



*PTC Monthly
Newsletter*
May 2017

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

President	Vacant		Quartermaster	Brian Smith	355 9945
Vice-President	Gary Huish	332 7020	Social Events	Maureen Whelan	027 819 9251
Vice-President	Kevin Hughes	332 6281	Committee	Diane Mellish	337 5530
Treasurer	Sue Piercey	384 9567	Committee	Leo Manders	356 1731
Trip Planner	Kerry Moore	359 5069	Committee	Raymond Ford	351 9496
Secretary	Merv Meredith	322 7239	Committee	Keith McQuillan	384 6164
Editor	Ruth Barratt	335 0010			

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

Tues 9 May	Conservation of the Kea Laura Young and Mark Brabyn will talk about a Kea Conservation Project and online sighting forms that tramping clubs are encouraged to use. Supper Duty: Helen Harkness & John Haylock
Tues 13 Jun	Cycling the Croatian Islands - Lorraine Wilmshurst In late May / early June 2016, Lorraine and Malcolm spent a week cycling on the islands off the Dalmatian Coast, near Split. They cycled up and down across these islands, experiencing the countryside, culture, local hospitality, sailing and swimming.. Supper Duty: To be arranged
Tues 11 July	Share your photos with other club members. Bring your collection on a flash drive for showing on the night. The Club will also be collecting and showing photos for the FMC competition but don't feel that your photos have to live up to that standard



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.

Bike Trips

The Club has a mountain biking section, Fat Tyre Fanatics, who head out on casual day trips throughout the year. For details in biking trips contact Chris Leaver 322 6445, or ptc75@clear.net.nz.

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|------------------|---|--------------------------|
| 7 May | MT BARROSA | J36 BX19 |
| Sun. | Diane Mellish 337 5530 | |
| * | 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 by staying at both huts. | |
| | List Closes 6 May | |
| 14 May | HIGH PEAK | L35 BX21 |
| Sun. | Chris Leaver 322 6445 | |
| * | A moderate walk up 968m High Peak in the Rockwood Range. | |
| | Meet 8am Church Corner, 20 Yaldhurst Rd | Approx cost: \$15 |
| 20-21 May | ARTHURS PASS BASE | K33 BV20 |
| | Diane Mellish 337 5530 | |
| ** | A range of trips based at the Catholic Outdoor Club house at the edge of the village. \$15 per night with a \$100 max, so more people make it cheaper as well as merrier! Leaving town Friday evening. Ice axe and possibly crampons needed for harder walks. | |
| | List closes 13 Apr | |
| 21 May | CHCH 360° -- DUNES WETLANDS TRACK | M36 BX24 |
| Sun. | Awaiting leader. Call Kerry M 359 5069 if you can help | |
| * | Part of the CHRISTCHURCH 360 TRAIL This flat easy leg runs from Lower Styx Road to Pages Road | |
| | Meet 8am Placemakers, 319 Cranford St | |
| 27-28 May | COLDWATER HUT | M33 BV23 |
| | Bruce Cameron 022 188 5905 | |
| ** | Saturday morning drive to the Hurunui swingbridge then an easy walk up the Jollie Brook and the pretty Cold Stream to the hut. Time to explore upstream after arrival. | |
| | List closes 20 May | |

- 27 May**
Saturday
 **LINCOLN TO MOTUKARARA**
Chris Leaver 322 6445
Easy half-day ride from Lincoln to Motukarara and back via road and rail trail to make a circuit. Start and finish at **The Laboratory cafe/bar, 17 West Belt Lincoln.**
Contact Chris in case of doubtful weather.
Meet 9:30am
- 28 May**
Sun.
***** **FRENCH HILL** **BX25**
Geoff & Mary Korver 355 3905
Easy-moderate ramble from Hilltop to 815m French Hill. Great all-round views.
Meet 8am PMH, Hackthorne Rd end, across the road by the rr **Approx cost: \$9**
- 3-5 Jun** **WILBERFORCE-MOA-UNKNOWN** **J34,K34 BV19,BW19**
Merv Meredith 322 7239
******* A moderate-hard trip up the Wilberforce, with three longish days. Early start on Saturday.
QB wknd From the canal road end, we cross the Wilberforce in low winter flow and travel up the true right to Moa Stream, staying the first night at Moa Stream Hut. From there, it's a steady walk up North Stream to Moa Saddle at 1078m, then a steep descent into Unknown Stream and downstream to Unknown Hut. Monday is a long plod back down-river, but this time crossing to Fanghill on the true left, after reaching Moa Hut on the right. A great early winter trip.
List closes 27 May
- 3-8 Jun** **WAIKAREMOANA TRACK** **BG40**
Evelien Baas 358 5521
********* Trace the shoreline of Lake Waikaremoana, An easy-moderate hike past giant podocarps and remote beaches, Enjoy breathtaking views from Panekire Bluff. The spectacular Korokoro Falls drop off a sheer cliff. <http://www.doc.govt.nz/waikaremoana>
QB wknd **List closes 21 May**
- 3-5 Jun** **BANKS PENINSULA BASE** **BY25**
QB wknd **Awaiting leader. Call Kerry M 359 5069 if you can help**
******* A variety of day walks from Akaroa
List closes 27 May
- 4 Jun** **CHARING CROSS** **M32 BU 24**
Sun. **Awaiting leader. Call Kerry M 359 5069 if you can help**
***** Easy-moderate tramp to this 999m peak in the Tekoa Range behind Culverden in North Canterbury.
Meet 8am Placemakers, 319 Cranford St **Approx cost: \$15**
- 10-11 Jun** **BLACK HILL HUT** **L34 BW22**
Kerry Moore 359 5069
****** Moderate trip to this hut in Oxford Forest. On Sunday morning we will walk the short distance up to 1300m Black Hill.
List closes 3 May
- 11 Jun** **HOGS BACK** **K34 BW21**
Sun. **Sue Piercey 384 9567**
***** Easy-moderate loop to the peak behind Cheeseman's Forest Lodge in the Craigieburn Range. Great views of the range and its beech forests.
Meet 8am Church Corner, 20 Yaldhurst Rd **Approx cost: \$15**
- 17-19 Jun** **WAITAHA--KIWI FLAT** **BW17**
Bill Templeton 354 2277
******* We'll take the new track up the north side of the Waitaha to Kiwi Flat Hut Sunday, Scamper Torrent Hut for lunch. Monday, back to cars, moderate-hard
List closes 10 Jun

18 Jun Sun. *	PINES BEACH WALKWAY Keith McQuillan 384 6164 Easy walkway along the coast of Pegasus Bay with views from Banks Peninsula to the Kaikouras. Meet 8am Placemakers, 319 Cranford St	M35 BW24 Approx cost: \$2
24-25 Jun **	LAKE DANIELS Margaret Clark 348 4993 Easy trip to this beautiful lake to the west of Lewis Pass, surrounded by beech-forested hills. The high standard walking track is suitable for children. List closes 17 Jun	L31,M31 BT22,23
25 Jun Sun. *	OG, GOG, MAGOG Bruce Cameron 365 8210 These Ogs come in a row and they all line up so we can "knock" them off in one easy-moderate walk. We'll be looking into the Waimak Rr before it reaches the gorgy section. Meet 8am Church Corner, 20 Yaldhurst Rd	L34 BV21 Approx cost: \$17
1-2 Jul **	HAWDON MID-WINTER BASE Keith McQuillan 384 6164 Staying at cosy Kidson Lodge and doing a range of easy to moderate trips such as , Sudden and Hawdon Valleys or the tarn on Woolshed Hill with views of the Savannah Range. List closes 24 Jun	K33 BV21
1-Jul Sat. *	PIGEON BAY WALKWAY Awaiting leader. Call Kerry M 359 5069 if you can help An easy , mostly flat walk alongside Pigeon Bay to the impressive heads Meet: 8am PMH, Hackthorne Rd end, over the rd by the rr	N36 BX25 Approx cost: \$11
8-9 Jul **	YOUNGMAN STREAM HUT-LILBURNE HILL Gary Huish 332 7020 Easy-moderate tramp to Youngman Stream Hut in the upper Ashley. We will exit via Lilburne Hill and Tarn Hut List closes 1 July	M34 BV22
9-Jul Sun. *	MT WHITE Merv Meredith 322 7239 We drive in from Mt White bridge to Mt White Station for a moderate climb up open spurs to this 1741m peak. Take ice axe and crampons in case of snow Meet 8am Church Corner, 20 Yaldhurst Rd	L33,L34 BV21 Approx cost: \$23
15-16 Jul **	NORTH OPUHA - SPURS HUT Calum McIntosh 376 6133 Moderate tramp to the North Opuha River hut with a climb to Point 2001 in the Ben McCloud Range. List closes 8 July	J38 BV21
16-Jul Sun. *	EAST ENDERS TRACK Helen Harkness 384 2890 An easy exploration of both sides of the Summit Road round Greenwood Park visiting Windsor Castle, Jollies Bush and Mt. Pleasant. Meet 9am Barnett Park	N36,M36 BX24
22-25 Jul ****	KEPLER TRACK Peter Umbers 359 9118 The moderate Kepler Track is an alpine adventure with stunning panoramas. It takes you from the shore of Lake Te Anau to spend a night high above the clouds at Luxmore Hut (1085m). Traverse the ridgelines of the Kepler Mountains, drop down to beautiful Lake Manapouri, before heading back through peaceful beech forest. List closes 8 July	C43 CD07,08

- 22-23 Jul HOPE-KIWI LODGE L32, M32 BU22,23**
Pauline Hill 357 8136
**** Easy-moderate** tramp in Lake Sumner Forest Park, overnighiting in Hope Kiwi Lodge. Good track all the way through beech forest and river terraces
List Closes 15 July
- 22-Jul RYDE FALLS L34 BW22**
Sat. Mary McKeown 358 7717
*** Easy** walk through mixed podocarp forest to these pretty falls which come down in three tiers amid a mixture of bush. Starting from Coopers Creek.
Meet 8am Placemakers, 319 Cranford St Approx cost: \$10
- 29-30 Jul CROW HUT K34 BV20**
Raymond Ford 351 9496
**** Easy-moderate** tramp to a comfortable hut (with woodfire) in a clearing between forested slopes and the Waimakariri River in Arthur's Pass National Park.
List closes 22 July
- 30-Jul MT BINSER 3 PEAKS L33,L34 BV21**
Sun. Merv Meredith 322 7239
*** Moderate-hard** trip in the south-east corner of Arthurs Pass National Park. We go up the Binser track to the saddle before turning south up a spur. The route is then unmarked through bush and onto the open tops. There are three peaks, ranging from 1753m to 1860m with a deep saddle between the low and middle peak. Possible round-trip depending on conditions. Take ice axe and crampons.
Meet 8am Church Corner, 20 Yaldhurst Rd Approx cost: \$20

SOCIAL EVENTS

**Tues 16th
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! The challenge is to work as a team to solve the puzzles, codes and riddles and escape the room in the nick of time. 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 before dinner at 7 pm - a selection of take-aways, from the Thai Container. 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
<https://escapeartists.nz/Christchurch/About>

Tues 20 June Cashmere Capers

Meet at Gary and Margot's house, 5 Patchett Place, Cashmere Hills, at 6pm for an exploration of places you may not have seen (or recognise again). Bring a head torch for the walk. Followed by a potluck dinner at 7.15pm. Please let Margot know if you are coming by Sunday, 18 June. Contact: Margot Bowden 332 7020 or margot.bowden@gmail.com.

Tues 15 July City Lights

See the regeneration progress followed by dinner. Details to follow. Contact: Margot Bowden 332 7020 or margot.bowden@gmail.com.

NOTES

Membership: The PTC welcomes

Deadline for the May newsletter: 31st May - send to Ruth Barratt rannalong@gmail.com

Next Committee Meeting: Tuesday 30th May 2017

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?

PTC - FMC Photo Competitions 2017

Again this year, we are planning a full PTC competition to choose entries for the FMC Photo Competition moved to a different time slot for 2017 and closes on 15th September. Entries to the PTC competition are open NOW, so please have a look at your recent piccies, load some on a memory stick and pass to Brian Smith or ask Brian how best to submit. Closing date for entries to the PTC competition is 30th June 2017.

Full details of the PTC and FMC Photo Competition, including categories, formats, etc. have already been circulated on Communicator 25.04.17.

Merv M

TRIP REPORTS

Walker Pass –Amber Col –Sudden Valley, 15- 16th March 2017

A little confused about the dates above? Yes, they are Wed – Thursday. Our PTC trip was listed in Footnotes for Sat 18 – Sun 19th March but by close off only one had enlisted. John Allan had phoned and questioned me about the route and timing as he had an OVER FORTIES group planning to go there on Wed – Thurs. He said the forecast was for a dying southerly Wed morning and fine on Thursday. If the PTC trip didn't go, would I like to come? At noon on the Sunday I phoned John and said yes please. So this report is what PTC might have experienced.

I first did this trip in late May 2010 with Gary Huish and Sue Piercey. The 2010 trip was in not very good weather and poor visibility. But a classic trip none the less, enough for me to say I must come back in fine weather. Well the PTC trip didn't go but this Wed – Thurs one did and I wouldn't have missed it for anything. I will try not to mention the weather again but it was FINE, blue sky, no wind, tee shirt weather and not even a dew at our campsite below Amber Col! Got the picture?

Helen and I were late getting to Springfield to rendezvous with John and Bridget. 7.45am there, so it was 9.00am before we were walking from the Hawdon shelter. But the timing ended up fine. Three hours up to Hawdon Hut and a chat with a chap from Bath doing an impressive series of multi day trips in the area. Then up Twin Falls passed the tarn, or muddy basin, to have lunch on Walker Pass. By 2.00pm we had dropped to where the track crosses the East Otehae and turned back up it. The climb up the stream steadily steepened so it was a relief to eventually emerge into the upper basin at 5.00pm. Our 2010 tent terrace was still there and the little stream 10 metres away was still just trickling, in March. What a lovely evening. And night, with a full moon.

Thursday, we were away at 8.30am up to the Col then climbing to our left up toward point 1828m. From pt1828m a rocky ridge runs south some distance. The ridge is steep and not easily travelled on either side. I had a misplaced memory of this ridge. It was of another ridge altogether! We sidling right a bit to find a semi suitable route up through the rocks to the ridge. Then travelled south along the ridge some distance before it looked certain we would be blocked. One or two screes down on the eastern side were explored before settling on a reasonable one from which we could sidle around to the saddle at the southern end running up on to the Polar Range. Took some time before lunch.

After lunch, the scree down without snow was steep, sometimes a bit boney and lumpy toward the bottom, but mostly good fast travel. At 3.20pm we stopped in the heat for a spell at the biv, then continued on, sidling on the TL to bypass Barrier Falls, emerged from the gorge into late afternoon sunshine and arrived back at the shelter at 6.25pm. John had questioned me on Wednesday how come it was 6.00pm when we got out on 2010? Now he knows.

Thanks lots for the invite, John. We were John Allan, Bridget Barclay, Helen Binnie & Merv M. MM

Annette Plateau 17 – 20 March

While I'm rather partial to wee adventure in the hills, our recent PTC trip to the Annette Plateau delivered a little more of an adventure than I had expected...

So how did it all start? Plan A was a four day mod-hard trip to the Serpentine Range got abandoned with high travel costs for a party of three and uncooperative weather. After some debate the Mt Cook region was closer, so the option of a 3 day trip to the Annette plateau got wings. Wow! I thought, another alpine trip! Yay!, I said, I'm keen! How often is the Plan B more exciting than plan A???

The weather forecast had suggested a brief fine spell. Just enough time for us to achieve our objective of reaching the plateau and maybe even a climb if we were lucky. But we knew we'd need to be lower down by Monday as a northwester loomed over the forecast charts. So we drove to Cook, staying at Unwin Lodge for Friday night, then we walked up the Sebastopol ridge in the mist via the Red Tarns for several hours on Saturday. Where the upper part of the ridge began to climb steeply, was critical decision time. We needed to decide if we sidled off the ridge to the ice/snow or continue up the ridge along the rock. Sunshine broke through the mist, giving us a route and the decision was made to head left for the snow.



We donned our crampons and with careful route-finding to avoid the slots, we soon popped out on the Annette Plateau to amazing views of Mt Cook and the Main Divide! Even though it was now 5:30 pm abouts, we bagged an easy Mt Annette after a shortish rock scramble. Finding a place to camp for the night was a little more fraught. Our wishlist was a fine piece of real estate that was relatively flat, had a view of the peaks, evening and morning sun, on stones - not ice, with a water supply. But we got lucky and I started cooking dinner after finding a number small water collection pools in the rock. Geoff and Raymond scraped out two

sites for the Minaret and Microlite. Geoff had much fun telling Raymond how fussy I am with not wanting to lie with my head downhill (true, cos it gives me headaches), and how he was required to carry a level to check that tent site was flat (not true - he doesn't!). While we dined on mince couscous with fresh green beans, we were rewarded with an amazing rosy-pink light on Cook as the sun set. Capturing shots of Cook with the light changing from rosy-pink to gold was a major distraction to eating our dinner ... and the night sky - views that I will never forget.



Next day dawned beautifully fine. We were entertained over breakfast with thuds and crashes followed by clouds of ice and snow avalanches peeling off from one of the hanging glaciers under Mt Sefton. The finale was a thunderous roar as a large serac collapsed onto the glacier below. A quick pack-up saw us heading off for a day trip to Sladden Saddle and then onto the Sladden Glacier. The snow conditions and slots presented no problems. The wind was beginning to get up, but we found a sheltered lunch spot in the lee of the hills before attempting Mt Sealy. We weren't that hopeful of success as Simon Middlemass, Unwin Lodge had mentioned that it had nasty

rock and hard ice (both true) and suggested Mt Jean and Mt Jeanette as better options. And sure enough we decided that the south facing ice required 2 tools (which we didn't have) so we turned back. I was pleased about that, as I'd just slipped about a metre or so on the weethixy argillite and was not only sporting grazes and bruises, but my confidence had been dented somewhat. We had plenty of time to scoot round to Mt Jean, and Raymond and Geoff scrambled up the warm rock slabs to the top (I chose to soak up sun instead). Then we were soon heading back to our tent site, with enough daylight left, thankfully. Back at the camp site we had a serious discussion about whether to drop down several hundred metres as the wind was picking up and our tents were very exposed. A quick hot drink helped to re-coup energy levels for the pack up and walk down. About an hour later and just on dark, we found a wee basin with a tarn and some flattish gravel, tucked in under the glacier that was considerably more sheltered than our prior previous spot, with only a short descent required to be on the sidle out to Mueller hut. The wind was getting up by that stage so we opted not to pitch the tents but instead huddle sardine-style in our sleeping bags in the lee of the ice. Fortunately there was enough shelter under the overhanging ice to fire up the stove and cook up a meal.

So much for sleeping... all night the wind constantly tugged at our bags or tried to tip us off our mats. The boys were kind and placed me in the middle and tied inside my bag to avoid the cold I did manage a few zzz's. Geoff complained of wet feet of wind whipped water off the tarn. As dawn broke we could see the waterspouts and spray off the tarn that was soaking our bags, and a gale was blowing across our camp.

Breakfast was major challenge, but we were adamant we needed sustenance. So would be the effort to get down to Mueller Hut, now the wind was so bad... 100 km/hr at least. Geoff vowed he'd never used so many matches to light the burner (at least 11?). Every move was carefully orchestrated in case our stuff blew away. Holding onto your coffee in one hand and a bowl of pog in the other, while lying in your pit to keep warm, became a major achievement. Packing up was less successful. Standing up in the wind gusts resulted in one losing hold of that item one was carefully stowing away, as one grabbed the nearest rock to steady oneself - I lost a billy lid and a ground sheet, sorry Brian! I also lost my climbing helmet. One of Raymond's gaiters was ripped off and Geoff had no idea at what stage of the night he lost one of his. Geoff was amazed when he saw the billy lid spin up to at least 50m up, asking me what on earth was that. Because it was spinning so fast it looked like a ball!

We linked arms and retreated towards a large pile of rocks that offered some shelter to decide what to do, when a wind gust lifted all 3 of us clean off the ice. I then got dragged along the ice, hanging on to my buddies for dear life. Having never experienced such strong winds, I protested in a very un-ladylike manner.... Geoff deposited me behind some the rocks, while they reconnoitered another route down. After a short while they came back to get me. We then waited a short while to see if the wind would drop but to no avail, so we set off on the new route. Once off the Plateau and on the sidle to Mueller Hut the wind was gusty but manageable. Big clouds of dust were blowing up from the Mueller Glacier. Walking while holding the odd rock for steadying and we were soon making steady progress. Thinking all was well now, bar the odd gust. But as it

happens that was not to be the case... An hour on, and Raymond was picked up by a gust and blown into some large boulders. This time he'd landed on his left wrist. It didn't look good. His wrist had that odd out-of-alignment look to it - not at all good. I rapidly put my PTC-subsidised –Outdoor- first aid course to use and strapped it up, plus administering some codeine. It was now a slower trip down as Raymond with one-arm-only balanced his way through the rocks and wind gusts. We made the hut by 2pm and checked in with a delightful Californian warden who tended to us with offers of chocolate biscuits. We made a brew, lunched and slowly headed down to Mt Cook village. Geoff and I shared the driving home, and delivered Raymond to A&E before midnight. Our diagnosis was correct - a couple of fractures. While an epic trip, it was magical. I've also learnt to check for how close isobars are on the forecast charts rather than just the absence of precipitation! Thanks Raymond for a great and very memorable trip.

Party was Raymond Ford (leader), Geoff Spearpoint, Liz Stephenson (scribe)

Mt Cook Base 24-26 March

Our 8am departure from Kevin's place was slightly delayed due to car swapping after Kevin saw just how small my Suzuki Swift bootspace is. Base camps mean quite a lot of extra gear such as chilly bins, pillows and liquid refreshments. Our two cars of four people stopped at Fairlie for an early lunch and some of us realised for the first time why this place is a must-stop as we tucked into their famous pies. I can recommend the salmon and bacon. Ask Kevin for the list of Christchurch outlets if you don't wish to drive to Fairlie.

We arrived at Unwin Lodge early afternoon and set off for a walk up the steps to the red tarns on the route to Mt Sebastopol. It was grey but not windy or raining. Beyond the steps were rougher tracks. Some of the party chose to head back down while others headed up to get good views of more tarns on a terraced area and views of the Tasman and Hooker Valleys.

Back at the Lodge the other seven travelling independently in three vehicles arrived late afternoon and some chose to go walking near the lodge or further afield. It was great to sit back on the comfortable couches and enjoy a drink, nibbles and the conversation while gazing out at the landscape from the large windows. Kevin and Heather went out for dinner at the Old Mountaineer's café and Margaret caught up with a friend working at the Hermitage while the rest of us catered for ourselves that night.

Saturday morning was supposed to be an early start for some but it was dark at 7am and the cloud was down low on Mt Wakefield (one planned destination) and so more time in bed was the choice for some of the party.

By 9am the weather was still indifferent and the cloud obscuring the tops so Mt Wakefield was ruled out and most opted to climb up to Sealey Tarns and possibly continue to Mueller hut. Others chose to go walking up the Hooker Valley and visit the village and have a coffee at the Hermitage. A couple of people climbed part way up the Mt Wakefield track later in the day.

The track up to Sealey Tarns consists of 2200 steep steps so a morning tea stop at the tarns was well deserved. The cloud was obscuring the views on the way up but people coming down from Mueller hut were saying it had been clear up there and so some of the party decided to continue up towards the hut with others choosing to go down after climbing a bit higher.



The cloud was coming and going from around the hut and the Mueller glacier was not visible but most of Mt Sealey was clear and the view of the top of Mt Cook came and went. Five of the party continued on up behind the hut to climb Mt Ollivier. The views from above the cloud were absolutely magical with peaks all around

showing out of the cloud. There was much clicking of cameras. The cloud continued to gradually lift as we descended and the views of the Hooker and back to Mt Cook village were good by the time we were back at Sealey tarns.

Dinner that night was the usual tasty pot-luck dinner with plenty of variety.

Sunday dawned gloomy with drizzle which later turned to rain and so there was no enthusiasm for walking. Instead the hot pools at Tekapo beckoned and we headed there with some of us enjoying a coffee in the café while others soaked in the pools before heading back to Christchurch.

Thanks to Heather and Kevin for organising a great base camp. Anyone can stay at Unwin lodge so have a look at alpineclub.org.nz if you fancy a visit to Mt Cook (preferred booking by email).

We were: Kevin & Heather Hughes, Pat & Callum McIntosh, Diane Mellish, Jill Fenner, Yvette So, Maureen Whelan, Margaret Clark, Maureen Thompson & Graham Phipps-Black, Rosemary Goodyear with her son Lachlan and his friend Phoebe, Sue Piercey (SP)

Mount Karetu 02 April 2017

We seven trampers sat off for Okuku pass to climb Mount Karetu on a clear and sunny Sunday morning. We arrived at the pass shortly after 9am to a cool breeze and blue skies. We were soon on our way following a well-maintained fence line to the ridge, which then took us directly to the summit. There was no actual track to follow, just those from previous trampers in the area, but it was a pleasant walk amongst the tussocks and snow grass.



Although I came across a few signs of pig rooting on my previous trip here a few weeks ago, there were none to be seen this time. After 2 hours we arrived at the top, but with our packs half off, we decided to continue our way down the correct spur to Okuku Pass road as the current weather was closing in from the south, far earlier than predicted.



Continuing down, the clouds seemed to be dispersing, but returned shortly later at a faster speed than before. Once on the road it was time to find a sheltered area from the cold and wind and finally have lunch. Diane persevered and found a spot along the roadside. After recharging our batteries we continued for another 90 minutes along a walkable shingle road to the cars. We returned back at the cars at 2pm, and left Mount Karetu behind us in a layer of cloud.

We were the Seven:

Helen Harkness, Diane Mellish, Jill Fenner, Dorothy Giejsztowt , Peter Umbers, Andrew Duck, Norman Burden.

Mackenzies Peak – Easter 2017

You wouldn't have seen this one on the program: the two-day trip was planned as a private trip with just me and a friend. But we were very happy when five "gatecrashers" from PTC joined us on account of unsuitable weather for their NW Nelson trip. We did invite them!

Mackenzies Peak (2200m) lies just west of the lower end of Lake Pukaki, above the headwaters of the Twizel River. At this time of year it is a big pile of rocks, but I am told the area is great for heliskiing and ski touring in winter. From the summit there are awesome views towards the big peaks in the Mt Cook area, as well as a whole panorama of the interesting peaks in the Dobson, Hopkins and Huxley valleys.



On the summit rocks with view of Hopkins valley peaks

Access involved a 9km drive over a very rough 4WD track to Baikie Hut. This requires picking up a key from Pukaki Downs Station and paying a fee to them. Our vehicles were only just up to the task. Ideally use a large vehicle with plenty of ground clearance if you wish to dodge the long walk in from the Mount Cook road. We had travelled from Christchurch Sunday morning, then lunched at Baikie Hut. Walking up Duncan Stream, the warm afternoon sunshine showcased the beautiful Mackenzie Country tussock landscape to perfection, and 4 hours later we arrived at the big tarn at 1335m. Its beach was our campsite for the night, vaulted over by a velvet sky with myriad stars, familiar constellations and later a full, bright moon.



Camping by the tarn.

Next day we excitedly climbed above the tarn through tussock, then rock-fields studded with emerald green tarns to the summit. Easter Bunny made a timely appearance and delivered some eggs about here! He hopped away before I could snap a photo of him.



At 1900m we dropped our packs, choosing the very steep, loose, blocky scree of the north face for the final ascent. With towering gendarmes above us and the constant threat of loose rocks becoming dislodged by our feet, we had to be vigilant as we climbed.

Excitement and relief surfaced as we emerged onto the summit at midday. Luckily there was a very easy exit route down gentle slopes on the western flank of the peak with interesting views into Irishman's Creek, a Dobson tributary. Tarn to summit: about 4 hrs with full packs on.

To return to the cars we traversed the high ridge which lies just east of Mackenzie Stream, over points 1945,

1959, 1725 and 1188. It was very scenic and enjoyable except for a trying traverse to sidle onto it from near the small tarn just NE of the summit.

This was a great trip in a new area for most of us and we came out mountain high. We were Trevor, Diane, Yvette, John, Derek, Merv and Gary (Diane Mellish)