



PTC Monthly Newsletter

November 2018

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

President	Diane Mellish	337 5530	Editor	Raymond Ford	351 9496
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Vice-President	Kevin Hughes	332 6281	Social Events	Maureen Whalen	027 819 9251
Treasurer	Mike Bourke	332 7097	Committee	Keith McQuillan	384 6164
Trip Planner	Kerry Moore	359 5069	Committee	Maureen Thompson	021 2665778
Secretary	Merv Meredith	322 7239			

New Member Enquiries:	Stan Wilder	260 2340	Contact Stan to request an info-pack. You will also receive three complimentary newsletters
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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 13 November 	Smart Phone Based Mapping Systems - Ian Roxburgh Ian is one of our club members, who has been sharing his knowledge of trip navigation using his phone for a number of years. If you want to find out what is available, particularly when internet connection is not possible, come along and find out about free and low cost map programs and information sources. Supper duty - Yvette So and Geoff Spearpoint
Tues 11 December 	Classic Kiwi Christmas Games Come along for a fun filled Kiwi Christmas evening with games and activities for everyone. Be prepared to be entertained and possibly challenged with some events from your past. Bring a plate of goodies with a Christmas theme for a shared supper.



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, contact the trip leader beforehand. A phone inquiry does not oblige you to go on the trip. If the weather is turning bad, contact the trip leader or if you use email check the PTC Communicator the day before for trip updates.

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 on biking trips contact Chris Leaver 322 6445, or ptc75@clear.net.nz.

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|---------------------------------------|---|---|
| 10-11 Nov

** | Mt Longfellow
https://www.topomap.co.nz/NZTopoMap/nz34314/Evangeline-Bivouac/Canterbury
A moderate-hard climb of this 1900m peak in the Glynne Wye Range
List closes 4 Nov | Laurayne Robb 021 619 718 |
| 10 Nov
<u>Saturday</u>
* | Cutty Grass Hut
http://www.topomap.co.nz/NZTopoMap/nz28636/Cutty-Grass-Hut/Canterbury
Near Mt Hutt, this easy-moderate walk starts on the Mt Alford track, climbs a little and then crosses to the track that leads up-valley to Cutty Grass Hut.
Meet 8am Church Corner, 20 Yaldhurst Rd | Keith McQuillan 384 6164

Approx cost \$20 |
| 16-18 Nov
Show
Weekend
*** | Lake Angelus via Speargrass
http://www.topomap.co.nz/NZTopoMap/nz36568/Lake-Angelus/Tasman
A moderate trip in Nelson Lakes NP to this scenic gem
List closes 11 Nov | Angela Grigg 027 578 9743 |
| 16-20 Nov
Show
Weekend
***** | Mt Saxton--Leatham--Severn River
http://www.topomap.co.nz/NZTopoMap/nz38424/Saxton/Marlborough
A moderate-hard circuit in Marlborough approached from the Molesworth Road
List closes 11 Nov | Diane Mellish 337 5530 |
| 18 Nov
Sun
* | Mt Grey
http://www.topomap.co.nz/NZTopoMap/nz33438/Mount-Grey%2fMaukatere/Canterbury
An easy-moderate circuit to this 933m hill inland from Amberley. We'll go up Mt Grey track and down Red Beech Track
Meet 8am Placemakers, 319 Cranford St | Leader pending

Approx cost \$11 |

24-25 Nov	Mt Gwinevere	Raymond Ford 022 318 0872
**	http://www.topomap.co.nz/NZTopoMap/nz32109/Crow-Hut/Canterbury A moderat hard trip from Klondyke Corner to Crow Hut and up to this 2042m peak on Jellicoe Ridge List closes 18 Nov	
25 Nov	Purau Saddle—Herbert Peak—Gebbies Pass	Keith McQuillan 384 6164
Sun	http://www.topomap.co.nz/NZTopoMap/trck22991/Mount-Herbert-Walkway/Canterbury Starting from Purau Saddle, this is an easy-moderate trip along the eastern rim of Lyttelton Harbour to the highest point on the peninsula at 919m. Meet 8am PMH, Hackthorne Rd end, over the rd by the rr	
1-5 Dec	Dusky Track	Angela Grigg 027 578 9743
*****	http://www.topomap.co.nz/NZTopoMap/nz13558/Seaforth-River/Southland An 84km track in the heart of Fiordland NP. List closes 20 Nov	
2 Dec	Mt Manson from Coal Pit Spur	Merv Meredith 322 7239
Sun	http://www.topomap.co.nz/NZTopoMap/nz32874/Mount-Manson/Canterbury A moderate climb to this 1858m Craigieburn Range peak via Coal Pit Spur Meet 8am Church Corner, 20 Yaldhurst Rd	
		Approx cost \$19
8-9 Dec	Fools Col--Jordan Saddle – Merv	Merv Meredith 322 7239
**	http://www.topomap.co.nz/NZTopoMap/nz31582/Fools-Col/Canterbury Moderate-hard going up the Waimak and over the col to the Avoca River. Sunday back to the Waimak via Jordan Saddle List closes 2 Dec	
9 Dec	The Bens (Ben More—Big Ben)	Gary Huish 332 7020
Sun	http://www.topomap.co.nz/NZTopoMap/nz32559/Ben-More/Canterbury A moderate through-trip from Lake Lyndon to the Lake Coleridge road taking in two Bens-- 1655m Ben More and 1416m Big Ben. Take plenty of water Meet 8am Church Corner, 20 Yaldhurst Rd	
		Approx cost \$16
15-20 Dec	Boundary Ck--McKerrow Range—Mt Shrimpton	Diane Mellish 337 5530
*****	http://www.topomap.co.nz/NZTopoMap/nz21119/Mount-Shrimpton/Otago A moderate-hard tramp above Makorora to 2002m Mt Shrimton. Expect splendid views around Mt Aspiring NP. Camping by tarns in the McKerrow Range List closes 6 Dec	
16 Dec	Year End Picnic	Keith McQuillan 384 6164
Sun	Motukarara Racecourse – Waihora Park. A day of fun and games, or lazing. Games will include: petanque, badminton, french cricket, darts, coits and games you remember as a kid. Bring or suggest other games we can play. Picnic from 10am. Look for the PTC Flag. Meet 9am PMH, Hackthorne Rd end, over the rd by the rr	
		Approx cost \$5
5-9 Jan	Matukituki—Snowball—Dart	Raymond Ford 022 318 0872
*****	http://www.topomap.co.nz/NZTopoMap/nz20412/Snowball-Glaciers/West-Coast A hard alpine trip to the Snowdrift Range, which lies to the southwest of Mt Aspiring. Ice axe and crampons essential. Departing and returning via the Matukituki Valley. List closes 15 December	

6-Jan	Timutimu Head - Scenery Nook	Leader pending
Sun	http://www.topomap.co.nz/NZTopoMap/nz36972/Timutimu-Head/Canterbury	
*	Easy-moderate tramp over Peninsula farmland, via 380m Lucas Peak to Timutimu Head, the western head of Akaroa Harbour then to watch the seals at Scenery Nook. Meet 8am Princess Margaret Hospital, Hackthorne Rd end, over the road by the river.	Approx cost \$15
12-13 Jan	Sudden Valley	Leader pending
**	http://www.topomap.co.nz/NZTopoMap/nz33640/Sudden-Valley-Bivouac/Canterbury Easy-moderate tramp in APNP. We cross the broad Hawdon riverbed and enter narrow Sudden Valley. To bypass the gorgy section we climb a gully before emerging into this beautiful valley and camping at the biv List closes 6 Jan	
13-Jan	Middle Waipara Gorge	Kerry Moore 359 5069
Sun	http://www.topomap.co.nz/NZTopoMap/nz33563/Claremont/Canterbury	
*	An easy walk from Ram Paddock Road through millions of years of rock strata up-river to see the large concretions. Down-river we will wade through the narrow section of gorge. Meet 9am Placemakers, 319 Cranford St	Approx cost \$11

NOTES

President's notes

This month we are in the grip of changeable spring weather making forays into the Alps intermittent. However, that has given a small group of us on the Executive committee time to focus on making submissions on the draft Aoraki/Mt Cook and Westland/Tai Poutini National Park Management Plans. These plans will define the policies that govern the management of the parks for the next 10 years.

The two main factors driving new strategies are climate change (and the associated glacial recession) and increasing pressure on everything from burgeoning tourist numbers. We decided to focus our club's feedback on four main issues which we feel are the most relevant to our members.

1. A trial Park and Ride scheme requiring all campervans and day visitors to Mt Cook to park vehicles at the entrance to the National Park and use public transport from there.
2. The upper limits being set for the daily number of aircraft landings at designated landing sites.
3. The 'Poo Pot' issue, i.e. the requirement to carry out all human waste from the alpine zone. Our members who have conscientiously done this in recent years found that no provision had been made for disposal on return to huts at lower altitudes or even at Mt Cook Village.
4. The plan to allow a gondola to be constructed, giving access from the lower Franz Josef valley to the mid-reaches of the glacier around the Aylmer Hut area.

I encourage you to look at these documents if you are interested. Contact me or Raymond if you want to make your opinion known. You can also make a personal submission. The deadline has been pushed out to February 4th. The links to the documents are

<https://www.doc.govt.nz/get-involved/have-your-say/all-consultations/2018/draft-westland-tai-poutini-national-park-management-plan/>

<https://www.doc.govt.nz/get-involved/have-your-say/all-consultations/2018/draft-aorakimount-cook-national-park-management-plan/>

Keep on tramping! Diane.

The November night sky

With summer arriving and daylight hours stretching out, trampers are less likely to see the night sky, except perhaps when crouching behind a rock with bulging eyes and a roll of loo paper.

Low over the southern horizon are the Southern Cross and the two Pointers, embedded in the faint band of our Milky Way galaxy, with the bright star Canopus (Autahi) further east.

After sunset, Jupiter and tiny Mercury are low in the evening sky. High in the sky, orange Mars is still conspicuous, but the only bright stars accompanying it are Fomalhaut and, further towards the southeast, Achernar.

The origins of star names are interesting – many coming from the golden age of Arab astronomy. Perhaps crouching behind a rock was warmer in the Middle East? Achernar means ‘river’s end’ (it’s the last and brightest star in a winding stream of stars, the constellation Eridanus), while Fomalhaut means ‘mouth of the fish’, referring to the faint constellation Piscis Australis. Alas, we’ve lost many of the wonderful Maori star names, but for anyone interested there is a link on <https://teara.govt.nz/en/ranginui-the-sky/page-4>.

Graham Townsend

FMC news

Liz Stephenson, one of our club members has been recently been co-opted on to the FMC Executive Committee. Liz sees her role as advocating for our outdoor world, and is keen to see FMC continue to take the lead in this area. Recreation in the hills in its numerous ways is quintessential to the Kiwi lifestyle. Tourism, farming and economic development need to take a back step to maintain the places we regard as special. Periodically, she will report back to club members on FMC’s work, but in the meantime if you have any burning issues in relation to our back country please give her a call.

Membership

The club welcomes new members: Jim Ouano, Erin Yeung, Jane Liddle, and Judith Barnsley. We sadly mourn the passing of Bob Reid, who passed away while on a trip to Bhutan.

Trip Photos

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

Deadline for the December newsletter: Friday, 30 November 2018 – please send newsletter items to Raymond Ford: fordrm@snap.net.nz

Next Committee Meeting: Tuesday, 27 November 2018.

Mt Peel 13 - 14 October 2018

For me, this trip was a repeat of the Mt Peel trip Joy Schoeder, Wayne Thomas and I did in Dec 2012, although mid-October compared to early December is not exactly a 'repeat' when it comes to the conditions. Nevertheless, as before, Dan and I left town mid-afternoon on Saturday to cruise down to the DoC camping ground at Peel Forest and set up our tent in a nice spot across from the kitchen block. Plenty of time to settle in, and eventually have the evening meals we had brought. And at this time of year, there were few other campers for company.



Saturday, near the mountain had been cloudy and calm, but the forecast suggested Sunday the weather would clear, although it took all day to clear off the northern side of the ridge.

Our intention was to be up and away early, to give maximum time to get up to the high peak. We were kind of dragging the chain from the start. Maybe it didn't help that during the night when my watch was showing 5.55am, I was encouraging Dan to get up when it was actually only 3.30am! And then when we did leave the camp, I had a mental block as we shot past the Blanchwood Rd turnoff,

and then couldn't work out where it was! But eventually we found the carpark, and were walking by 7.50am, up through the baches and then on to Deer Spur for the climb to Little Mt Peel.

A descending hunter passed us with a smallish pig strapped on his back, grumbling a little that he had been hoping for a thar. A nice juicy porker versus a tough old thar? Everyone has their own preferences, I suppose. As time passed, we were slowly caught by another group of six. Once at the shelter on Little Mt Peel we found they were Geraldine Tramping Club members. And I was impressed that one of them knew quite a bit about Don's Track to Winterslow.

Initially, the ridge up from the shelter is pleasantly gradual, but then loss of height followed by more demanding climbing up to Middle Mt Peel, took a bit more effort. We were fortunate that the hunter had left his tracks in the snow, and although the snow on Mt Peel wasn't deep, it made route picking that much easier. It was 1.30pm when we reached Middle Mt Peel. Lunchtime. We could see some of big Mt Peel up ahead, but we were at our turnaround time. Leaving at 1.55pm, we were back up to the shelter at 4.05pm and down to the vehicle at 6.55pm, the last part in lovely early evening sunshine coming through the bush.

So back to Peel Forest, packed up the tent and off for the drive home. Food was then increasingly on our minds and the options were limited. Dan suggested that McDonalds were better than they may have been decades ago when I was last in a McDonalds, so the big M in Ashburton it was. Interesting. The burger probably was better than years ago, but anyway, the big nutty muffin and very large latte in a massive coffee cup! What's there not to be happy about? Late home, particularly for Dan, who had done all the driving and still had to get back to his side of town. But a very satisfying trip once again with the snow at this time of year adding to the scenery.

We were: **Dan Pryce and Merv Meredith (L)** 🏠 MM.

Hurunui Hut -13-14 October 2018 – Mountain biking



It was a grey day for the drive in to Lake Taylor. Snow from the recent southerly lay on the ground where we parked the car and in the manuka trees around the lake. But by 10:40 we were cycling under a blue sky. The fresh snow on the mountains and shimmering sunlight on the lake was stunning. As we weaved around the puddles, an occasional slug of snow would land on our heads, and a jacket was needed against the cold wind. We passed the junction to Lake Mason, so I looked up to take note of the hills above – that's the way back tomorrow. The track into Loch Katrine and the wide open Hurunui valley beyond is flat, which made

easy riding even with overnight panniers & packs. We stopped for a snack and to photograph the view and the many kowhai trees in bloom.

With bikes there was no problem getting around the locked gate and on a firm grassy track we quickly covered the 4 km to the flowering beech forest and swing bridge where we unloaded our gear and left the bikes. The hut is 20 minutes further on and situated in a clearing so we could enjoy an early afternoon tea in the sun. Later we explored a short way up the valley (not to the hot pools). Graeme chopped logs for the fire; an early dinner with time to read before bed.



Sunday was a little drizzly at first. Back to the bikes by 8:30, we re-loaded and waved to a couple of fisherman camped nearby trying their luck in the stream. Soon we were walking the 4WD track up to the saddle leading to Lake Mason. We tried not to disturb the many mums with lambs fenced in here, so it was over an hour before we reached the top. We crossed a fence (I don't remember that there last time), before the joy of riding downhill. Clumps of matagouri lower down looked worse than they were. Beyond that it was easy bush; on the gentle, eastern verge around Lake Mason. Luckily no punctures.

After a quick look at the station hut on the opposite side, we were gliding downhill beside the South Branch of the Hurunui. Unfortunately, Graham had a close encounter with one of the messy puddles churned up by cows. The symptoms of Mycoplasma bovis have not yet developed! Then there was the large hill crossing before we were back looking over Lake Taylor and the mountains beyond.

A very enjoyable weekend thanks to: **Graeme Nicholas. Graham Townsend, Chris Leaver** 🏆 CL

Scamper Torrent Hut – Labour Weekend 20 – 23 October 2018



We walked up the Waitaha valley on Saturday afternoon in cloudy conditions with some drizzle. Despite my warnings, the team was severely shocked at the state of the official DOC track (not Permolat maintained as its under DOC control – I’m convinced it’s intended to put off inexperienced Ivory Lake hopefuls) While it is a new track - built in 2012 - it follows a very poor line, muddy, many roots, steep ups and downs, and tangled supplejack...! So Kiwi Flat hut was very welcome and we soon had the fire roaring after 2 cold river crossings. (I’d suggested a short-cut to get the hut quickly and quickly found out it was not a popular suggestion.) A six bunk hut, we luckily secured 5 bunks and also had good company of a solo chatty Methven veterinarian. Liz can’t help but badger people to join the club...he may join!?!

Sunday dawned fine and clear so away we trudged. A single male blue duck was in residence at the confluence of Whirling Water and the Waitaha River. That was a treat!

The team was reluctant at the prospect of getting cold wet feet again so an obscure inland route was found by Calum (who it seems

doesn’t like cold water), but it petered out...! Back at the river with only an hour lost in bush, we headed back down to find the track to Scamper Torrent, which heads up the Labyrinth River. Liz lopped bushes at the back with her trusty L78s; she is now addicted to track trimming.



It’s a long slow steep slog up to Scamper Torrent Hut -7 hours in total, but this did include an unnecessary extra hour taking an “interesting” route variation down to the hut from Pt 1125 – it’s not well taped.

We rectified the poor route till all the cruise tape was gone!! While heading down steep bush, Dan lost all hope and wrote his final memoirs as Liz and Callum chose a line down that was nasty - very steep, and hairy, through leatherwood filled gullies. He lived so we didn’t need to need to pass his final words on

to Lee.



A friendly hunter was in residence, but decided to move on when he saw our numbers (despite our assurances we had tents -it's a 4 person hut). Liz had planned to sleep on the alcove above the door, but on smelling the mice opted to sleep in the luxury of a Minaret. It was a sunny afternoon without a breath of wind and later the moon came out for a gloriously windless night!

We had planned to explore Mt Durward on Monday, but time would not allow a full day so 4 of us sneaked off for a half day trip, and 3 of us conquered Pt 1397 in a couple of hours.

It was a clear sunny day and the views were amazing. We were also rewarded with 4 keas, who circled us with interest for several minutes before flying away.

On the way back, Liz grabbed a dip in the Scamper Torrent (shallow and not a torrent!), then we all lolled about bare armed and bare legged in the tussocks for a leisurely lunch before heading down the hill to Kiwi Flat hut again in much quicker time (5 hours). This time we had the hut to ourselves. It was such a warm evening we didn't bother to light the fire.

Tuesday morning, we walked out the Waitaha in 5 hours (with all its ups and downs, it's no faster than coming in). Again we were treated to viewing a pair of blue ducks swimming in Whirling Water as we left. On the way out Liz dealt with the supplejack. Then the long drive home was ameliorated somewhat by the luxury of Keith's roomy vehicle.

We were: **Dan Pryce, Calum McIntosh, Peter Umbers, Keith Hoard and Liz Stephenson (L)** 🏠 LS

Freehold Creek – Dumb Bell Lake - Labour Weekend 20 – 23 October 2018

This was a moderate hard trip starting from Lake Ohau. Given good weather, my plan was to drive to Twizel Friday afternoon, have dinner there and then drive around the corner to camp across the road from Lake Middleton. Then Saturday, park at Parsons Creek, sidle around to Freehold Creek, up the track to the bushline and on up to the low point on the range between 1922m and 1817m. From there the route drops north to Dumb-bell Lake. On Sunday, we would climb from the head of the lake to the ridge running via 1942m around to Mt Sutton, 2007m. Great view in all directions from this big flat area. Then descend to the tents, pack and move down to the bushline to camp, ready for a two hour walk back to the carpark on Monday, and a leisurely drive home.

We did that in 2016, except, disappointingly, we skipped the climb to Mt Sutton and walked out shortening the trip to two days. So this has been on my list to repeat for the full trip.

This time, a week prior we had four people, and the forecast looked good. Then someone pulled out with a cold, then two days before our departure another person dropped off due to family problems. Angela decided she really should make her family a priority and stay at home too. Therefore no trip, but not a problem, I could do two day trips and catch up on track work. However, the forecast kept bugging me. It was too good and a solo trip to Dumb Bell was tempting, particularly if I departed later a day to avoid the norwester on Saturday.



Driving down on Saturday afternoon, I arrived in Twizel to find thousands of MTB's and people everywhere. Well maybe not thousands; just hundreds and Twizel was packed. Some kind soul made space for me in a corner at the Twizel Pub while I had dinner, then I drove to Lake Middleton to camp in a quiet area near the main lake. The weather really was good, calm and dry.

Sunday morning, I finished packing for the trip and panicked about how heavy my pack was. At that stage it should have dawned on me that in

addition to the Minaret, I was carrying my winter bag plus crampons when the forecast was for a 3000m freezing level –I should have ditched the crampons. However, off I went sidling around on the Alps to Ocean to the turnoff up Freehold Creek. Then up to the bushline by 10.00am at which stage I was already in a bad way. Continuing upwards I stopped at the lower of the two tarns for an early lunch at 11.30am. Just me and an annoyed male paradise duck. There was less snow than in 2016 and I tried to avoid it by climbing up the rock rib on the true left of the basin. It wasn't easy. The snow was soft, and eventually I was going to have to sidle out to the left into the basin to reach the saddle.

By 1.30pm I was up at 1700m and aware I was in no condition to make a long sidle up in very soft snow that could possibly avalanche. So I made the frustrating decision to return to the tarns to camp, and walk out. In two days again! It took almost an hour to flounder down to the upper tarn at about 1450m, often losing a leg in the snow and struggling to extract it. But at the upper tarn I found a reasonable tent site and sorted a sheltered kitchen below it. The kitchen in the afternoon sun was too hot, sheltered from the up valley rising air. But I settled in with a brew and just a female paradise duck on the tarn for company.

Monday dawned to a cloudless, perfect day. I took my time packing eventually, reluctantly leaving to go down. Passing the lower tarn I noted the paradise duck pair were now there and on talking terms. After dallying at the bushline I continued down the creek, onto the Alps to Ocean, to encounter a number of lycra clad day trippers biking down from the Ohau Lodge end. Despite the impossibility of making it in those snow conditions, I was happy to have been there on a 'summers' weekend. Next time maybe.

Merv Meredith

Barnett Park-Windsor Castle-Jollies Bush - 28 October 2018: A new standard in trip organisation is set!



After climbing the East Enders Track from Barnett Park, and descending partway down Clifton Spur, we crossed to Richmond Hill and ascended to the trig on Windsor Castle. The next stop was lunch near Jollies Bush before climbing to the summit of Mt Pleasant. By a quarter to two, we were at the top of Mt Pleasant Road, standing beside the weekend café. The café sparked some bright ideas among the party which resulted in trip leader Helen Harkness putting forward the proposition: ‘Do you want to have your café stop after the trip or do you want to have it now?’

The vote went 6 – 6, so a consensus process (aka as trip leader) an executive decision was applied, and a dozen sweaty, pack-laden, boot-wearing people entered the café. As the serving counter is actually a caravan window and there was ample outdoor seating with tables and umbrellas, our custom caused no problems, and we enjoyed our teas, coffees and muffins overlooking the sweeping vista down to Moncks Bay.

Then we resumed our trek along an MTB track to the top of Greenwood Park before descending back to Barnett Park. So all other trip leaders please take note, a new standard, whereby afternoon tea is partaken in a mountain café, has been set.

We were: **Helen Harkness (L), Danny Lee, Helen Tapper, Jill Fenner, John Robinson, Judith Barnsley, Kyung Lee, Linda Gardiner, Sabine Crellin, Stan Wilder, Wendy Templeton and Stuart Payne ...** 🌲SP.

Wilding pine days in Waimakariri basin - September & October 2018



Lots of us recall the bus trips to the Waimakariri Basin to clear self-seeding wilding pine trees from the grassland landscape. Combining with other groups was a social as well as a productive arrangement, as well as a fundraiser for clubs. Then, for a variety of reasons

Environment Canterbury pulled the buses. In its place, Environment Canterbury allocated a 'block' to each participating club, with an expectation we would clear it of invading trees over a period of time on a self-managing basis, incentivised by an annual allocation covering travel costs plus a per-head 'fee', shored-up by our underlying commitment to protect high country grasslands. This met a mixed response from clubs, but PTC took it on.



Then a boost in central Govt. funding for controlling wilding conifers enabled Environment Canterbury and the Department of Conservation to

mobilise commercial contractors. Being more focussed and efficient than volunteers, they have made a very big impact on the trees. Our volunteer role shifted to one of mopping up and gap filling areas after and between the contractors.

The three dates we set for the last couple of months had variable success. The first mid-week one attracted a core of 'hardy perennials', Kerry Moore, Gary Huish, Raymond Ford, Peter Umbers and myself, who cleared a useful strip of nice-sized mini trees on the terrace just above the road into Broken River ski field, leaving, we thought, the sparser trees up on rising ground to our left for the next day that did not happen. Snow on the ground scared our Saturday carload off, and the next midweek day attracted only three regulars – not quite car load – each willing to make up the numbers, but not so keen immediately after their respective labour weekend trips. It seemed kindest to cancel that day as well.

Although we await a seasonal outlook from those co-ordinating the overall tree control effort in the Waimakariri, the up-scaled contractor effort, matched with gap-filling volunteer days is definitely gaining ground. Arguably, there has never been a better time for PTC members, as Kerry says in Footnotes, "to spend a rewarding day in the hills ridding the Castle Hill basin of pesky pines". Look out for some fresh dates soon, to suit weekenders as well as those with weekdays in their hands.

Grant Hunter