

PTC Monthly
Newsletter

September 2016

PTC: Affiliate of Federated Mountain Clubs of NZ (Inc)
Postal Address: The Secretary, PTC, PO Box 13 258, Armagh, Christchurch 8141
Web address: www.peninsulatrampingclub.org.nz
E-mail: secretary@peninsulatrampingclub.org.nz
Facebook name: Peninsula Tramping Club Christchurch
Correspondence: Address all correspondence to the Secretary including change of contact details

Current Committee

President	Gary Huish	332 7020	Editor	Ruth Barratt	335 0010
Vice-President	Leo Manders	356 1731	Quartermaster	Brian Smith	355 9945
Vice-President	Kevin Hughes	332 6281	Social Events	Margot Bowden	332 7020
Treasurer	Sue Piercey	384 9567	Social Events	Maureen Thompson	377 2482
Trip Planner	Kerry Moore	359 5069	Committee	Raymond Ford	351 9496
Secretary	Merv Meredith	322 7239	Committee	Keith McQuillan	3846164

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.



Notice of PTC Special General Meeting 11th October

A Special General Meeting will be held on 11th October at 7.30pm PROMPTLY (prior to Club Night) to consider the following motion put by our Treasurer, Sue Piercey:

'That the subscriptions for our 2017 financial year remain at \$30.00 for electronic membership but be increased from \$35.00 to \$40.00 for hardcopy membership'.

The Executive Committee recommends and supports the motion. The rationale for this proposal is:-

1. FMC affiliation fee for 2017, due 31st May 2017, is to increase from \$10.00 pp to \$15.00 pp.
2. The proposal to increase ONLY the hardcopy subscription is to recognise our ACTUAL costs of printing and postage, thereby resulting in an accurate balance between the two sub types.
3. Although the \$5.00 increase has been applied to only half our membership, the Executive believes this will still cover our projected costs for 2017.

The SGM will commence PROMPTLY at 7.30pm prior to the OCTOBER club night.

Club Nights

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

Tues 13 Sep Iceland by Rick Bolch



Land of fire and ice, short on trees, but big on waterfalls. Probably New Zealand's northern cousin

Supper Duty: Jim or Margaret Clark, John Cook

Tues 11 Oct David Ellis – 4 generations of New Zealand-made outdoor clothing



David Ellis - founder and owner of the specialised outdoor clothing brand Earth Sea Sky will talk about his 35 years experience designing and making outdoor clothing and equipment in New Zealand. His grandfather started the Fairydown brand and supplied Sir Edmund Hillary the sleeping bag he used during the first ascent of Mt Everest. His father joined the business and was the engineer that accompanied Hillary on his tractor trip to the South Pole.

"Life's a journey, we provide the clothes"

During the evening David a keen outdoor enthusiast will talk about his unique family heritage, remarkable characters he has met along the way, interesting places he has visited, some misunderstandings of the importance of efficient layering systems as well as the secret of how Earth Sea Sky survives in a world of exaggerated marketing claims, huge advertising budgets and discounts - A night of entertainment not to be missed!

Supper Duty: Wendy Dann, Andrew Duck, Jill Fenner

Forthcoming 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.

**11 Sep
Sun**

MT BRUCE

Kevin Hughes 332 6281

Maps BV20,K34



Moderate tramp over 1630m Mt Bruce at the northern end of the Craigieburns. The route initially follows the track towards Lagoon Saddle, before heading up steep mixed scree and tussock slopes to the summit. There is a steepish scree slope down to the saddle at the head of Broad Stream, which can then be followed out. Great panoramic views from the top.

Start: 8am Church Corner, 20 Yaldhurst Rd

Approx cost \$21

**17-18 Sep
Sat-Sun**

AVALANCHE PEAK - CROW HUT

Carolyn Catt 332 9472

K33 BV20



A classic **moderate** trip ascending Avalanche Peak from Arthurs Pass then following the ridge towards Mt Rolleston before dropping down a scree slope to Crow Hut. Sunday, walk out to Klondyke Corner

List closes 10 Sept

- 17-20 Sep **CROSS COUNTRY SKIING** F40,41 CB12
Calum McIntosh 376 613
■ ■ ■ ■ Cross country skiing originated in Scandinavia thousands of years ago. It's the great-great-grandfather of all ski sports. If you are an intermediate down-hill skier with moderate tramping fitness you will enjoy cross country skiing.
List Closes 7 Sept
- 18 Sep **KOWAI RIVER - THE GAP** L35 BW21
Sun Chris Leaver 32264445
■ Moderate climb from the Kowhai River to this distinctive feature on the Torlesse range. Views of the plains and Castle Hill Basin.
Start: 8am Church Corner, 20 Yaldhurst Rd
- 24-25 Sep **ROUGH CREEK - LAKE CHRISTABEL** L31 M31 BT22
Sat-Sun Kerry Moore 359 5069
■ ■ Moderate trip starting up Rough Creek from Lewis Pass with good views of Lake C from the saddle on the way to the hut. On day 2 we loop around towards The Grand Duchess onto a ridge and back onto the Rough Creek track.
List closes 17 Sept
- 25-Sep **PEAK 1912 - CASS SADDLE** K34 BV21
Sun Merv Meredith 322 7239
■ Moderate-hard trip in the Craigieburns. Starting up the Cass River to Long Valley Stream, then up Peak 1912, descending to the Cass Valley track.
Meet 0730 Church Corner, 20 Yaldhurst Rd Approx cost \$20
- 1-2 Oct **BOULDER COL, RAKAIA** J35 BW18,19
Sat-Sun Merv Meredith 322 7239
■ ■ On Saturday we will wander up the south side of the Rakaia to a campsite near Thompsons Hut. Sunday will be the business end of this trip with a **moderate-hard** day tramp up to this 2000m col promising magnificent Arrowsmith Range views. Jagged Creek takes us to Banfield Hut, then back down the Rakaia River to the cars.
<http://www.topomap.co.nz/NZTopoMap/nz30571/Boulder-Col/Canterbury>
List closes 24 Sept
- 1 Oct **HARRY ELL—MITCHELLS—GILPINS—LATTERS SPUR** BX24
Saturday Margot Bowden 332 7020
■ An easy walk from Takahe to Kiwi, doing both tracks on the harbour side of Sugarloaf then down Latters Spur to the Takahe.
Meet 9.00am Sign of the Takahe, Hackthorne Road
- 8-9 Oct **DUFFY CREEK** L31 BT22
Sat-Sun Merv Meredith 322 7239
■ ■ A shorter **moderate** hike about 12km past Springs Junction and not far past Lake Stream. A track leads up the valley, but the upper section is untracked through open forest, meaning some bush bashing. As elsewhere in the Victoria Range, campsites near small tarns on the ridge aren't hard to find. Sunday offers a dramatic return via the open eastern ridge, with an easy descent through the bush back to the highway. List closes 1 Oct
- 9 Oct **QUAIL ISLAND** M36 BX24
Sunday Mary Korver 3553905
■ An easy tramp around Quail Island with some stunning cliff top views and interesting history. A chance to look at all those plants you have put in over the years. Launch returns 3.30pm

Meet at 10.05 on north side of Lyttelton rail over-bridge

Cost \$30 for Ferry rides

- 15-17 Oct** **LAKE MORGAN** **BU21**
 Lab wknd **Kerry Moore 359 5069**
 *** A **moderate-hard** trip in the Lake Brunner area going up the Haupiri Rr and climbing above the bushline to Lake Morgan Hut. Day two takes us past beautiful Lake Morgan and on to Cone Creek Hut. The last day sees us back near Gloriavale Community via the Haupiri Rr
List closes 8 Oct
- 16-Oct** **TE OKA RESERVE TRACK** **N37 BY24**
 Sun **Awaiting leader. Call Kerry Moore 359 5069 if you can help**
 * From Bossu Road an **easy** descent through this 903 hectare reserve to splendid Te Oka Bay on the south coast of Banks Peninsula
Start: 8am Halswell School 437 Halswell Rd **Approx cost \$8**
- 22-24 Oct** **FREEHOLD CREEK – DUMBELL** **H38 BZ14**
 Lab wknd **Merv Meredith 322 7239**
 *** **Moderate** three-day tramp on to very nice tops near the Ohau skifield. Plenty of alpine tarns to camp beside. Grand views of the main divide.
List closes 15 Oct
- 22-24 Oct** **BARKER HUT** **K33,K34 BV20**
 Lab Wknd **Gary Huish 332 7020**
 *** **Hard** trip at the head of the Waimakiriri River. Walk into Carrington on Friday night and early start and continue to Barker Hut on Saturday. The intention is to climb Mt Harper or Mt Speight early Saturday and walk out late on Sunday. Ice axe and cramp
List closes 15 Oct
- 22-24 Oct** **KELLYS CK - HUNTS SADDLE - KELLY RANGE** **K33 BV20**
 *** **Awaiting leader. Call Kerry Moore 359 5069 if you can help**
 *** A valley walk in and a high walk back in APNP. Varied terrain, mostly off-track. Staying at remote Hunts Creek Hut. The ill-defined climb from Hunts Saddle up to Kelly Range makes this a moderate-hard trip.
List closes 15 Oct
- 29-30 Oct** **KELLY RANGE – TAIPO** **K33 BV20**
 ** **Kerry Moore 359 5069**
 ** From near Otira, a steady **easy-moderate** forest climb to Carroll Hut, just above the bush line then on to a poled route over the tops. Staying at Dillon Hut on the Taipo River.
List closes 22 Oct
- 30-Oct** **GOLA PEAK** **M33 BV23**
 Sun **Awaiting leader. Call Kerry Moore 359 5069 if you can help**
 * **Moderate** trip on rolling farmland up the spur beside Pig Gully to 1285m Gola peak. We'll be looking down on a point where the Waipara River heads NE and the Okuku heads SW
Start: 8am Placemakers, 319 Cranford St **Approx cost \$14**
- 4-7 Nov** **MT TAPUAE-O-UENNUKU** **O29,30 BS27**
 *** **Milan Brisnik 03 313 2955**
 *** NZ's highest summit north of Mt Cook NP is in the Inland Kaikoura Range, and happens to be a trumper's peak, for those competent with ice axe and crampons. We'd like to approach it from the Clarence River side rather than from the Hodder. We are allowing 4 days in case of weather.
List closes 22 Oct
- 5-Nov** **GLENROCK STREAM - TURTONS SADDLE** **K35 BW19,20**
Saturday **Angela Grigg 03-318-1988**
 * A **moderate** tramp on part of Te Araroa trail east of Double Hill Station and Godley Peak. From the saddle we climb 600m to point 1805m with views across to Petticoat Lane and Godley Peak.
Start: 7:30am Church Corner, 20 Yaldhurst Rd **Approx cost \$16**

- 11-13 Nov LAKE CLEARWATER BASE J36 BX18**
Show wknd Awaiting leader. Call Kerry Moore 359 5069 if you can help
 *** Base camping at this site with plenty of options--Harper, Guy, Sunday, Potts, or just lazing around.
List closes 1 Nov
- 11-13 Nov PENNY PASS M33 BV21**
Show wknd Merv Meredith 322 7239
 *** **Moderate-hard** tramp in APNP. Starting over Casey Saddle, we'll head up the Poulter River, past remote Lake Minchin, skirt Minchin Pass cross Penny Pass and exit down Thompson Stream.
List closes 5 Nov
- 11-13 Nov LAKE ANGELUS - HOPELESS CREEK M29,N29 BS24**
Show wknd Awaiting leader. Call Kerry Moore 359 5069 if you can help
 *** **Moderate** tramp to this alpine gem in Nelson Lakes National Park, staying in the large hut then on to remote Hopeless Creek Hut via Sunset Saddle. Route is steep and rocky in places.
List closes 5 Nov
- 11-13 Nov GLORIANA AND FAERIE QUEENE M31 BT23**
Show wknd Raymond Ford 351 9496
 *** Taking the Camera Gully route to the big tarn below Gloriana and on to Faerie Queene. Some may want to settle for the easier Gloriana. **Moderate-hard**
List closes 5 Nov
- 13-Nov MT BRADLEY FROM ORTON BRADLEY M36 BX24**
Sun Evelien Baas 358 5521
 * **Easy-moderate** climb to this flat-topped 855m peak through bluffs via the old "eye of the needle" route if possible, otherwise we'll find a way onto the plateau from the NW side. The eye of the needle route was damaged by earthquakes.
8am PM Hospital, Hackthorne Rd end, across the road by the river Approx cost \$6
- 19-20 Nov CARLYLE HUT, GLENHOPE STATION M32 BU23**
Show wknd Awaiting leader. Call Kerry Moore 359 5069 if you can help
 ** Cross the Hope River Bridge and park on the edge of Glenhope Station then walk the flat **easy-moderate** track up Carlyle Stream to this unusual hut in the valley below the Poplars Range.
List closes 12 Nov

CHRISTMAS BASE CAMP



This year from Dec 26 2016 to 2 Jan 2017 the club will be running a traditional base camp like Dennis Kemp used to run. This year Leo Manders will be running this at Onamulutu at the base of Richmond Forest Park.

Access into here is easy on sealed roads from Renwick near Blenheim turning onto Northbank Road Wairau River just after crossing SH6 bridge across the Wairau River. Continue travelling 6 km onto Onamulutu Road and then for a further 7 km to the DOC campsite. A sheltered spot with flush toilets tap water with sink. 50 campsites cost \$8 per adult per night. Also suitable for campervans and caravans.

I will be present for the whole duration in my campervan. If you want to spend Christmas day here let me know and will organise a Christmas dinner.

Onamulutu is well situated for you to do a large number of different tramping trips along the eastern Richmond Range ranging from one hour to several days with huts on offer. Lake Chalice is easily accessible from here. A good cross over trip leaves from near our campsite to the Wakamarina River with Doom Creek hut en route. Can give a hand with transport at other road ends and will go shopping for supplies at nearby Blenheim a couple of times throughout the week. Great cafes and wineries close by at Blenheim, Renwick

and Havelock.

You are welcome to come and go as you please and catch up with other PTC members while also enjoying some walks on offer. I will try and get the PTC flag to identify our spot. You will obviously need to bring all your own gear including tents etc. I will have a limited amount of gear and will offer you a cup of tea if you are calling in. Please contact me Leo Manders 356 1731, 027442 6080, leomanders@paradise.net.nz if you have any questions. No need to book just turn up.

Social Events

Thurs 22 Sept Dumpling-making lesson and Chinese Banquet



Thursday 22 September (NB note changed date)

Master-chef Yvette will show us how to make dumplings and will provide a selection of takeaways for a Chinese banquet. Meet at Tim Hines's place at 6.15 pm at 73 Parklands Drive, Huntsbury. Park at the top of the very steep drive. We hope to start feasting at about 7.15 pm. Bring \$20 for the meal and your own drinks. Booking to Maureen Thompson by Friday 16 September. Phone 377 2482 or 021 266 5778 or mothompson@xtra.co.nz

Tues 18 Oct The Streaker - Comedy Court Theatre

By Gregory Cooper Directed by Mark Hadlow Featuring Phil Vaughan
7.30pm Tuesday 18th October 2016



We have booked the best seats in the Court Theatre, Bernard St, Addington. Book your seat, \$51 discount price by Sunday 25th September, with Brian Smith Ph 355 9945, 027 740 3035, or brian21x@xtra.co.nz
Ron Hewlett's lost his job, his mortgage is overdue and his family's on the brink of revolt. So when a Christchurch radio station offers a million dollars to anyone willing to streak naked at the Super Rugby final, Ron's got nothing left to lose – except his pants. How far will Ron go for his family? And how far will he get?
Sprint to see this brand new un-bare-ably funny comedy from the writer of MAMIL. Contains mature language and themes. May contain nudity.

Thur 24 Nov Mt Vernon Farm track loop followed by dinner at Protocol



Meet at 6.00 pm Thursday 24th November at the Mt Vernon Valley track car park. (Go to the far end of Hillsborough Terrace and turn left after Heybridge Lane down a narrow lane to the car park). We will do a loop walk up the Farm track with good views over the city. Back to the cars at 7.15 pm and drive to Protocol at 2 Colombo St for dinner at 7.30 pm. Mains \$27 – \$36, Pizzas \$21, smaller dishes \$14 – \$18.

No need to book for the walk but please book for the restaurant by Friday 18 November. Maureen Thompson 377 2482, 021 2665778, mothompson@xtra.co.nz

Notes

Membership: Our membership is stable with no resignations or new members to report this month

Deadline for the Oct newsletter: 30th September - send items for the newsletter to Ruth Barratt rannalong@gmail.com

Obituary

Geraldine Bowman - PTC Patron 2002 to 2016

END OF AN ERA

As advised in a Communicator last month, our Patron, GERALDINE BOWMAN, passed away peacefully on 12th August, aged 101.

Geraldine joined PTC in July 1973, when her longtime boarder, Harry Webb, was on the PTC Committee. Harry was soon PTC Secretary and then Gear Custodian. He and Geraldine were the 'gear handling team' for many years and many current and former PTC members will have fond memories of visiting Atlee Crescent for gear stored in Harry's old, but very orderly, shed. Tents, tent flies, billies and stoves were all stored in bags made by Geraldine and the inevitable repairs needed from time to time were never any trouble to her.

Geraldine's sewing skills weren't just confined to making and repairing tramping gear. She was, in her own words, born to sew, and apparently from an early age loved stitching and making things from any scraps of material she could get her hands on. As many women did in those days, she sewed extensively for her family and there was nothing that she couldn't turn her hand to making. Wedding dresses became one of her specialities and over the years she made hundreds for family and friends, including the 3 Hockley girls who joined the Club in the mid 70's and, like many others, were taken under Harry and Geraldine's wing! Over the years Harry and Geraldine travelled extensively throughout New Zealand's National Parks and walked many of our great walks. They would've been wonderful employees for Tourism New Zealand, as they extolled the beauty of our country and took many friends and overseas visitors to back country places they might not have otherwise seen.

When Harry sadly died in 1996, Geraldine by that stage was not doing much actual tramping but she continued to come to coffee evenings and maintained a keen interest in the Club. She always said that being a part of the Club, where most members were much younger than she was, kept her young, and the friendships she made were lasting ones that she obviously treasured. It was fitting that in 2002 she was asked to be the Club Patron and continued in that role to the end.

As time went on, it became increasingly difficult for Geraldine to maintain the house and large section that Harry had always kept immaculately tidy but, with the help of her daughter Jocelyn, she remained fiercely independent and lived a very active life until eventually, reluctantly, she had to go into a rest home at the age of 97.

While her eyesight and hearing began to fail and she became increasingly frail, she still had a keen wit and memory up until the last few months of her life. Some of her favourite memories were from when she worked as a conductress on the Christchurch trams, starting during the war and working on them until the last tram ran in Sept 1964. She was a keen member of the Tramways Historical Society and over the years was quite in demand for magazine and radio articles, where she shared her experiences of these times.

On her 100th birthday the dozens of cards and messages she received reflected the varied life she'd led and the esteem in which she was held by the many people she'd met along the way.

Rest in peace, Geraldine - a life well lived and you've earned it.

Pauline Thorpe

Trip Reports

Basins Hut, Avoca - 30-31 July

Saturday dawned with promise of a tramp to Basins Hut. As we got closer to Lake Coleridge, the rain got heavier and heavier. Not to be thwarted we continued on as the forecast was showers clearing. At the starting point of the tramp we had grave doubts as the small stream we had just crossed was a torrent charging under the bridge, and the sky very dark. Not fancying being stuck on the far side of the Avoca river (even if we could cross it) we decide another hut would be preferable. So with much thought, 13 mile Bush and Ben More Hut was decided on.

When we got there the weather was fine - but not to last. The track was what you would call muddy! The actual track was fortunately only 2 hours, but as it was nearly lunch time when started! we were grateful it was short. We reached the lovely old A frame 3-4 bunk hut after a wet trek in. Thanks to Bruce who got the fire going, and he and Norman who kept it going through most of the night, we were fairly snug. Outside it froze though, so the return journey was actually nearly as muddy, and thick ice puddles on the 4 WD track at the end. We passed an Avon TC group on our way out and a farmer who had a hand in keeping that track maintained. All in all a successful weekend. The key song should have been: "Mud, mud, glorious mud. Nothing quite like it but trampers in mud" ! We were: Keith and Marion McQuillan, Bruce Cameron and Norman Burden. (MM)



Mount Lyndon - Sunday 7th August

Four intrepid trampers turned up on a cold sunny winter's day for a walk in the snow. Due to transportation limitations, Red Hill was swapped for Mount Lyndon and turned out to be a great alternative. Keith was a fantastic leader (he told me to write that), and we set off from the parking area at Lake Lyndon just over Porters Pass. The snow got deeper and deeper as we got higher but we all managed to make it to the summit for lunchtime.

After a look around at the amazing winter wonderland views, we headed off down to the shores of Lake Lyndon via one of the other ridges. A hare came flying down past us as we slowly descended through the tussocks and two crested grebes were spotted along the shores of the partially frozen lake. On this trip we enjoyed the company of Isobel, a French/Vanuatu who is a new tramper to our club and who has previously tramped in Otago. A great day to be in the hills! Trampers were Keith McQuillan (great leader), Penny Coffey, Ruth Barratt and Isobel.



Pudding Hill (AKA Mount Thomas)

We the Magnificent Seven arrived at church corner to discuss plan B of our trip as Plan A had been canned for a later time due to strong NW gales forecast for the Pudding Hill Range.

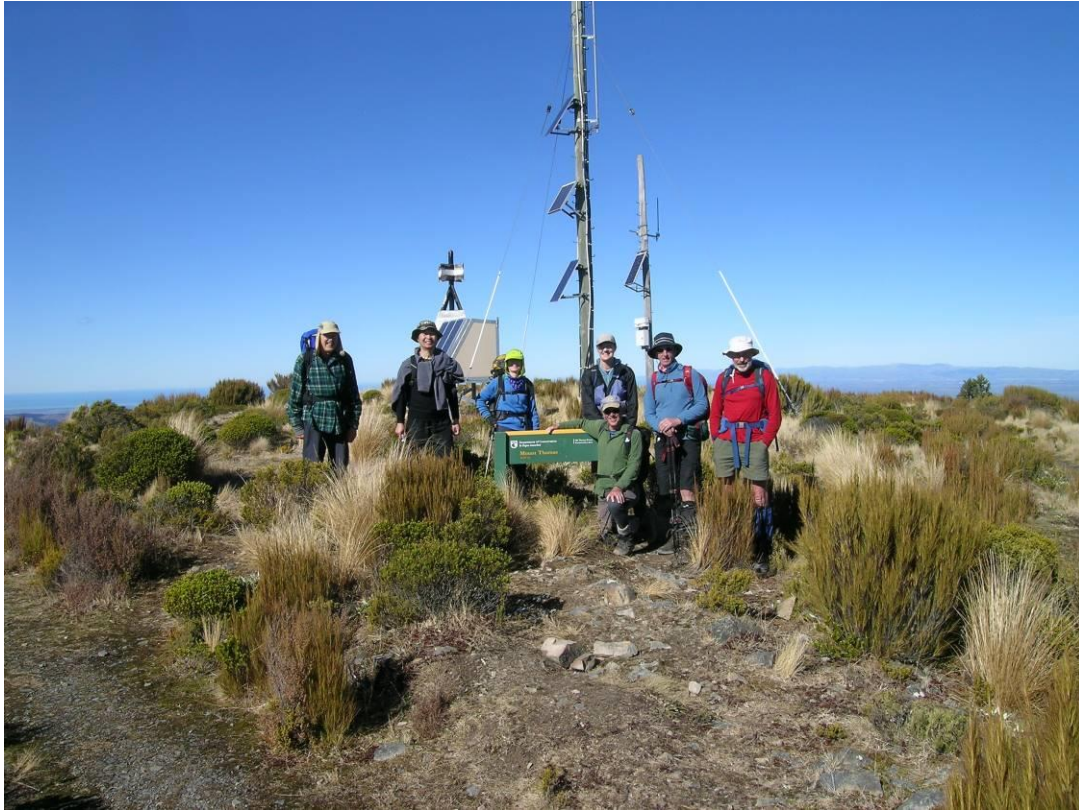
After a brief discussion we all agreed to take our tramping boots to Mount Thomas. We arrived at Wooded Gully camping area at 8 55am, and soon changed and on our way to the summit the Mt Thomas 1023meters. We casually made our way up a four wheel drive gravel road before branching off and onto the Ridge Track which took us through natives and into the beech forest, where after a time Stewart and Merv found a sunny spot for morning tea.

Once reaching the top of the bush line and out into the open tops we took time to stop and to view the area before moving on. Merv was particularly keen to wander off and explore the area, but soon returned. From now it was a 45min walk to the summit along the tops, where it was not a problem in finding a sunny spot for lunch – three and half hours after leaving the cars.



After lunch I gave them the choice of the return downward journey, Summit or Wooded Gully via the Pine Track. Votes were deadlock so I made the call - Gully Track it was. While making our descent in the puddles and mud we came across some youngster going up dressed for summer, made us wonder who had the right gear on!! We returned back at our cars by 3 50pm after all having a grand day out.

We were, Ruth Barratt, Penny Coffey, Merv Meredith, Stewart Payne, Kerry Moore, Wang & Norman Burden (leader and scribe).



Trail Notes

Walking the Larapinta Trail in Central Australia Independently – Sue Piercey

I walked the Larapinta trail recently and agree with it being called one of the greatest treks in the world. The views, colours, birds, animals and vegetation were all amazing and so different from what we see tramping in New Zealand.

The trail covers 223Km along the spine of the West MacDonnell ranges from Alice Springs to the highest point, Mt Sonder (1379m). It is divided into 12 sections and each trailhead is accessible by vehicle, although a four wheel drive with high clearance is required to access some trailheads. Other trailheads such as Ormiston Gorge and Standley Chasm are popular tourist destinations and there are kiosks selling food and drinks (but no tramping food).

I planned my trip using the northern territory government website nt.gov.au (search for Tjoritja/West MacDonnell National Park: Larapinta trail). It not only gives information and maps about the trail sections but you can see when groups of 8 or more people will be on the track, gives trail links and contacts, water supplies, latest conditions, and camping fees. There is no registration system for individuals, or charge for using the track, but there is self-registration and a cash camping fee to be paid at a few of the trail heads (total cost A\$38.50). Another useful site is larapinta.trail.com.au

I walked the trail from Mt Sonder back to Alice Springs, west to east. Although I had a plan, I was not sure how long the trail would take me and I did not want to have to commit to a day and time to be picked up at Mt Sonder if I had walked east to west.

I booked my transport online long before I flew to Alice Springs. I got quotes from a number of operators that offer transport to trailheads. Alice Wanderer offered me the cheapest deal as they already had a booking for the day I wanted. They also did my 3 food drops (Ormiston Gorge, Ellery Creek and Standley Chasm). It cost me A\$310 for transport, 3 food drops, and use of 3 storage bins. A key deposit of A\$50 was included in this amount for the key I was given to access the food storage rooms and this was refunded online after I returned the key.

I took some back country cuisine packets of mince, egg, mixed vegetable, rice and potato with me to Australia and made up my meals into small plastic bags when I got there. I also took OSM bars. "Lone

Dingo” store in Alice Springs sells gas, tramping equipment and dehydrated meals, including Back Country Cuisine, but I only saw their complete meals. I purchased the other food I needed from supermarkets in Alice Springs.

There are lots of places to stay in Alice Springs. I booked the YHA well in advance. It is central and has facilities for storing luggage and valuables while away on the trail.

I walked the trail over 14 days and had 2 rest days. Other people walking the whole trail were taking from 9 to 20 days. Lots of people were doing it on their own and others were in groups. Many people do part of the trail and lots of people walk up Mt Sonder as a day trip from Redbank gorge. Guided groups use different camp sites from independent walkers.

The trail was well marked, except in gorges where the route is generally obvious. It was not as difficult as I had imagined from reading the information online. I completed most sections in a couple of hours less than the guide on the trail maps. I would have graded most sections down a grade from what was on the maps. There were sections in gorges where boulder hopping was required but anyone used to New Zealand back country tracks would not find such terrain difficult. The tread on my Scarpa boots has worn down a bit in places but my boots caused no problems.

I carried both the inner and outer pieces of my Macpac microlite tent and I did not have trouble getting tent pegs in the ground anywhere that I camped. I was pleased to have an inner as there were mosquitoes and midges at some sites. It can rain in central Australia and I was pleased to have my fly as there was rain one night. Many other walkers had freestanding tents and often just slept in the inner tent. A number of trailheads have open shelters and it is common for people to put up these tents on the platforms.

The trail was very busy, partly because my time on it coincided with the school holidays. The best time to walk it with regard to the climate is May – August and June/July are ideal. I carried my own PLB but I never had a feeling of being very remote, like I’ve often had on parts of Te Araroa. For parts of the trail the highway is not far away and some of the trailheads are popular with travellers. I had a very social time (including a chat with PTC member Douglas Woods who was walking the other way). I did not have one night camping on my own. At Waterfall Gorge there were almost 20 people camping and the last ones arriving were having to clear tent sites.

Larapinta.trail.com.au advises carrying a minimum of 6 litres of water a day. I carried plenty but didn’t drink more than 2 litres in a day’s walking. There are tanks at trailheads and some intermediate points. Despite notices advising boiling or treating the water most people didn’t because they said it was brought in from Alice Springs. I did use aquatabs and did not take water from other sources despite there being water in some creeks, waterholes and gorges as there had been recent rain. Lots of people had fancy filters like Life Straws. They told me they could suck up water from the filthiest puddles if they needed to and they would be quite safe. Camping between trailheads or on the tops requires carrying more water as there is unlikely to be water available before the next tank.

Temperatures can vary up to 20 degrees C or more in 24 hours. Some nights it was very cold and I was grateful for my warmest sleeping bag, a down jacket and polypro top and leggings, woollen hat and gloves. There was a cold wind at times, especially on the tops. One day I was in my thermals and rainjacket all day. However, another day was 29 degrees and I was glad of my long-sleeved shirt and wide-brimmed hat. It is best to start walking well before 9am so that you arrive at your destination before the hottest time of the day which I found tended to be between 2pm-3pm. It was dark soon after 6pm and not light until around 7.30am.

Alice Springs has some great places to visit including the Telegraph Station where the Larapinta trail finishes, the Desert Park, self-guided historical walk, and the cultural centre.

I recommend The Rock Tour. This is a 3 day bus trip to Uluru, Kata Tjuta (the Olgas) and King’s Canyon – all special places. It includes accommodation (in swags around a fire) and meals for A\$350 (includes A\$25 Uluru park fee) and is a lot of fun.

Sue Piercey