



*PTC Monthly  
Newsletter*  
**March 2017**

**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](http://www.peninsulatrampingclub.org.nz)  
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**Facebook name:** Peninsula Tramping Club Christchurch  
**Correspondence:** Address all correspondence to the Secretary including change of contact details

### Current Committee

<b>President</b>	Gary Huish	332 7020	<b>Editor</b>	Ruth Barratt	335 0010
<b>Vice-President</b>	Leo Manders	356 1731	<b>Quartermaster</b>	Brian Smith	355 9945
<b>Vice-President</b>	Kevin Hughes	332 6281	<b>Social Events</b>	Margot Bowden	332 7020
<b>Treasurer</b>	Sue Piercey	384 9567	<b>Social Events</b>	Maureen Thompson	377 2482
<b>Trip Planner</b>	Kerry Moore	359 5069	<b>Committee</b>	Raymond Ford	351 9496
<b>Secretary</b>	Merv Meredith	322 7239	<b>Committee</b>	Keith McQuillan	384 6164
<b>New Member Enquiries</b>	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.

<b>Tues 14 Mar</b>	<b>Keith &amp; Marion McQuillan - Exciting cycling adventures in Samoa</b> Beer, foles, swims and hot cycling days. Keith and Marion's experiences last year <b>Supper Duty:</b> Linda Gardner and Dorota Giejsztowt
<b>Tues 11 Apr</b>	<b>To be arranged</b> <b>Supper Duty:</b> Ann Schofield and Tony Greaves

## Notice of 2017 PTC AGM

The PTC 85<sup>th</sup> Annual General Meeting is to be held in the Oxford Terrace Baptist Church Hall, on:  
**Tuesday 14<sup>th</sup> March 2017 starting promptly at 7.30pm, prior to our normal club night**  
 The agenda has been circulated via the Communicator  
 No motions were received

Merv Meredith, Secretary [secretary@peninsulatrampingclub.org.nz](mailto:secretary@peninsulatrampingclub.org.nz)

## Court Theatre Show – 18<sup>th</sup> April

Based on the novel by Mark Haddon  
 Adapted by Simon Stephens  
 Directed by Lara Macgregor  
 Featuring Tim Earl



7.30pm Tuesday 18th April 2017  
 We have booked the best seats in the Court Theatre,  
 Bernard St, Addington.

Book your seat, \$51 discount price by Sunday 26<sup>th</sup> March, with Brian Smith Ph 355 9945, 027 740 3035, or [brian21x@xtra.co.nz](mailto:brian21x@xtra.co.nz)

I recommend read the novel and Google for more information about the story and play – Brian Smith

## 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.

- |                    |   |                    |
|--------------------|---|--------------------|
| 11-12 Mar          | <b>SYLVIA TOPS</b><br><b>Merv Meredith 322 7239</b><br><b>** Moderate tramp over this 1500-1600m range between Nina and Doubtful valleys in the Lewis Pass area. Camping beside Devils Den Biv. on Devilskin Saddle.</b><br><b>List closes 4 Mar</b>  | M31 BU23           |
| 11-Mar<br>Saturday | <b>PINE REMOVAL, CASTLE HILL BASIN</b><br><b>Kerry Moore 359 5069</b><br>A satisfying day in Castle Hill Basin cutting and pulling wildings to stem the westward march of pines<br><b>List closes Thur 9 March</b>  | BW21               |
|                    |   | Exact cost: \$0.00 |
| 12 Mar<br>Sun.     | <b>PACKHORSE HUT FROM GEBBIES PASS</b><br><b>Margaret Clark 348 4993</b><br><b>* Easy walk on the peninsula, through farmland, pine plantations, bush remnants, past Remarkable Dykes to the sturdy stone Packhorse Hut. Suitable for children. Excellent views of Lyttelton Harbour.</b><br><b>8am PMH, Hackthorne Rd end, across the road by the rr</b> | BX24               |
|                    |   | Approx. cost: \$3  |



- 17-20 Mar**     **SERPENTINE RANGE**     **D40,E40 CA09,CB09**  
**Raymond Ford 351 9496**  
**\*\*\*\***     This **moderate-hard** four day trip starts from the Routeburn track over Sugarloaf Pass to the Rockburn and the spectacular Theatre Flat. The route to Park Pass then climbs the ridge to drop down to Lake Nerine, then traverse along the Serpentine Range to Lake Wilson and Harris Saddle, and out via the Routeburn. Be prepared for a wet weather alternative into N. Routeburn.  
**List closes 8 Mar**
- 18-19 Mar**     **WALKER PASS - AMBER COL - SUDDEN VALLEY**     **K33 BV21**  
**Merv Meredith 322 7239**  
**\*\***     A **moderate-hard** satisfying round-trip in the southern section of APNP. We will camp near Amber Col and travel along the Polar Range. A rapid scree descent gives "back-door" access to Sudden Valley.  
**List closes 11 Mar**
- 18-19 Mar**     **SUDDEN VALLEY**     **K33 BV21**  
**Keith McQuillan 384 6164**  
**\*\***     **Easy-moderate** tramp in APNP. We cross the broad Hawdon riverbed and enter the narrow valley. To bypass the gorgy section we climb a gully before emerging into this beautiful valley. We'll camp at the biv  
**List closes 12 Mar**
- 19 Mar**     **CHARING CROSS**     **M32 BU24**  
**Sun.**     **Stuart Payne 337 2275**  
**\***     **Easy-moderate** tramp to this 999m peak in the Tekoa Range inland from Culverden  
**Meet 8am Placemakers, 319 Cranford St**     **Approx. cost: \$14**
- 25-26 Mar**     **MT COOK BASE**     **H36 BX15,BY15**  
**Kevin Hughes 332 6281**  
**\*\*\***     Base camp at Unwin Hut. Superb day tramps for fitter people include Mueller Hut, Sefton Biv and Mt Wakefield, whilst easier tramps include Sealy Tarns, Red Lakes, Hooker and Tasman  
**List closes 15 Mar**
- 25 Mar**     **KAITUNA CHALLENGE**     **M36 BQ27**  
**Saturday!**     **Merv Meredith 322 7239**  
**\***     Our annual not-too-serious classic BIKE, WALK, RUN, BIKE event. We have team, individual men's and individual women's categories. Once everyone finishes, the day concludes with lunch and presentation of the prestigious trophy. Entry fee to this popular event is a mere \$5.  
**Call Merv**     **Exact cost: \$5**
- 26 Mar**     **EASTERN BAYS (PART II)**  
**Sun.**     **Bruce Cameron 365 8210**  
**\***     Continuing from where we left off on the Pompey's Pillar leg of Eastern Bays we'll take this **easy** walk from Goughs Bay to Shell Bay.  
**8am PMH, Hackthorne Rd end, across the road by the river**     **Approx. cost: \$15**
- 1-3 Apr**     **CASEY--LAKE MINCHIN--TOWNSEND CK**     **K33 BU21**  
**Names to Angela Grigg 03 318 1988**  
**\*\*\***     A worthwhile **medium-hard** trip from end to end of APNP, passing Lake Minchin, Minchin Pass and down the rugged Townsend Creek to the Taramakau  
**List closes 25 Mar**
- 2 Apr**     **MT KARETU**     **M34 BW23,BV23**  
**Sun.**     **Norman Burden 358 5115**  
**\***     **Easy-moderate** trip to this 970m peak, west of Mt Grey. Starting from Okuku Pass and returning via a forestry road.  
**Meet: 8am Placemakers, 319 Cranford St**     **Approx. cost: \$13**

- 8-10 Apr**      **EDWARDS - STANLEY - FOWLER PASS**      **M31,N31 BT24**  
**Kerry Moore 359 5069**  
**\*\*\***      **Moderate** tramp north of Hanmer Springs between the Clarence and Waiau rivers. Up the Edwards River, north of the Amuri skifield road, to Charlies Saddle. Travel up the Waiau via The Racecourse, to the Stanley River to the hut at Glenrae Flat. Returning via Fowler Pass.  
**List closes 3 Apr**
- 9 Apr**      **NIKAU PALM GULLY**      **N37 BY25**  
**Sun.**      **Margot Bowden 332 7020**  
**\***      This bush-clad gully is quite a dramatic spot, and the plentiful nikau palms here are notable for being the southern-most limit of this species in New Zealand. This is an **easy** tramp towards the eastern heads of Akaroa Harbour.  
**8am PMH, Hackthorne Rd end, across the road by the rr**      **Approx. cost: \$14**
- 14-18 Apr**      **LONELY LAKE—ANATOKI**      **M26 BN23,24,BP23,24**  
**Easter**      **Merv Meredith 322 7239**  
**\*\*\*\*\***      **Moderate-hard** tramp to this landmark at the northern end of Kahurangi National Park. Walking in via Cobb Valley. Return via Lake Sylvester or a through-trip via Adelaide Tarn and Boulder Lake to Bainham  
**List closes 7 April**
- 14-18 Apr**      **MT ARTHUR TABLELANDS CIRCUIT**      **M27 BP24,BQ24**  
**Easter**      **Angela Grigg 03 318 1988**  
**\*\*\*\***      A popular **moderate** circuit in karst country with rock shelters, an open tussock plateau and tops with superb views, combine to make this an interesting tramp  
**List closes 7 April**
- 16 Apr**      **PUDDING HILL RANGE**      **K35,K36 BX20**  
**Sun.**      **Merv Meredith 322 7239**  
**\***      A **moderate** walk onto Pudding Hill Range with the more ambitious people heading for 1820m Mt Bruce, SW of Mt Hutt  
**Meet 8am Church Corner, 20 Yaldhurst Rd**      **Approx cost: \$17**
- 19 Apr**      **TRIP PLANNING**  
 Have your say on where we go. Take your suggestions to the planning meeting at Gary and Margot's, 7:00pm, 5 Patchett Place, Cashmere. If you can't attend be sure to give trip suggestions to Kerry M 359 5069 or a committee person
- 22-23 Apr**      **BRASS MONKEY BIV**      **M31 BT23**  
**Peter Umbers 359 9118**  
**\*\***      A classic, **moderate-hard**, Lewis Pass tops trip to this bivvy situated just off the main divide. We can take the Lewis Tops route or go up Lucretia Stream.  
**List closes 15 Apr**
- 23 Apr**      **AHURIRI, PORT HILLS**      **BX24**  
**Sun.**      **Bruce Cameron 365 8210**  
**\***      From Langleydale, near TaiTapu, a loop on the end of the Port Hills to Ahuriri Peak, perhaps Coopers Knob. **Easy** with great views, on private land  
**8am PMH, Hackthorne Rd end, across the road by the river**      **Approx cost: \$2**
- 29-30 Apr**      **PINCHGUT--BOBS CAMP CIRCUIT**      **BW23**  
**Kerry Moore 359 5069**  
**\*\***      An **easy-moderate** circuit from the Okuku River to Pinchgut Hut and along the Cattle Peak Route to Bobs Camp Biv. Day two will take the Whare Route back to Pinchgut and out.  
**List closes 22 Apr**

- 30 Apr Sun.** **VIRGINIA PEAK** **M33 BV23**  
**Margaret Clark 348 4993**  
 \* An **easy-moderate** tramp into foothills west of Hawarden to 986m Virginia Peak, then along the ridge returning via the Waitohi Valley  
**Meet 8am Placemakers, 319 Cranford St** **Approx cost:\$12**
- 6-9 May** **HUMP RIDGE TRACK** **C46 CFO7**  
**Awaiting leader. Call Kerry M 359 5069 if you can help**  
 \*\*\*\* The highlight is a loop track at the top of the Hump Ridge range which winds around limestone tors and offers views of south-west Fiordland, the Southern Ocean, and Stewart Island. **Easy-moderate**  
**List closes 23 Apr**
- 7 May Sun.** **MT BARROSA** **J36 BX19**  
**Merv Meredith 322 7239**  
 \* A **moderate** trip in the Clent Hills area above the Ashburton Gorge Rd. Open tussock country with good views all the way up this 800m climb to this 1364m peak.  
**Meet 8am Church Corner, 20 Yaldhurst Rd** **Approx cost \$18**
- 13-14 May** **KAITUNA--PACKHORSE--ROD DONALD HUT** **BX24**  
**Keith McQuillan 384 6164**  
 \*\* **Easy-moderate** tramp on Te Ara Pātaka/Summit Walkway. Can be done as a 3-day, 2 night or 2-day, 1 night  
**List Closes 6 May**
- 14 May Sun.** **HIGH PEAK** **L35 BX21**  
**Merv Meredith 322 7239**  
 \* A **moderate** walk up 968m High Peak in the Rockwood Range.  
**Meet 8am Church Corner, 20 Yaldhurst Rd** **Approx cost: \$18**
- 11-12 Mar** **SYLVIA TOPS** **M31 BU23**  
**Merv Meredith 322 7239**  
 \*\* **Moderate** tramp over this 1500-1600m range between Nina and Doubtful valleys in the Lewis Pass area. Camping beside Devils Den biv on Devilskin Saddle.  
**List closes 4 Mar**
- 12 Mar Sunday** **PACKHORSE HUT FROM GEBBIES PASS** **BX24**  
**Margaret Clark 348 4993**  
 \* **Easy** walk on the peninsula, through farmland, pine plantations and bush remnants, past Remarkable Dykes to the sturdy stone Packhorse Hut. Suitable for children. Excellent views of Lyttelton Harbour.  
**8am PMH, Hackthorne Rd end, across the road by the rr** **Approx cost \$6**
- 17-20 Mar** **SERPENTINE RANGE** **D40,E40 CA09,CB09**  
**Raymond Ford 351 9496**  
 \*\*\*\*\* This **moderate-hard** four day trip starts from the Routeburn track over Sugarloaf Pass to the Rockburn and the spectacular Theatre Flat. The route to Park Pass then climbs the ridge to drop down to Lake Nerine and then traverse along the Serpentine Range to Lake Wilson and Harris Saddle, and out via the Routeburn track. Be prepared for a wet weather alternative into the North Routeburn or somewhere with better weather  
**List closes 8 Mar**
- 18-19 Mar** **WALKER PASS - AMBER COL - SUDDEN VALLEY** **K33 BV21**  
**Merv Meredith 322 7239**  
 \*\* A **moderate-hard** satisfying round-trip in the southern section of APNP. We will camp near Amber Col and travel along the Polar Range. A rapid scree descent gives "back-door" access to Sudden Valley.  
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<b>**</b>	<b>Easy-moderate</b> tramp in APNP. We cross the broad Hawdon riverbed and enter the narrow valley. To bypass the gorgy section we climb a gully before emerging into this beautiful valley. We'll camp at the biv <b>List closes 12 Mar</b>	
<b>19 Mar</b> <b>Sunday</b>	<b>CHARING CROSS</b> <b>Stuart Payne 337 2275</b>	<b>M32 BU24</b>
<b>*</b>	<b>Easy-moderate</b> tramp to this 999m peak in the Tekoa Range inland from Culverden <b>Meet 8am Placemakers, 319 Cranford St</b> <b>Approx cost \$12</b>	
<b>25-26 Mar</b>	<b>MT COOK BASE</b> <b>Kevin Hughes 332 6281</b>	<b>H36 BX15,BY15</b>
<b>***</b>	Base camp at Unwin Hut. Superb day tramps for fitter people include Mueller Hut, Sefton Biv and Mt Wakefield, whilst easier tramps include Sealy Tarns, Red Lakes and the Hooker and Tasman valleys. <b>List closes 15 Mar</b>	
<b>25 Mar</b> <b>Saturday</b>	<b>KAITUNA CHALLENGE</b> <b>Merv Meredith 322 7239</b>	<b>M36 BQ27</b>
<b>*</b>	Our annual not-too-serious classic BIKE, WALK, RUN, BIKE event. We have team, individual men's and individual women's categories. Once everyone finishes, the day concludes with lunch and presentation of the prestigious trophy. Entry fee to this popular event is a mere \$5 to cover costs.	
<b>26 Mar</b> <b>Sunday</b>	<b>WORSLEYS SPUR - GOVERNORS BAY</b> <b>Awaiting leader. Call Kerry M 359 5069 if you can help</b>	<b>M36 BX24</b>
<b>*</b>	<b>Easy</b> walk up Worsleys Spur through the new adventure park to the summit road, then down to Governors Bay for lunch. <b>8am PMH, Hackthorne Rd end, across the road by the rr</b>	
<b>1-3 Apr</b>	<b>CASEY--LK MINCHIN--TOWNSEND CK</b> <b>Awaiting leader. Call Kerry M 359 5069 if you can help</b>	<b>K33? BU21</b>
<b>***</b>	A worthwhile <b>medium-hard</b> trip from end to end of APNP, passing Lake Minchin, Minchin Pass and down the rugged Townsend Creek <b>List closes 25 Mar</b>	
<b>2 Apr</b> <b>Sunday</b>	<b>MT KARETU</b> <b>Norman Burden 358 5115</b>	<b>M34 BW23,BV23</b>
<b>*</b>	<b>Easy-moderate</b> trip to this 970m peak, west of Mt Grey. Starting from Okuku Pass and returning via a forestry road. <b>Start: 8am Placemakers, 319 Cranford St</b> <b>Approx cost \$10</b>	
<b>8-10 Apr</b>	<b>EDWARDS - STANLEY - FOWLER PASS</b> <b>Kerry Moore 359 5069</b>	<b>M31,N31 BT24</b>
<b>***</b>	<b>Moderate</b> tramp north of Hanmer Springs between the Clarence and Waiau rivers. Up the Edwards River, north of the Amuri skifield road, to Charlie's Saddle. Travel up the Waiau via The Racecourse, to the Stanley River to the hut at Glenrae Flat, southeast of Lake Guyon, and return via Fowler Pass. <b>List closes 3 Apr</b>	
<b>9 Apr</b> <b>Sunday</b>	<b>NIKAU PALM GULLY</b> <b>Margot Bowden 332 7020</b>	<b>N37 BY25</b>
<b>*</b>	This bush-clad gully is quite a dramatic spot, and the plentiful nikau palms here are notable for being the southern-most limit of this species in New Zealand. This is an <b>easy</b> tramp towards the eastern heads of Akaroa Harbour. <b>8am PMH, Hackthorne Rd end, across the road by the river</b> <b>Approx cost \$15</b>	

- 14-18 Apr Easter \*\*\*\*\*** **LK CHALICE-GOULTER R-MT RINTOUL** **N28,O28 BR26**  
**Awaiting leader. Call Kerry M 359 5069 if you can help**  
A classic **moderate** round-trip in the Richmond Range. From Lake Chalice we go down the Goulter River to Lower Goulter Hut for the first night. Day 2 is uphill to Rintoul Hut and a great view. Even better on day 3 over Mt Rintoul and along the interesting ridge, to Old Man. A connecting spur then runs south from Old Man with a track dropping back directly to the eastern end of Lake Chalice.  
**List closes 7 April**
- 14-18 Apr Easter \*\*\*\*\*** **LONELY LAKE—ANATOKI** **M26 BN23,24,BP23,24**  
**Merv Meredith 322 7239**  
**Moderate-hard** tramp to this landmark at the northern end of Kahurangi National Park. Walking in via Cobb Valley. Return via Lake Sylvester or a through-trip via Adelaide Tarn and Boulder Lake to Bainham  
**List closes 7 April**
- 14-18 Apr Easter \*\*\*\*\*** **MT ARTHUR TABLELANDS CIRCUIT** **M27 BP24,BQ24**  
**Angela Grigg 03 318 1988**  
A popular circuit in karst country. Rock shelters, an open tussock plateau and tops with superb views, combine to make this an interesting **moderate** tramp  
**List closes 7 April**

## Social Events

**Wed 22  
March**

### **The Groyne followed by dinner**

We will be walking some of the pleasant tracks in the Groyne followed by dinner at a local restaurant. More details in the next newsletter.  
Contact Margot Bowden ph. 332 7020 or [margot.bowden@gmail.com](mailto:margot.bowden@gmail.com)

**Tues 18<sup>th</sup>  
April**

Court Theatre - The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-time. See information on page 2 of this newsletter

**Tues 16<sup>th</sup>  
May**



### **Escape Room preceded by Thai take-aways at Maureen's place.**

What is an Escape Room? It's a room you must escape from! Each room has its own carefully constructed ambience, with real props gathered "from the far corners of Canterbury" ... to ensure a realistic, immersive experience. And the clock is ticking! The challenge is to work as a team to solve the puzzles, codes and riddles and escape the room in the nick of time. Can you release the souls trapped in the Mysterious Log Cabin? Can you launch a missile in time to save the world from an asteroid?

We have booked 3 rooms, each with a different theme. Each room takes 6 people, so a maximum of 18 people.

Meet at Maureen Thompson's place 30A Peacock St, Central City, at about 6.30 pm for nibbles. Dinner at 7 pm will be a selection of take-aways, including vegetarian options, from the Thai Container. Please BYO drinks. Drive to the Escape Room 2/25 Churchill St off Bealey Ave, at 8.10 pm for a briefing. The challenge begins at 8.30 pm and most teams take about an hour to escape.

Cost \$22 per person for the Escape Room plus \$15 for dinner. Please book and pay in advance by depositing \$37 in the PTC bank account 38 9015 0030334 00 with your name and "escape" in the boxes. Booking dead-line Sunday 14 May to Maureen Thompson 021 266 5778 or 377 2482 or [mothompson@xtra.co.nz](mailto:mothompson@xtra.co.nz)  
<https://escapeartists.nz/Christchurch/About>

## Notes

**Membership:** The PTC welcomes Paul Bingham and farewells Carolyn Catt, Julie Wagner.

**Deadline for the March newsletter:** 31<sup>st</sup> March - send items for the newsletter to Ruth Barratt [rannalong@gmail.com](mailto:rannalong@gmail.com)

**Next Committee Meeting:** Tuesday 28<sup>th</sup> March 2017

## Trip Reports

### Youngman's Stream 11-12 February 2017

Three of us set off on this trip with a good weather forecast. It was my first time through Ashley Gorge to the Lees Valley and it was certainly an impressive drive in Keith's trusty old ute. A couple of vehicles at the road end gave us hope that the hut would not be full but a tent was carried anyhow. We chose not to travel up the river but regretted that decision as we toiled in the heat up a never-ending upward high sidle track.



Eventually we dropped down to the hut and ended up with sharing it with a sole young hunter. Despite the heat, the sandflies were pretty ferocious which spoiled any chance of a swim in the river.

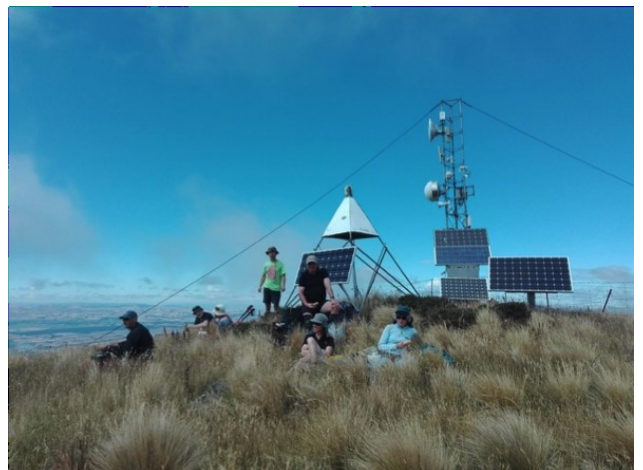
During the night the wind got very strong and in the morning the party split. I headed up over the tops to Lilliburne Hill and back down via the Tarn Hut track while the other two set off an hour later down the river. Unfortunately  $\frac{3}{4}$  hour into their route they had to turn back due to high water and take the high sidle track back - so maybe the previous day's decision was justified. Despite being blown over a couple of times I eventually walked into the lee of the wind and had a pleasant descent down to the truck where we all met up. It was a great weekend trip. Did I mention what a great leader Keith is? We were: **Keith McQuillan, Norman Burden and Ruth Barratt #RB.**



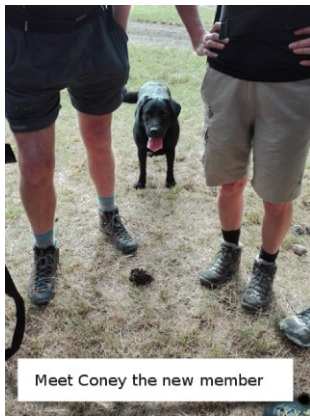
### Hurunui Peak—Sunday 19 Feb 2017

While Chch had a grey day our eight were enjoying a sunny walk inland from Culverden. We parked at Korari Downs and quickly got reacquainted with the farm dogs. We were aware of their antics from last year. The lab arrived with a pine cone and dropped it at Norman's feet. Norman understood the gesture and threw the cone for the enthusiastic dog. This game could have gone on and on if we'd obliged but we had a walk in mind. The other farm dog, a small mut wasn't athletic at all. It lay at our feet and wanted its tummy scratched.

Going up the farm track wasn't difficult but we needed a few cool-off breaks. Geoff, our leader and guide had







promised we would see what's visible of a diatrema, a volcanic pipe caused by a gaseous explosion. On the 937m hill-top we studied a rock sample Geoff chipped off as we munched on our sandwiches. Sorry Geoff but I was hoping for something more dramatic than a chip off a common-looking rock. I do admit the chip's structure told an explosive story.

Hurunui Peak gives a great view of Balmoral Forest and the big area of farmland containing Waikari and Hawarden. Inland there are the Dove and Mandamus Rivers. 1615m Mt Tekoa and 1704m Mt Skedaddle also beckon. We were: **Geoff Price, Dorota Giejsztowt, Diane Mellish, Andy Duck, S P Wang, Norman Burden, Gavin Chalk, Kerry Moore # KM**

## **Murchison Glacier – Tasman Glacier 4-11 February 2017**

New to the club, I heard of the annual Geoff Spearpoint alpine trip while on a club trip on Show Weekend. I heard it was to be up the Murchison Valley and down the Tasman Glacier and it was suggested I might enjoy it. No, I couldn't make it as I had a week planned to go tramping with my daughter the week before. But the seed was planted and it thrived. Geoff's trip won out, I put my name down and started in earnest to get fitter. It was a trip I had wanted to do for over 25 years and what an amazing trip it was. Eight days of fun, comradeship, laughter, hard yacker and stunning views. The biggest concern before the start of the trip was the weather. We'd had very unsettled weather for the last month, would this week be any different? Geoff had planned several alternatives but I was sure hoping the original plan would win out. It did.

**Day One** was a reasonable 9am start from Christchurch, travelling down to Mt Cook. While Geoff signed in with DOC we headed to Tasman Lake to meet up with the boat taking us over the lake. A quick 5 minutes ride across the lake had us leaping onto the shore hauling heavy packs from the boat. Hefting our heavy packs it was up to the top of the moraine, then negotiating our way through big boulders. Trying to keep our balance with our laden packs, we made steady progress for 10 minutes. Then disaster struck, Merv lost his balance, tumbling from the moraine top down among the boulders. Being at the back of the pack I hadn't witnessed this and thought he had just tripped and hurt his knee. Gaylene had him propped up against a rock reassuring him. As a nurse I thought it best if I popped over to check the knee out and saw one almighty laceration. Oh dear, there would be no continuing for Merv. On further investigation I was informed what had happened, by this stage Merv was in a little bit of shock, looking very pale. Luckily no head injury had been sustained. We covered and wrapped his knee, gave some pain relief and waited till Merv felt better. Fortunately we had cell phone coverage, so Geoff organised for Merv to be picked up by the boat and taken back across the lake. It was a sombre start to the trip but also a reality check that anything can happen at any time, a reminder to take care at all times. We continued on over the moraine following the true right of the Murchison River for several more hours till a flat campsite was found. In no time Geoff had a fire going, dinner cooked and eaten. We slipped thankfully into our tents as darkness approached.

**Day Two** started with the cursing of the noisy tents. The wind had picked up during the night and some of us had to get up to secure tents. But the worse part was not being able to sleep due to the noise the tents made. So grumbling aside, we packed up and were moving by 8.30am. We continued along the moraine by the river then onto the river flats. First swim for the day was had by Liz and Geoff, some sort of competition I hear. We continued up the river flats making good progress in the heat. Lunch time and another swim by Liz and Geoff joined by Gaylene, Gary, Aarn and Raymond. Our destination was Liebig Hut. Continuing up river we scouted possible crossing places, thought we found a suitable one only to have to re-cross back as we couldn't get across the next braid. Gaylene and Aarn became guinea pigs, testing the waters first, thanks guys. Another suitable place was found and we teamed up to cross. It was certainly one of the more difficult crossings I've done for a while. It was then a gentle meander up to the hut. Resident at the hut was a lone English man Ben, who had flown in for a spot of hunting, though the Deer and Tahr appeared to be rather elusive. As only a six bunk hut, several of us chose to pitch tents for the night. Tuning into the Mountain Radio forecast at 7pm the forecast for the next day was for heavy rain and winds in the afternoon / evening. The decision was made to spend the next day in the hut waiting out the weather.



**Day Three** dawned fine. Tents were packed up. An enjoyable morning was spent chatting with Ben till his pick up at 11.30. A gourmet seafood soup was cooked for lunch from food left behind by Ben and others. We whiled away the afternoon practicing our rope skills as the weather deteriorated outside.

**Day Four** was an early start, planning to get away by 8.00am. Our aim was to get as far up the glacier as possible and hopefully make it to

Murchison hut. We headed up valley in clearing weather. We skirted around Murchison's terminal lake full of floating icebergs. We spotted a couple of people walking up the other side of the lake, next thing we knew they were kayaking among the icebergs!! At the head of the lake we tried to find the best line among the rock strewn debris on the glacier. This went on for a number of hours and we were eventually relieved to finally reach ice. Crampons were donned and we continued up the glacier, making our way through and among the crevasses. The crevasses started to get larger and the jumps across bigger as the glacier steepened. As there was little or no snow on top, no need to rope up, saving valuable time. Murchison Hut came into view perched on top of a rocky ridge high above the Glacier. It looked oh so close, but oh so far. The final approach to the Hut was a steep snow slope, and then jumbled rock the last 100m. Thanks Raymond for plugging the steps up the slope. By this stage it was starting to get dark and we spread out to locate the hut. Hut located after a 13hr day, epic! We tumbled into the hut, people were exhausted, flopping onto the bunks, except Geoff and Gaylene. With super efficiency they had the cookers going and dinner on. I was impressed with the speed they managed this. Then Gary at lightning speed exited the hut to vomit over the balcony. Not feeling the best, we tended to him, giving him an electrolyte drink and put him to bed to sleep it off, saving his dinner for the morning, hoping it wasn't a bug for all to catch. The bunk at the end of this day felt damn good.

**Day Five** arrived in a blanket of fog, rime and light snow. Won't be going anywhere until this clears. Geoff decides to wait to make a decision to move on till after lunch. We need good visibility to go over the Murchison head wall. Gary's feeling better. A large hot lunch is cooked and consumed gratefully by all. Weather starts to clear, decision made to go. Today is the crux of the trip, can we make it over the headwall?

It wasn't possible 2 weeks ago, too many slots, what will it be like today? We rope up for the glacier travel. Chris is resplendent in chux multi clothes and safety pins as sleeves for her shirt, hers accidentally left in the car. This is serious sun-burn country. Geoff leads, keeping a steady pace. It's a stunning and beautiful setting, just magnificent country.





Words can't really describe it, this is what I came for. The travel up to the Murchison head wall was one of the easiest of the trip. Geoff leads us up the wall, the only concern I can see is possible slots at the top. No problem, we belay to get over the slot. Fantastic, we don't have to go back down the Murchison, I'm thrilled not to have to experience that moraine again. And then it fogs in, we don't get to see the view down the Tasman! We make our way towards where we think the Kelman Hut is. Gaylene & Tony glimpse a toilet up above us and we make our way there. Kelman hut is a welcome sight, it is warm, has gas and solar lights. Late dinner again, becoming a bit of a habit.

**Day Six** starts early. I get woken at 3.30am by the other climbers in the hut getting up to climb Mt Aylmer before flying out later that day, plus the snoring has kept me awake most of the night. I get up to the loo to witness a light sprinkling of new snow but now a clear sky with stars out. Back to bed for a couple hours of sleep, to then be woken by Gaylene and Liz at 6am, rearing to go. But they hadn't informed Geoff! Coffee in hand, Geoff slowly awakens. Geoff decides today we'll climb Mt Aylmer a 2699 metre peak on the main divide, visit Tasman Saddle Hut then make our way down the Tasman Glacier. An action packed filled day. The fog arrives again but looks like it will clear. Leaving the hut at 8am, we witness a beautiful display of glittering ice crystals in the sky. We rope up to travel across the neve to the base of Mt Aylmer. At this stage I'm feeling rather nervous, I'm not keen on the exposure along the ridge and say I'll just wait here. I haven't done this sort of climbing for 20 years! Geoff will have none of that, he says we all go. With his confidence, experience and awesome leadership skills he leads us to the top, belaying each other for support. The views were stupendous; we could see the Tasman Ocean in the distance, Mt Cook, Tasman and many more peaks. I've also climbed a lot steeper terrain, so my anxieties were unfounded, as long as I didn't look down! After congratulatory photos it was back to our packs down on the neve and lunch. The Tasman neve is a hive of activity today, helicopters flying people in and out and several groups climbing Mt Aylmer. Off then to visit Tasman Saddle Hut for Geoff's requisite photos. Yet again an amazing location for a hut perched on top of a rocky ridge overlooking the Tasman. Superlatives are hard to come by now. Back again to our packs and the start of the decent down the Tasman. Soft snow initially, then hard ice. A ski plane circles above us wanting to land, we are on his runaway. Scampering out of the way the plane flies in very close to land. The pilot enjoyed that! Making good progress we descend around halfway down the glacier when Gaylene suggests camping for the night. We head over to the moraine looking for a suitable campsite. While Gary boils the billy for a brew, Gaylene, Tony and Geoff depart in different direction to suss out a campsite. They return some time later with the best they could find, a rocky strip of moraine. Off we trot to pitch tents and enjoy a late meal proficiently cooked by Liz.

**Day Seven.** Fine weather again, Geoff is certainly in the good books with the Gods☺. Our goal today is Ball Shelter. Steady progress is made down the glacier. As we stop for a break I notice some sort of machine on the right of the Glacier, "hey guys" I say, what's that? It takes a while for them to spot it, and then we're off to investigate. A snow plough/bulldozer left abandoned many years earlier. A very strange sight indeed. Gary climbs in for a good photo shoot. Three hours



into the day I inform Geoff of my very swollen and sore knee. I'd twisted it the day before and now it is very painful to walk on. It is certainly a distraction from the enjoyment of the day. At lunch I take stock, tape and bandage it and take plenty of pain relief. Thanks Geoff for your codeine and Tony for the loan of your bandage. The rest of the day comprised of ice, then rocks again on top of ice. At this stage I was feeling a little nostalgic for a bit of bush. As we came up to the moraine wall leading to Ball Shelter it was suggested by Gaylene to camp the night, then head up in the morning as we were all rather tired. Geoff was

in agreement, so we camped below among the rocks with the tussock tantalising close. Geoff proposes this is the one location we should use those poo pots. Much hilarity later, a number of poo pots are filled.

**Day Eight** dawned fine again. A hop, skip and jump to our cars. After breaking camp, Geoff looks for a suitable point to head up. Penny had said she had gone up the moraine around 800m further down. Geoff investigates and decides it's the best choice. He leads the party of ten up, no problem. On top, packs are dropped and off everyone heads to investigate Ball Shelter, minus me. Now my left knee is swollen as well, I need to keep going so I don't seize up. I make steady progress down the Ball road with Raymond, Chris, John and Gary. The rest wish to stop for lunch at a waterfall but our group is intent on continuing. It's a scorcher of a day and nearing the cars the others decide for a refreshing swim. I don't dare, I'm afraid I want

be able to start again. I make my way to the cars, Gary's keys in hand. On arriving I drop my pack and head for a swim at the car park, despite all the tourist numbers. As the others arrive, we change and pack up waiting for Geoff, Liz, Tony, Gaylene and Aarn. After an hours wait, no one to be seen, we decide to head to the village for a bite to eat. Oh dear, Gary's car won't start, a flat battery. Help is gathered from a local tourist and within no time we were on our



way. We pick up gear Merv has dropped at Unwin hut and head to the Mountaineer's Café. The others join us and cars seats are shuffled to fit 10 people into 2 cars instead of the anticipated 11 people in 3 cars. Goodbyes are said and off we travel home after an eventful, fun packed 8 days of tramping and climbing. It was an amazing stark landscape. I was so appreciative of the chance to tick it off my bucket list.

The ride home was just as enjoyable as the trip as Gaylene and Tony regaled me with their survival story on the high seas. I still think of it now and again. Gaylene, you really do need to put it in print.

## **AWARDS**

**BEST GOURMET MEAL:** Goes to John, loved the dehydrated Passata sauce and anchovies.

**BEST FASHION STATEMENT:** Chris for her Chux multi cloths and safety pins for make shift sleeves.

**MOST CHEERFUL PERSON:** Gaylene for your positive encouraging attitude at all times.

**MOST SUPPORTIVE ENCOURAGING MEMBER:** Goes to Gary for looking after us tail end Charlies. I appreciated you letting me follow you when I was struggling.

**LEADERSHIP AWARD:** Undisputed champion Geoff. For your calm, experienced manner. Taking everything in your stride. You made the trip possible. Thank you.

**GENEROSITY AWARD:** To Tony for the loan of your bandage, straight off your own leg!!

**BEST DESSERT:** To Raymond for carrying the Rocky Road all that way. Loved it, appreciated by all.

**GEAR EXPERT:** To Aarn for your innovative pack designs. You've made my pack carrying pain free. Luv it.

**THE ONE AND ONLY MEAT DISH:** Thanks Liz. I'm a bit of a carnivore at heart.

We were: John Allan, Raymond Ford, Gary Huish, Tony Lawton, Chris Leaver, Merv Meredith, Geoff Spearpoint (leader), Liz Stephenson, Aarn Tate, Gaylene Wilkinson and Angela Grigg 🏠 AG