



*PTC Monthly
Newsletter
October 2018*

PTC	Affiliate of Federated Mountain Clubs of NZ (Inc)
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Committee

President	Diane Mellish	337 5530	Editor	Raymond Ford	351 9496
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Vice-President	Kevin Hughes	332 6281	Social Events	Maureen Whalen	027 819 9251
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Trip Planner	Kerry Moore	359 5069	Committee	Maureen Thompson	021 2665778
Secretary	Merv Meredith	322 7239			

New Member Enquiries: Stan Wilder 260 2340 Contact Stan to request an info-pack. You will also receive three complimentary newsletters

Our Club

The PTC 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

Club Nights are held on the **second Tuesday** of each month at the **Baptist Church Hall, 286 Oxford Terrace (corner of Madras St. and Oxford Terrace)** at 7.45 pm. Doors open 7.30pm.

<p>Tues 9 October</p> 	<p>Members' photos of recent overseas jaunts</p> <p>A number of club members have recently been tramping or biking in different countries. Come and share your photos of your adventures with your fellow club members. Book in (early) your 10 minute (or less) presentation with Brian Smith brian21x@xtra.co.nz, and give your pictures to Brian by 7.30pm on club night.</p> <p><i>Supper Duty: Joy Schroeder & Jane Severn</i></p>
<p>Tues 13 November</p> 	<p>Smart Phone Based Mapping Systems - Ian Roxburgh</p> <p>Ian is one of our club members, who has been sharing his knowledge of trip navigation using his phone for a number of years. If you want to find out what is available, particularly when internet connection is not possible, come along and find out about free and low cost map programs and information sources.</p>

- 13-Oct** **PINE REMOVAL, CASTLE HILL BASIN** Kerry Moore 359 5069
Saturday Spend a rewarding day in the hills ridding the Castle Hill basin of pesky pines.
List closes 8pm Fri 12 Oct
- 14-Oct** **Mt Peel** Merv Meredith 322 7239
Sunday <http://www.topomap.co.nz/NZTopoMap/nz27631/Mount-Peel/Canterbury>
***** **Moderate-hard** ascent of this 1743m landmark in Sth Canterbury, passing through podocarp forest and subalpine scrub with 7km along the tops beyond Little Mt Peel. We plan to drive down Saturday afternoon, camp at Peel Forest for an early start on Sat for this 10hr day.
List closes 6 Oct **Approx. cost \$25**
- 20-23 Oct** **Scamper Torrent** Liz Stephenson 027 633 2038
Labour Wknd <https://www.topomap.co.nz/NZTopoMap/nz30708/Scamper-Torrent/West-Coast>
******** A **moderate-hard** tramp up the Waitaha River, past Morgan Gorge (subject of a possible hydro-power scheme) to this hut in the Smyth Range.
List closes 14 Oct
- 20-22 Oct** **Freehold Creek--Dumb Bell** Merv Meredith 322 7239
Labour Wknd <https://www.topomap.co.nz/NZTopoMap/nz21849/Freehold-Creek/Canterbury>
******* A **moderate-hard** trip starting from Lake Ohau, Camp at Lake Middleton. Saturday, up Freehold Creek to the bushline and on to the low-point on the range between 1922m and 1817m. From there the route drops north to Dumb-bell Lake where we'll camp. Sunday, a day trip from the head of the lake to the ridge running via 1942m around to 2007m Mt Sutton. Great view in all directions from this big flat area. Monday, home. For more info talk to Merv.
List closes 14 Oct
- 22 Oct** **Vulcan** Bruce Cameron 022 188 5905
Monday <https://www.topomap.co.nz/NZTopoMap/nz37219/Vulcan/Canterbury>
***** An **easy** walk to this low 412m hill near Motunau Beach.
Meet 8am Placemakers, 319 Cranford St **Approx. cost \$16**
- 24-Oct** **PINE REMOVAL, CASTLE HILL BASIN** Grant Hunter 351 6369
Wednesday **List closes 7 Oct**
Spend a rewarding day in the hills ridding the Castle Hill basin of pesky pines.
List closes 7 Oct
- 27-28 Oct** **Walker Pass - Tarn Col - Edwards** Dan Pryce 356 1962
****** <https://www.topomap.co.nz/NZTopoMap/nz32218/Tarn-Col/West-Coast>
One of the best-known APNP tramps. This **moderate** trip takes in the Hawdon and Edwards valleys, a couple of attractive alpine passes and views of what's left of Falling Mountain.
List closes 21 Oct
- 28 Oct** **Barnett Park--Windsor Castle--Jollies Bush** Helen Harkness 384 2890
Sunday <https://www.topomap.co.nz/NZTopoMap/nz30195/Windsor-Castle/Canterbury>
***** An **easy-moderate** exploration of both sides of the Summit Road round Greenwood Park visiting Windsor Castle, Jollies Bush and Mt. Pleasant.
Meet 9am Barnett Park

- 29 Oct – 2 Nov Gorgy Creek** **Diane Mellish 337 5530**

<https://www.topomap.co.nz/NZTopoMap/nz32124/Gorgy-Creek/West-Coast>
Moderate-hard mid-week tramp up the Waimakariri River to Campbell Pass and on to a large seldom-visited tarn, a scenic gem, where we will camp.
List Closes 22 Oct
- 3-4 Nov Klondyke—Right Branch Rahu Stream** **Peter Umbers 359 9118**
 **
<http://www.topomap.co.nz/NZTopoMap/nz35400/Rahu-Saddle/West-Coast>
Moderate tramp from Rahu Saddle in Victoria Forest Park. Camping out in a tarn basin below some 1500m peaks. A round-trip, dropping into Lake Stream for the return trip. Some great views of the surrounding area from the tops.
List Closes 28 Oct
- 4 Nov Cass River—Point 1912** **Merv Meredith 322 7239**
 Sunday
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<http://www.topomap.co.nz/NZTopoMap/nz32920/Mount-Misery/Canterbury>
A moderate-hard trip in the Black Range. Starting up the Cass River Track to Long Valley Stream, sidling the waterfall on the true right and around the head of the basin up to peak 1912m for views all around. Then a great scree-run back down to the track and out.
Meet 7am Church Corner, 20 Yaldhurst Rd **Approx. cost \$22**
- 10-11 Nov Mt Longfellow** **Laurayne Robb 339 8869**
 **
<https://www.topomap.co.nz/NZTopoMap/nz34314/Evangeline-Bivouac/Canterbury>
A moderate-hard climb of this 1900m peak above Lake Sumner in the Glynne Wye Range.
List closes 4 Nov
- 10 Nov Cutty Grass Hut** **Keith McQuillan 384 6164**
 Saturday
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<http://www.topomap.co.nz/NZTopoMap/nz28636/Cutty-Grass-Hut/Canterbury>
 Near Mt Hutt, this **easy-moderate** walk starts on the Mt Alford track, climbs a little and then crosses to the track that leads up-valley to Cutty Grass Hut.
Meet 8am Church Corner, 20 Yaldhurst Rd **Approx. cost \$20**
- 16-18 Nov Lake Angelus via Speargrass** **Angela Grigg 0275789743**
 Show Wknd

<http://www.topomap.co.nz/NZTopoMap/nz36568/Lake-Angelus/Tasman>
A moderate trip in Nelson Lakes National Park to this scenic gem.
List closes 11 Nov
- 16-20 Nov Mt Saxton--Leatham--Severn River** **Diane Mellish 337 5530**
 Show Wknd

<http://www.topomap.co.nz/NZTopoMap/nz38424/Saxton/Marlborough>
A moderate-hard circuit in Marlborough approached from the Molesworth Road.
List closes 11 Nov
- 18 Nov Mt Grey** **Leader pending**
 Sunday
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<http://www.topomap.co.nz/NZTopoMap/nz33438/Mount-Grey%2fMaukatere/Canterbury>
 An **easy-moderate** circuit to this 933m hill inland from Amberley. We'll go up Mt Grey track and down Red Beech track.
Meet 8am Placemakers, 319 Cranford St **Approx. cost \$11**
- 24-25 Nov Mt Gwinevere** **Raymond Ford 351 9496**
 **
<http://www.topomap.co.nz/NZTopoMap/nz32109/Crow-Hut/Canterbury>
 From Klondyke Corner to Crow Hut, a **moderate hard** trip up to this 2042m peak on Jellicoe Ridge with Mt Rolleston nearby. Ice axe and crampons required.
List closes 18 Nov

- 25 Nov** **Purau Saddle—Herbert Peak—Gebbies Pass** **Keith McQuillan 384 6164**
Sunday <http://www.topomap.co.nz/NZTopoMap/trck22991/Mount-Herbert-Walkway/Canterbury>
***** Starting from Purau Saddle, this is an **easy-moderate** trip along the eastern rim of Lyttelton Harbour to the highest point on the peninsula at 919m, then on to Packhorse Hut and Gebbies.
Meet 8am Princess Margaret Hospital, Hackthorne Rd end, Approx. cost \$6
over the road by the river.
- 1-5 Dec** **Dusky Track** **Angela Grigg 0275789743**
********* <http://www.topomap.co.nz/NZTopoMap/nz13558/Seaforth-River/Southland>
An 84km track in the heart of Fiordland National Park.
List closes 20 Nov
- 2 Dec** **Mt Manson from Coal Pit Spur** **Merv Meredith 322 7239**
Sunday <http://www.topomap.co.nz/NZTopoMap/nz32874/Mount-Manson/Canterbury>
***** A **moderate** climb to this 1858m Craigieburn Range peak via Coal Pit Spur.
Meet 8am Church Corner, 20 Yaldhurst Rd Approx. cost \$19
- 8-9 Dec** **Fools Col--Jordan Saddle** **Merv Meredith 322 7239**
****** <http://www.topomap.co.nz/NZTopoMap/nz31582/Fools-Col/Canterbury>
We go up the Waimak and over the col to the Avoca River. Sunday back to the Waimakariri River via Jordan Saddle.
List closes 2 Dec
- 9 Dec** **The Bens (Ben More—Big Ben)** **Gary Huish 332 7020**
Sunday <http://www.topomap.co.nz/NZTopoMap/nz32559/Ben-More/Canterbury>
***** A **moderate** through-trip from Lake Lyndon to the Lake Coleridge road taking in two Bens--1655m Ben More and 1416m Big Ben. Take plenty of water. The trip requires two cars so one can be placed at the far end. It would be helpful if you could tell Gary if you are interested in going on the trip.
Meet 8am Church Corner, 20 Yaldhurst Rd Approx. cost \$15
- 15-20 Dec** **Boundary Ck--McKerrow Range—Mt** **Diane Mellish 337 5530**
Shrimpton
********* <http://www.topomap.co.nz/NZTopoMap/nz21119/Mount-Shrimpton/Otago>
A **moderate-hard** tramp above Makorora to 2002m Mt Shrimpton. Expect splendid views around Mt Aspring NP. Camping by tarns in the McKerrow Range.
List closes 6 Dec
- 16 Dec** **Year End Picnic** **Keith McQuillan 384 6164**
Sunday A fun day at Motukarara. Details to come later.
Meet 9am Princess Margaret Hospital, Hackthorne Rd end, over the Approx. cost \$5
road by the river.
- Christmas Base**
********* To be decided

SOCIAL EVENTS

Tuesday 16 October	Cracroft Capers Check out the lanes and byways of Cracroft, followed by dinner. Meet at the Old Stone House, 30 Shalamar Drive, Cracroft at 6pm. Thai Rendezvous Restaurant, 250 Barrington Street, at 7.15pm. For the menu see: https://www.facebook.com/ThaiRendezvous/ . Book with Margot for dinner by Saturday 13 October at 332 7020 or margot.bowden@gmail.com
Tuesday 6 November	Sumner evening walk Meet at 1 Bayview Rd, Monck's Bay at 6pm. We will walk a circuit on tracks up the hill behind Sumner, then take our cars or bikes round to Sumner village about 7pm. I will make a booking at Indian Sumner for the meal. Please let me know by Sunday evening 4 November if you are dining with the group. Diane Mellish 027 413 6468 or 337 5530.

NOTES

President's notes

It is always great to see a good turnout of members at our monthly club nights, and to observe everyone enjoying our speakers and socialising enthusiastically afterwards. That's the thing with tramping, it always gives you lots of stories to share. However, the numbers are getting pretty thin on some of our tramps. I wonder if we are pitching the trips inappropriately, or if our programme is a bit too crowded, or whether we should adjust the balance of trips on offer. I believe it would be good to boost numbers on trips for social and economic reasons. But maybe you are just very busy people and happy with the status quo. Any feedback on this issue would be appreciated: email me, phone or foot-trip me at club night.

The Committee will be making a submission on the draft management plans for Aoraki/Mt Cook and Westland Tai Poutini National Parks. The plans contain proposals to manage high visitor numbers to the Mt Cook Village Hooker Valley area and a new approach to managing aircraft activity in the parks. If you have any comments or suggestions on the draft management plans, please send them to me by Sunday, 28 October. A link to the draft plans can be found here: <https://www.doc.govt.nz/news/media-releases/2018/have-your-say-aorakimount-cook-and-westland-tai-poutini-national-park-plan-reviews/>.

Norman Burden says hello to everyone. He is slowly recovering from his heart surgery, walking a little further each week, and looking forward to participating in club activities in another month or so. He is very appreciative of all the messages, good wishes and practical support from club members.

Keep on tramping! Diane

The October night sky

The brilliant planet display of recent months is all but over. Venus is sinking lower in the evening sky, while Jupiter is less bright and also getting lower. Saturn is still visible in the western sky in the constellation Sagittarius, while orangey-coloured Mars is still high overhead but is also diminishing.

With summer approaching, the stars of the Southern Cross and the two Pointers are lower in the southern sky, with the bright star Canopus also low but a bit further east. It's worth noting that the three brightest stars in the sky (Sirius, Canopus and Alpha Centauri, one of the two Pointers) are all best viewed from the southern hemisphere.

Close to Canopus are several brightish, misty patches in the Milky Way. Through binoculars you can see the many faint stars therein. One of these is Eta Carinae – only recently discovered to be a monster double star. The bigger star is reckoned to have a mass well over 100 times that of our Sun – close to the upper possible limit. That makes it somewhat unstable, and it has flared up several times over the last 150 years. In fact it's

a prime candidate to explode as a supernova – in which case it could become nearly as bright as the full Moon for a month or two. Luckily it's about 7,800 light years away! Even if it was much closer, our atmosphere would protect us from the hazardous radiation.

Graham Townsend

Trip Photos

The Club maintains a gallery of photographs on its website. Keeping this up to date allows people to see what recent trips the Club has undertaken. Can trip leaders send or nominate someone to send some photographs from each trip to Kevin Hughes, ptc@nivek.co.nz, so we can keep this record current.

Deadline for the November newsletter: Friday, 2 November – please send newsletter items to Raymond Ford: fordrm@snap.net.nz

Next Committee Meeting: Tuesday, 30 October 2018.

TRIP REPORTS

Tasmania's Cradle Mountain Overland Track 26 July – 1 August 2018 (private)

The iconic 'Overland Track' is Australia's only multiday track walk that is comparable to the popular New Zealand 'Great Walks'. The Overland Track, comprising a network of tracks and huts, ranging in size and comfort, traverses the World Heritage central highlands of Tasmania, over a distance of 65km. The 'official walking season' is from 1 October to 31 May where one must walk north to south and commands a fee of \$200 plus a National Park Pass. It's a popular track with Australians and international visitors. During the season, the track is extremely busy and walker numbers are regulated.



All the seasonal restrictions, with the exception of the National Park Pass, don't apply out of season. So it's a good time to walk the track as there are less walkers and if you are lucky, lots of snow. Overall, the track is an easy walk, but what makes it difficult in winter is the extreme and changeable weather.

I recently completed the Overland Track with my stepson, Harry and his wife Mel. We met in Hobart and enjoyed an evening of delicious Tasmanian food, wine and ambience before catching a regular bus service the next morning from Hobart to Queenstown. The bus stopped at the Lake St Claire National Parks Visitor Centre where we, the only walkers on the bus, disembarked. We took the midday ferry to the top of the lake to intercept the Overland Track at Narcissus Hut and start our walk.

We planned to stay at Pine Valley Hut. This hut is situated off the Overland Track and provides access to the Labyrinth, Lake Elysia and the numerous peaks of the DuCane Range. In hindsight, after checking the weather chart, we should have continued north on the Overland Track to Bert Nichols Hut, so that our only fine day coincided with crossing Pelion Pass and provided an opportunity to climb Mt Ossa. A lesson learnt!

We started our walk under an overcast sky, the weather slowly deteriorated over the course of the day, by evening it was pouring with rain. Pine Valley hut is small and dank. I stayed here in 2010 in similar conditions, however, there was no heater and it was very cold. This time there was a potbelly stove with damp kindling plus coal. Another lesson, pack firelighters. We gave up trying to start a fire and retired early. The next morning we returned to the Overland Track and enjoyed an easy walk to Bert Nichols Hut. That evening the clouds cleared displaying a blanket of stars with promise of a fine day.



A glorious clear morning dawned. Amazing how sunshine energises the soul and gets one moving. We hit the track early, ascended to DuCane Gap at 1100m encountering our first snow of the trip. Much of the track traverses through Myrtle-beech rainforest and patches of Pencil and King Billy pine, and runs parallel to the Mersey River for a short distance after the gap. We arrived at Kia Ora Hut by lunch time.

I wandered up the track towards Pelion Gap with good views of Mt Ossa and Mt Pelion to the west and east respectively, and Cathedral Mountain to the south

east. Spectacular dolerite columns crown these and the other mountains. The track from the hut is predominantly boardwalk. Patches of knee high snow gradually merged to cover the track closer to the gap. Snowshoes weren't required. I looked back and noticed an insidious low cloud moving quickly up a valley towards the hut and immediately turned back. Within a short time, cloud obscured the surrounding mountains, and that evening a low pressure system moved in. The next day we walked in the rain over Pelion Gap (1126m) to Pelion Hut!

Pelion Hut was almost full when we arrived, with a school group, large private group of locals plus two independent walkers. The large hut is located in the centre of the Overland Track and is readily accessible via the Arm River and Lees Paddock tracks. The hut looked like a laundry with clothing strung up everywhere to dry. We spent the afternoon listening to the pouring rain, playing cards and drinking hot beverages. Our stay here was the warmest, noisiest and most social of any hut on our trip. We discussed climbing Mt Oakliegh the following day, but abandoned the idea when it started snowing that evening.

A blanket of white snow covered the landscape the following morning. The hut was buzzing with activity as everyone prepared to leave. Our group headed northwards on the longest section of the 14km track. The track descends into Frog Hollow then ascends to a plateau at 1000m. Unfortunately, cloud obscured all the views. The large amount of boardwalk made for quick easy travel, though a number of new sections lacked chicken wire which slowed our travel. We were looking forward to a quiet and solitary evening at Windemere Hut, when a party of nine from the Hobart Walking Club turned up. It was interesting and informative chatting to locals. I also saw my first spotted Eastern Quoll (a type of marsupial 'cat') that afternoon as it scavenged for food at the hut entrance.

Overnight, there was a light dusting of snow, however the clouds lifted at times to provide views along the plateau south to Lake St Claire where we had climbed to 1100m. We had lunch at Waterfall Hut before ascending and traversing the narrow Cradle cirque to Mt Benson, and then turning eastwards onto the Lake Rodway Track. This section of the Overland track was spectacular; blanketed in snow and great views to the south of the magnificent Barn Bluff and the Cradle Plateau. At the track junction, we stopped to admire a new and impressive emergency shelter - a dome securely anchored into the ground.



We descended to Lake Rodway, located on the eastern side of Cradle Mountain. We took this lower route to avoid the deep snow on the Overland Track plus we planned to stay overnight at Scott Kilvet Hut - a beautiful

A framed hut. It was erected as a memorial to David Kilvet and Ewen Scott, who both died tragically of exposure in 1965 in the area. The hut was built to provide shelter to future walkers and avoid such tragedies occurring in the future.

The next morning, we walked out after an extremely cold night. It was an easy two-hour walk around the eastern side of Cradle Mountain to Dove Lake past snow laden vegetation and frozen lakes. We climbed Hansons Peak for stunning views of the Cradle Plateau and eastwards, then completed a steep descent with the assistance of chains. At the track end, a free shuttle, delivered us to the Cradle Mountain Lodge and back to civilisation and the wonderful smell of freshly ground coffee.

We were: **Sonja Risa, Harry Crawford, Melissa Crawford** 🏔️ SA

Mt Cheeseman – but not Mt Izard - Sunday 5 August 2018

The Cheeseman – Izard round trip in winter is usually scheduled for a 7.00am meet, walking by 8.35am from Texas Flat, say 12.30 to 1.00pm on top for lunch and hope to get around and down back to the flat before dark. Somehow the Footnotes description defaulted back to an 8.00am start, and I didn't send out an email to change it. So today was always going to be a Mt Cheeseman only trip. No trouble. The forecast was good so an enjoyable day was in store.

We were fortunate to have five people at Church Corner therefore one vehicle. Approaching the Texas Flat car park on the Cheeseman road, it was obvious the snow level was going to be higher up. There had been some snow from the norwesters during the week and the smallish cover on the old snow probably saved us. Anyway, we were walking by 9.35am, following the familiar route up onto the Cheeseman spur, then crampons on early for the boney bits. We plodded up the ridge in beautiful, calm weather with a light westerly only starting nearing the top ridge. With it now being late lunch time, there was no incentive to go further north along the ridge to the actual Cheeseman peak at 2031m, but simply drop down on the eastern side for a sheltered lunch spot with the usual fantastic view.

Descending from the top ridge after lunch, it didn't take long again in totally calm conditions. Why go down and leave this? Taking our time, we were back at Texas Flat by 4.45pm.

We were: **Jane Liddle, Kerry Moore, Merv Meredith, (leader), Sue Piercey and Shi Ping Wang.** 🏔️ MM.



Duffy Creek, Victoria Range 22-23 September 2018

This two day round trip is described in Sven Brabyn's 1995 tramping guide as short, albeit lots of bush bashing, with an easy final descent back to the road.

At the end of October 2009, when Merv M, Paul Smith, Aarn Tate and Bill Templeton did it in perfect weather, it was just as Sven described. Although bearing in mind that any bush navigation with Bill in front is always going to be easy. We climbed up the true left of the valley head, circled around to the eastern ridge, through the lower tarns at 1350m and up to camp on a large rock in the middle of the snow filled tarn near 1575m. Lovely night! Leaving the campsite at 8.00am, Sunday wasn't too hard along the ridge down to the bushline. Once into the bush it was a bit of a pain and we did have to sidle left or right to avoid bluffs, but the descent got easier lower down, and we reached the road by 1.00pm.



I tried scheduling a return trip in Oct 2016, but with only two for a 225km drive, we didn't go.

So I scheduled it again this year, and again, only got two; Di and I. But the forecast was too good to not go on a 'tops' trip; so we did. Leaving Di's place at 8.00am, we were at Duffy Creek by about 11.00am and walking by 11.30am. No trouble with the walk up the track to our lunch spot at the big clearing. Then into the bush. Instead of tending to the true left of the valley I veered more to the true right, which eventually lead us to a steepish spur and a rope assist to emerge on the rocky spur below the saddle. Instead of continuing up

to the saddle, we climbed out, up a small steep gully to the eastern ridge and descended to the lower tarns by 5.00pm. At this time, the tarns area was always going to be home for the night. We found a good camp site, with a full moon and the wind dying down, we settled in to enjoy the evening – us and a few hundred or so whistling frogs. Di was intrigued at the range of tones -tenors to baritones to basses. Di also pondered on how they might be getting on with sopranos! Anyway, they stopped sometime after I went to sleep.

Sunday morning we rose to find valley filled with cloud. It was late morning before it almost fully cleared. Away at 8.20am we climbed for an hour up to 1575m and the snow filled tarn. Sitting on the eastern ridge, we marveled at how the valley cloud was blocked from the SE and was shooting vertically into the big Shaw Stream valley way below us. Continuing south, we rounded 1557m and sidled down to the bushline for lunch at 12.30pm with spectacular views all round on a lovely day.

Then the fun. The first bit in the bush was on a sharp ridge as expected, but once it broadened out, it wasn't any easier. Di's GPS programme kept us mostly where we felt we were best to be, but the tree falls and dense understory made for slow going. Again as expected, bluffs blocked descent and we sidled right. Then we got to the 'Lawyer level' with the souvenirs to prove it. As we got closer to the road it still wasn't easier and a surprise when we suddenly popped out – at 6.00pm. The short walk back down the road to the car was a pleasure. All changed and away, we just made it to Springs Junction before the old café shut. Obviously grateful for any food, a very helpful young chap could provide. And the tea and coffee, of course. Away home then, to arrive well after 10.00pm, very satisfied with a trip that turned out harder than previously, but is still a great circuit. (Maybe for someone else next time, if we are truthful)

We were **Diane Mellish** and **Merv Meredith (leader)**. 🏔️ MM.

Snow Caving Temple Basin - 22-23 September 2018

We drove straight to Gary and Margot's bach at Arthurs Pass where we left the some gear, got into our tramping gear and shared out the party gear. There were a lot of cars at the Temple Basin parking areas and lots of mostly young people heading up the track. It was the last weekend of the ski season and there was to be a big party at the lodges that night. It was a beautiful sunny day with no wind. We were stripping layers off although not to the extent of some of the young people who were down to bikini tops and colourful wacky outfits. At the shelter, we filled up extra water bottles although later found that this water had a rather unpleasant taste.



To avoid the ski runs, we headed up the rock and tussock to left of the lower rope tow. Below the top of the tow, we climbed up the snow to join a path to the upper basin, where on some rocks we enjoyed a leisurely lunch watching the skiers and snowboarders. At one point, I was startled by a young man on skis with a parapent upside down doing a flip not far in front of me!

In the tarn basin below Mt Blimit, in the lee of a wind drift, we found a suitable place to build a snow cave. We put on our overtrousers, raincoats and gloves. Gary had advised us all to bring spare clothes as we could get quite damp from digging out the cave. He also told us no matter how many people you were building a snow cave for, it would take about 3 hours to make it (and he was right). Gary drew a horizontal line along the drift at the level our sleeping platform would be. It was long enough for a person to lie down with a bit extra for boots at their feet. At the left end of the line, we started digging a tunnel into the drift below the level of the line gradually sloping it up towards the level of the sleeping platform. At the right end of the line we dug another tunnel straight into the drift above the level of the line.



We worked in pairs with one person digging, and the other removing the snow using groundsheets and tossing it down the slope, swapping over when we needed a rest. At first, it was hard working in the confined space of the tunnels, but once we had burrowed in some distance we were able to start digging out the area between the two tunnels. Progress was quicker after we had broken through from each side, and Gary was soon working on the shaping of our domed ceiling. We filled in the right hand tunnel, laid groundsheets on the platform then foam mats, topped with our usual sleeping mats and our sleeping bags.

It was still warm outside, so we cooked dinner on a rocky area not far from the cave. Gary provided a tasty main meal of chicken, vegetables and noodles with a satay sauce. Wang shared a Chinese moon cake to celebrate the Festival of the Moon. It was a lovely evening, we enjoyed the spectacular scenery as the sun went down. We could hear music from the party down below echoing off the peaks, and at one time the boom of explosives (we had been warned). Then it suddenly turned cold and we were off to bed.

I thought it might be claustrophobic and dark in a snow cave, but it was spacious and surprisingly light and quiet. No one outside the cave could hear you as snow kills the sound. We were all warm and slept reasonably well. Getting up in the middle of the night was a bit of an exercise retrieving boots and putting

them on, then getting off the platform and exiting quickly down the tunnel which had become icy. It was light and spectacularly beautiful night outside with an almost full moon, bright stars and a clear sky.

In the morning, Gary boiled the billy at the tunnel entrance and some of us had breakfast in the cave. We packed up. Gary, Peter and I put on our crampons and headed off up the ridge to Mt Blimit. We met a man coming down, who had spent the night bivvied up on rocks below Mt Cassidy. We considered climbing up to Mt Blimit, but decided not to as there was quite a lot of rock to traverse plus Gary thought there was likely to be cornices.

We headed off down the slopes towards the lodges. In parts, it was steep. Peter said at one point it was almost steep enough to go down backwards. I was using leg muscles I don't often use! Gary kept disappearing ahead to check out the best route. The scariest part was crossing an icy gully with a rock rib in the middle of it. Gary made steps and told us to use the same holes he was making with his ice axe. It took me a while to work out how to get across the rock. Eventually, we reached safer ground. Gary was all for heading to the right for more thrills, but I convinced everyone it was time to take the easier route round, crossing the stream walking down tussock and snow patches, to the bridge near the lodges. Then it was a quick descent back to the car with lunch at Gary's bach before driving back to Christchurch. Thanks to Gary for a fantastic weekend.

We were: **Gary Huish (leader), Shi Ping Wang, Peter Umbers, and Sue Piercey** 🏔️ SP

Lake Kaniere Base Camp - 15-16 September 2018



John left Christchurch in the morning, Stan and crew departed mid-afternoon and Kerry's carload managed to get away at 5:30pm. At Hokitika, the night car turned one street too early and got lost! Consulting a GPS phone put us right and we got onto Stafford Street, and arrived at the holiday house at 9:30pm to find the others happily installed.

Saturday morning dawned fine and clear. The team were away by 0815 to the other end of the lake. A roadside photo-stop at Dorothy Falls was worthwhile. We headed up the steep Mt Brown Hut track through rata, kamahi forest. Most of the group had lunch at the beautifully located hut with great views of the lake and snow-capped mountains. This is the first hut

I've seen that provides binoculars for sight-seers. There is a wood-stove but the small amount of fuel must have been air-lifted in. Most our troop left for the long descent at 12:30. By 1pm cloud started to roll in around the hut. The youngsters—including Darcy—took Kerry's car back to base with the second car following later.

We dined on beef stroganoff on rice plus a big plate of blue-cheese flavoured veges. Sue Wilder generously made the vege dish. She had to beg-off the trip when she caught a cold. 87.5% of the diners had fresh fruit and custard. Stan, the 12.5%, has a long-standing aversion to custard.

We were up early again, to cloudy weather, with rain forecast. Margaret and Stan offered to take us to the lake-end so we could walk the length of the lake on the foot and cycle track and return to base for lunch. We set out in light drizzle then rain and arrived at the northern end of the track to find our "taxis" waiting for us. Not only that, Margaret and Stan had done most of the clean up of the house. We packed and headed away around 1pm.



We were: Margaret Clark, Stan Wilder, Joy Schroeder, Wendy McCaughan, John Robinson, Darcy Mawson, Jim Ouano and Kerry Moore 🏠 KM