



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

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## June 2012

<b>President</b>	Leo Manders	356 1731	Raymond Ford	351 9496
<b>Vice-President</b>	Kevin Hughes	332 6281	Dan Pryce	356 2617
<b>Vice-President</b>	Mary Hines	942 6486	Liz Stephenson	358 3281
<b>Treasurer</b>	Geoff Price	337 2614	Brian Smith	Quartermaster 355 9945
<b>Trip Planner</b>	Gary Huish	332 7020		
<b>Secretary</b>	Merv Meredith	322 7239		
<b>Editor</b>	Kerry Moore	359 5069		

**New Member Enquiries** Please contact Stan Wilder, 980 5291, 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 12 June **OLIVINE ICE PLATEAU**



Two superb 8-day PTC alpine club trips led by Geoff Spearpoint will be described with the crossing of Sealy Pass in 2011 and the Olivine Ice Plateau in 2012.

**Supper Duty: Paul Moreham, Miriam Preston, Geoff Spearpoint**

### Tue 10 July **CIRCUMNAVIGATION OF THE SVALBARD ARCHIPELAGO**



A well-developed sense of adventure, love of the wilds, kayaking and photography, led **Jillian Wilson** to Svalbard, an outpost of Norway, Arctic Ocean, July 2011.

To see a polar bear—just one would do—walrus, guillemots, ivory gulls and maybe a beluga whale or two? See if she achieved this and more on her second visit to this Archipelago.

**Supper Duty: Richard Smith, John Rice or Lois Moore, Yvette So**

**Peninsula Tramping Club: Celebrating 80 years of tramping, June 2012**

## COMING TRIPS

### Day Trips:

Depart from and return to a convenient point on the side of town nearest 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.

### Bike Trips:

For up-to-date details on biking trips please contact

**Rick Bolch ph 980 5156 email rlbolch@paradise.net.nz**

<b>10 Jun Sun</b>	<b>80TH ANNIVERSARY DAY TRAMP</b> <b>Leo Manders 356 1731</b>	<b>Maps BX24;M36</b>
■	An <b>easy</b> tramp on the Port Hills. The original route is still closed due to rockfall issues so we plan to start from the Sign of the Takahe, heading up to Sign of the Kiwi, Kennedys Bush and Halswell Quarry.	
<b>16-17 Jun Sat-Sun</b>	<b>CASEY SADDLE - BINSER SADDLE</b> <b>Gary Huish 332 7020</b>	<b>Maps BV21;L33,L34</b>
■ ■	<b>Moderate</b> round-trip in the south-east corner of Arthurs Pass National Park. Good track and comfortable Casey Hut. Casey Saddle is barely perceptible but Binser is more noticeable with a 600m climb to the saddle. <b>List Closes: Sat 9 June</b>	
<b>17 Jun Sun</b>	<b>MT BINSER - THREE PEAKS</b> <b>Merv Meredith 322 7239</b>	<b>Maps BV21;L33,L34</b>
■	<b>Moderate-hard</b> trip in the south-east corner of Arthurs Pass National Park. From Binser Saddle the route goes through untracked bush and onto the open tops. There are three peaks, ranging from 1753m to 1860m with a deep saddle between the low and middle peaks. Possibility of a round-trip. Ice axe and crampons may be required if the snow arrives early. <b>Start: 7am Church Cnr (across from church)</b> <b>Approx Cost: \$20</b>	
<b>23-24 Jun Sat-Sun</b>	<b>BANFIELD HUT</b> <b>Leo Manders 356 1731</b>	<b>Maps BW19;J35</b>
■ ■	<b>Easy-moderate</b> trip up the Rakaia River to a small hut a short way up a side stream—Jagged Stream. Largely 4WD track with a stream crossing and possibly a little scrub and a washout to negotiate. From the hut there could be time for some exploration either up Jagged or adjacent mountain-sides, to give views of peaks and glaciers at the northern end of the Arrowsmiths. <b>List Closes: Sat 16 June</b>	
<b>24 Jun Sun</b>	<b>MT BOSSU</b> <b>Kerry Moore 359 5069</b>	<b>Maps BY25;N37</b>
■	An <b>easy</b> trip on Banks Peninsula with great views of Akaroa Harbour. <b>Start: 8am Halswell School</b> <b>Approx Cost: \$15</b>	
<b>30Jun-1Jul Sat-Sun</b>	<b>KIRWANS HUT</b> <b>Raymond Ford 351 9496</b>	<b>Maps BS21,22;L30</b>
■ ■	<b>Easy-moderate</b> tramp up a well-graded miners pack track in Victoria Forest Park near Reefton. Despite the gentle grade it is still a near-900m climb through the forest to this comfortable hut near the bush edge. An optional side-trip to tussock-topped Kirwans Hill, gives great views of surrounding mountains. <b>List Closes: Sat 23 June</b>	

1 Jul Sun ■	<b>FLAGPOLE</b> Paul Moreham 339 8050 Easy-moderate ramble in the foothills behind Whitecliffs to 900m this viewpoint. Start: 8am Church Cnr (across from church)	Maps BW21;L35 Approx Cost: \$11
7-8 Jul Sat-Sun ■■	<b>NINA VALLEY</b> Leo Manders 356 1731 Easy walk up-valley through beech forest to Nina Hut with maybe a little exploring up the valley past the hut. List Closes: Sat 30 June	Maps BT23,BU23;M31,M32
8 Jul Sun ■	<b>MT ENYS</b> Merv Meredith 322 7239 Moderate-hard snow trip to this 2200m peak in the Craigieburns, via Dead Man Spur. Ice axe and possibly crampons required. Start: 7am Church Cnr (across from church)	Maps BW20,21;K34 Approx Cost: \$16
14 Jul	<b>BARN DANCE</b> see back page	
15 Jul Sun ■	<b>HORSESHOE LAKE, TRAVIS WETLAND</b> Kerry Moore 359 5069 An easy, flat walk through some of our urban wetlands. Should be some bird-watching opportunities. Start: 9am Robbies Cranford St (near Placemakers)	Maps BX24;M35
21-22 Jul Sat-Sun ■■	<b>WOOLSHED CREEK BASE CAMP</b> Keith McQuillan 384 6164 Easy tramp to the modern, comfortable hut, behind Mt Somers. We will celebrate close to the longest night with a mid-winter feast. List Closes: Sat 7 July	Maps BX19;K36
22 Jul Sun ■	<b>MT CHEESEMAN - MT IZARD</b> Merv Meredith 322 7239 Moderate-hard snow trip to two 2000m peaks in the Craigieburns, via 1000m Hogsback. Ice axe and possibly crampons required. Start: 7am Church Cnr (across from church)	Maps BW20,21;K34 Approx Cost: \$16
28-29 Jul Sat-Sun ■■	<b>BROKEN RIVER HUT</b> Liz Stephenson 358 3281 A moderate trip near Castle Hill starting from the Avoca incline. This descends to and then follows Broken River to the hut. Possible round-trip returning through No Man's Land. List Closes: Sat 21 July	Maps BW21;K34,L34
28 Jul Saturday ■	<b>BROKEN HILL</b> Gary Huish 332 7020 Moderate trip to this peak just off of the Arthurs Pass highway, near Flock Hill Resort. Start: 8am Church Cnr (across from church)	Maps BW21;K34,L34 Approx Cost: \$17
2-5 Aug Thur-Sun ■■■■	<b>TRENT RIVER - HAUPIRI RIVER</b> Merv Meredith 322 7239 Merv's going back to the West Coast again, chasing more of the fantastic weather the Coast can turn on during winter. This is a classic <b>moderate-hard</b> , four day round-trip starting up the Trent from Waikiti Downs, staying the first night at the newish Tutaekuri Hut. The second day is an easy stroll around the corner to the Mid Trent. The plan, given clear weather then is to climb to the main ridge before Mt Wilson, travelling along the top with great views both sides, dropping down toward Trent Saddle for the night after Mt Dixon. On the final day, down the Haupiri. List Closes: Sat 21 July	Maps BU21;K32,L32

<b>4-5 Aug Sat-Sun</b> ■ ■	<b>MT FYFFE - KOWHAI RIVER</b> <b>Dan Pryce 384 7065</b> A <b>moderate</b> traverse of Mt Fyffe. Friday evening start to Kaikoura and walk up the 4WD track just after full moon 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. <b>List Closes: Sat 28 July</b>	<b>Maps BT27;O31</b>
<b>5 Aug Sun</b> ■	<b>TIROMOANA BUSH - KATE VALLEY</b> <b>Chris Leaver 322 6445</b> Easy trip to the coast east of Waipara. Check out the reserve below the Kate Valley landfill site. <b>Start: 8am Robbies Cranford St (near Placemakers)</b>	<b>Maps BV24;N34</b>  <b>Approx Cost: \$9</b>
<b>11-12 Aug Sat-Sun</b> ■ ■	<b>YOUNGMAN STREAM HUT - LILBURN HILL</b> <b>Kevin Hughes 332 6281</b> Easy-moderate tramp to Youngman Stream Hut in the upper Ashley. On Sunday up to Lillburn Hill and impressively located Tarn Hut. <b>List Closes: Sat 4 August</b>	<b>Maps BV22;M34</b>
<b>12 Aug Sun</b> ■	<b>MT OAKDEN</b> <b>Keith McQuillan 384 6164</b> Moderate ascent of a 1630m peak at the head of Lake Coleridge. Quite an uncompromising grunt but you get superb views for your effort – up the Rakaia and Wilberforce Rivers towards the main divide, and of the lake itself. <b>Start: 8am Church Cnr (across from church)</b>	<b>Maps BW20;K34,K35</b>  <b>Approx Cost: \$20</b>

## President's Report

Over the weekend of 9<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> of this month PTC will be celebrating 80 years of tramping. It's great to see 32 of you have registered for the dinner on Saturday night and a number of you have already indicated they will do the walk on Sunday. We gather at Sign of the Takahe, 9.30am the Sunday morning.

### Membership List

With this copy of Footnotes you should receive a copy of our Membership List. Just a reminder this list is for your use as a club member and is confidential to club members only. It is really encouraging to have had 10 new members join—some single and some family—since 1 April 2012. These new memberships are included on the list and we have made sure PTC Communicator has been updated for those people on joining, ensuring they receive our club emails. Welcome to our new members, we have some fantastic new people who I am sure will add great additional value to our club. Thanks also to Stan and Liz for their hard work in ensuring new people are being followed up.

### Membership Ideas from recent AGM

Your executive has checked the minutes of our last AGM for accuracy and these are now ready to be approved at our next AGM. We have also taken on board the comments made on new membership and will incorporate these ideas into our prospective new member strategy. Some of these ideas include database development—currently Liz and Stan are working on this to make it easier to keep track of new people. Attracting young members—we have already come up with family and young-people-friendly trips for next year's trip program. We have set aside a weekend especially in Feb 2013 so new people can try us out. Trip leaders are encouraged to make sure new people are looked after on trips. On reports to hand this is working well and has been instrumental in bringing a number of new people into the club already. A big thanks to trip leaders for helping new people. We have a number of members, including Liz Stephenson, administering **Facebook** to ensure relevant information for both members and potential members is available. **Skills courses** : we will be running two weekend bushcraft courses this coming 2012,13 trip schedule and are also looking at scheduling a club basic alpine skills course. Thanks to those of you who contributed some great ideas to move our club forward. We are well on our way!

### **Promotion of Club Trips in Footnotes**

Where a trip has a specific requirement eg ice axes, crampons, helmets, it is important for trip leaders to please make sure this is stipulated in Footnotes when these trips are being advertised. This is to ensure potential trip participants come fully prepared for the trip.

### **Club Gear Purchases**

Our club has recently purchased an additional Minaret tent, bringing our club minaret total to 6 although our original first two are aging. We have had great demand for these tents from members. All of you as members can check on what gear the club holds by looking at the **asset list** in the Financial Statement issued to members before our last AGM. Your executive is currently discussing options for purchase of a one-person tent and perhaps a small number of helmets for club member to hire where rock-falls present a hazard on a trip. The one-person tent idea is to overcome current tent accommodation problems where we have an odd number of trip participants. If you have any thoughts on these potential purchases, please let any committee member know before 26 June where it will be on the exec meeting agenda.

### **PTC Photo Archive**

I am putting the finishing touches to our club's digital photo archive. Thanks to the many members who have supplied images, your images are all included and you have also been credited as the contributor. A good number of trips are depicted covering the last five years. This will give you an idea of trips done in the past which you may be keen to do in the future. By knowing the trip details, contributor and date it is easy to cross-reference for further information by contacting people, reading applicable trip reports in Footnotes etc. The 2012 version of the photo archive will be on show at the 80<sup>th</sup> anniversary and from there will be downloaded onto the club's hard drive. If you take a usb memory stick to club night you will be able to download the updated digital album, for non-commercial use. This update will replace the 2007 version so I suggest you delete that version if you have it. **Irfanview** image viewer software is included on the archive together with an instruction file you can print out for ease of use. If you have any questions on this please contact me. Irfanview is the viewer we often use on club nights.

### **Barn Dance**

Just a month to go now for our annual barn dance. See any committee member for tickets. Details on back page.

### **Happy Tramping – Leo Manders**

## **SOCIAL EVENTS**

### **Peninsula Tramping Club 80th Anniversary Weekend June 9 & 10, 2012**

#### **Saturday 9 June 2012**

**5.00pm** Meet at Lone Star Bush Inn, Upper Riccarton for 80th Anniversary Dinner

Drinks at bar (at own cost) and chat

**6.00pm** All seated in Dining Room

Cost \$40 per person with set menu featuring Starter Lone Star loaf and...

Choice of one main from 7 different best selling Lone Star mains and 2 options for dessert

A chance to catch up with members and past members. We will have our PTC digital photo library with images from 1932 through to 2012 available for viewing on a few computers in the dining room.

We have pre-booked for around 40 people. We need to know whether you are coming so please register by emailing [leomanders@paradise.net.nz](mailto:leomanders@paradise.net.nz) or phoning Leo 356 1731. Will need to confirm final numbers in the first week of June. No need to prepay. You pay for your meal on the night.

Please confirm by Sat 2 June 2012. Contact Leo Manders if you want the specific menu details.

#### **Sunday 10 June 2012**

**9.30am. Meet at Sign of the Takahe for 80th Anniversary Walk**

You can drive and leave your car at Victoria Park or catch a 12 or 14 Metro bus to the Sign of the Takahe. A group tramp following Harry Ell Track to Sign of the Kiwi then along open sections of Crater Rim Walkway through to Kennedys Bush Track, down Kennedys Bush Track to Halswell Quarry and on to **The Old Vicarage** on Halswell Road directly opp Halswell Post and Video.

Approx **3pm** onwards drinks and snacks at The Old Vicarage and a chance to chat.

Plenty of car parking near The Old Vicarage or catch a 7 or 8 Metrostar bus from here to take you back home.

The Old Vicarage has a variety of espresso coffees, teas and a full bar. It has a lunch and snacks menu, available

at your cost. An area near the bar will be set aside for us.

Contact **Leo Manders** if you have any questions,

**leomanders@paradise.net.nz** phone **356 1731** or mobile **027 442 6080**.

You do not need to pre-book. Feel free to just turn up on the day either for the walk at 9.30am or at The Old Vicarage at around 3pm onwards.

### Tue 19 June



### Crazy Whist Evening

6.30 pm at 289 Avonhead Road (Back section)

Bring your favourite take-away meal for sharing, followed by games of Crazy Whist (instructions provided). You need to be familiar with card games that involve collecting tricks and having trump suits.

Limited to the first 20 who contact Brian and Mary Jane

Preferably by email: [bonsell@xtra.co.nz](mailto:bonsell@xtra.co.nz) or phone **358 5259**.

### Thur 21 June



### Indoor Archery

7:15 pm Rawhiti Domain, New Brighton \$25/person

Maree Hughes of the Christchurch Archery Club will be our instructor for about 2 hours in their club rooms.

Maximum 12 people so come along and unleash your hidden Robin Hood.

Wear a shirt or thermal jacket with fitting sleeves and enclosed shoes.

Entrance off Shaw Ave from the Lonsdale Street end. Come in main entrance and follow road around to the left, take driveway on left (signed Christchurch Archery Club). Some will meet before event for a cheap meal possibly at Spagalimis Marine Parade (Opposite New Brighton Library). Contact Chris Leaver 322 6445 or [ptc75@clear.net.nz](mailto:ptc75@clear.net.nz)

### Sat 23 June



### Horse Riding At Kowhai, View Hill

A number of members have shown interest in riding and Sue Johnston is willing to take keen people to the Kowhai stable where an instructor will introduce you to the pursuit. You will catch and groom your horse, spend a short time in the arena learning or checking basic commands and then ride out around the farm and surrounds. Cost \$55. 8.30am start from city. Call Sue on 351 4622 to book and arrange transport.

### “THE MOTOR CAMP” at the COURT THEATRE

By Dave Armstrong

Based on a story by Danny Mulheron

Directed by Tim Bartlett

100% pure New Zild Comedy

**7.30pm Wednesday 25th July 2012**

We have booked the best seats in the Court Theatre, Bernard St , Addington.

Book your seat, \$39 discount price by **Tuesday 3rd July**, with Brian Smith

**Ph 355 9945, 027 740 3035, or [brian21x@xtra.co.nz](mailto:brian21x@xtra.co.nz)**

The problem with holidaying at a motor camp is that anyone can park their caravan next to you. When the hard-case Hislops pull up next to the liberal Redmonds, what was supposed to be a relaxing getaway turns into the holiday from hell. THE MOTOR CAMP is a hilariously cheeky comedy from the writer of THE TUTOR, NIU SILA and LE SUD, a glorious celebration of the Kiwi summer. Coarse language may amuse.

Playwright Dave Armstrong is being dubbed the new Roger Hall in this genuinely funny, naughty play.

## NOTICES

**Membership** We welcome new members: **Trish Faulkner, Ainslie Talbot, Richard Battersby, Derek Gane**

**Deadline for July newsletter Mon 2 July.** Trip reports, news and items of interest may be e-mailed to **Kerry Moore, [moorekj@xtra.co.nz](mailto:moorekj@xtra.co.nz)** Phone **359 5069**

**Next committee meeting 7:30pm Tue 26 June at Kerry's**

**Heights of Winter Rogaine Saturday 30th June. Details at <http://www.rogain.org.nz>**

## TRIP REPORTS

### ECAN 'No Green Needles' WILDING TREE Eradication 2012 – THE WRAP UP

These annual outings organised by Ecan allow local tramping clubs to assist with the eradication of to control fringe spread wilding trees in the Canterbury high country. The events are always good fun and let us tramp to places we don't normally get to. We get a sense of achievement and help Club funds at the same time.

This year three days were scheduled. See the trip report in the April edition of Footnotes, for a description of the first two days: opposite Parapet Rock and east of Flock Hill.

#### DAY 3 – 14th April

This was an extra day in the area between Lake Lyndon and the Porter Heights ski-field road. Only Raymond Ford and I from PTC, volunteered for this day. Malcolm Wilmshurst had a Pegasus group there also. Raymond and I were able to travel in an Ecan vehicle, to our starting point a few hundred metres along the ski-field road. The higher ground above the road and around to the lake had been deemed not easily accessible on foot so had been cleared by helicopter spraying. The flat ground in from the main highway and around the lower fringe of the hills, was left to us. This included numbers of spurs and side streams, in which we found numerous, little clusters of pines lurking in unexpected places.

Once again, it was a fine day with mostly widely-spaced pines, making for an enjoyable tramping day out, with regular stops. There were only forty-plus volunteers, rather than the eighty-plus on each of days one and two, but collectively the whole area targeted by ECAN was cleared.

The club earned \$360 for the three days. That could easily have been twice or three times the amount with more participation from our members. Whatever, they are still fun, satisfying days up-country. 🌲 MM



### CAPE CAMPBELL WALKWAY April 2012

The seven wind turbines on the hills at Ward were a clue that it was a windy area, and it was. We had a 50 kph breeze for four days and nights, with clear blue skies, making for a really fantastic trip. The walkway is a 54km walk, mostly across rolling hill-sides following a poled route—probably a bit tricky in fog—with stunning views. Usually we were walking on farm tracks or sheep tracks.

The accommodation was a mixture of houses and cottages and all very good, with food and drink available on the third and fourth nights. There are lunch shelters each day complete with 'brew up' facilities, a welcome sight

on a cold day, I'm sure. The two farm families are very friendly and their attention to detail is amazing. There is also a cycling and horse-riding option. If you are planning a "mobile social" with friends, this is the walk for you, however it is very much a cross-country up and down walk.

For details check out [www.capecampbellwalkway.co.nz](http://www.capecampbellwalkway.co.nz) 📌 Rick Bolch

## MT EARNSLAW - PIKIRAKATAHI 30th March – 2nd April 2012

On Tuesday 3rd April I was at work pretending. We had got in at 2.20am that morning after a strict roster of driving back from Queenstown, one hour each and we didn't need the fog between Fairlie and Geraldine. Three of the party of eight were on a plane to Wellington at 6.30 that morning and they did wake up. They are mad – I am almost mad. It was a stunning trip and the scariest thing I have done in my life, the potential for slippage huge where the margin of error must be none. Geoff Spearpoint is the complete hero and a Master Mountain Man—an absolute privilege to be under his direction on the end of a rope when it mattered. The other 'most scary' thing for me was having both thighs get cramp at the same time at lunchtime on the first day after climbing 1000m with another 1000 before camp that night. That's two Mt Herbert's with a three day pack on, but as Linda said, somewhat steeper! The pain is excruciating. Luckily Chris had magnesium tablets and I was licking the container of anything salty.

But I get ahead of myself. Two cars left Christchurch at approximately 5pm, after work, and after driving and changing drivers, and driving, through the Mackenzie country in the gloaming and on through a moonlit night of Lindis, Dunstan, Kawarau Gorge, the bright lights of Queenstown and through to Glenorchy we were there to find MMM with the door open to the bunkroom. Sleep, power sleep, or not, and up at 6am. Clear morning and off to do the shuffle, one car to the Dart car park and then back to the Rees to meet the farmer who would take us up the riverbed, reducing the walk by 2-3 hours. It takes 1 hour 20 minutes driving time to do this loop, a long time for those waiting, especially a farmer out of bed too early! We were dropped right at the foot of the climb out of the valley and set off up the zigzag Kea Basin track with a break at the turn-off to the Earnslaw Hut. As we climbed we met the other groups who would be on the mountain for the weekend: four from Wanaka including



Mal, the alpine guide, who had his parapont with him, four from Dunedin, and two others. Some parties were travelling very light, with no tents, and felt real pressure to get to Esquilant Biv and secure a bunk. Up we went into Kea Basin and inspected the huge rock biv that would be such a godsend in bad weather. By lunchtime the views are already grand of the valley floor far below and of the surrounding mountains. During the afternoon the tongue of the Earnslaw Glacier reared above us on the left, and the sky clouded over slightly which made for cooler climbing conditions. We came to the edge of the Birley Glacier where caution and care were required but not crampons. “How are you going girlfriend”, says Dan, as we straggled along at the back. Liz meantime hasn’t stopped talking, with superb fitness she has air to spare. We trail into camp at 5ish and TTL (Terrific Trip Leader) immediately goes into cook mode, first the obligatory and very much looked forward to soup, followed by butajiru (a miso, bacon and noodle stew), served with great flavour and flair.

It is drizzling now and TTL’s star momentarily wanes until there is a clearance and Aspiring appears red in the sunset. A short walk to the top of Right Col and Pluto, the Toilet, and an overcrowded Esquilant Biv are silhouetted on an amazing horizon with jagged mountains tumbling in behind. Bed is welcome, in four minarets pitched on the flat shingle rocks at the edge of the snow. Big day tomorrow.

Woke to a cracker day and ice! Therefore a leisurely start at 9.15am as rock is covered in a dangerous sheen. “Step only on dry rocks” cautions MMM. Up we go, on the shingle initially then through the first gully and up the first rock band as we wind around the very, very steep mountain edge. Then up to the second rock band and to the pillar. There is blood on the snow ahead. MMM shimmies up the slot and then prepares the rope to take packs up the outside of the pillar and people up the inside to lessen the exposure. Geoff and Gary are on the top and ready to belay. I ask to go first—can’t stand the suspense of waiting. I scramble up with an ease that surprises me and the effervescent Gary gets a kiss as his smiling face greets me at the top. It is then my job to get in against the rock wall and stow the packs securely as MMM manoeuvres them over the top edge. One by one we are there. “No more pies” says Dan as he squeezes through the gap.

The summit of Earnslaw’s highest East Peak (2830m) was benign on this day for us. Not so for Mal’s partner who was almost physically sick as he dropped like a stone initially before the parapont took flight. After wonderful photo opportunities and ample time in the sun we retreated carefully off the mountain and back to pack up camp.

On Sunday afternoon as we descended via the Bedford Stream towards the Dart, there was little chat, a few “I’m not happy”s from Liz and a lot of concentration and route finding brilliance from MMM and his first lieutenants. Two rope lowers and fading light. With a lot of boot-edge balance and fingernails in sparse vegetation we eventually emerged in a calm and moonlit night like children to the promised land—of flat tussock, comfort and Chris’ chicken curry—a hugely satisfying day toasted by a mouthful of good red wine. Pluto, the west peak of Earnslaw, and Sir William sparkled in the moonlight above us.

Even the next morning, wonder at having descended safely down those unforgiving bluffs was the over-riding emotion. But there was still work to do—Tarzan and Jane country, first in the snow grass, then floating over scrub when it went well and cursing when it didn’t, before the final bash and grovel until the bush relinquished its hold. Two watches were lost with the owners unaware of when. Down and unrelenting down until at last we came upon the Dart Highway. A walk on the flat and oh the pleasure of a blue pool, cold and clean, refreshed for a long drive home.

Grateful thanks to Raymond (TTL) for all the organising involved in this second and successful opportunity to climb Mt Earnslaw. (We had a bonus trip last Show Weekend to Brewster Hut, when the Rees River was described by the locals as ‘too sporty’ for the landrover transport).

This trip was very special. I am so pleased to be down safely but so pleased to have been there, dwarfed by things way bigger than me. And not just the mountain, it was descending into the Dart River on a route described for mountaineering parties only. Geoff said cheerfully, PTC goes mountaineering. Bloody hell! But I would go again. **Sue Johnston for Raymond Ford, Gary Huish, Geoff Spearpoint, Dan Pryce, Chris Leaver, Liz Stephenson and Linda Lilburne.** 🏔️ SJ

## **Hellfire - Misery - Branch – Lees — Easter, 6–9 April 2012**

This trip has been on the club programme previously, but not gone because of the weather. No problem with weather this Easter. Four days without any sign of cloud and little wind. And, unbelievably, dry underfoot at each campsite.

The trip is described in Sven Brabyn's guidebook and might normally be approached by 4WD up the Clarence from Hanmer along the transmission line, or Rainbow Road. Once over Island Saddle, the 4WD road drops down the Wairau to the trip starting point at the Lees swing-bridge. This is only a few kilometres south of the turnoff on the Rainbow Ski-field road. As we had a non-4WD club group, our plan was to drive to St Arnaud on Thursday evening and then drive the 30km in to the swing-bridge on Friday morning. That worked fine. Actually, our trip was a 'non' most things. No 4WD. No GPS. No one had been on any part of the circuit before.

Getting out of town on Thursday afternoon posed a few tactical problems, afternoon traffic held us up and then the dairy at Culverden was closed even on Easter Thursday with droves of people milling about desperate for food. The option was the queue at the fish & chips shop if that's your scene or an enforced fast. The good end to the evening was arriving at the Travers-Sabine Lodge in St Arnaud about 10.15pm. It was well set up and a good place to stay.

### **FRIDAY: UP HELLFIRE STREAM**

Having left \$50 at the lodge for Rainbow Station's road toll charge for two cars, we were away early. Crossing the Six Mile Stream ford was uneventful and soon we were at the car park near the swing-bridge and walking by 8.45am, then an hour down the right bank of the Wairau to get to the Hellfire confluence. Along the Wairau it's tracked or grassy and in the Hellfire mostly tracked in bush up the true right to start with. Let's not talk about the wasp stings. For the route above the bush-line, Sven's book describes climbing out on a rib to the west. Fine weather navigation is easy, isn't it? We could see the rib and the big tarn basin up ahead. The route description is for climbing the rib and continuing around directly to the col behind point 1988m. We sidled off the rib lower and easily around to be just above the tarn. By then it was 4.30pm and the option of getting over the top and down into the Misery before camping, was greeted with mumblings in the ranks. So that was it for the night. We set up our three tents on widely dispersed sites. With little wind, dry tussock and an Easter moon, it was a very comfortable night.

### **SATURDAY: OVER THE COL & DOWN THE MISERY AND UP THE BRANCH**

An overnight frost froze wet boots and socks, even under the tent fly but by the time we got up the ground and tents were bone dry on a lovely morning. At 8am, I was the last away from our campsite—past the tarn and straight up a fairly steep face to drop over to the north side of the col at 9am. It's necessary from here to sidle up-valley and drop down the second stream. Once at the stream we crossed to the left and travelled easily down-valley to Top Misery Hut by 10.45am. The hut was all set up for airborne hunters, including large gas cooker, gas fridge and a porch that is floor to ceiling with beer can cartons. After lunch, as we got closer to the Branch, the spread of wilding pines from those first planted in the Branch in the 1950s, made their appearance and then got denser which is very demoralising to see for any dedicated "no-green-needles" volunteer.

The Bottom Misery Hut is a delight, sitting on a spur above the river with a view straight down the Branch. We arrived there at 2pm intending to pass by. BUT, Chrys now confessed she had been coping with a sore knee for some time. She was naturally concerned, not only about coping with the rest of the day up the Branch, but more so, climbing over the top and down the Lees next day. Its times like this that a trip leader can feel a little relieved to have brought two burners because we had eight people when the trip was planned. We could manage with one, so the second was really just a back-up. Actually, there was another secret burner on the trip and it was ideal to leave that one with Chrys. We agreed Chrys and someone else would stay at the hut and then take two half days to walk north, down the Branch, to be picked up by us on Monday. Kerry offered to be the someone else. This new plan meant returning to Christchurch via Blenheim—no problem, just extra kilometres.

After a divvy-up of food the remaining five left the hut at 2.30pm to travel up the Branch to the Branch Bivvy. It did get interesting travel at times and the presence of wasps added to the concern. Nearing the biv, we met a party of hunters that were based there. They didn't appear to be too serious about looking for animals, but were good company. Arriving at the biv at 5.30pm made it a 9½ hour day. With perfect weather and good variety of terrain, it had been 9½ enjoyable hours. We set up at the bush edge along from the biv, for a pleasant evening. Sleeping out that night, with the full moon tracking across the valley, seemed rather special.

### **SUNDAY: FROM HEAD OF BRANCH UP TO HEAD OF LEES AND DOWN TO LEES HUT**

One of the hunters took our photo and we left the biv site at 7.55am. After the trip, Glenda pointed out that all five of us wore Aarn packs of varying designs and vintages. So maybe that was why Kerry offered to stay with Chrys? Neither have an Aarn pack, poor souls. Anyway, we arrived at the bush-line at 10am after some fairly rough going and then another two hours-plus, to be at the base of a scree at 12.15pm. The scree rose on the true left and was our route out of the Branch. We climbed that until we were beside the large basin that is very

obvious on the map. From there, we turned west and climbed straight up a steep scree shute to a small col on the ridge.

Having arrived on the western side, what better place could you pick for lunch? After lunch, the drop and sidle to get around to the Lees, was easier and shorter than it had looked from our lunch spot. Judges Stream dropped away to the south as we sidled around. Once back on the ridge to the west of point 2022m, Linda saved the day. The trip leader had not given a thought to Easter and it's important rituals; but Linda had and shared Easter eggs all round. Gosh. There were only five of us now. Would we score the quantity for seven?

Sitting above the Lees with views to die for was too good to leave, but eventually we had to drop down a scree and into the lovely upper basin. Travel down-valley, including in the bush was straightforward enough, and we arrived at the 4-bunk Lees Hut near the far end of a long flat, by 5.10pm. On arriving, we disturbed the solitude of three people from Nelson. The man had a tent up, so Ruth and Bill bunked inside. Linda put a Minaret up out in the tussock. Aarn and I slept out on a dry, moonlit night at the bush edge.

### **MONDAY: WALK OUT, PICK UP CHRYS & KERRY THEN HOME VIA BLENHEIM**

It took 2½ hours to walk out in the morning. Linda drove off straight away to get down to the Branch road and drive in to meet Chrys and Kerry. The rest of us drove down to Six Mile Stream for the usual post-trip scrub up and change. By the time we drove down to the Branch road, the others were out waiting for us.

The worry about having enough petrol to get to Blenheim was unnecessary, as it transpired. But then we were faced with a quandary that we should know the answer to by now: finding a café in Blenheim that's open, or, if you mean central Blenheim, finding your way through the maze of streets. The answer's still the same, give up and drive on to always reliable Kekerengu and then home by 7pm.

Overall conclusion: When will we ever get four perfect days like that at Easter again? A great round circuit with two high crossings and all uncharacteristically green this year.

**We were: Ruth Barratt, Chrys Horn, Bill Hotter, Linda Lilburne, Kerry Moore, Aarn Tate and Merv Meredith** 🏠 MM

### **Hellfire, Lees, Branch. Diversion**

Chrys and Kerry opted for the easier well tracked route down the Branch River and elected to stay at the charming Bottom Misery Hut. We had lots of time to kill so lit a fire down in the river bed where there was ample driftwood including a fair proportion of douglas fir. Around the hut lots of pines grew, including some full-sized ones. Dinner was cooked over the fire in a hut billy and was some ancient packets that have been carried on many trips as emergency food—not very appetizing.

Next day we walked down the Branch to the aptly named Siberia Hut and crossed the river to the sunny side for lunch amidst a near-forest of pines. Chys' knee was still hurting and she was glad she wasn't slogging over to the Lees River. From there we got onto a vehicle track on the true left with some major high zig-zags. Where we crossed to the right bank of the Branch there was a good road going up-valley so we checked it out and soon found Greig Hut. Painted white with two large bunkrooms it is a popular place for 4WDers to visit and indeed at 6pm a vehicle rolled up bringing everything a camper might need. A local farmer wearing a mean sheath-knife, and an older guy placed boxes of supplies and a camp oven on the table. The 30kg bag of livestock salt stayed on the vehicle. The camp oven was used to thaw and then cook a wad of mutton chops on the hut wood-stove. An innovation that was very effective is to take a spray squirt bottle of diesel. You open the firebox door, give it five squirts and the fire is roaring. This is the lo-tech diesel fuel injection system. We'd had our dehydrated dahl and very good it was but the emerging smell of cooked mutton was mouth-watering. The duo had fresh corn to cook but I don't think they got around to eating it. Their gas lantern gave a welcome light and their stories were entertaining. They planned a day trip up Mt Morris track the next day.

The map in the hut told us we had a long walk on a good road so we made an early start in the morning and made good time on a 4wd road so were out to the Branch-Leatham confluence by eleven. Our hour of waiting passed quickly enough with the help of a local resident who came to chat for well over 30mins. At noon Linda motored up to retrieve us and gave us each a welcome Easter egg. A ten minute drive had us back in the fold—seven again in two cars headed for Blenheim and home.

**Note:** In the pre-trip notes Merv wrote that he was taking the Mrs to do the cooking so I was expecting cordon bleu dining in the upper Hellfire. Alas, Glenda was nowhere to be seen and we had a regular tramping meal. It seems that Merv had meant MSR stove rather than MRS Meredith. Oh well. 🏠 KM

# Barn Dance

Saturday 14 July, 8pm till Midnight

Roy Stokes Community Hall

146 Seaview Road (opp police station)

Dancing — Country, Scottish, RocknRoll

Called dances with Colin Forsyth and

The Incredible Ceilidh Band

Spot prizes

Fancy Dress Theme

Prizes for Best Dressed

Bring a plate of Finger Food for Supper

Drinks Supplied

Tickets \$25 from Dan Pryce

ph. 384 7065 mobile 021 927 716 (txt is fine)

email: dan.pryce@mas.co.nz

or any PTC committee member

