



*PTC Monthly
Newsletter
May 2020*

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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. In addition to the monthly club meeting, a variety of social events are also held every month.

President's notes

Hi everyone. We are all getting tired of the restrictions on our personal freedom, but we will have to live with them for a few more weeks.

One of our members has suggested advertising a day trip and keeping the social distancing within it, but this is against the whole intent of Level 3. Sometimes we must look at the complete picture to understand what it means, not fixate on a few separate details. It is made very clear on the official government site that at Level 3 people are advised to stay at home other than for essential personal movement. Also that people must stay within their immediate personal bubbles or extended bubble while enjoying recreation.

So all club trips are still on hold until we go down another level. At least we can range a little further afield on our solitary or small bubble outings in the meantime. And be thankful for the many other blessings we enjoy every day.

Diane Mellish

May night sky notes

In these 'interesting' times, nature gives us a welcome sense of perspective; the mountains are part of that, and so is the night sky.

May/June is perhaps the best time to grasp our place in the massive Frisbee disc of our galaxy. At this season the Milky Way runs in a massive arch over our heads from horizon to horizon. Eastwards lies the dense star fields near the centre of the galaxy; the closer stars making up the winter constellations including Scorpius and Sagittarius.

High overhead are the Southern Cross and the two pointers, Alpha and Beta Centauri, with the bright star Canopus further west. Fully westwards, we are gazing towards the outer Orion arm of the galaxy with the summer constellations slowly setting, including Orion itself followed by bright Sirius, the Dog Star.

To look North or South is to look out of the galactic disc, so the sky does not have much to show. Northwards we see the isolated bright stars Procyon, Spica, Regulus, and, low in the N.E. sky, lonely orange Arcturus.

Bright Venus sets in the NW soon after the Sun. If you have a small telescope, you might be able to see its crescent shape. Jupiter rises in the East around 10 pm followed soon after by Saturn. Orange Mars follows about midnight.

The Moon's phases: first quarter is on 1st May and 30th; full moon on 7th, and last quarter 15th, and new Moon 23rd.

Graham Townsend

Deadline for the June newsletter: 30 May 2020 – please send items for the newsletter, e.g. trip reports, notices, etc. to: Raymond Ford fordrm@snap.net.nz

Next Committee Meeting: Tuesday, 26 May 2020.

TRIP REPORTS

Kahurangi Circuit - 6-10 February 2020 (private)

As I was the only taker for Diane's Three Tarn Pass trip, we were invited to join Chris, Graham, and Vesna for a circuit in the Kahurangi National Park. We left Christchurch Thursday morning and drove up to Tapawera Settlers Motel and Campground where we had two comfortable units for the night. There was time to explore the town and go for a walk before going to the Tapawera Hotel for a drink and a meal.

Day 1. The drive from Tapawera to the Rolling River car park the next morning took about an hour and although there was water flowing across the Dart River ford we had no trouble driving across. It is 11.4 km to King's Creek hut where we planned to stay that night so there was no hurry and it was very pleasant walking along beside the Wangapeka River. In places we saw quite large fish swimming. There are trap lines beside the river and whio are now frequently seen on the Wangapeka, as we later read in a hut book, but we didn't see any. We had morning tea sitting on logs by a "lake" which was formed when debris from a landslip created a dam across the river in October 2012. There were many dead drowned trees. There were also lots of wasps in the bush throughout the trip, and it is surprising that Chris was the only one of us to get stung. We had lunch near the swingbridge that crosses the Wangapeka River. From there it was a further 30 minutes on the true left of the river to the 20 bed hut. Here we had our first encounter with very audacious weka trying to steal food and anything else that looked appealing to them. We quickly made it a rule to keep the hut door closed after one entered the hut and had to be chased out. The afternoon was spent dipping in the river, visiting the nearby Cecil King historic hut, or just lazing about.



Figure 1. Chris, Graham on enroute to Kiwi Saddle Hut. Photo courtesy of Vesna Mojsilovic.

Day 2. We back tracked to where the swing bridge crosses the Wangapeka, and a little further on crossed Kiwi Stream on another swingbridge. We then followed the very gently graduated track on the true left of the Kiwi stream and climbed 700m to Kiwi Saddle Hut (1170m). We stopped for a leisurely lunch at a rocky stream about three quarters of the way up. Not far on from the stream Vesna and I heard some strange sounds and later on in the trip realized it must have been goats calling to each other as we saw several in the following days. Vesna was fortunate to see some kaka high up in the trees near the hut. We had the hut to ourselves as a couple who arrived later in the day chose to camp in the bush.

Day 3. A day trip to the Luna tops. From Kiwi Saddle hut the climb up to the Luna tops is mostly on the ridgeline. Once above the bushline we chose to stay on or near the ridge to a point where we lunched enjoying fabulous views in all directions including Luna Lake, Mt Patriarch, Mt Owen, Nuggety range and numerous other ranges.

Vesna and Graham decided to head back to the hut after lunch. Chris, Diane and I continued on along a razorback ridge for about 500m to point 1578m. We debated continuing on down to a saddle and then up Mt Luna (only 52m higher than the point we were on) but decided it may take longer than we imagined. Diane and Chris got out the map and proceeded to identify as many of the mountains and ridges as they could in all directions, including where the track went down to Stone Creek hut.

Back at our lunch spot we chose a different route down to the bushline via a very small tarn. This route was well used as the track was quite well formed back towards where we joined the ridgeline. The Kiwi saddle hut weka managed to steal Diane's plastic bag containing her toilet paper in the evening while she was doing her teeth and despite extensive searching in the bushes near the hut we were unable to find it.



Figure 2. Ridgetop walking from the saddle. Photo courtesy of Sue Piercey.

Day 4: We woke to rain which later became confined to just the toilet up above the hut (orographic rainfall according to Diane). By the time we were ready to go it had cleared. We parted company with Graham who headed back the way we had come to collect the car for us. It took us an hour and a half mostly climbing in the bush until we reached a saddle above the bushline where we left most of our equipment to climb up Mt Patriarch (1701m). There was a reasonably well-defined cairned track with good hand holds in the rocky sections. It was perfect weather with no wind and no cloud swirling around. With fantastic views in all directions we took lots of photographs.

Back at the saddle we had a number of ups and downs along the Arthur ridge towards John Reid hut (1250m) enjoying the mountain panorama as we walked. At times, we thought how on earth we will get up there only to find that the track diverted from going over a rocky top to climb more gently on the north side with plenty of flax and other bushes to act as handholds (especially Point 1463). There was a tricky bit over a steep scree slide near Point 1507, the first point after the saddle, but it was quite narrow and we all got across without sliding down. When John Reid hut came into view we debated at what point to leave the ridge line and then came across a cairn, which proved to be an ideal point to start heading down through the tussock and then short scrub to the 6 bed hut. Once at the hut we could see several blue snow poles heading directly up towards the ridge. The water supply is a small stream about 20m from the hut. We designated the upstream above a plank across the stream our water supply and downstream below the plank for washing. After a cup of tea we all took the opportunity to wash ourselves and our clothing and to sunbathe. We cooked dinner outside that night, but the usual pesky hut weka meant constant vigilance as we ate.

Day 5. “Hey Diane, where are you going?” I called as being the first to leave the hut she was climbing back up towards the ridge following blue snow poles. She had walked past the large DOC sign pointing to Chummies track which contours from the hut and is also marked with snow poles. Which just goes to show anyone can make a mistake, however, experienced you are. After contouring for about half an hour the track reached the ridge and it was easy travel on a good track down to the end of the ridge. From there the track contoured down, steeply in places, until it emerged beside Chummies Creek. We had taken 4 hours from the hut. Crossing the Wangapeka was easy as it was only around knee height. Graham was waiting for us and we drove a little further down the road to enjoy a dip in some deep pools.



Figure 3. Chris, Vesna and Diane on the ridge to John Reid Hut. Mt Patriarch behind. Photo courtesy of Sue Piercey.

We stopped in at the Kowhai Kitchen Café in Tapawera for a late lunch before driving home. We were very impressed with the food, drinks and service. The cabinet food was very low by that time, but they happily made us salads and excellent sandwiches.

PS: Always carry some duct tape. I snapped the nose bridge of my glasses and they were able to be temporarily mended using duct tape.

Thanks to Chris for organizing this fantastic trip.

We were: **Chris Leaver (leader), Graham Townsend, Vesna Mojsilovic, Diane Mellish, Sue Piercey** 🏔️ SP

Benmore Hut - Sunday 16 February 2020

Strong norwesters inland forced this diversion from Mt Barrosa to this lower trip. Norman had learned of a new track on the flanks of the Russell Range that could be combined with the Thirteen Mile Bush Track of old. A conspicuous DoC sign-board sent us up a vehicle track in tussock and scrub country, then a further sign showed the way up to Point 1211 or down through dracophylum scrub to the beech forest. With the wind trying to remove our hats, no one was keen to go higher and we were happy to reach the calm of the forest, then the ideal lunch spot at the bright orange Benmore Hut with its 200 litre steel water barrel. For future visitors, the hut has a burner that takes 220g tall butane aerosol cans.

After a leisurely lunch our team walked out the usual way on a dry, mud-free track. Thank you Norman for introducing us to this pleasant circuit and letting us meet your son, Adam from the North Island and local daughter, Emma.

We were: **Norman Burden (leader), Adam Burden, Emma Burden, Wendy McCaughan, Allison Maccoll, Kim Ashmore, Donna Grice, Kerry Moore** 🏔️ KM



Figure 4. Above the Thirteen Mile valley track onto the Russell Range for a new angle to view the Gap (hidden) and Mt Oxford in the far distance Photo courtesy of Kerry Moore

Temple Col –Goat Pass –Mingha River- 1 – 2 March 2020

This weekend was scheduled to be Townsend Hut – Koropuku Hut, a three day trip with Peter Umbers as leader. But the forecast was against us and even with clearing weather, no guarantee we could cross the Otira River at the start of the trip. So we did what we have done increasingly lately; we followed the good weather. Sunday looked ideal with Monday still ok, just. Only a two day window. Temple Col maybe? What a good idea; haven't been there for ages. Peter, meanwhile, had picked up an injury so that left the three of us.

Derek picked me up at 7.00am and then picked up Kerry. Kerry provided the food and a gas burner, plus we carried a PTC tent fly just in case. Walking from Temple Basin car park at 9.30am, we were up at the day lodge by 10.45am in fantastic weather, to be checked out by the local keas. Continuing on, we sidled up, not initially going high enough to pick up the skiers track leading into the top basin. On the Col about 12.30pm for lunch, it was a great place to be. I hadn't been over the Col for donkeys' years. Long enough for memory of travel in the scrub on the true left of the upper Mingha River below us, to have well faded.

Dropping down was pleasant travel to start. Reaching the edge of a drop, we startled SIX red deer. I have read they are in the area in numbers, but it was still a surprise. Which prompts a memory. In the 1970's the Arthurs Pass series of route guides said of the scrub in the valley below –"just follow the deer trails". Travelling down there for the first time in Feb 1984, the reaction as we floundered down was "what deer trails?" Kerry had been down there in recent times and preferred to sidle higher for shorter scrub and more tussock. But it still wasn't easy with steep faces and gullies to traverse. We were very relieved to reach the open 'terrace' at the confluence of our west branch and start up the true right of the Mingha River toward Goat Pass.

At Goat Pass Hut the final count was two American, Lisa and James from Christchurch, two French blokes, two German girls on Te Araroa and us. Plus there were eleven from Wellington College camped on the terrace above the hut. Made for an interesting evening.

Monday was a mostly cloudy start with some westerly, but was fairly sunny by early afternoon. We left the hut at 8.30am and found the College group had already gone. Lisa and James were going to try the side trip up to Lake Mavis before walking out. The German girls left just before us but we caught them on the way down.



Figure 5 Kerry and Derek on Temple Col 1774m. Photo courtesy of Merv Meredith

We were aware Mingha Bivvy had been totally upgraded. Very impressive. Middayish and nearing the Bealey, Derek and Kerry continued on so Derek could hitch a lift back to Temple Basin, while I stopped for lunch. Shortly after I got out to Greyneys Shelter, Derek did get a lift from a Dutch tourist. On Derek's return we loaded his vehicle, then added the German girls and their gear. We dropped them off at the Bealey Pub for them to pick up their food parcel for the next stage of Te Araroa. So after a stop at the café in Springfield we were home at a very civilised hour after two days of very summery weather.

We were **Derek Gane, Merv Meredith & Kerry Moore.** 🏠MM

Mount Alexander – Sunday, 15 March 2020

In mid-March, New Zealand only had a hand-full of Covid 19 cases so four of us braved the close proximity ride to Foxdown between Waikari and Scargill. A cool breeze blew as we headed up a vehicle track intending to do an anti-clockwise circuit. Halfway up 748m Mt Alexander we were seeing to our right, very dry, rolling farmland and a prominent limestone scarp. Mt Alexander was in the cloud and we almost walked past the communication complex. While we had lunch, the cloud ceiling rose to unveil the all-round panorama. Heading west we used the road to get on to a spur leading to a good farm track that headed back to the car. We passed through an area of matagouri playing host to lots of mistletoe and further down over a field of well-grazed, bone-dry, chicory. A gate got us into a deer paddock but getting out wasn't as easy. In future we'd go high to bypass the deer. Back at the car we donated a few dollars to Foxdown's chosen charity – the local church restoration fund. For variety we drove back via Scargill and Greta Valley.

A nice day out enjoyed by **Dorota Giejsztowt, Joy Schroeder, Shiping Wang and Kerry Moore** 🏠KM



Figure 6. Dry vegetation. Mt Alexander's communication complex in the distance. Photo courtesy of Kerry Moore

Wild Cattle Hill - Saturday 21 March 2020

Covid 19 and the forecast for early afternoon rain deterred 98% of the club so it was up to us three to conquer 600m Wild Cattle Hill. We parked at the end of Pa Road near the jetty and set off along the stony beach for 200m then climbed through slumped loess to Putiki Road for an ascent of a nice spur to the main ridge. On the ridge the wind was blowing cold and rain threatening but we found a nice spot for lunch where we decided not to go the whole way to Wild Cattle Hill, which was a side trip from our planned circuit. Near Point 621, which is higher than Wild Cattle Hill, we found a good vehicle track that led to our down-spur. The spur has some awkward bluffy, steep bits so our path was a zig-zag until we got onto gentler slopes to emerge on the road on the south side of Puari and along the road to the car. This was an enjoyable circuit despite the cool weather and the many barbed wire fences we had to cross. Only in a few places could we squeeze between the wires. Future trips need to take a barb protector such as Bruce C's length of fire hose.

We were **Dan Pryce (leader), Mary McKeown, Kerry Moore** 🏠 KM



Figure 7. Puari Village and Port Levy with a new view of the Monument in the distance. Photo courtesy of Kerry Moore

Waimakariri Falls Hut – Waimakariri Col – Point 1845m - 13 – 15 March 2020

This was a trip with a mission, or two missions. Back in January Diane's Gorgy Creek trip was planned as a circuit up to the Gorgy Creek lake – over the divide and down to Waimakariri Col – down to the hut and back out down the Waimakariri River. But once up at the lake our group wasn't too keen on pressing on up an unknown route in the 'glacial' snow leading to the divide and likewise, dropping down the other side on 'glacial' snow to get to the gentle ridge along pt1845m to the Col. So we opted for a great Plan B that saw us backtrack around the corner and over Bijleveld Col to exit out down the Hunts and Kellys creeks to Otira. Worked out just nicely, although nearly anything would in four days of perfect weather like that. But it left me wondering with the thought that checking the Divide route from the Waimakariri Col side could be enlightening. Then Colin said if you are going he could come too and do a little work on the radio in the Falls Hut. So the trip firmed up as a three day trip with a side trip up to the Col and pt1845m and possibly the divide, on the middle day.

FRIDAY

Away from Halswell at 6.30am, we were walking from the Klondyke Corner road end at 9.00am for the long plod up the river. We did the short detour into Carrington Hut, leaving there at 1.30pm. Then somewhere not too far south of the Campbell Creek confluence where we had camped on the Gorgy Creek trip, Ian picked up an unusual injury. A matagouri twig about 4mm diameter, stabbed him deeply above the knee. We cleaned and dressed it and Ian continued on. At the confluence at 3.00pm it was a bit windy and we had time in hand so agreed we would continue on and climb up to the Waimakariri Falls hut for the first night so we had maximum time tomorrow. Colin and I arrived there at 5.50pm, very pleased to be there and to our amazement, greeted by EIGHT Kea. Very healthy looking and behaving very kea like, particularly on the ramp up to the loo. We had the 'six' bunk hut to ourselves the first night. I couldn't get over the solar powered lighting!

SATURDAY

Up early for a day trip up to the Col, Ian's knee had stiffened and although a Plan B would have been to move down to Carrington for a shorter walk out on Sunday, Ian opted to stay at the hut and have a few practice walks about. So Aarn and I went up the valley in perfect weather following plenty of cairns. On the Col at 11.00am, after a break we started up the broad rocky ridge to pt1845m. At 11.20am, we heard the helicopter and saw it land at the hut. Ian had made his own decision. Continuing on with our rock scramble and beyond Pt 1845m, the view of the glacial face between Pts2057 and 2005m got closer. No, it didn't look very inviting, although we were looking straight at it. Perhaps we could have gone a bit closer, but we chose to retreat and drop in to the upper basin to find a nice spot for an early lunch.

Back down at the hut about 2.30pm in glorious warm weather, we compared notes with Colin then explored the three tarns we had seen from above. The big one was too pristine to touch; the little one nearest the track had a rocky bottom; but the middle one was just right for a soak or scrub up then sit in the sun. What a way to spend a tramping afternoon!

Later afternoon Tomas the Czech turned up but he stopped and set up on a rock 25m short of the hut. Then having eaten he moved to a rock to look down valley until dark. Only then did he come inside and although he could answer questions with brief replies, he hid behind an e-reader. His loss, but a shame. Later afternoon we also had someone pass through headed for the Philly-Rolleston ridge. And then a bit later a couple of young blokes came down. They had given up on Philly-Rolleston ridge, and were happily intent on walking out that night. Or one of them was happy!

The electric light in the hut meant it was easy to go through the full menu that evening

SUNDAY

Another glorious day in Paradise in NW conditions, we were away from the hut at 7.50am, passed the Carrington turn off at 11.00am and stopped for lunch just before The Point. The norwester chased us down valley and back to our vehicle at 3.30pm. So home by 6.00pm and a catch up with Ian in the evening.

Once again, we couldn't go wrong in weather like that. A great three days.
We were: Ian Beale, Merv Meredith (leader), Aarn Tate & Colin Wilmshurst. 🌲 MM



Figure 8. Aarn Tate on Waimakariri Col. Photo courtesy of Merv Meredith

PTC EASTER TRIPS PAST – A little bit of reminiscing during COVID-19

Thoughts during a Level 4 lockdown at home on a pleasant Good Friday.
I was really looking forward to Raymond's Gillespie Pass this Easter. Glenda and I did that trip in March 1991 in perfect weather and I don't think we have been back since. Well, COVID-19 certainly put pay to our trip this time. But anyway, the double whammy was the weather. Nice today but getting progressively awful by Monday. So much for Easter 2020. Thinking back, some previous Easters have been canned due to weather, or even lack of numbers. But here is a few that did go, sometimes despite the weather and have memories for me.

Merv Meredith

2012	Hellfire Stm – Misery Stm-Lees Creek	A great round trip in South Marlborough in fantastic weather. But let's not mention the wasps.
2010	Ahuriri –Canyon Creek –Dingleburn	Just Joy S, Dan P and I. Had awful weather up at the bivvy rock, so Saturday pm we escaped down valley and camped in the shelter

		of the scrub edge just around the corner in the Ahuriri. Got even better over in the Top Dingleburn.
2008	Lost Stm –Bull Paddock-Silver Stm	Another in South Marlborough with Frank and Honora, up along the Raglan Range. Some great campsites
2005	Cromwell Base camp at the Top Ten	Glenda and I ran a few of these. Good day trips plus this time the incident of the large pink rock.
2004	1000 Acre Plateau	This Plateau trip was dogged with indifferent weather including snow on the Lewis delaying travel for most of the group until Friday morning. But we persevered and were eventually rewarded with a lovely campsite and fire back at Bay Creek on the Sunday night. And the Pink Panther
1998	Big Tops – Townsend hut	This was a Plan B when we couldn't go elsewhere due to hunters. And the weather made it doubtful to the last minute, but then the weather got better and better. Including a lovely evening camped at a tarn below Mt Koeti.
1992	Chalice-Goulter-Rintoul-Old Man-Top Valley	Gee, this was a great trip, including my brush with the BIG black pig. And the other half of our party being a day late back to Oddstone House from their trip
1991	Mt Owen via the Fyffe	Back in the days when PTC could get twenty two people on a long weekend trip. We got some pretty wet weather up the top, including while we had 22 people in Branch Creek Hut for meals. But eventually scored a beautiful campsite and evening partway back down the Fyffe on our final night –plus two Whio.
1990	South Temple Stm-South Branch Huxley R.	The other half of the party dropped us off at the Temple road end then went around to the Huxley and up to the Forks Hut. We went up the Temple Stream, up on to the Barrier Range ridge and sidled around to V-Notch Pass. Down the steep bit and then ran out of daylight, so we kept dropping over short bluffs. The tent site was as soon as we got down to the Huxley River!
1987	Ohau –Hopkins R – Richardson Glacier	Back when the District Council maintained the road up the Hopkins River. all the way to the Monument carpark. There could be thirty cars there at Easter and PTC had a number of trips from there. This trip was based at Dodger Hut with a day trip up to the glacier. Great weather and memories of a snoring incident plus thieving hunters
1984	Sphinx Saddle – Avoca R-Jordan Sttm	<p>Special for me. My first Easter trip and one the club hasn't repeated. Back when both the Sphinx and Jordan were far less eroded. Friday over Sphinx Saddle to Avoca Hut. Saturday a day walk up Hanging Valley Creek, up toward Half Moon Saddle. Sunday move down valley to camp before Galilee Creek with a campfire provided by Ray Borrell. Monday out over Jordan Saddle. Great weather all four days.</p> <p>The photo at Avoca Hut shows: Iain Chinnery, past president and life member. Merv M and Hilaire Campbell, current member. The photo is a scan from one of Bryan MacBeth's 10" x 8" B&W prints</p>

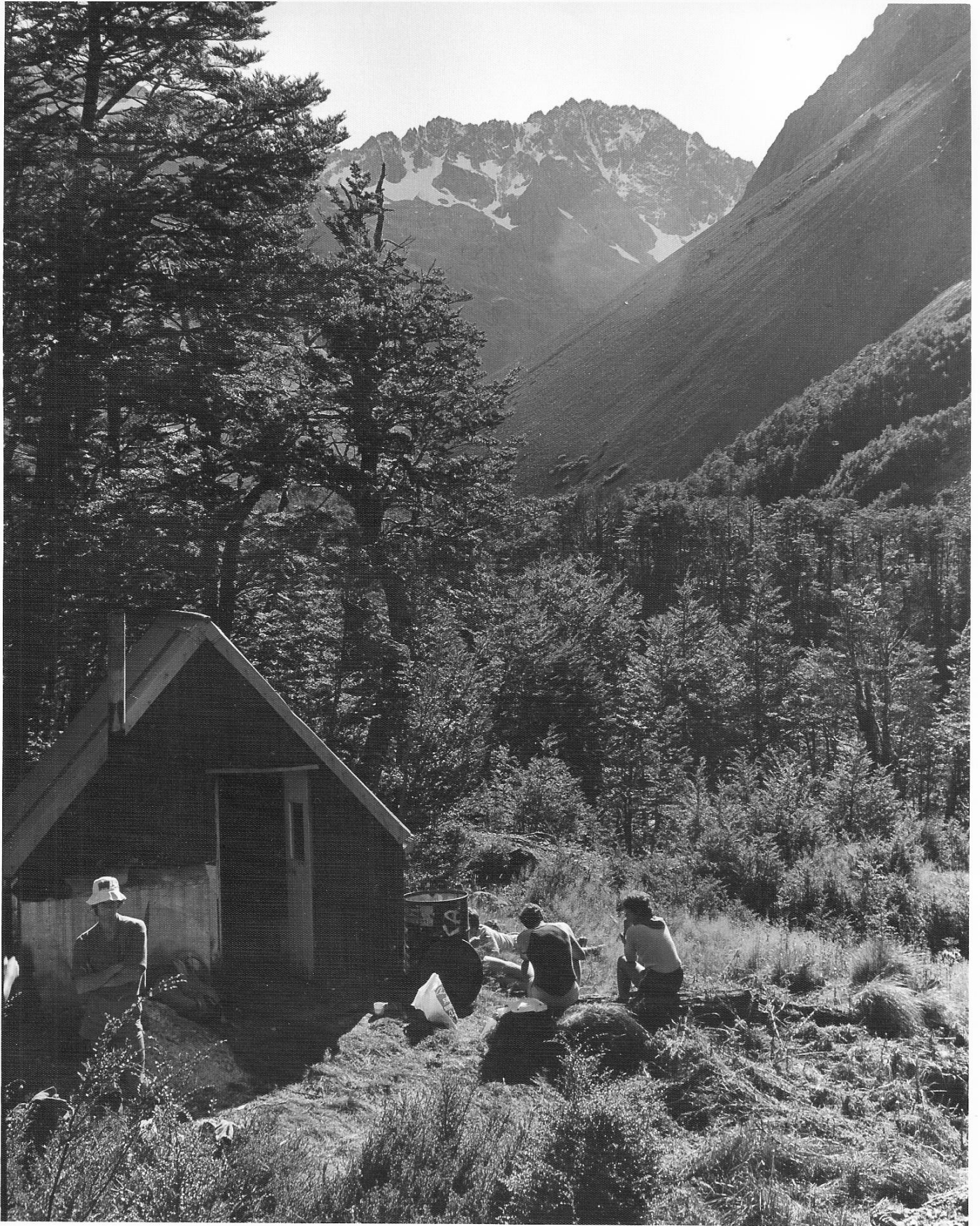


Figure 9. 1 Easter at Avoca Hut. Photo courtesy of Bryan MacBeth