



THE CHRISTCHURCH TRAMPER

Published by CHRISTCHURCH TRAMPING CLUB INC.
PO Box 527, Christchurch, www.ctc.org.nz
affiliated to Federated Mountain Clubs of NZ Inc.

Opinions expressed or events described in this newsletter might not represent Club policy, and if you really care what club policy actually is, you can read about them in the rule book, assuming you haven't lost it like I have.

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April 2003

No. 11

President	Dave Watson	981 7929	Club Captain	Adrian Busby	383 4046
Vice President	John Henson	342 3311	Trip Organiser(day)	Sandi Keenan	981 9583
Vice President	Andrew Turton	332 8275	(weekend)	Andrew Turton	332 8275
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Treasurer	Nellie Vink	332 5879	Gear Custodian	Bernard Parawa	981 4931
Editor (Interim)	Linda Lilburne	366 6570	New Members	Alice Yung	382 3988
Social Convenor	Alan Ross	384 6425		Joanne Boereboom	342 5590

The **CHRISTCHURCH TRAMPING CLUB** has members of all ages and runs tramping trips every weekend ranging from easy (no experience required) to hard (high fitness and experience required). We also organise instruction courses and hold weekly social meetings. Membership rates per year are \$32 member, \$38 couple, \$16 junior or associate.

EQUIPMENT HIRE: The Club has a range of equipment (tents, ice axes, crampons, harnesses, large and small weekend pack, billies and a mountain radio) for hire to members at reasonable rates. Contact Gear Custodian, Bernard Parawa 981 4931. Note: Club gear assigned to you to carry on a trip is your responsibility; please take care of it.

Our **CLUB HUT** in the Arthur's Pass township has the comforts of home but with the mountains at the back door. Even better now with inside flushing loos, and soon to be improved showers. A great place for a few days away; take your usual gear and a pillowcase. **Please book** before leaving town to ensure there is a bunk available and no overcrowding. For keys and bookings phone Rex Vink 352 5327; or if he's away, John Henson 342 3311; or if they're both away, Dave Watson 981 7929 (or pager 026 252 3284). Hut fees are \$6 member, \$6 member's partner, \$12 non member, \$4 kids under 12. If you find any problems or maintenance required, please tell Rex when you get back.

SOCIAL SCENE: We meet on Thursdays 7:30 pm at the Canterbury Horticultural Centre (Watling Lounge) Hagley Park South, 57 Riccarton Avenue (entrance opposite the hospital). A variety of social functions are organised, the atmosphere informal, and tea and biscuits served. If you can give a presentation or have ideas, please contact Alan Ross 384 6425.

TRIPS: Unless otherwise stated, trips depart outside Shell Carlton Corner Service Station (see page 2 for details). Day trips depart at 8:00 am and weekend trips depart at 7:00 pm on Fridays. If you have comments or suggestions for trips, please contact the appropriate trip organiser (listed at top of the page).

Notices

DEPARTURE VENUE: Trips depart from Shell Carlton Corner Service Station, 1 Papanui Road, between Burger King (who said Elvis was dead) and Liquor Land (opposite Derby Street). If you aren't taking your car on the trip, you will have to park on one of the nearby side streets, as you may come back to a wheel clamp, or have had your car towed! If you are taking your car we would like to encourage you to refuel at Shell Carlton, as they have been kind enough to hold onto our trip lists. **LEADERS:** Please ask for the trip list box (disguised as a shiny red 'Stanley' toolbox) and post the trip list into the locked box. If anyone turns up after this, the service station has a key to open the box. Spare key holders are listed on the box.

NEWSLETTER BY EMAIL: If you would like to receive general notices by e-mail (including the newsletter and list of member email addresses), please let Linda Lilburne know at LilburneL@LandcareResearch.co.nz.

CTC STICKERS: The club has had some Christchurch Tramping Club stickers printed for members to stick in hut books when they visit one. Contact Sandi Keenan 981 9583 if you would like some.

ROCK CLIMBING COURSES: Learn to climb safely and confidently with professional instructors – all abilities catered for. Private classes can be arranged. Discount to CTC members. Phone Cliff at Vertical Ventures 332 8571.

MEMBERSHIP DATABASE: We try to keep the club membership database up-to-date, so if you know of any updates, errors or omissions, give Rex a ring on 352 5327, and help us get it right.

SITUATIONS VACANT: Our beloved Treasurer is resigning after many years of faithful service, so we need a new treasurer for the 2003 committee. So if you are of mostly reputable character, know the difference between a debit and a credit and want to give us a hand, the committee would love to hear from you.

The current editor is also going to be overseas until December, so we need a replacement from May onwards.

BOOK RELEASE: Pat Barrett has recently written *A Trumper's Guide to The Foothills and Forests of Canterbury* (A5 format, 160pp). Apparently, a fairly comprehensive and detailed guide to tramping in the region. Special author's offer – \$35.00 plus \$1.00 postage and packaging (\$39.95 RR). Send your order with payment (cheques only please) to: Pat Barrett Images, 117 Harris Crescent, Christchurch. Allow 10 days for delivery.

Calendar of Trips and Social Events

Sunday 30th March

Leader: Bernard Parawa 981-4931

MT CLOUDSLEY: A popular trip in the Craigieburn Range, Near Castle Hill Village. A big climb up the hill from the village, to the top of the hill at 2200m.

Grade: ModHard

Map:

Approx: \$20

List closes: 27th March

Sunday 30th March

Leader: Mike Newlove 355-8360

MT THOMAS: There are three ways up Mt Thomas (1050m). Which one is the quickest? Come along and find out! Mt Thomas is an excellent place to go, offering great views of the plains and Christchurch.

Grade: Easy

Map: M34

Approx: \$15

List closes: 27th March

Thursday 3 April	Club Night
We have Margaret Clark along to take us Trekking in Ladakh. She is the most widely travelled person that Alan Ross knows. Ladakh is the Tibetan part of India's Cashmere state beyond the Himalayas. It's an easy access land of clear Indigo skies nestled between Chinese restricted Tibet and the Muslim uncertainties of Pakistan. Margaret will show slides of 6 treks featuring oasis villages and apricot orchids, Buddhist monasteries and festivals, alpine spring flowers, summer Yak meadows and autumn harvest activities. Wow!	
Weekend 5 and 6 April	Leader: Don Carnielo 338 9865
HURUNUI HOT POOLS: Drive into Lake Sumner (snorkel required? Ed.) then take an easy walk up the Hurunui Valley to camp beside the hot pools. These pools, although small, (6-8 people) are nice and hot. A good relaxing social weekend trip.	Grade: Easy Map: L32 Approx: \$30 List closes: 27 March
Weekend 5 and 6 April	Leader: Andrew Wrapson 381 6003
EDWARDS – MINGA VIA WILLIAMS SADDLE: Tramp into the large Edwards Hut via a good track. This alpine valley itself is well worth the visit, but as a bonus, the next day you will cross the low Williams Saddle and drop down to the Minga river for a good round trip.	Grade: Moderate Map: K33 Approx: \$30 List closes: 27 March
Sunday 6 April	Leader: TBA
SUGARLOAF FROM CASS: Starting from the railway line at Cass. There are many ways up and down this hill, so the descent should be on a different route from the ascent. Views of the top of the Waimakariri Gorge.	Grade: Easy Map: L34 Approx: \$25 List closes: 3 April
Sunday 6 April	Leader: John Easton 981-9414
MT WALL: This is an interesting trip in the Broken River area. Some of the best screes in the Craigieburn range are to be enjoyed in this vicinity.	Grade: Moderate Map: K34 Approx: \$20 List closes: 3 April
Thursday 10 April	Club Night
Our own Rex Vink will take us to the South West of the USA. Mainly to National parks including the Grand Canyon. Note that we will be upstairs .	
Weekend 12 and 13 April	Leader: Gareth Rapley 03 363 0270
THE LAZYS MAN: An area not often visited by the club, the Lazyman is an elevated plateau above the Esk River on the Western side of the Puketeraki Range. The approach is via Mt White Station.	Grade: Moderate Map: L34 Approx: \$30 List closes: 3 April
Sunday 13 April	Leader: TBA
MT HUTT: This trip is starting from near the Rakaia River, in case you were thinking that we were going to cheat by taking the road! So there'll be about 1500m of climbing involved, and probably a scree to aid the descent	Grade: ModHard Map: K35 Approx: \$20 List closes: 10 April
Sunday 13 April	Leader: Don Carnielo 338-9865
GODLEY HEAD: Popular walkway with heaps of good views. From Taylor's Mistake walk along the coastline with heaps of bays and caves. The track climbs to the top of the Peninsula and crosses the Summit road.	Grade: Easy Map: N36 N37 Approx: \$10 List closes: 10 April

Tuesday 15 April	Club Social
MEAL OUT at Pastarella Ristorante 19 Bealey Av from 7:30pm. Mains are \$10:95 on a Tuesday (normally \$16) but I am assured they are the same size! As usual please put your name on the list or ph Alan on 3846425 or alan.ross@nzl.biolabgroup.com before the 13th so I can give the restaurant numbers.	
Thursday 17 April	(No) Club Night
NO CLUB TONIGHT as it's about to be Easter and those fortunate enough will be on their way to destinations for trips	
Easter Friday 18 April	Leader: TBA
STEEPFACE HILL: Steepface Hill is near Mt Hutt, overlooking the Rakaia River. This hill is about 1900m high and is well known for a long and narrow scree which speeds up the descent.	Grade: Moderate Map: K35 Approx: \$20 List closes: 17 April
Easter Weekend 18 to 21 April	Leader: Andrew Turton 332 8275
TRENT / MCKENZIE TOPS: The plan is to traverse the easy rolling tops between the Trent and Hurunui rivers above the McKenzie Hut along to the Harper Pass. We pass 2 hot pools along the route and spend 1-2 nights camping on the tops. 4WDs welcome, availability of these will limit numbers.	Grade: ModHard Map: L32 Approx: \$40 List closes: 10 April
Easter Weekend 18 to 21 April	Leader: Peter Eman 337 3003
MATAKITAKI RIVER – NARDO TOPS – BURNS CREEK: Come and explore a rarely visited part of the Nelson Lakes National Park. The plan is to climb to the tops the traverse them, above the Nardo and Burns Creeks before descending to Bob's Hut in the Matakitaki river and following it back to the cars.	Grade: ModHard Map: M30 Approx: \$45 List closes: 10 April
Extended Easter Weekend 18 to 27 April	Leader: Sandi Keenan 981 9583
STEWART ISLAND EPIC: Takes in Easter and Anzac day. For 3 days off work you have 10 days of freedom to play down in the remote Stewart Island. We will be walking the Southern Circuit in 6 or 7 days, with some time to sightsee the island and attractions. Contact Sandi if interested.	Grade: Moderate Map: C49 D48 D59 Approx: \$500 List closed:
Thursday 24 April	(No) Club Night
NO CLUB TONIGHT as it's about to be Anzac Weekend. Good luck to those trips.	
Anzac Friday 25 April	Leader: TBA
ASHLEY HILL: Ashley Hill is located on the Eastern side of Lees Valley, so from here you'll be able to see most of the Puketeraki Range.	Grade: Easy Map: L34 Approx: \$20 List closes: 24 April
Long Anzac Weekend 25 to 27 April	Leader: Sarah Hardie 332 8275
OHAU FAMILY BASE CAMP: We will stay at the Glen Mary Ski Club Hut on the shores of Lake Ohau, the venue of a highly successful CTC family base camp in 1998. Possibilities include 4WD up the Hopkins, exploring the clay cliffs at Omarama, fishing in local lakes, streams and canals, wine tasting in Omarama, a drive to Mt Cook, exploring the Ohau skifield, walking to Lake Dumbell from the field, or tramp the ever-popular Temple Valley.	Grade: All/Family Map: H38 Approx: \$70 List closes: 17 April (by phone)

Long Anzac Weekend 25 to 27 April	Leader: Bernard Parawa
MINCHIN PASS: A classic Arthurs Pass tramp going up the Poulter River past the beautiful Lake Minchin to Minchin Pass. From the pass Bernard will traverse the tops to the beautifully situated Townsend Hut before exiting down the Taramakau on Sunday. A great trip.	Grade: Mod Map: L33/K33 Cost approx: \$40 List closes: 17 April (by phone)
Long Anzac Weekend 25 to 27 April	Leader: Keith Johnson 388 1332
THE VALLEY OF DARKNESS: Now there is a name that brings up all sort of images. Go with Keith to this trampers El Dorado in the untracked rain forests of South Westland. A valley straight out of the Lord of the Rings (it is rumoured that the trampers Holy Grail is there). A trip for real men and women this is the ideal place for 3 days of grovelling in wet bush and fighting wasp sized sandflies.	Grade: ModHard Map: G37 Approx: \$55 List closes: 17 April (by phone)
Thursday 1 May	Club Night
AGM and Newsletter folding night. Come along and vote or even better ask someone to nominate you for the committee!	
Weekend 3 and 4 May	Leader: Phil Tree 349 3670
MT UNA SPENSER MOUNTAINS: The highest point in the Spenser mountains Mt Una is an obvious challenge. Approached from Lake Tennyson and Maling Pass. Talk to Phil for the intended route.	Grade: Hard Map: M31/M30 Approx: \$40 List closes: 24 April (by phone)
Saturday 3 rd May	Leader: Chris Curry 351-5913
NIKAU PALM GULLY: Follow a farm track to the Akaroa heads, then climb down the gully full of Nikau palms to the creek bed. Boulder-hop along to a little waterfall, then return the same way.	Grade: Easy Map: Approx: \$20 List closes: 1 st May
Sunday 4 th May	Leader: TBA
MT WINTERSLOW: Start at Sharplin fall carpark and go up Duke Knob. Follow a rough track to the ridgeline in the forest and climb steadily. An unmarked route down a spur will bring you back to the Mt Somers walkway.	Grade: Moderate Map: K36 Approx: \$25 List closes: 1 st May
Thursday 8 May	Club Night
A social night of 3 weeks worth of verbal trip reviews. What happened on the Easter and Anzac and the previous weekend's trips. Lots of time to catch up with your tramping buddies.	
Weekend 10 and 11 May	Leader: Stu Smith 342 1065
ROCKY CREEK – GRIFFEN CREEK: Stu is going to have another go at this interesting West Coast trip with its mix of river flats, rocky gullies and a little scrub. The tracks are overgrown so there may be a little track clearing along the way	Grade: ModHard Map: K33 Approx: \$35 List closes: 1 May

Weekend 10 and 11 May	Leader: Keith Johnson 388 1332
DOCTORS CREEK – HOKITIKA CATHMENT: For those recovering or in need of recovery (probably all those who went with Keith to the Valley of Darkness) come with Keith to Doctors Creek for a weekend of moderate bush bashing just south of the Hokitika River (see <i>Tramping in the Southern Alps: Arthurs Pass to Mt Cook</i> Pg 118). Bring gold pan and insect repellent. West Coast bush at its best.	Grade: Moderate Map: J33/J34 Approx: \$40 List closes: 1 May
Sunday 11 th May	Leader: Claire Burgess 981-9583
MT RICHARDSON: The Mt Richardson track starts at Glentui picnic area and follows the waterfall track, then climbs steadily up the ridgeline. Some steep sections, but great views of Lees valley. Return the same way.	Grade: Mod Map: L34 & M34 Approx: \$20 List closes: 8 th May
Sunday 11 th May	Leader: TBA
RIBBONWOOD STREAM: Located at the very end of the Craigieburn range. There is a short gorge before the stream opens into a basin. From the top of the stream travel to the tops and back down.	Grade: Moderate Map: K34 Approx: \$20 List closes: 8 th May
Weekend 17 and 18 May	Leader: Ruth Tramschek 326 7833
OTEHAKE HOT POOLS: One of the CTC classic social trips. A relatively easy tramp in as long as the river is low, we will camp beside the pools and soak all night. Bring food for a special feast and liquid refreshment. (Ruth has a special alcohol permit). This trip is always a club highlight that is talked about for weeks after.	Grade: Easy/Mod Map: K33 Approx: \$35 List closes: 8 May
Sunday 18 th May	Leader: TBA
MT ALFORD: At Mt Alford Forest settlement near Mt Hutt. A rough unmarked route follows the fenceline from a 4WD track to the top of Mt Alford. Return the same way.	Grade: Easy Map: K36 Approx: \$20 List closes: 15 th May
Sunday 18 th May	Leader: TBA
MT ST BERNARD:	Grade: Mod/Hard Map: L34 Approx: \$20 List closes: 15 th May
Weekend 24 and 25 May	Leader: Craig Beere 355 7313
KELLY RANGE: A 2-3 hour climb up through lovely West Coast bush to a big hut. Good opportunities to explore the easy rolling tops in the afternoon. Sunday completes the traverse before dropping to the Taipo and out to the road.	Grade: Moderate Map: K33 Approx: \$35 List closes: 15 May
Sunday 25 th May	Leader: Phillip Tree 349-3670
THE DOME: Approach the Dome via the Edwards river with about 1200m height gain. Contact Phillip for a description of the route he plans to take..	Grade: Hard Map: K33 Approx: \$25 List closes: 22 nd May

Sunday 25th May

Leader: TBA

RYDE FALLS: Can be approached from either View Hill or Coopers Creek. The Coopers Creek track follows a low bush ridge through mixed beech / podocarp forest. Return the same way or via the view Hill track.

Grade: Easy
Map: L34
Approx: \$20
List closes: 22nd May

Queen's Birthday Long Weekend 31 May – June 1 and 2

Leader: John Henson 341 8321

WEST COAST GLACIERS WITH ICE CLIMBING: John's annual ice climbing trip to the West Coast Glaciers. The accommodation will be motel-type with a meal out on the agenda, so it is a comfortable way to spend a winter long weekend. The days will be spent climbing on one or both of these spectacular glaciers.

Grade: Mod
(but with ice climbing)
Map: H35/H34
Approx: \$60
List closes:

Trip Reports

The Thousand Acre Plateau

February 6th – 9th February 2003

The Thousand Acres Plateau (a.k.a. bog land) is north of Murchison and is approx 1000m high. At the northern end of the plateau is a ridge with The Needle at one end and The Haystack at the other. The trip plan was to walk up the Matiri valley to Lake Matiri, climb up to the plateau and then cross it to Larrikins hut (just below the Needle and Haystack). A circular day trip of The Needle and Haystack ridge was planned for day 2 with a walk out to Lake Matiri hut on day 3, facilitating a short trip back to the car for an early getaway on day 4. There were to have been five of us, but changes late in day meant that it was a defenceless, leaderless group of 3 mature women (Helen, Kerrie & Susan) who set out for Murchison on Wednesday evening. Little did we know that we were to be branded 'man haters' before the trip was out !

We were on the track by 9.00am, the weather promised to be good as the morning mist burnt off the tops fast. We walked first past farm land, on a 4WD track and then along the Matiri river valley on an old pack track. The sandflies were out in force and even the ripe blackberries by the track could not delay us to give them an easier target. Soon we crossed the west branch of the Matiri river and noted the sign to some sort of river crossing contraption, 20 minutes upstream. We had a few tantalising glimpses of the rocky walls to the plateau up ahead and then we were in the bush. Lake Matiri hut (8 bunks excellent condition) was reached at 11:00am. The lake was visually attractive but home to a large duck population and the pestilent sandflies were

enough to prevent any extended human rest time.

The plateau was 3 km away and 700m higher. We climbed slowly up to the viewpoint over the lake then, when the track flattened out for a while about 2/3rds of the way up, we decided lunch was in order (13:30). As we ate, we appreciated the lovely flowering rata, the numerous bellbirds, tui's, grey warblers and absence of sandflies!. During the final push for the top we caught up with and passed a family group of 4 adults and 5 children (all heading for the 4 bunk Larrikins hut). Despite the tough climb they all seemed to be enjoying themselves.

Out on the top, we made for Poor Pete's hut over the plateau as fast as we could, we were low on water and it had turned into a scorching hot day. The 2 bunk rusty iron hut was just about habitable if desperate. The water butt was open topped and its water did not look trustworthy, so Kerrie hiked to the nearby tarn to fill up our water bottles. She returned apologising that there were so many tadpoles in the tarns that it was hard to exclude them from the bottles.

The track across the plateau became increasingly boggy as we crossed to its northern edge. We passed more small tarns and 3 river beds (only one of which had good clear running water). The Needle and Haystack gradually got closer and more formidable. The last hour was the most tiring, as we entered bush again and had to concentrate hard on the tortuous permanently muddy route. Nine hours after starting we arrived at last at the (empty) 4 bunk hut. Some time later, a tentless young couple turned up. Kerrie took pity on them and pitched her tent outside, so they could both take up residence.

During the night we like to think we heard a Kiwi screeching although it might actually have been a Weka. Next morning dawned bright and sunny and at 9:30 we set off for the Needle following a clear route from the hut, up onto a bushy spur leading to the flat tussock basin under the Needle. The route continued up onto the ridge a short way above the low point. Our hut cohabitants felt this was far enough for them and watched, as we continued along the ridge and up (100m) to the Needle(1438m). A superb 360 degree panorama was our reward, with a particularly impressive view below us of the entire 1000 acre plateau.

The Haystack looked more demanding and we had no clear idea of the way down. However, we decided that we could just return the way we had come if things got hairy, so off we went along the ridge. It was easy going except for a knobbly section just before point 1411, which we sidled around relatively easily. We had good views of Mount Patriarch and Mount Owen. Somewhere up here we settled down in the shade of a rock and had lunch – and watched a small grey bird (a New Zealand Pipit) flit about.

On the knife edge (rock solid) near the Haystack we met another couple, who had come up the south ridge from the 1000 acres plateau. We could see it was steep and rocky at the top and they told us that there was still an unpleasant bush bash at the bottom. Given this information we decided to try a spur off the peak, which led us closer to our destination and seemed to have less bush at the bottom.

We slowly worked our way down the spur taking

care not to set rocks rolling. Once we reached the scrub it looked like people had been down this way before. However once we got into the trees we had either lost the route or it was just wishful imagination in the first place. Our bush bash began then ended, as we were ‘bluffed’ close to the bottom. Edging to the south of the bluffs we eventually found a way out onto a small clearing with a tarn in it. We were very happy to see that the track to the hut ran right through this clearing !

On returning to the hut (6 ½ hrs) we found our tentless friends had left and a new party of 4 had arrived. We found out later that as the 2 parties crossed each other’s paths on the plateau, the incoming group had been told by the outgoing ‘lout’ to expect 3 ‘man haters’ in the hut. Some gratitude for Kerrie’s generosity!

Day 3 dawned misty and damp. We trudged quickly back across the bog to Pete’s hut where we had an early lunch in its smelly and dark but welcome shelter. We then managed the descent to Lake Matiri rather faster than the ascent and were being eaten by sandflies again at the hut by 14:00. A group decision soon after had us skipping the night at Lake Matiri and had us wandering back to the car – eating black berries as we went. After cleaning up and refuelling in Murchison we headed back to Christchurch with the prospect of all Sunday to sort out the gear and relax.

Trampers: Susan Pearson (scribe), Helen Harman, Kerrie

Dasler Pinnacles, Feb 23/24, 2003

This is a tramper’s mountain i.e. no pitching required. Lynette was asked to take over as leader from Phillip Tree on the Wednesday and despite no trip list, managed to organize 4WD transport. We had the asset of Steve’s Ford Explorer for its ground clearance and carrying capacity up the Hopkins to Monument hut. The state of the 4WD track meant Liz and Jezz’s Subaru only made it to 3km short of the hut. Hopefully something meaty has carved out a track over the scoured out side stream since then.

On the Friday night we camped by Lake Pukaki. I noted Max and Lynette bivvying under the pines sheltered from infra-red heat loss. Against my

better judgment Steve and I spent a chilly night in our summer weight sleeping bags in his Minaret tent. Having persuaded him not to pitch the tent on the compressed 4WD track I had thought better of being too pushy to insist on tree cover as well. As we were planning to camp at 1300m the next night we wondered if we’d been a bit remiss with our light bags but we avoided the katabatic valley cold and were better rugged up on Saturday on the scenic terrace at 1400m.

Max got us going at 7am on a fine clear morning with his extroverted banter and roaring Coleman. We drove round to the Monument hut. Liz is a country vet so took driving up the track in her stride. Clearance was only a few millimetres at

times. We set off on foot and Ian advised us to cross to the true left after about 20 minutes to take advantage of the 4WD track. We had lunch just after Red Hut which was getting a new red coat. I thought about leaving my crampons on the flat but Max said if he'd taken his, he would carry them up the hill so I did.

I was surprised to see DoC markers indicating the track up to Dasler Biv. They were supplementing the Forest Service markers and old blazes. There was a neat 5m vertical rock climb with a hanging fat rope which I was not too proud to use as I was carrying the Minaret minus poles and my plastics and crampons. We checked in at the biv. A party of 3 had walked in that morning and were doing the Pinnacles as a day trip. We carried on up to the area Lynette had envisaged for a campsite and stopped by the plant survey enclosure to recce a site. The difference in the enclosure and surrounding vegetation has been minimized by the falling animal population.

Max had proved himself to have heading dog abilities so raced off 100m up the hill to check out a couple of terraces while Lynette and others checked out another site. Lazy ol' me decided they didn't need my input as well so waited for the verdict. Lynette is a fan of camping high with great views so up the hill we went. I was surprised to see subtle animal trails so followed one up. The terrace as was to be expected was a bit boggy but the edges being of slightly raised stuff were drier. We selected sites and spent ages gazing at and identifying peaks - Dechen, Hooker, Mt Ward and even Aspiring in the distance.

I'd wimped out on weight and had one of Sandy's dehy specials, Babotje, which I've dragged out on many a trip only to be left unconsumed. Steve and Lynette had a delicious pasta, tomato, tuna, fresh vegie communal affair. I was wistful and luckily they decided they had some to spare. Around this time we spied first one then the two other day trippers returning. The one in front was interviewed and found to be a chap about 70 from Auckland who'd recently climbed Mt Brewster. He'd made it to Point 2315, a pinnacle but his pals had not gone as far. He told us there was a bit of snow up to the ridge but the ridge itself was clear which made me think of doing a sandal ascent.

Max headed up to a knob and came back with the report of quite a bit of snow in the upper basin. The sandal ascent was shelved. Liz and Jezz who are fond of evening strolls headed north for a vista. Lazy ol' me thought they wouldn't see anything we'd see tomorrow so enjoyed another milo. We calculated travelling times for the wake up call. Max figuring we'd move twice as fast as the day trippers, calculated 5 hours return to the campsite for a 900m ascent and descent including lunch. We agreed to get up at a quarter to six so were in the bags by nine for a cosy sleep on soft ground.

Thankfully we were roused at six. Steve sang a song he does for son Matthew about a bear hunt. I found this very motivating. We were off before 7 as planned. Ian and I went direct and ascended a soggy steep herbfield. The others thought the better of this and eventually so did I and joined them. Steve said something about planning to have a body bag ready to pick up the pieces but it hadn't been too bad in my plastics. We followed the daytrippers' melted steps which were refrozen quite hard. I voiced aloud how close it was to cramponing conditions but Max had said he'd made his own steps once or twice and confidently pronounced you wouldn't need crampons at this altitude in February. This contrasted with the previous day's pronouncement! He was right, Ian had easily plugged steps to join us from his death route which he had plodded up in thigh deep snow with Freddie on a recent previous trip.

Max and Steve took shortcuts to the main ridge. I followed Max's which made my dodgy herbfield quite pleasant in comparison. Steve's shortcut had involved something overhanging! The sensible people were up on the ridge having taken the gentle route. We left ice axes and I thought about putting on sandals for the rock route I'd been informed about. Fortunately I persisted in boots, which was the right call as there was indeed the odd patch of snow and the excellent rock was ideal for the edging, bridging and jamming properties of the plastic boots.

Max and Steve raced off in front. I was next so found myself climbing alone. When I got to the crux, a 70 degree 10m section I thought Hmmm... then reminded myself a 70 year old had soloed it the day before. I hoped he wasn't some old timer who done lots of first ascent rock

routes! After the first 3m it eased off anyway. I met Steve and Max at the summit, who informed me it was not the summit after all. The real summit lay 50m south with an enormous cairn. The route down was a thin layer of snow on slab, bugger. It would mean descending to an easy side. Could I be bothered if that summit was so easy anyway?

Others joined us, Liz had wisely decided she'd had enough challenge for the day so stopped before the crux. We had lunch, and began figuring out peaks. Studying the map, I realized we were on Point 2315 and the cairned thing didn't have a spot height so there was no need to go there anyway. It was just an unmarked pimple and we'd bagged our pinnacle! Max gave me a ribbing about the plastics but they felt great as we

descended the crux. People who'd gone down first lingered to give advice and encouragement to those following about foot and handholds.

We had a pleasant walk out and drive back to the road. Ian took over the driving from Steve and was reasonable cocky till he hit the first little bump and discovered the Explorer's handling foible. We stopped at Fairlie for greasy junkfood and farewelled Max. I had enjoyed his company and thought he'd stayed with the group quite well! It had been a great weekend with a pleasurable climb, thanks everyone.

Participants were: Lynette Hartley, Steve Bruerton, Honora Renwick (scribe), Max De Lacey, Jezz Mears, Liz ? and Ian (Dunn?)

The Torlesse Challenge??

On Saturday 1 March, a number of my friends having supplied excuses as to why they should not go for a walk on what promised to be a reasonably fine day, I went for a wander in the Torlesse Range.

Starting from the car park at the bottom of Porters Pass at 7.30am, I walked up the Kowhai River and then up Foggy Stream. Taking the left (true right) fork I scrambled to the top of Foggy Peak, and then along the ridge to Castle Hill Peak. The time was just after 11am. I considered, perhaps one might attempt all named peaks in the Range?

So I sidled the Gap on the east side, discovered that it is necessary to regain the ridge and climb over the nergy .1712 knob to continue, and so on to Red Peak (hard work, that section). Then on to Junction Peak, Back Peak, and Oterama Peak (the trig point is on the farther of the two knobs that appear the same height - there is a short stick in

the cairn). Then back across Back Peak, dropped into the basin to avoid climbing Junction Peak twice, over Mt Torlesse and down to the Kowhai River and to the car park at 8pm - a total of 12 hours, 30 mins.

So it was a pleasant day out. The breeze was warm, northerly, humid, just strong enough to blow one's cap off. Small fluffy white clouds drifted past from time to time. I met one other person, a photographer taking photos of the Gap. I carried 3 litres of water, and it was barely enough.

Perhaps one might give it Avalanche Peak rules, ie. tramping boots and a day pack - no sneakers or expensive mountain running shoes, and a gun like Stu or Max could see what sort of time was possible.

Philip Tree.

Linda Lilburne is the interim editor until the club elections in May.
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