



*PTC Monthly
Newsletter*

**Dec 2018 &
Jan 2019**

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

President	Diane Mellish	337 5530	Editor	Raymond Ford	351 9496
Vice-President	Gary Huish	332 7020	Quartermaster	Brian Smith	355 9945
Vice-President	Kevin Hughes	332 6281	Social Events	Maureen Whelan	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. 11 December 	Classic Kiwi Christmas Games <p>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.</p> <p><i>Supper Duty: Ian Roxburgh</i></p>
Tues 12 February 	Tall Tales from Beyond the Snowline – Margaret Clark <p>Since first getting the climbing bug on the snows in Arthurs Pass 68 years ago, Margaret's had many adventures and mis-adventures on the mountains in Europe, Mongolia, the Himalaya, Alaska, Tibet, Antarctica and the NZ Alps. She will share some of the highlights and near-miss epics plus lessons learned from them.</p>



NOTICE OF 2019 PTC AGM

The PTC 87th Annual General Meeting will be held in the Oxford Terrace Baptist Church Hall on:

Tuesday, 12 March 2019 starting promptly at 7.30pm, prior to our normal Club night.

The agenda will include:

1. Election of Officers and Executive members

Nominations for positions, signed by the nominee, proposer and seconder, should be sent to the Secretary prior to the meeting, but late nominations may be accepted at the meeting only if insufficient written nominations have been received by the Secretary before the meeting.

2. Notified motions

Note that any member wishing to give notice of a motion for consideration at the AGM should forward their notice to the Secretary at, or prior to, our 12 February Club Night.

The AGM agenda, including any Notices of Motion received, will be circulated on Communicator in late February.

Merv Meredith, Secretary. secretary@peninsulatrampingclub.org.nz

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.

8-9 Dec	Fools Col--Jordan Saddle	Merv Meredith 322 7239
	http://www.topomap.co.nz/NZTopoMap/nz31582/Fools-Col/Canterbury	
**	We go up the Waimakariri River and over the col to the Avoca River. Sunday back to the Waimakariri River via Jordan Saddle.	
	List closes 2 Dec	
9 Dec	The Bens (Ben More—Big Ben)	Gary Huish 332 7020
Sun	http://www.topomap.co.nz/NZTopoMap/nz32559/Ben-More/Canterbury	
*	A 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 \$14

15-20 Dec	Boundary Ck--McKerrow Range—Mt Shrimpton http://www.topomap.co.nz/NZTopoMap/nz21119/Mount-Shrimpton/Otago	Diane Mellish 337 5530
*****	A moderate-hard tramp above Makorora to 2002m Mt Shrimpton. Expect splendid views around Mt Aspiring National Park. Camping by tarns in the McKerrow Range. List closes 6 Dec	
16 Dec Sunday	Year End Picnic Motukarara Racecourse – Waihora Park. A day of fun and games for those inclined. Games will include: petanque, badminton, french cricket, darts, quoits and games you remember as a kid. Bring or suggest other games we can play. Picnic from 10am. Look for the PTC Flag. Meet 9:30am outside PMH, Hackthorne Rd end	Keith McQuillan 384 6164 Approx cost \$4
5-9 Jan	Matukituki—Snowball—Dart http://www.topomap.co.nz/NZTopoMap/nz20412/Snowball-Glaciers/West-Coast	Raymond Ford 022 318 0872
*****	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 Sun *	Timutimu Head - Scenery Nook 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 outside Princess Margaret Hospital, Hackthorne Rd end	Alison Maccoll 322 8540 Approx cost \$15
12-13 Jan	Sudden Valley http://www.topomap.co.nz/NZTopoMap/nz33640/Sudden-Valley-Bivouac/Canterbury	Dan Pryce 356 1962
**	Easy-moderate tramp in APNP. We cross the broad Hawdon riverbed and enter narrow Sudden Valley. To bypass the gorgy section, we will climb a gully before emerging into this beautiful valley. We'll camp at the bivvy. List closes 6 Jan	
13-Jan Sun *	Middle Waipara Gorge http://www.topomap.co.nz/NZTopoMap/nz33563/Claremont/Canterbury An easy walk from Ram Paddock Road past 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	Bruce Cameron 022 188 5905 Approx cost \$10
19-20 Jan	Lake Man http://www.topomap.co.nz/NZTopoMap/nz35179/Lake-Man/Canterbury	Diane Mellish 337 5530
**	A moderate tramp from the Doubtful River, up the Kedron River to this scenic gem perched well above the forest. The Doubtful Range provides a high route back to the car. List closes 13 Jan	
20-Jan Sun *	Mt Oxford http://www.topomap.co.nz/NZTopoMap/nz32803/Mount-Oxford/Canterbury A moderate walk from Mountain House car park on a good track to this prominent 1364m hill overlooking the plains. Meet 8am Placemakers, 319 Cranford St	Jillian Fulcher 351 4189 Approx cost \$11

- 26-28 Jan Robinson River—Lake Christabel** **Peter Umlers 359 9118**
<http://www.topomap.co.nz/NZTopoMap/nz35189/Top-Robinson-Hut/West-Coast>
******* A moderate circuit in the Springs Junction area. Up the Robinson River, over Robinson saddle to Lake Christabel Hut. Day three goes past Lake Christabel to Palmers Road.
List closes 20 Jan
- 27-Jan Pudding Hill Stream** **Leader needed**
Sun <http://www.topomap.co.nz/NZTopoMap/nz28638/Pudding-Hill-Stream/Canterbury>
***** A moderate circuit from AwaAwa Reserve to Scotts Saddle then down to Pudding Hill Stream for a wet walk to Alder Track then back to the cars.
Meet 8am Church Corner, 20 Yaldhurst Rd **Approx cost \$16**
- 2-9 Feb Alpine Trip** **Geoff Spearpoint 329 0008**
********* The annual long, transalpine trip. Details to come.
List closes 7 Jan
- 2-7 Feb Hill and Valley Trip** **Heather Hughes 332 6281**
********* Another longer trip at low altitude. Details to come.
List closes 13 Jan
- 6-9 Feb Acheron Base camp- midweek** **Names to Kerry M 359 5069**
Waitangi [topomap.co.nz/NZTopoMap/nz37797/Acheron-Accommodation-House/Canterbury](http://www.topomap.co.nz/NZTopoMap/nz37797/Acheron-Accommodation-House/Canterbury)
plus 2
******* About 20km from Jacks Pass is the Historic Acheron Accommodation House, where we will camp and explore the area doing mostly easy trips. Take a pruning saw in case we see a wilding pine or two. DoC's Molesworth pdf brochure is very comprehensive.
List closes 27 Jan
- 9-10 Feb Centre Creek—Thesis Pk** **Merv Meredith 322 7239**
****** <http://www.topomap.co.nz/NZTopoMap/nz31514/Thesis-Peak/Canterbury>
Moderate climb to this 2042m peak in the Lake Coleridge area. Less energetic people could do a flat trip to Basins Hut.
List closes 3 Feb
- 10-Feb Mt Algidus - Big Goat Hill** **Kerry Moore 359 5069**
Sun <http://www.topomap.co.nz/NZTopoMap/nz31171/Mount-Algidus/Canterbury>
***** We drive to the end of Algidus Road, park and cross the Wilberforce Rr to Algidus Station. From there we climb 1651m Big Goat Hill via 1405m Mt Algidus.
Meet 8am Church Corner, 20 Yaldhurst Rd **Approx cost \$20**

SOCIAL EVENTS

Tuesday 15 January 2019	Lyttelton Lookout Check out the restored Lyttelton Timeball and surrounding lanes and staircases. Enjoy superb harbour views then head back down for dinner. Meet on the corner of Oxford Terrace and London St in Lyttelton at 6 pm. After our walk, we'll aim to be at the Nom Nom Kitchen, 47 London St at 7.15 pm. The restaurant (where Freemans used to be) serves Thai/Vietnamese/Malaysian dishes priced \$10 – \$20 https://nomnomkitchen.co.nz/application/nomnom/public/nomnom/dinner-chc.pdf . Book with Maureen Thompson for the dinner by Sunday 13 January on 021 266 5778 or mothompson1212@gmail.com .
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Tues. 19 February	<p>Mt Pleasant hike then dinner</p> <p>Meet on the Summit Road just below the Gondola at 6.00 pm. To get there drive up Mt Pleasant road and turn right at the top. Watch out for cyclists. The road is blocked just below the Gondola so park there. Fantastic 360 degree views are to be had at the summit. Bring a few pre-dinner snacks with you as dinner might be later than usual. We'll then head back to the cars. For dinner we could either get takeaways delivered to someone's house near-by (ANY OFFERS GRATEFULLY ACCEPTED), or we could have a meal in the Ferrymead area.</p> <p>Details to be confirmed later. Wear tramping boots.</p> <p>Bookings for dinner by Sunday 17 February to Maureen Thompson 021 266 5778 or mothompson1212@gmail.com</p>
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NOTES

President's notes

Hello fellow trampers. I hope you are coping with the endless variety of weather we've been getting - it makes organising trips quite stressful. Trip leaders please note that the PLB and first aid kit, which were stored at Maureen Whalen's place, have moved to live at my house.

Looking to the future, the executive committee has been having discussions about base camps. These have been poorly patronised in recent times so we are looking at strategies to make them more successful. From July, we will look at running only about 3 per year, probably over the public holidays. Your part will be to commit well in advance and pay an early deposit so that the trip leader can organise fantastic accommodation and activities with definite numbers. Our existing annual programme has base camps almost every month so look for them in Footnotes. Do the trip leader a favour and sign in really early if you can. If you have any feedback on this issue or good ideas, please contact me.

In the mean-time, enjoy all the Christmas festivities with friends and loved ones. And of course have wonderful and safe tramping adventures over the summer. **Diane**

Smartphone mapping systems

At the last club meeting, Ian Roxburgh showed members how to down load free maps onto their phones. Ian has created a website (click on the following link), which will take you to a wide range of maps, and information on Android phones to get the best use out of the mapping apps. Anyone who is befuddled by the technical information is welcome to ring Diane Mellish 027 413 6468 for help. Bring your phone over, she will load an app and get you underway. <https://sites.google.com/site/irnzmaps>

The December – January night sky

Last winter's wonderful planet show is over. Of the five planets visible to the naked observer, orange Mars is still visible after sunset in the northwest, while bright white Venus rises in the east before sunrise; the other planets are above the horizon during the day and therefore invisible.

Overhead, the summer evening sky lacks conspicuous constellations. But the Southern Cross is upside down and low in the south, with the two bright pointers a bit to its west. The bright star Canopus is in the southeast, and Sirius is roughly due east, with Orion and the tight star-cluster Matariki rising in the northeast. That means we can see the three brightest stars all at once: Sirius, Canopus, and Alpha Centauri (the brighter of the two pointers).

Sirius is not intrinsically an unusually bright star, but it's relatively close. Its light took a mere 8.6 years on the journey to reach your eyeballs. Interestingly, it has a tiny companion 'white dwarf' star, lost in the glare of the bigger one. **Graham Townsend**

Membership

The Club welcomes new members: Keith Hoard and Sabrina Crellin.

Deadline for the January newsletter: Thursday 31 January 2019 – please send newsletter items to Raymond Ford: fordrm@snap.net.nz

Next Committee Meeting: Tuesday, 29 January 2019.

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?

TRIP REPORTS

Turton Saddle -- 6-7 October 2018



Four trampers and two co-drivers set off at 0800 in Angela's people carrier so we four could walk from the Glenrock, Rakaia end, secure in the knowledge that the vehicle would be moved around to Lake Heron. Cows took time off from munching their brassicas and lined the road-side fence to gawk as we put our boots on. The green pasture, matagouri and flowering kowhai alongside Glenrock Stream gave way to tussock with a bit of *Dracophylum* as we gained height. The zig-zag track to Turton Saddle made the climb easier. The saddle was the ideal place for lunch as we enjoyed a great view back to the wide Rakaia River. Patches of snow on the tops added to the scene.



Our next stop was at the A-frame hut in this barren, treeless landscape, then on to the minimal, corrugated-iron Comyns Hut. It must have been 4pm and we were tempted to stop for the night, but we wisely pressed on, taking a hard-right turn into the Ashburton River--North Branch. With its many river crossings, we pictured doing this leg on a chilly morning, and so were thankful we were wading this and Round Hill Creek late in the day. Angela called a stop at about 6pm on a fine gravel terrace which made for very flat tent sites. The MSR Whisperlite cooked up Angela's excellent dehydrated mince and we climbed in to our tents.



Kerry thought the steady breeze in the valley would avert any frost. Wrong! During the night, the wind dropped and we awoke to solid boots and socks. Sunshine crept onto our site soon after breakfast. The sun and warm water allowed us to put our socks and boots on.

Clent Hills Saddle, at 1480m, is higher than 1135m Turton Saddle and the south-facing slopes had little patches of hard snow which some of us skirted. The camp chairs on the saddle are a quirky addition to the vista. We weren't tempted to sit there for more than a minute, the fabric weathered away long ago. It was late afternoon by the time

we got to the flat land near Double Hut, then the long walk to Lake Heron. The Grigg mobile was waiting for us at the road-end and we were happy to be motoring home at 6pm. Thanks go to Angela, our organised, able leader.

We were: **Angela Grigg (leader), Linda Gardner, Dan Pryce and Kerry Moore.** 🏔️ KM

Five plus two went to Mt. Grey - 18 November 2018



Evelien and her 3 year old German shepherd 'Mischa' collected Joy, Sabina and Helen from Cranford St. We met John at the Grey River picnic area with Bob his 12 week old Border Collie puppy, who kept us amused all day. The forestry access road was in excellent order so after 'meeting and greeting', we walked back down it, crossing the concrete bottom ford to the start of the Mt. Grey track. This is classed by DOC as a "Walking track" and is more gently graded than the Red Beech track, which is classed as a "Tramping track".

Apart from two cheerful cyclists, the only noise was the buzz of bees enjoying the honeydew on the beech trees. The lack

of wasps may be due to the bee hives on the roadside close to where our track began.

Evelien had attended the last PTC meeting when Ian Roxburgh explained Smart phone mapping systems. She had downloaded Ian's own app map viewer and this was a great opportunity to try it out. With rain forecast for 6 pm, we lunched on top in case it came early, arriving at the trig at 12.30. We took 3 hours rather than the suggested 2hrs.30 mins.



Several small groups appeared and joined our lunch party. At our sunny spot, a lively wind did spring up about 1.30 so we moved briskly across the open top to head down Red Beech track and its sheltering trees. It was rougher than the Mt. Grey track, with lumpy rocks and windfalls. Crossing the narrow Grey River meant getting wet boots unless you could balance on the rocks, or take their boots off (not looking at anyone!) Little Bob amazed us all. Often he would rest his paws on a log, watch someone get over a windfall, then copy, rather than pass underneath.

A brief stop to inspect the historic Possumers' hut then another half hour before we popped out into the picnic area and our cars. It was about 4.15 and the weather still good. Our 5 plus 2 were tired but happy.

Oh, Evelien gave the thumbs up to Ian's app. Thanks Evelien. We really enjoyed our day.

We were: **Evelien Baas (leader), Joy Schroeder, Sabina Crellin, John Robinson, and Helen Harkness.** 🏔️ HH

Mt Longfellow - 10-11 November 2018

Thick cloud the previous night held the promise of a Sunday morning sleep-in followed by a leisurely wake-up and retreat to lower levels. That wasn't allowed on Mt Longfellow. It was Laurayne's first PTC trip as a leader, and at first light she was taking the role as motivator and coordinator seriously. "Come on, there isn't a cloud in the sky, the top's just there, this is a great chance, we won't get better conditions...", and eventually she had everyone up, munching breakfast and putting on frozen boots.

The trip hadn't started so auspiciously. The spring weather forecast had vacillated between gloom and doom to settle on a major weather event for the Thursday/Friday, with possible improving conditions over the next few days. Laurayne had checked with Merv and Gary, who were mildly optimistic while Peter was still looking

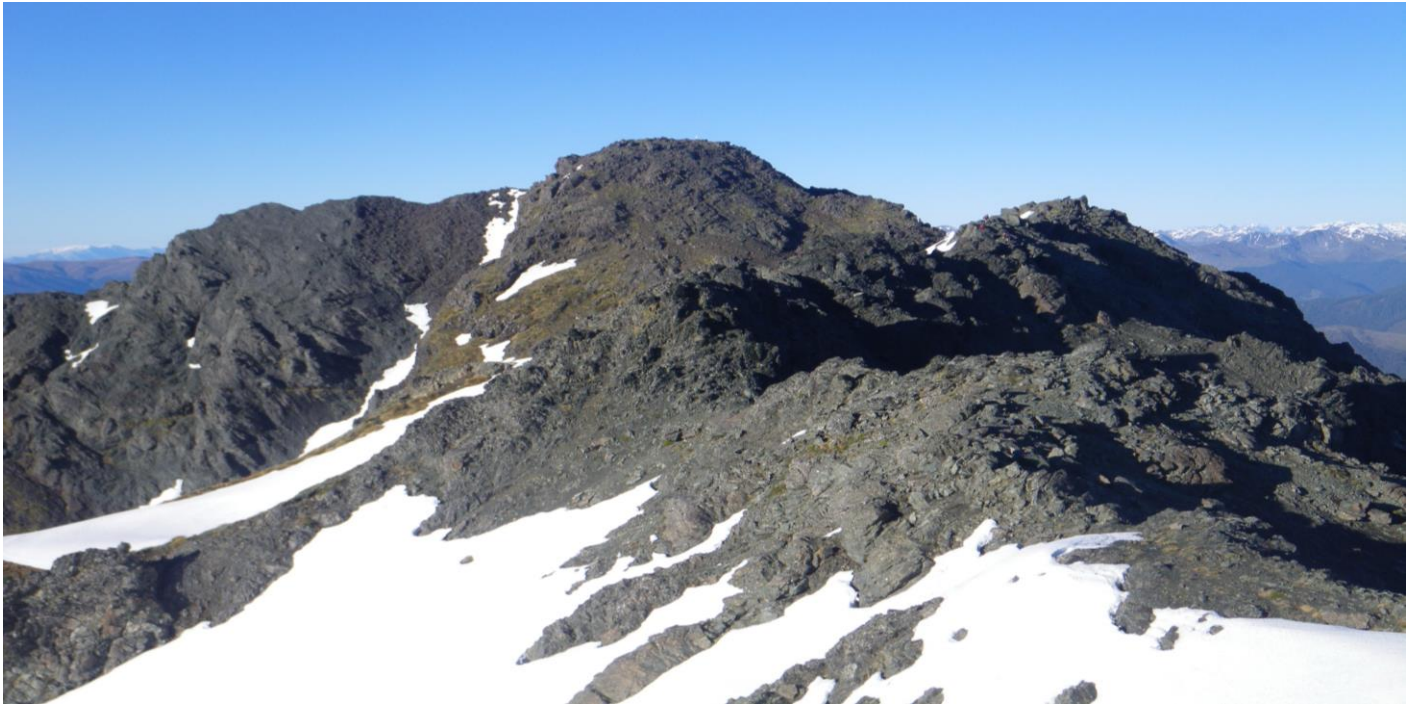
for the cancellation email when the others arrived on Friday afternoon. The Waimakariri River extended way beyond its banks, the Hurunui River was an impressive sight with wall to wall water, but the rain eased as we set off from the Sister's car park and there was light ahead as we headed towards Lake Sumner.

The vintage Gabriel Hut was a welcome sight just after dark although we never found the camouflaged toilet until morning and the permanent hut residents kept scrambling far into the night.

An early start the next morning held the first sign that things would not go



according to plan. Merv, nine years before, had walked the Lake Sumner beach around to Evangeline Stream. This time, forlorn Department of Conservation markers were attached to trees well out into the water and flood debris was floating well into the bush. It was too cold to swim so we started to climb. Up through thick regrowth; no good; try higher, perhaps back at the lake edge; nope! A painful kilometre in the first hour and the advantage of an early start was vanishing. Peter was just commencing another climb when a vision appeared through the trees below us. A marker; well away from the lake edge; a track! It was overgrown but very welcome and we were off. We reached Swell Bay to see the track again disappear below the waves and so scrub-bashed north directly towards Evangeline Stream rather than following the coast.



Pink tape marked a route up Evangeline Stream, but that meant crossing and re-crossing where the water was impressively high. The few crossings we tried got even Peter's shorts wet, so mostly we scaled bluffs, skirted boulders and clambered around cliffs. Evangeline Biv was a welcome sight, but not the news that we were now only one hour ahead of Merv's previous trip that had driven up Saturday morning, nor was the news that we still had 800m to climb to the top of the Glynn Wye Range. Packs on and upward. The tussock shown on the map turned into alpine scrub that required many traverses until we could ascend small side streams. Even tussocks were an issue as our legs were so tired after earlier scrub-bashing that we had to walk around them rather than stepping over. Then the scree; two steps forward...! Another 100m up, then another. It's amazing how 200m to go sounds twice as good as 300m. Finally, we reached ribs of solid rock that reduced the back-sliding and the slope started to level off. Then came the views, through drifting cloud but spectacular, with the large Gabriel Tarn directly below down a snow slope. There were some feeble jokes about ascending Mt Longfellow that night before a rapid descent to a fantastic camp site just above the tarn after 11 hours on the move.

After the Laurayne alarm clock the next morning, the 300m ascent back to the top of peak 1880 seemed a breeze after Saturday's effort. Views in all directions. The ridge towards Mt Longfellow got spikier as we progressed while Merv decided that his fingernails weren't up to the holds and turned back. The drop-offs became more impressive until we reached a cliff before the last easy stroll to the summit. Not good; the snow to the left didn't reach the top and the cliff line to the right just kept going. There was a small notch down that we may have been able to slide but the landing didn't look good and ascent might be an issue. Oh for a short length of rope. The top was only 180m away but not a good place to get stuck as Merv had the PLB, and so we turned back.

Down to the tarn and a quick pack-up. The descent gave us time to consider exit routes. We had planned to climb out directly to the east but the tussock looked thick and the slope steep. A slightly higher col to the

north looked more inviting and after kicking a line of steps up a convenient snow slope we arrived at the top of a fantastic scree basin. All downhill from here! The 600m descent to the bushline went quickly although some words were said about Gary's Plan B of reversing the trip mentioned when we were thrashing around the lake. Some scrub-bashing as we entered the trees, but a deer highway appeared through the thick regrowth and we were off. Areas of tree-fall delayed us as we neared the Jollie Brook but still reached it by 1pm. Finally a track! Well, one marked on the map anyway. Occasional markers were sighted but did not seem to aid navigation. The deer highway down the tributary seemed luxurious by comparison. We finally staggered out to the groomed footpath on the Gabriel-Jollie Brook circuit by 3pm. Over the low saddle to Gabriel Hut (who said it was all downhill?) and a welcome rest.

The last two hours down to the Sister's car park was a bit of a blur. Head down, keep going through some great conversation and a fear that stopping would mean an impossible re-start. It was great to look back up to Mt Longfellow as it vanished in the distance to see how far we had come. Laurayne was still talking about a return to complete the last 180m but the rest of us were muttering "near enough".

We were: **Laurayne Devery (leader), Merv Meredith, Peter Umbers and Gary Huish.** 🏠 GH

Lake Angelus via Speargrass 16- 18 November 2018 (Show Weekend)



The trip started bright and early, leaving Christchurch at 6:30 am on the Friday morning. It was a lovely drive up through Lewis Pass to the start of the track. We left the van at around 1pm, and started up the Robert Ridge Track after a discussion whether to go via Speargrass Hut or via the ridge due to the high wind forecast. Most of us wanted the climb out of the way first!

The track followed the edge of the bush, winding up the hill till we reached the top. Once we arrived we were treated to a beautiful view of Lake Rotoiti and down the valley where we stopped for a breather and food. After that we followed the ridge, luckily the clouds stayed away even though the wind had picked up and was rather noticeable on the exposed ridge. It was a bit of a slog in places, especially in one part where some scrambling was required. After four more hours of walking it was a relief to cross the last saddle and have the stunning view of Lake Angelus before us.



Unfortunately, the hut booking system hadn't started up yet so the hut was a bit packed but luckily there were some spare mattresses. In my opinion, one of the best views of the trip was seen that night with the moon illuminating the

lake and snow with an ethereal glow.

The next morning, unfortunately, clouded in and the views were limited, but after a hearty breakfast we headed off into the drizzle and down into Speargrass valley to the hut. Once we reached the valley, we were out of the cloud and luckily the weather cleared up a bit and we had a great view of Speargrass valley. The track then followed the stream down the valley, periodically crossing it. This was slow going as most of us were trying to keep our feet dry which required some creative path planning, thanks to Kerry for throwing his poles back across the stream to help me get across. However, in the end only two out of the six of us actually keep our feet fully dry. We reached the 12 bunk Speargrass Hut around 1pm, and were lucky enough to have the hut to ourselves. After lunch, Angela and Alison decided to head up towards Sabine hut for a few hours while the rest of us stayed behind and chilled out.



From the weather forecast, before we left we were expected to be walking out on Sunday in pouring rain. However, we were rather surprised to end up walking out in spotty cloud cover and sun! Again the walk was lovely and very different from the previous days, this time walking through native bush. Jim and I had the great pleasure of finding out what a flood route was like (note the sarcasm) and Miriam was dragged along for the ride when she didn't realise there was another route. Thankfully Jim was a great help for Miriam getting round the track, and we all arrived on the other side in one piece. After that it was an easy walk out to the carpark with the weather still holding out.

A lovely weekend with: **Miriam Preston, Kerry Moore, Jim Ouano, Alison McColl, Angela Grigg (leader), and Emma Grigg.** 🏔️ EG

Mt Saxton 16- 20 November 2018 (Show Weekend)

Five of us went off on this adventure, which was exploring new territory for all except me. Mt Saxton, 2043m, is a peak up the northern end of Molesworth Station in Marlborough.

I obtained permission from DOC in Renwick to leave the main tramping trails, and they liaise with the station manager about who is around the station. On previous trips up the Saxton River, I encountered large numbers of cattle in the valley, but this time we had it all to ourselves which was great. And with just a small amount of snow on the tops, it was a great time of year to visit.



We did the land custodians a big favour by removing a large number of wilding pines as we came across them. It was distressing to see from the high ridges that there are large mature pine colonies in the Leatham catchment. The seed from these is borne by NW winds and dropped all over the tributaries of the Saxton river, causing start-up colonies everywhere. The Marlborough authorities need to get on to this urgently

before it becomes an even bigger problem. It would be a tragedy to allow the beautiful, open tussock spaces of Molesworth to become invaded with conifers.

After a Thursday evening journey, via Hanmer and Jack's Pass enjoying travel along the quiet backcountry Molesworth road with not a tourist in sight, we camped near the Saxton River Bridge. Next morning about 2 hours of easy valley walking, with a leisurely breakfast stop in the sun, took us to the base of the spur just



downstream from Team Hut. Then it was up, up, up for many hours in beautiful weather, the rapid rate of ascent being punctuated by numerous pine-pulling episodes. Once we topped out at 1957m, there was still a ridge traverse of about 2 km before we dropped down to a little tarn tucked under the summit of Mt Saxton. We dined with panoramic views of Tapuae-O-Uenuku and Alarm and other jewel green tarns high on the opposite ridge, causing excitement about possible trips and bathing opportunities in the future! It was very windy overnight with the weather starting to unsettle, but we were on the summit about an hour after leaving camp next morning, with good views all around. However, mist and showers were approaching so we canned the planned high-level traverse we had hoped to continue for the next couple of days and dropped quite easily and quickly into the headwaters of Team Stream to exit the mission. More



pine-pulling occupied us for some hours as we worked our way back to the main valley for bathing and a salubrious camp amongst the briar bushes. With the bonus of no fresh cow-pats! But horror stories about being pursued by bulls on the Te Araroa Trail from our new and very experienced member Jane. Welcome to the club Jane, it was a great pleasure to have you on the team.

This is a gorgeous area which lends itself to plenty of easy, medium and more challenging tramping. I have unfinished business with that ridge traverse, so look for trips up that way in future programs. I will be going back!

We were: **Diane Mellish (leader), Liz Stephenson, Raymond Ford, Peter Umbers and Jane Liddle.** 🌲 DM.