



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

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May 2011

President	Leo Manders	356 1731	Dorota Giejsztowt	352 9130
Vice-President	Kevin Hughes	332 6281	Raymond Ford	351 9496
Vice-President	Mary Hines	942 6486	Dan Pryce	384 7523
Treasurer	Geoff Price	337 2614	Brian Smith	Quartermaster 355 9945
Trip Planner	Gary Huish	332 7020		
Secretary	Merv Meredith	322 7239		
Editor	Kerry Moore	359 5069		

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 10 May PORT PEGASUS EXPEDITION

Fourteen club members braved stormy seas on a chartered fishing boat to get to remote Port Pegasus in the south of Stewart Island. Based at a hunters' hut they explored the inlet in powered dingies and on foot.

Supper Duty: Helen Harkness, Rick Harlow, John Haylock

Tue 14 June MEMBERS' PHOTOS

Dig out your pics and give us a visual trip report or just show a selection that you'd like to show. Leo 356 1731 will coordinate so call him if you have photos to offer

Supper Duty: Murray Hight, Chrys Horn, Bill Hotter

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.

8 May Sun	LEITH HILL Gary Huish 332 7020	Maps BW21;K34,35
■	Easy-moderate trip to this 1384m peak behind Castle Hill Village. Possibility of round-trip behind the Castle Hill scenic reserve. Start: 8am Church Cnr (away from church)	Approx Cost: \$16
14-15 May Sat-Sun	LAKE LYNDON BASE CAMP Mary & Tim Hines 942 6486	Maps BW21;K34
■ ■	We'll be staying at the lodge south of Lake Lyndon, and doing some of the day walks (all grades) in the area. List Closes: Sat 30 Apr	
15 May Sun	RYDE FALLS TBA Contact Gary Huish 332 7020 if you would like to lead this trip.	Maps BW22;L34
■	Easy walk to these pretty falls which come down in three tiers amid a mixture of bush. Starting from Coopers Creek. There shouldn't be many wasps at this time of year! Start: 8am Church Cnr (away from church)	Approx Cost: \$10
21-22 May Sat-Sun	OTEHAKE HOT SPRING Gary Huish 332 7020	Maps BV20,21;K33
■ ■	Moderate walk from Aickens, up the Taramakau, before turning off for Lake Kaurapataka. There is a short climb to a saddle before dropping to the Otehake Rr. The hot springs are further up the Otehake. Camping out and hopefully not adding to the club legends. List Closes: Sat 14 May	
22 May Sun	LAKE RUBICON - BOBS KNOB Mary & Geoff Korver 355 3905	Maps BW21;L35
■	Moderate circuit up to a ridge below the Torlesse Range, with good views of the latter, taking in Lake Rubicon. Start: 8am Church Cnr (away from church)	Approx Cost: \$12
28-29 May Sat-Sun	MAGDALEN HUT Kerry Moore 359 5069	Maps BU23;M32
■ ■	Easy side trip off the southern end of the St James Walkway to this small, new hut. Mistletoe can be seen growing near the hut. Mixture of beech forest and the open flats of the Boyle river. List Closes: Sat 21 May	
29 May Sun	COACH STREAM - RABBIT HILL Dorota Giejsztowt 352 9130	Maps BW21;K35
■	Easy moderate round-trip to point 1179m in Korowai/Torlesse Tussocklands Park and returning on the old coach track. Starting from near the Big Pine at the bottom of Porters Pass. Start: 8am Church Cnr (away from church)	Approx Cost: \$14

4-6 Jun Sat-Mon ■■■ Queens B	POTTS RIVER - ASHBURTON RIVER Merv Meredith 322 7239 Moderate tramp up Potts River traversing Big Hill Range to south branch of Ashburton River. Ice axe may be required. List Closes: Sat 14 May	Maps BX18;J35,J36
4-6 Jun Sat-Mon ■■■ Queens B	CEDAR FLAT Heather Murray 322 5030 An easy-moderate trip inland from Hokitika. Walking up the Toaroha River to the Cedar Flats hut with elusive hot springs. Day or round-trips from this point. List Closes: Sat 14 May	Maps BV19;J33,J34
4-6 Jun Sat-Mon ■■■ Queens B	REEFTON BASE CAMP Leo Manders 356 1731 Base camp in this popular area with a variety of walks amongst mining relics or some serious tramping. List Closes: Sat 14 May	Maps BS21,BT21;L30
5 Jun Sun ■	MT EVANS TBA Contact Gary Huish 332 7020 if you would like to lead this trip. Easy-moderate walk to this 700m peak on Banks Peninsula, between Lyttelton Harbour and Port Levy. Start: 8am Princess Margaret (Hackthorne Rd end)	Maps BX24;N36 Approx Cost: \$9
12 Jun Sun ■	TIROMOANA BUSH - KATE VALLEY Gary Huish 332 7020 Easy trip to the coast east of Waipara to stretch the muscles after the barndance. Check out the reserve below the Kate Valley Landfill site. Start: 9am Robbies by Placemakers Cranford St	Maps BV24;N34 Approx Cost: \$10
18 Jun Sat-Sun ■■	PINCHGUT - BOBS CAMP - MT THOMAS Kevin Hughes 332 6281 Moderate circuit to this 2-man biv in the Mt Thomas area. It's not even shown on the Amberley topo map. List Closes: Sat 11 June	Maps BW23;M34
19 Jun Sun ■	BLACKWATER LAKES, MT ROSA Dan Pryce 384 7523 An easy-moderate tramp in the Craigieburn basin, along farm tracks through tussock to these distinctive kettle tarns. A brisk climb of Mt Rosa provides great views of the lakes, the Waimakariri River and the peaks of Arthurs Pass NP. Start: 8am Church Cnr (away from church)	Maps BW21;L34 Approx Cost: \$20
25-26 Jun Sat-Sun ■■	MT FYFFE - KOWHAI RIVER Mary & Tim Hines 942 6486 A moderate traverse of Mt Fyffe. Friday evening start to Kaikoura and walk up the 4WD track by moonlight to Mt Fyffe hut for the night. Saturday involves the Mt Fyffe traverse across Gable to Gables End and down to the Kowhai Saddle and Kowhai Hut. Sunday is more leisurely down the Kowhai River and out. List Closes: Sat 18 June	Maps BT27;O31
26 Jun Sun ■	FLAGPOLE Geoff Price 337 2614 Easy-moderate ramble in the foothills behind Whitecliffs to 900m viewpoint. Start: 8am Church Cnr (away from church)	Maps BW21;L35 Approx Cost: \$11

3-4 Jul Sat-Sun ■■	CARLYLE HUT TBA Contact Gary Huish 332 7020 if you would like to lead this trip. An easy-moderate trip up the Carlyle Stream to this hut among the forests and peaks on Glenhope Station on the north side of the Lewis Pass road. List Closes: Sat 25 June	Maps BU23;M32
4 Jul Sun ■	STEEPFACE HILL Merv Meredith 322 7239 Moderate-hard snow trip to 1876m peak on Mt Hutt Range, overlooking the Rakaia River. Ice axe and crampons required. Start: 7:30am Church Cnr (away from church)	Maps BW20;K35 Approx Cost: \$17
10-11 Jul Sat-Sun ■■	CROW HUT mid-winter dinner Mary & Geoff Korver 355 3905 Easy-moderate tramp, providing we don't get deep snow drifts this year, to a tidy little hut in a clearing between forested slopes and the Waimakariri River, in Arthurs Pass National Park. Come and celebrate a mid-winter "Christmas". List Closes: Sat 25 June	Maps BV20;K34

President's Report

Barn Dance

This event is coming up very soon. The date is **Sat 11 June** commencing 8pm. The venue is St Peters Parish Hall Church Corner beside the church at Church Corner. All committee members have limited tickets. These will also be available at the May club night. The barn dance is now on before the June club night. Tickets this year cost \$22, down from last year. Please also bring a plate of finger food for supper. Drinks and nibbles will be provided as usual. The Ceilidh Band with caller Colin Forsyth will be performing. They proved very popular last year.

Trish Stephenson

Thanks to those club members who joined me and a packed funeral service to see off Trish Stephenson on March 17. An emotional service, being weeks after the CTV building collapse on Feb 22.

PTC 80th Anniversary

Next year on June 10 2012, our club will be 80 years old. We are in the early stages of planning a social get together and probably a day walk. It will be a simpler affair than our recent 75th celebration. If you have any thoughts or ideas, please contact a committee member. It is also planned to run our barn dance again next year but a month after the PTC 80th social.

Trip Planning July 2011 – June 2012

Thanks to those of you who turned up at Gary's place on April 19 for the trip planning meeting. A range of good trips are being proposed. Now is the time to contact Gary by email gary.huish@xtra.co.nz if you still have ideas for trips over the next year. A final trip programme will be presented at the May committee meeting on Tue May 31. The trip programme is currently being drafted. You should receive the final version in June.

PTC Instruction Courses

Being drafted into the new trips programme is a 2 part instruction programme to be held over two weekends, a month apart in the spring of 2011. These will be called BUSH 1 and BUSH 2 and will together cover everything you need to know in the bush from safe tramping to getting the confidence to lead trips. A number of club members with huge experience will pass on their knowledge on different aspects of bushcraft. We are in the process of putting together a comprehensive program. If you have any thoughts on what you would like included please contact Kevin Hughes, Geoff Spearpoint or myself. We will not be covering alpine instruction on snow or rock.

Queens Birthday Weekend 3 – 6 June 2011

Get in now to book your place on a trip for QB weekend. See elsewhere in Footnotes for trips running. The base camp is being held in Reefton which I am taking. I have available a lovely classic Reefton crib which holds 6 people at a very reasonable price. This needs to be booked shortly but I need names now if I am to secure this. There are a wide variety of tramps and walks on offer. I have been there a number of times and have fond memories.

Happy Tramping – Leo Manders

SOCIAL EVENTS

Thurs 19 May **Ceroc Dancing**



Come along for a fun night of dancing. The evening starts with a 45 minute beginners' class. You will learn 4 steps. Partners are not needed and there is usually an even number of men and women. You change partners every couple of minutes. There is no fancy footwork so it is easy to learn. After the beginners' class there is a review of what you have learned at a slower pace until about 9pm. You can go home after that or stay on until about 10pm to practice or just sit and watch and have a drink at the bar. Cost is \$12. It is a very relaxed, friendly atmosphere. Meet in the foyer of the **St Albans Shirley Club, 269 Hills Rd. club at 7.15pm**. Dancing starts at 7.25pm. Dress is smart-casual. Some of the ladies dress up but jeans are fine. You need to wear shoes that won't slip off if you do a bit of a spin. Smoother soled shoes are good but anything is OK.

More info at <http://www.alldance.co.nz/index.html> or ring Maureen Thompson 359 5707 or email mothompson@xtra.co.nz

Saturday
11 June

Annual Barn Dance

June 11 8 till midnight

St Peters Church Hall, Church Corner, Upper Riccarton

The Incredible Ceilidh Band will provide the music

Colin Forsyth will call the dances so you don't need to know any steps or moves

You can order tickets by calling/texting or emailing Mary Hines

on 021 049 1835 hinestandm@clear.net.nz

Please bring a plate of finger food to share for supper

Bring out your jeans/skirts and hats, cowboy boots, chaps, western shirts as there is a prize for 'Best dressed'

Tickets are \$22 and include: all drinks, called dances, spot prizes



NOTICES

Membership We welcome **Douglas Woods** to the club

This year's 80th FMC AGM will be held at Te Papa in Wellington, 4.30pm Saturday 11 June 2011.

Deadline for June newsletter **Sunday 5 June**. 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 31 May at Kevin Hughes' house

BITS AND PIECES

FMC PHOTO COMPETITION 2011

Entries are accepted from member clubs.

Each club may submit up to two entries per category. The 5 categories are:

Above bushline Below bushline Historic hut or camp life
Native flora or fauna Outdoor landscapes

PTC will collate and submit the first two entries received from PTC members in each category.

Please submit one entry per category to Leo Manders. We'll select two entries from the bunch to send to FMC.

The full rules can be seen at: <http://www.fmc.org.nz/services-to-clubs/photo-competition/>

Our collated CD has to be in Wellington by **17th May**. So if you think you have some good pics taken since 1st Jan 2008, hunt them out.

TRIP REPORTS

Lake Nerine – Rockburn – North Col - 12 -15 March 2011

This is Hannah Keith's account of the Lake Nerine trip which she did as a practice trip for her Duke of Edinburgh Silver award.

Day one: We all got up after having spent a night at the Glenorchy Lodge and made our way to the Routeburn Shelter where we left our cars and started the tramp. We walked on the Routeburn track for about 15 – 20 minutes before we reached the Sugarloaf track turn off. We then climbed up a very steep track up to the top of the pass. At the top of the pass we had lunch and there were some amazing views of Pluto and Mt Earnslaw. We then had a very steep descent on the other side of the pass and at the bottom we walked by the river on the track that would lead us to Theatre Flat, our campsite for the night. When we got there we were all exhausted and our feet sore so we quickly found a good sheltered spot under some trees, cooked our dinner and when it got dark we all went to bed.



Day two: We woke up early—thanks to the paradise ducks—cooked our breakfast and got on our way to the next stop—Lake Nerine. We walked up to the top of the valley where we had lunch under a rock bivvy and then we climbed up the steep hill onto Park Pass. We then made our way up the ridge and sidled on a very steep slope around the rocky cliffs at the top of the mountain up a small valley, over a saddle and finally made it to Lake Nerine after some navigation troubles in the thick fog that rolled in during the afternoon. By the time we found a good campsite the weather had turned bad with rain and

wind coming our way, all this after a warm sunny morning. We quickly made some dinner and retreated into our tents where we could stay warm. That night was long with the gusty wind and rain on the tent keeping me awake.

Day three: We awoke and got on our way early because it was cold, windy and the weather was expected to get worse. We walked over a small saddle by the lake and sidled around on a terrace to North Col. This was an interesting experience. We had to climb up and over North Col which then dropped down into the valley we were walking down and on the way up and over, the wind was really strong—possibly over 100kph. It was hard to keep upright but we all got over safely. We then walked down a very rocky face at the top of the valley passing the remains of winter snow, then struggled without much luck for an hour or so to find a sheltered place out of the wind and rain. In the end, we stopped behind a large boulder out of the wind and shivered terribly while trying to have lunch and keep warm. We moved on quickly and made our way down the valley, crossing the same river many times, following the cairns that led the way and sometimes walking through overgrown bush when we struggled to find cairns. Eventually, we reached the flats in the north branch of the Routeburn. By this time it was very wet and the rain continued non-stop. We all decided that instead of camping another night in the miserable weather we would walk the entire way out to the car-park where we started. So we walked for another hour till 7pm and stopped for some more food at the shelter near Routeburn Flats Hut. The Route Burn's North Branch was a roaring torrent. For the last one and a half hours we walked out the Routeburn track in the dark with our headlamps on. We got to the car-park around 9pm and drove back to Glenorchy where we had a warm shower and bed at the camping ground.

Overall this was a very hard, but fun tramp to go on and it was a really good experience. We had bad weather on the last day which was a shame, but I managed to put lots of skills into practice, such as a lot of river crossing and navigating.

We were: **Raymond Ford, Chris Leaver, Bill Hotter, Brad Willson, Karen Keith, Hannah Keith**
 🏠 HK - Year 13, St Hildas College

The Dusky Track – 20-29 March 2011

Day 1. It was 8.30 and we—Lisa, Helen, Murray and Darcy—were on the road south. The miles rolled by until it was time for a break in Geraldine. Canterbury skies had been overcast, but as we ascended Burkes Pass the sky cleared and we enjoyed the views of the Mackenzie as we wended our way south. Omarama saw us replenishing our energy levels before we moved into Otago. Due to the quake, Lisa had not been able to purchase a new hut pass, so we headed for the DoC office at Te Anau and there she was subjected to a barrage of questions. We learned that the boat up Lake Hauroko was fully booked for the morrow. Drat! We had been hoping that we would be the only ones going in. Then we went on down to Manapouri and moved into our booked backpackers dorm at Possums Lodge, before going into the pub for drinks and eats.

Day 2. A hurried breakfast and repack saw us driving down to meet our minibus transport to Clifden Corner. Murray raced away to park his car with an old school friend who lived locally and the rest of us started to meet our fellow trampers—all young and foreign. Murray returned, our bus arrived, we loaded our gear, and then we were off. The drive was beautiful, with multiple layers of ground mist lying in the valleys. All too soon we arrived at Clifden Corner, and there was Val our boatman waiting for us. We transferred our gear, and continued on to where Val keeps his boat, the Namu. With Namu in tow, we were soon at Lake Hauroko. Any residual mist had cleared and we enjoyed the trip up the lake, although space on board was rather cramped due to the large number of nine passengers. Views were great. After some 50 minutes on the water, we arrived at the head of the lake and rushed into Hauroko Burn Hut for sanctuary from the horde of sandflies. I was dressed for the track and so champed at the bit whilst the others changed. Then we were off, and very soon met two hunters who were staying in the hut. The walking was mostly good with the track following the Hauroko Burn, but it wasn't long before

we met our first bog-holes. Trees, moss, fern—everything was green, except for the blue sky, the odd boghole, and the burn itself. I was taking lots of video of the burn and its enclosing vegetation, so I knew that I would not get to Halfway Hut in five hours, but even so I was beginning to think that Helen and I had somehow walked past the hut when we met Murray who had reached the hut and was coming back to ensure that the two laggards were okay. In bed that night, we listened for hours to the stags as they roared in the clearing right in front of the hut!

Day 3. We rose at 7am, much to the annoyance of a Czech woman who was still adjusting to sharing a hut with others. Although we were first away, we were soon passed by the other, younger folk, and this became the pattern for the succeeding days. Some of them had done over a dozen tracks in the previous few weeks, so they were really fit. We enjoyed crossing the three-wire suspension bridges, but they did impede our rate of progress and Murray decided to ford the rivers as a way of speeding our progress. It was a good decision as the river levels were low. Eventually we emerged above the bush line, and very soon after that we were at Lake Roe Hut. Four hunters, a mixed group of Aussies and Kiwis, had left their gear strewn everywhere, so we shunted it all into a corner for them and moved in. Some cloud had come over, but it wasn't bad. We took off up to Lake Roe itself to enjoy the scenery and I climbed a bit higher to look down into the Hauroko Burn Valley, but the cloud made the view of it quite dark. The hunters returned with no game – they were an amiable bunch, and we co-existed easily.

Day 4. Yesterday's cloud had dispersed, and the weather was brilliant. We left the hut and found ourselves in a wonderland—no bush, but innumerable small lakes and tarns all about us, and towering peaks further away. The climb up to Furkert Pass was made easy for us because we were continually stopping for “Kodak” moments. The pass merged into the Pleasant Range tops, and for us they really were pleasant—more tarns with the backdrop of mountain peaks, the deep chasm of the Seaforth River, and the first views of Dusky Sound. Fantastic! The view of Dusky Sound kept appearing for some time. Then, just before the track entered the bush, from a rocky outcrop we could see Loch Maree far below us. We could see the drowned tree stumps in the water, but we could not discern the hut. In all ways the day so far had been really great, but now adverse conditions commenced. The descent was not just steep, it was damned steep. Slippery tree roots became a constant hazard, and I continually asked myself why I had given up using tricounis. Then I slipped and rolled a few metres down-hill and off the track. I knew the general direction in which the track was heading, so rather than climb back up to it I set off through the bush to intercept it. Ten minutes or more passed and still I hadn't regained it. Drat, maybe the track turned a hard right just after I fell off it, or something. Another few minutes went by – the bush bashing was actually easier going than was the track, but the track offered security. Still no track appeared, so I used my sergeant-major's voice. Murray heard and replied. He was directly in front of me, although some distance ahead. Whew! Another five minutes and there was the track, but it continued to be the “track in hell” for another hour or so before it arrived in heaven, a lovely flat area that followed a tributary of the Seaforth River. And there was the shelter shed, a haven for trampers who could not get through raging flood waters of the Seaforth. These days there's a ladder up to the three-wire bridge. Soon after was the bridge itself. Due to my previous experience, I knew that the ravenous horde waited until a tramper was halfway across before attacking him, so I applied repellent before climbing the ladder. Soon after the bridge, Loch Maree Hut was a welcome sight. All four of us agreed that that the descent from Pleasant Range to Loch Maree was an experience not to be relished.

Day 5. A side trip to Supper Cove and back. We stored food, unused gas, and other items that we could do without for the following two days and one night in one of the hut cupboards, and off we went. The track along the loch was not easy, but we were fresh. We passed a couple of waterfalls, the second one being quite spectacular, and had some beautiful views of the Seaforth. The lowest reaches of the river are tidal, wide, deep, and slow-moving with beautiful bush alongside it. One look at the sound, when we got there, convinced us that the low tide route across the flats was not possible, so we had to endure the difficult up and down track through the bush to the hut. That night a mixed Czech/Swiss couple, who were having several nights in the hut, provided blue cod which they had caught from the rocks below the hut, for dinner. Some Aussies, who were holidaying on a rented fishing boat, rowed ashore with a big crayfish which they presented to us. The Czech/Swiss pair cooked them all beautifully and shared them with us.

Day 6. The fishing couple assured us that low tide would be 9.30am, so we had a lazy start to the day. We were, however, down at the boatshed by 9.30 and found that the water was still too deep. We waited an hour, and the water steadily receded during that time, but it was still too deep to get around the point. We four kiwis and two

Brits opted to take the track over the nearest spur and then to try the low tide route. It did not save us time, but it certainly saved us lots of energy and it provided us with a different experience, that of tramping knee deep in salt water. And then Helen went missing. She was the rearmost tramper in our group, I was just in front of her, and I asked her something. I received no reply. I stopped and waited, and when she did not appear within a couple of minutes, I called out to her. There was no reply. Damn! I visualized her slipping in one of the ubiquitous bog-holes, hitting her head on a tree root or something as she fell, and lying, possibly face down, in the mud. I dropped my pack and raced back, yelling to her. Again, there was no reply. I went further back and yelled again, and this time I got a reply. From its direction, she had somehow got in front of me. I was relieved. She hadn't drowned in the mud, nor had she been kidnapped by the Lost Tribe. I returned to my pack, shouldered it, and continued on. I caught up to the others, who had stopped, and as I approached them I said, "Helen, how did you get past me?" They looked at me and said, "Helen's not here". She wasn't either. Apparently they had heard me calling out to Helen and they replied – that was what I heard and mistook for her. Murray and I both dropped our packs and raced back, yelling at intervals. Eventually we heard a reply, way off to our right and through some thick bush. Murray stayed on the track so that his voice could be a homing beacon for me if I needed it, and I scrambled through the bush. There she was, safe and sound, sitting beside a bridge on the track. She had recognized the bridge from yesterday, but she knew that she hadn't been over it today and so she was certain that she was right on the ball. But today we had forded the river rather than use the bridge, and bridges do look different when seen from below. Helen had left the track to skirt round a bog-hole, and on regaining the track had followed it the wrong way. All's well that ends well. When we got back to Loch Maree Hut, we found that our food cache untouched by man and mouse.

Day 7. Dawn was cloudy and cool. The track along the Upper Seaforth was initially a steady but easy climb. Light showers fell at times. Gair Loch provided some interest, and good views of it were obtained during breaks in the weather. Soon after that we reached a dry and warm Kintail Hut. The roaring stags did not keep us awake for long that night, but most of us woke at times to hear steady and fairly heavy rain on the roof.

Day 8. A grey, dismal dawn followed. The climb began almost as soon as we left the hut, and we were fortunate to get a good view of Gair Loch below us. The track got steeper, and I kept on wondering when we would get out on to the open tops of Centre Pass. Eventually we did, and it was really bleak up there. I did not recognize it until just before our descent. On the tops Helen pointed out an extremely long worm lying on the track. It was a good 45cm long. The descent was quick and easy with most of us leaving the track to take short-cuts over the deep mosses, etc. Once in the bush, it was just another hour or so of easy walking to gain the Upper Spey Hut.

Day 9. This promised to be the easiest and shortest day of the trip, and so it turned out to be. The track followed the Spey River almost all of the way, and large, moss-covered tree branches stretching out across the river provided some beautiful scenes. Every day preceding this we had exceeded the advised track time by an hour or more, but today we were faster than the given time! At the boat terminus at West Arm, Manapouri, we had to wait for almost three hours. Plenty of time to change into dry, tidy clothing and to have lunch. It was now that I discovered that the memory card in my video camera was full and so I changed it. Unfortunately, when I did so, I must have forgotten to place the full card back in my pack. It contained my visual record of the final two and a half days on the track, from Loch Maree Hut to West Arm. Two days later, from Chch, I phoned Real Journeys to make enquiries, but it had not turned up. Anyway, the boat returned us to Manapouri and hence Possum Lodge. After a hot shower, a copious quantity of beer, and a large, freshly prepared meal, we slept like babies.

Day 10. This was Day 1 in reverse.

I would like to thank my three companions. Together we survived the ravenous hordes, the mud, the slippery tree roots, the steep terrain (particularly the descents), the weather of the last three days, and each other's cooking. Helen showed unfailing good humour, Lisa's exclamations of delight at the constantly unfolding panorama bucked us all up, and Murray demonstrated great fortitude in tramping day after day with badly blistered feet that were rubbed raw in places. The only grumbling I heard was my own. We were: **Helen Harkness, Lisa Williams, Murray Hight, and Darcy Mawson**—the real old-fashioned general who believed in leading from the rear, but in my case perhaps I had little choice in the matter. 🏔️ DM.

Clarence-West Sabine-East Sabine-Waiiau Pass-Maling Pass. Easter 22-25 April 2011

Three trampers—Chrys Horn, Carl Shawcross and Kerry Moore—were motoring by 0640 in good weather, headed for Lake Tennyson. The Jacks Pass road is not sealed. Nor is Tophouse Road which makes for a slow, pothole-dodging drive. The road goes past the Fowler Pass and Maling Pass tracks which are now part of an intermediate-grade cycle-way.

By 1040 we were walking alongside Lake T. Then it was up the Clarence Valley over easy, low tussock. Near its head the Clarence climbs steeply and turns sharply. We had a choice of sidling and climbing, climbing up a gully, or going further up to avoid bluffs. We chose the gully route and passed close to an interesting waterfall. The all-the-way-up route is worth a try. Soon we were traveling east up a gently sloping valley head. The terrain gets bouldery and then climbs more steeply on scree to reach the 1900m saddle under Belvedere Peak. There was a little snow on south-facing slopes which was easier to climb on than scree. We made a brief stop just short of the saddle to avoid the brisk, chilly wind. Moving on, we were now in the headwaters of the East Sabine River. A sidling descent looks like a good idea but bluffs get in the way. The best way into the valley seems to be down tussock slopes. Further down the valley we didn't enjoy the lumpy terrain with low scrub and tall tussock, so the going was quite slow. Darkness threatened before we reached the promised campsite in beech forest. By the time we found the excellent site close to the river we had struggled through scrub and dense beech with torches employed. Chrys pitched her eclipse one-person tent. Carl pitched his light-weight Vango Helium 200 two-man tent. Kerry cooked soup-flavoured macaroni and cheese. We ate dinner contentedly, skipped dessert and went to bed in cool, dry conditions.

The predicted rain for Saturday arrived early so we breakfasted in light rain and then packed our wet tents to set off. With no official track the going was slow. Sometimes we found good remnants of track but lost them when they came to areas of windfall. Sometimes the riverbank was navigable but then we'd hit awkward scrub. With steady rain we didn't stop for more than a few minutes to stoke up. We reached the Travers Track and suddenly we were able to cruise. Soon we were alongside the West Sabine River and got to WS Hut at 2pm for a hot drink and lunch-stop. Knowing we could run out of daylight to reach Blue Lake Hut we were away again by 2:20. Halfway to BL Hut we were stopped in our tracks by a swift side-creek. We bashed a little way up this creek where we found a flatter gradient with a more even, slower flow and crossed. We arrived at the hut as it was getting dark and were surprised to find the PTC Moss Pass team there. They'd decided that Moss Pass would be unpleasant in the rain and planned to retreat back out to Lake Rotoroa. The hut was full and everyone was trying to dry their gear but with very little firewood the only heat came from warm bodies. The hut walls were dripping with condensation.

In the morning the rain was more intermittent. Some of the Moss Pass group went for a walk to Lake Constance. We three set off for Waiiau Pass via Lake C. The map shows a route going on the west side of the lake and we found the way well poled for a time but then there seemed to be a gap or we missed a pole. We started to descend and then thought better of it and climbed back up to find the track, well trodden and poled. It took us above bluffs and through some craggy little gullies and dropped us on the lake shore for an easy, flat walk to the foot of the slope leading to Waiiau Pass. A steady 400m trudge in light drizzle on a poled route got us to the pass. We'd left the hut at 0830 and we reached the top at 1230. The descending track heads down a SW-facing spur to avoid bluffs below Waiiau Pass. For a while we had serious rain and the track became a little river. Soon we were on flat tussock and heading to a scrubby section of track alongside some impressive Waiiau River cataracts. We were relieved to find that recent track work had tamed the scrub. We had to team up to cross a vigorous side creek and then onto the first patch of mature beech which revealed an excellent campsite. After discussion we decided to push on to give ourselves a shorter final day. Here we had a dilemma. If we played it safe and stayed on the left bank of the river we'd have to make our own track through dense vegetation. Across the river was an excellent, well-maintained track and a useful biv—Caroline Creek Biv—but we'd need to find a way across the Waiiau the next day. If the rain persisted crossing may have been impossible. We tried

the first option and made minimal progress pushing through dense phyllocladus, so we took the easy way and crossed to the track. Sections on bouldery scree proved slippery but the track was mostly very good. Carl's high-spec GPS told us it was 4km to the biv. People we met going up-river towards Waiau Pass told us the biv was leaking. This wasn't apparent to us because the rain was minimal and they'd tracked lots of water onto the floor. We added to the wetness of the floor and only Kerry was game to sleep on one of the two stretched canvass bunks. Chrys and Carl tented.

Easter Monday was cloudy with no rain. A track sign at the biv said it was an 8 hour walk to the Maling Pass car park. We crossed the Waiau with ease and connected with the Maling Pass track. The pass can be crossed by bike or 4WD with good ground-clearance. As we descended we met people going up in a Subaru Legacy. Such cars are low-slung so the vehicle was scraping. It would be interesting to know how they coped on steeper bits and stream crossings. When the track leveled out we took a shortcut over wetland to the Tennyson lakeshore and along a vehicle track to our waiting car, saving a longer hike along the road. Tramping time was 6 hours. As we drove to Hanmer we could see that it was Canterbury's turn for bad weather and the predicted southerly was arriving. We were back in town by 5:30pm.

Last time the club did this trip, Nick Webb chose to camp at Lake Tennyson to get an early start for the long first day. With our strategy and Easter falling in late April we ran out of daylight and needed torches to hunt for the campsite. This trip is a handy circuit saving lots of motoring to Nelson Lakes NP but then you have the pressure to get back to the car in bad weather. If the weather had forced us to exit to Lake Rotoroa, retrieving the car would be awkward. Carl, a recent migrant from England bore up well and didn't complain too much about wet clothing and the weather. He's encountered worse in the Falklands. 🏔️ KM



Carl at the head of the Clarence River

Annual Barn Dance

Saturday, June 11, 8 till midnight

St Peters Church Hall, Church Corner, Upper Riccarton

The Incredible Ceilidh Band will provide the music

Colin Forsyth will call the dances

You don't need to know any steps or moves

You can order tickets by calling/texting or emailing Mary Hines

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Please bring a plate of finger food to share for supper

Bring out your jeans/skirts and hats, cowboy boots, chaps, western shirts
as there is a prize for 'Best dressed'

Tickets are \$22 and include all drinks, called dances, spot prizes