



THE CHRISTCHURCH TRAMPER

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affiliated to Federated Mountain Clubs of NZ Inc.

Opinions expressed or events described in this newsletter might not represent Club policy.

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No. 3

President	Dave Watson	981 7929	Club Captain	Sandi Keenan	981 9583
Vice President	John Henson	342 3311	Trip Organiser(day)	Warwick Dowling	366 2045
Vice President	Andrew Turton	332 8275	(weekend)	John Henson	342 3311
Acting Secretary	Jenny Harlow	349 2280	Hut Convenor	Andrew Wrapson	381 6003
Treasurer	Andrew Turton	332 8275	Gear Custodian	Bernard Parawa	981 4931
Editor	Joanna Ibell	980 3824	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 instructional courses and hold weekly social meetings. Membership rates per year are \$35 member, \$55 couple, \$18 junior or associate.

Equipment Hire: The Club has a range of equipment for hire to members at reasonable rates (tents, ice axes, crampons, harnesses, large and small weekend pack, billies and a mountain radio). Contact Gear Custodian, Bernard Parawa 981 4931. Note: Club gear assigned to you 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 real showers and inside flushing loos (BYO toilet paper!). 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. For keys and bookings phone Andrew Wrapson 381 6003; or if he's away, Rex Vink 352 5327; 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 Andrew.

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, day trips depart at 8:00 am and weekend trips depart at 7:00 pm on Fridays, from Shell Carlton Corner Service Station at 1 Papanui Road (next to Liquor Land and opposite Derby Street). If you aren't taking your car on the trip, park on one of the nearby side streets, otherwise it may be wheel clamped or towed. If you are taking your car please refuel at Shell Carlton, as they are kind enough to hold our trip lists. If you have comments or suggestions for trips, please contact the appropriate trip organiser (listed at top of the page).

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.

Notices

Email: To receive general notices and the newsletter by email (including last minute trips and the list of member email addresses), email Linda at LilburneL@LandcareResearch.co.nz.

CTC Stickers: The club has Christchurch Tramping Club stickers for members to stick in hut books when they visit. Contact Sandi Keenan 981 9583.

Photos: Thanks to the multi-talented Paul Ashton, we can now have photos on the web page to accompany trip reports. Please email photos to the editor.

Membership Database: If you know of any updates, errors or omissions, call Rex on 352 5327 or email greta-vink@clear.net.nz.

New Members: A warm welcome to Jen Murphy, Robert King and Madhusudhan Rajagopal (known as Madhu).

Resignations: Daniel Petherick, Kerry Smith, Lillie Sadler and Lois Murdoch have resigned. The CTC wishes them well in their future adventures.

Batteries in Avalanche Transceivers

The batteries used in avalanche transceivers can have a big effect on performance, ranging from emitting a weak signal, to no signal at all. Given the potentially life-saving value of transceivers, this is of concern.

Marvelox (NZ distributor of Ortovox avalanche transceivers) advise that transceiver manufacturers recommend using high quality alkaline batteries. They provide the best battery life and voltage supply for the particular power requirements of transceivers.

Some people may use lithium batteries in head torches for their performance in cold temperatures, however for transceiver use alkaline batteries last just as long. They are also cheaper. Rechargeable batteries should not be used, as they output a lower voltage, and have problems operating in cold temperatures.

Marvelox also strongly recommend that people use only 'name-brand' alkaline batteries. Cheaper imported batteries (and non-alkaline versions of some name-brand batteries) can be significantly shorter than others, resulting in a bad, or nonexistent connection with the transceiver contacts, and a voltage drop. Also, cheaper batteries can perform poorly in 'low drain' devices, which includes transceivers.

The standard considerations for transceiver use still apply. Batteries should be removed when the transceiver is not in use for a period of time, as battery leakage can cause damage. New batteries should be inserted for the winter and the battery strength checked regularly, changing the batteries when the signal gets low. The battery and transceiver contacts should be cleaned to prevent surface corrosion, which contributes to reduced voltage supply and hence performance.

If your transceiver is playing up check your batteries and make sure they are new, name-brand alkalines.

Anthony Sidwell NZAC (Auckland)

Members Photos. There is now a photo board of the committee displayed at club night. Aunty Ice Axe thinks it would be helpful if we also had photos of all members to help us get to know one another. She suggests that as a trumper's predominant view is of the rear of the person in front, the photo should include from the pack down to the boots - that way everyone will be able to put a name to the bottom in front.

THE MOUNTAIN CLUBS LIAISON GROUP, CANTERBURY

CONVENER: David Henson, 2-32 Picton Avenue, Christchurch, 8001.
Phone/Fax (03) 942.3954. E.mail:paradise.net.nz

TRACKS AND ROUTES ON THE PUBLIC CONSERVATION ESTATE IN WAIMAKARIRI AREA

DOC have recently established a permanent work gang to maintain tracks and routes in the Waimakariri area which covers Arthur's Pass National Park, Craigieburn & Korowai/Torlesse Conservation Parks and the foothills from Rakaia Gorge to Mt Grey. This is welcome news and their work programme includes many tracks and routes that have not been cut for a long time. However there are still a few tracks and routes of high recreational value, which are not on the list. The main ones are:

- Route from Taramakau to Townsend Hut.
- Sudden Valley Gorge route. ---- Coopers Creek Tramway.

There are also some tracks on land managed by Carter Holt Harvey Forests, which DOC will not maintain. These are:

- Mt Thomas – No 1.
- Lake Janet to Mt Grey.
- Link Track (from the Lake Janet Track to the main Mt Grey track)

Unofficial Tracks

There will always be some of these. Some of them are old APNP or NZ Forest Service routes. Others have appeared owing to regular use of untracked ridges and spurs. A partial list of these is:

- Pfeifer Biv. Route.
- Koropuku Hut Route. (from lower Otehake)
- Route west of Mt Thomas # 2 track to Bob's biv.
- Side route from route above, down to Pinchgut Hut.

Clearly there will still be room for voluntary work on some routes.

DOC invites trampers to report any problems such as slips or windfalls that need attention. Contact Mark Nelson or Ronan Grew at (03) 312. 8564. First thing in the morning is best.

DOC will run a further round of consultation starting in September to obtain public comment on spending increased recreation funds. We have pointed out the above anomalies and they will look at these again as part of this review.

They also say that tramping clubs dominate the consultation process but are only 10% of users. Our view is that clubs are majority users in terms of time spent in the hills and are key stakeholders. Be sure to have your say.

David Henson
23.6.03

Calendar of Trips and Social Events

Weekend 2 and 3 August	Leader: Jeff Hall and Lynette Hartley 332 9251
Big River Mountain Biking: A great opportunity to explore the old mine tracks around Reefton on two wheels. Contact Jeff and Lynette for details	Grade: MTB Map: L30 Approx: \$50 List closes: 24 July
Weekend 2 and 3 August	Leader: Andrew Wrapson 381 6003
Arthur's Pass Base Camp: Based at our club hut this weekend provides the opportunity to stroll, tramp, climb and ski using the warm hut as a base.	Grade: All Map: K33 Approx: \$35 List closes: 24 July
Saturday 2 August	Leader: Rex Vink 352 5327
Rakaia Gorge Walkway: Relatively short and flat walk, but interesting. There are a number of surprises including the red and black soil outcrops, the old mine, and the cable-way. Good views of the gorge and river from the elevated track. A club classic.	Grade: Easy Map: K35 Approx: \$15 List closes: 31 July
Sunday 3 August	Leader: Dave Watson 981 7929
Mt Bradley Mt Herbert: Start from Orton Bradley Park. Scale Mt Bradley then ridge walk to Mt Herbert before descending back to cars via a loop. The bluffs of Mt Bradley are a magnificent sight and Mt Herbert is the highest peak in Banks Pen. at approx 1000m.	Grade: Mod Map: M36 Approx: \$10 List closes: 31 July
Wednesday 6 August	Club Night
Meal out at Boaters Restaurant in the Town Hall, Kilmore St. Meet from 7pm. Mains \$14 please put your name on the list or ph Alan 384 6425 or alan.ross@nzl.biolabgroup.com. I need to confirm numbers to them 3 days prior.	
Thursday 7 August	Club Night
Lynette Hartley will take us to Mt Hooker. This is a well-known but quite remote mountain in Landsborough valley. This trip was done just last Christmas. We will also go to the Olivine's (ice plateau) and a traverse of the Liebig range near Mt Cook. These are all fantastic places where many of us will never get to. A show not to be missed!!!	
Weekend 9 and 10 August	Leader: Andrew Turton 332 8275
Ski Weekend Lake Ohau: Based at the Glen Mary Ski Lodge 2 days of skiing at Lake Ohau and a social Saturday night.	Grade: Ski Map: Approx: \$60 List closes: 31 July
Weekend 9 and 10 August	Leader: Bernard Parawa 981 4931
Temple Col, Goat Pass: Climbing over Temple Col to Goat Pass for the night. Lake Mavis is an option for the morning before traveling down the Mingha River. Ice Axe and Crampons required	Grade: Mod-Hard Map: k33 Approx: \$35 List closes: 31 July

Saturday 9 August Leader: Sandi Keenan 981 9583

Cass-Totara: The myth that everything east of Porter's Pass is easy is just that - a myth. The trip is quite long and mostly untracked. The Cass - Totara ridge is the summit of the coastal hills east of Waipara. Wander through limestone grikes* and extensive patches of native shrublands. Great views in all directions.

* Grikes - a northern English word for limestone outcrops.

Grade: Moderate
Map: N34
Approx: \$15
List closes: 7 August

Thursday 14 August Club Night

Our own Keith Johnson is taking us Gold Panning! (Well as far as he can without leaving your chair.) Keith will tell us about where to go, what tools you need and how to sluice to extract the gold. Keith is going to give out samples of the resulting yellow stuff (social convener added this sentence in hope). Will be interesting.

It is now too late. The bad taste bonanza of the year is upon us. Congratulations to those of you who fled the country in time. As for the rest of you - start polishing that gold medallion.

Weekend 16 and 17 August Leader: Sandi Keenan 981 9583

Mid Winter Hut Bash: This is the party event of the year. The theme will allow all the old clothes out of the cupboard - **70'S DISCO!** Flares, hairy chests and gold medallions will be the order of the day at a mystery location. Numbers limited so be in quick.

Grade: Party
Map:
Approx: \$
List closes: 7 Aug

Sunday 17 August Leader: John Axford 980 9781

Wharfedale Options: Starting from the View Hill car park, the leader will take you towards the base of Mt Oxford and return you back to the cars via a loop using one of the various options available with the Wharfedale Track. Enjoy the forest and streams.

Grade: Easy
Map: L34
Approx: \$12
List closes: 14 August

Thursday 21 August Club Night

How safe is our mountain water to drink??? From the Mountains to the Sea - a microbiological journey of discovery by Mr John Aitken, director of Envirolink Laboratory (a Food and Water Laboratory.) "I am well aware of the scientific fact that the judicious application of single malt whiskey to any available water will swiftly render it safe for human consumption. Within a week of study of water samples I had enough material to frighten myself into doubling the whiskey/water ratio. In the South Island swimming holes and rivers were often contaminated with E.coli. Results of testing will be presented as part of my talk, in conjunction with a discussion on the specific environmental features of the testing sites."

Weekend 23 and 24 August Contact: John Henson 342 3311

Jollie Brook: At the southern end of Lake Sumner the Jollie Brook and Gabriel streams provide an easy low level trip. Spend the night at the Jollie Brook hut.

Grade: Easy
Map: M32
Approx: \$30
List closes: 14 August

Sunday 24 August Note: early start Leader: Ian Dunn 343 2155

Sudden Valley Biv: Trip may not start at usual meeting point - you must contact the leader by Friday night. A different route this time. Climb through forest north of One Tree Swamp just west of Hawdon Corner on to the snow clad tops. Descend to Sudden Valley Biv. Return to cars via Sudden Valley gorge. This will be a great day trip for the explorer at heart. Bring ice axe and crampons.

Grade: Mod-Hard
Map: K33
Approx: \$20
List closes: 21 Aug

Thursday 28 August	Club Night
<p>Newsletter folding night and " What do you take for lunches on weekend trips " I am interested in what is light and has lots of calories, tastes good, and requires minimal preparation - especially if it's raining. On a recent 8 day trip a fellow party member had a 200gram packet of crisps allocated across 3 consecutive lunches! What have you found that works for you?</p>	
Weekend 30 and 31 August	Leader: Craig Beere 355 7313
<p>Henry Saddle, Anne Hut, Boucher Saddle: Visit the Anne hut in a weekend by crossing two great saddles and enjoy the warmth of the hut at night.</p>	<p>Grade: Moderate Map: M31 Approx:\$35 List closes: 21 August</p>
Weekend 30 and 31 August	Leader: Persephone
<p>Underworld Adventures: Persephone's going to see Hades for winter and is willing to guide CTC trampers. Meet at the Styx crossroads with grain, salt, wool and head torch. Need to carry all your own food and water for the weekend. Don't forget your coin for the ferryman. Terrain like you've never seen before, challenging descents, interesting locals and a long hard grunt back out. Sure to be a great weekend.</p>	<p>Grade: Hellish Map: Off World Approx: Gold Coin List closes: 21 August</p>
Saturday 30 August	Note: 9:00am start
	Leader: Helen Harkness 384 2890
<p>Bridle Path and Tracks East: Bring your own transport and meet at the Gondola car park at 9:00am. Then walk towards Evans Pass. We will explore a mix of tracks east from the Bridle Path. Great harbour views.</p>	<p>Grade: Easy Map: Approx: \$nil List closes: 28 Aug</p>
Thursday 4 September	Club Night
<p>Lets go to south Patagonia with our guide Bill King. This is located at the VERY bottom of South America. They did a traverse of the Darwin range east to west. Wow this will be a great show!</p>	
Weekend 6 and 7 September	Leader: Andrew Wrapson 381 6003
<p>Tarn Hut: High above the upper Ashley river in the Puketaraki Range Tarn hut offers great views and access into an area less often travelled</p>	<p>Grade: Moderate Map: L34 Approx:\$25 List closes: 28 August</p>
Saturday 6 September	Leader: Sandi Keenan 981 9583
<p>Mt Karetu: West of Mt Grey in the Ashley Forest lies the prominent Mt Karetu. There will be good views from the open top. Forestry roads encircle and then approach this peak from a number of ways. Expect at least 300m of height gain.</p>	<p>Grade: Easy Map: M34 Approx: \$15 List closes: 4 Sept</p>
Saturday 6 September	Leader: Paul Ashton 358 5570
<p>Mt Misery: This lies at the north-east corner of the Black range and overlooks the Waimakariri River to the north and the Cass River to the south. The usual approach is via Pylon Gully, but your leader may have other plans for this day. Expect ~ 1200m height gain.</p>	<p>Grade: Mod-Hard Map: K34 Approx: \$20 List closes: 4 Sept</p>
Weekend 13 and 14 September	Leader: Flo Roberts 980 7913
<p>Gizeh Col, Jordon Saddle: Travel up the Anti Crow before climbing Gizeh Col and down to the Avoca Hut for the Night. Return via Jordon Saddle. Ice axe and crampons required.</p>	<p>Grade: Hard Map: k34 Approx:\$35 List closes: 4 Sept</p>

Sunday 14 September	Leader: Dave Henson 942 3954
Bealey Spur: Start above the baches and climb through beech forest. Climb up to the hut and ramble along from there depending on the weather and group.	Grade: Easy Map: K34 Approx: \$20 List closes: 14 Sept

Sunday 14 September	Leader: Bernard Parawa 981 4931
Bealey Spur, Jordan Stream: Start at the baches, as for the Easy trip. When reach Bealey Spur hut, continue to the open tops of Hut Spur. Drop to Jordan Stream. Return along south bank of Waimakariri River and road back to cars.	Grade: Mod Map: K34 Approx: \$20 List closes: 14 Sept

Weekend 20 and 21 September	Leader: John Henson 342 3311
Basic Snow Craft: The second basic snow craft course for the year. Covering ice axe and crampon use for club members wanting to travel above the snowline. The last course was booked out 3 weeks before close off.	Grade: Easy Map: K33 Approx:\$35 List closes: 11 Sept

Weekend 20 and 21 September	Leader: John Henson 342 3311
Intermediate Snow Craft: Covering basic snow anchor's, belays, glacier travel and avalanche awareness. This course is for people wanting to progress beyond the basic level.	Grade: Moderate Map: K33 Approx:\$35 List closes: 11 Sept

Trip Leaders Required. Must be able to:

- (1) calmly put up with the inability of potential trampers to make a decision about their inclusion until after the last moment;
 - (2) diplomatically tell a new tramper (male or female) that stilettos and the little black dress are unsuitable for winter tramping, and to advise them what is.
 - (3) understand that erudite individuals who could not only organize themselves out of a paper bag, but design, wire and engineer a better receptacle, are collectively unable to arrange themselves, unaided, into the requisite numbers of cars.
 - (4) ignore jokes made at the leader's expense, and to refrain from correcting inaccurate but entertaining stories about the leader, promulgated by old hands to the new
 - (5) take full responsibility for all map reading, navigation and time keeping from the shell station onwards, as well as being accountable for all weather, track conditions, bed space at the hut, quality of packed lunches and blisters
 - (6) display an extensive knowledge of all ice cream shops and cafes in the South Island.
 - (7) perform complex calculations at the end of a 12 hour day, involving numbers of trampers, engine sizes and vehicle propulsion methods (from petrol combustion to elastic band), mileages rates, people who joined part way, distances, and foreign exchange rates.
- If this sounds like you, call John Henson or Warwick Dowling and extend your horizons.

Trip Reports

Alexandra Bike Rush - Queen's Birthday Weekend (31 May - 2 June 2003)

My first weekend away on a CTC trip and the next thing I know I'm doing the write up. Now that's what I call slick delegation!

Having expressed interest to a CTC member in joining the club, they had passed me a copy of the "Christchurch Trampler" pointing out that there was a mountain bike trip going out over Queen's Birthday weekend that I might be interested in. I thought I'd give it a whirl but felt that going away for 3 days with 6 people I didn't know might be somewhat less daunting if I took a friend, so I asked along a fellow bike buddy, Michelle.

Our Tour Leader, Steve, decided on a Saturday morning departure to avoid the heavy long-weekend traffic although we weren't certain that it wasn't so that he could catch up on his sleep! Michelle and I met up early with Steve, David and Chris, loaded the jeeps and headed southward to Timaru to collect mad Max, later connecting with Sue and Grubby (took me a while to start calling him that) who had made their own way south.

A brief lunch stop at the Danzies Pass Pub, which was overrun with Brass Monkeys, before heading for Naseby to explore the tracks in the Naseby forest. The area offered a huge variety of trails that took us around dams, along water races and past ancient fossil sites. David led us on a quest to find the notorious "big dipper", which certainly looked pretty impressive in the guide book and turned out to be the closest thing to piping on a mountain bike. Great fun!

Next stop Alexandra Pine Cabins, which was base-camp for the weekend. Time for a freshen up before uncorking a few wines and heading to Clyde for some well earned dinner and a chance to get to know each other.

The following morning, after a totally sleepless night on my part (unaccustomed as I am to sleeping with a room full of

people) we organised ourselves into easy, moderate and difficult group rides and set off in our various directions. It was a stunning day so it didn't really matter what we did, we were going to have a good time.....and we did.

Michelle, nick-named by this stage Blonde 2 (who was fighting off a serious cold) and I - Blonde 1 (who was fighting off the need for sleep) joined Steve and David to explore the aptly named "Mountain Bike Heaven", whilst Sue and Chris headed for the Rail Trail tunnels and Max-the-Meteor and Grunty-Grubby bit off a huge ride over to the Roxburgh Dam and back.

Mountain Bike Heaven definitely lived up to its reputation with a myriad of trails over endless rolling rocky hills. It was indeed a mountain biker's dream and we couldn't get enough of it. The "whoop-de-dooos" were a highlight although didn't quite match the thrills of the Big Dipper. A broken chain provided the boys with a few mechanical challenges as well as an increased awareness of the wisdom of carrying a tool kit. Good thing the girls had come prepared with both a chain breaker and some useful pointers!

Having "heavened" ourselves out and worked up a thirst we headed to a local drinking hole for a beer or 2 (or 3) and some food. We later met up with the others who had returned from their various adventures and shot off on a rapid tour of the local vineyards. (Who said this was a biking weekend)?

Back to base camp for some more reds before dinner (by which time I was beginning to understand that Tramping Club really meant Drinking Club). The local Chinese "taki awi", as Grubby called it, was on the menu that night. But not before the local talent had been checked out by Michelle who, having a need to return to her adolescence, was heard shouting "Fresh Meat" from the car window as we circuted

town. – Scary behaviour.....We put it down to her Australian upbringing!

After food and more wines we all later crashed and thankfully managed a better night's sleep than the night before.

On the Monday, we awoke to grey skies and cooler temperatures, so after a breakfast confab we decided to head to St Bathans for coffee. St Bathans is a charming old goldmining town, which consists of a pub, a post office and a dozen houses nestled on the edge of a lake formed as a result of the gold washings. After a prolonged coffee session (read procrastination) in the warmth of the pub the enthusiastic amongst us unloaded the bikes for a short excursion around the lake before heading homeward. We again took

the route through Danzies Pass stopping off at the pub for lunch, then on to Timaru to drop off Max and back to Christchurch by early evening.

Whilst it may not have been a huge weekend for mountain biking, it was huge in other ways. We all had a really great time with plenty of laughter and frivolity and some new friendships made.

Thanks to Steve, our fearless leader, who ensured that everyone's needs were met and that we all got home safely, sober or otherwise.

Steve Brasch (Leader), Dave McDougal, Grubby, Sue Napier, Chris Curry, Max DeLacy, Michelle Ward, Sue Wood (scribe).

Paske Saddle: Queen's Birthday Weekend (31 May - 2 June 2003)

As usual before a long weekend I was really indecisive deciding what to do. There were two trips I was considering going on, but in the end decided that I had no time to get ready, and besides, there was work to do at home. Then on Friday night Flo rang up with an offer of a trip which was to leave the following morning. She and a still indeterminate number of people were leaving for an indeterminate place, probably Lake Tennyson, then over Paske Saddle and finally somewhere else. I said that I was interested, and promptly rushed off to the supermarket to get some supplies (cupboards bare again).

On Saturday morning when I walked into Stu's lounge there were several maps spread out and a detailed discussion in progress about where we should go, given that the weather conditions were predicted to be strongly north-west all weekend. We finally settled on Lynette's suggestion of a trip from Judges Creek into the tops of the Severn (a tributary of the Acheron), Leatham and Branch Rivers (tributaries of the Wairau River).

Judges Creek is also a tributary of the Wairau River, joining about 10km upstream (south) from the Rainbow River on the true right bank of the Wairau. It's about 2 hours drive from Hamner Springs via the rough road up and over Island Saddle. Judges

Creek is about 12km long, with cattle grazing in the lower reaches and a river that disappears for a while in the middle section of the valley.

After parking up at a clearing on the Hamner - St Arnaud road and discovering that I had left a good part of my food behind, we set out up the river. The top half of the stream is pretty, and fast progress was made on the flats. About half way up Judges Stream we climbed most of the way up the ridge of some anonymous mountain and crossed the Raglan Range at about 1900m. The descent to the tops of the Severn River was quick, via a really good scree (which seem to be a feature of this area) and encouraged by a really cold wind on the saddle.

We passed over Severn Saddle early on Sunday morning, stopping to admire some tall rock faces on a mountain at the very top of the Severn Valley. At this point the trip differed from any previous trip I had been on.

Viewed from Severn Saddle, the forests of the Leatham Valley had an unusually green appearance - much brighter than beech forest usually is. As we descended into the Leatham, it became clear that the valley was overrun with Pinus Contorta - Wilding Pines. By the time we reached the top hut in the Leatham Valley the pine forests were

well established. The fate of this valley is clear; it will be completely overrun with wilding pines.

At Leatham Hut we stopped for lunch and I replenished my food stocks courtesy of the previous visitors to the hut who had left large amounts of pasta. This hut receives numerous visitors, mostly from Blenheim, but the hut book still dates from the 1980's. The hut is in really good condition, helped no doubt by the relatively dry climate of the area.

The next stage of the trip was potentially the most difficult, and so it turned out. The guidebook said something like 'ascend Hot Rocks Creek until the first tributary on the right is passed, then climb up to a tussock covered ridge'. We found Hot Rocks Creek easily enough, and even found the right place to climb out without too much argument, but instead of tussock we found pines. The ridge started off well - a steep ascent through beech forest and so forth, and progress was fast. Then we hit the pine trees. Progress slowed from several hundred metres per hour in a vertical direction to essentially zero. After floundering about for a while, Stu found a lead, which took us through the worst of the pines. From here on travel was along a pointy ridge, either through the trees (painful) or on traverses to one side or the other (occasionally exposed). However, progress was much faster than it had been in the worst of the pines, or will be in a few years time. As an indication of the places in which *pinus contorta* will grow, the highest tree we found was a lone tree at about 1700m, much higher than the beech trees and above the scrub as well.

Finally, the ridge separating the Leatham River from the Branch River was gained at 4pm. We were at 1800m, the river was at 1000m and the sun set in one hour. According to the map the bush descent was fine, apart from possibly one row of bluffs running along the slope. With some urgency we debated the options for the descent, and in the end settled for the nearest spur. Courtesy of a good piece of route finding by Jeff and numerous deer

tracks, we were down beside the river within an hour without encountering any obstacles.

In contrast to the Leatham Valley, the top of the Branch River is free of pines, but this is apparently not true of the lower Branch River.

Despite my protests, we camped about three kilometers downstream from the Top Branch Hut. Actually, it was a good place to camp. I found a great spot in the forest and there was neither frost nor dew nor wind - and this was meant to be winter!

Monday's journey back over the Raglan Range into Judges Creek was more uneventful. To avoid a deep gorge in the Branch River we climbed and sidled high above the river through the forest on the true right bank, starting almost at the hut.

One of our plans had been to cross over into Coldwater Stream from the very top of Judges Creek and descend Coldwater Stream to the Wairau, but rain and cold wind about the passes (at about 2000m) put us off this idea. So we went back down Judges Creek to the Wairau Valley Road.

This area has many possibilities for long weekend trips when the weather is not good enough to venture further west. However if you want to do the crossing from the Leatham River to the Branch River, it would be best to do it sooner rather than later - before the route is completely choked with wilding pines.

The sight of valleys full of such weeds is depressing, considering that they can out-compete and smother everything else and are hardy enough to survive where no other plants (except tussocks etc.) can. I've since been told that the old New Zealand Forest Service loaded up planes with the seeds and aerial sowed the valley.

Despite this it was a great weekend away to a part of the country I'd never been before. Thanks to Flo for agreeing to subject her car to the rigors of the Hamner - St Arnaud Road!

Ian Dunn, Jeff Hall, Lynette Hartley, Flo Roberts, Stu Smith

Broken Hill/Trig O: 7 June 2003

We left the car park at the Broken River ski field turnoff at 9.40am, crossed the main road and strolled across a wee flat before beginning the climb up to Trig O. The background chatter failed to subside on the ascent, indicating a fit bunch of trampers. A cool, moderate northwesterly was in progress.

About two thirds of the way up we stopped for a snack and named the various Craigieburn peaks and ski fields- then got out the map and got it right.

At the top (TrigO) the norwester was cool and strong. We had nice views over Lake Pearson, Purple Hill, Mt Bernard and of course the Craigieburn range. There were two trigs at Trig O, either the metal one replaced the wooden one or Trig G arrived here in a very big easterly.

Broken Hill was identified and we set out for it glancing down on the Flock Hill station

and flats as we went. Lunch was in the lee of Broken Hill. The wind was quite cold now and I think we were all pleased to get underway again. We descended the ridge to a saddle before climbing up to Trig G for views over the Torlesse range, Waimak Gorge, Puketeraki Range and Esk River as well as down onto the railway viaduct. Then back to the saddle and a scree descent (southwards) into a creek bed; a walk downstream to pick up an undulating farm access track; followed westwards before veering off to make a beeline back to the car park to complete the circuit.

A Springfield café stop completed an enjoyable (if somewhat cold) day in the hills.

Warwick (leader) Richard, Jenny, Helen, Ben, Katherine, Susan, Kerrie, Stephen, Joanna, Dave, Ron, Kieran (scribe)

Mt Cloudsley: Sunday 15 June 2003

Inspired by the recent showing of Shackleton's Endurance adventures, here is our own tale of entirely pointless heroic exploration and exposure to the elements, of inspiring leadership, and of selfless generosity . . . A good group of 14 of us set off from Castle Hill village towards Mt Cloudsley in some sunshine but with no sledge dogs and a bad forecast. By the time we were starting the first upward sections it was distinctly grey, with enthusiastic gusts of cold wind. Half an hour or so later there was undeniable rain. The wind rose, the rain turned to sleet, and the sleet came in sideways. We carried on in resolute spirit, keeping an eye on brave leader Bernard in the middle of the pack. The brave leader eventually called a conference and four people decided to go back – the rest of us may have been affected by frozen common sense because we opted to continue a bit further, even though all were agreed that we would not be attempting to go beyond the closest intermediate knob well below Cloudsley. Onward and upwards – or, in my case at least – more sideways and upwards in a crab like effort to keep upright and avoid

sleet in the face. Catherine and Ben disappeared into layers of lovely Paramo; Joanna fished with frozen fingers for extra gloves, Michael protected his sun hat with a waterproof hat on top. Near to the top of the knob it was more exposed. Conference again in a huddle out of the wind: eight opted for immediate descent via the scree slope while intrepid explorers Kieran and Gareth decided to carry on a bit further.

A very good scree run brought us down to the creek which we followed most of the way back. Arriving at the cars again we were slightly surprised to find no sign of the first four to come back, until we were hailed by a woman from a nearby house: 'Come on over, we've got four of you in here already.' Visions of Gretel lured into the gingerbread house in search of Hansel . . . but no, just two exceedingly kind people who let us get changed and warm up in their lovely house (the entrance hall of which is probably still redolent of wet socks). We sat down close to the log burner (in Eloise's case, almost in it) and gratefully accepted hot drinks; sensible people like Taka took the opportunity to

bring out their packed lunches as well. Gareth and Kieran reappeared, wrung themselves out, and joined us in the warmth. Mr & Mrs Hassell must have been wondering how many more there were, and if we would ever go. Finally Bernard managed to lever everyone out of their comfy corners and we made a dash for the cars - and headed straight for Springfield

and more food and drink. It really is tough this tramping business.

Many thanks to everyone for a fun day, to Bernard for leading, but most especially to Mr & Mrs Hassall of Rangiora and Castle Hill Village for their wonderful hospitality.

Bernard (leader), Gareth Gilbert, Susan Pearson, Kerry, Catherine, Ben, Eloise, Kieran, Joanna, Taka, Jenny (scribe), Michael, Steve Heald, Wim

Hamilton Peak: Sunday 22 June 2003

It was a reasonably clear and dry Sunday morning as I met my fellow explorers at Springfield, lead by Captain Warwick, his advisor, First Officer Frank, and their crew of seven.

After the usual relief stop, pies and map consultation, we set off for Craigieburn Forest Parkland; our destination, Hamilton Peak.

We parked our horseless carriages at the Broken River ski field car park and climbed the access road through the luxurious resorts of the Broken River ski club. We then ploughed our way up the slopes of the ski field with first officer Frank doing a sterling job of making the rest of our lives easier in the snow. A stop at the top afforded awesome views of the snow capped Grey and Black Ranges. Jackets were donned to keep out the wind as we traveled along the ridge via Nervous Knob and onto Hamilton Peak.

After a very quick lunch, we descended down the spur towards Camp Saddle. Here we were introduced to the new Olympic sport of BUM SLIDING, by Honora. And so several grown and mature adults(!!!) spent the good part of the next 45 minutes sliding down the slope in various contorted ways.

Captain Warwick trying the "Head first on stomach" method, Joanna trying the "Wanting to see where I've been" method and Frank and Honora going for the 'Flat-out' method. I knew snow had a purpose. Much fun was had and it was with some reluctance that we left the snowy slopes and entered the bush track back to the car park.

This Expedition consisted of:

Warwick (Leader), Frank, Honora, Joanna, Jenny, 2 Johns, Scott, Richard and your scribe, Roddus

Cameron Hut: 28 - 29 June 2003.

After an early departure from Chch we all met up at Lake Heron campsite at 8:45 and then drove up first part of the 4WD track opposite the 'gravel pit' on the map. Parked and left intentions. Then about 9:30 am we set off up the valley into increasingly gloomy weather.

The first 2 hours were pretty straightforward grazed river flat travel to where the corrugated iron hut named Highland Home sits on the far side of the river. Then about 2km further on the valley narrows into a tighter section where the going was more difficult and more unpleasant due to a

steadily increasing drizzle and a cold wind coming from seemingly every direction. Some time during this section we stole a few minutes in a protected hollow to consume some lunch as rapidly as we could and kept going.

The route hugged the river edge pretty closely but somehow we missed it at one stage and went up the bank. This detour ended up making things worse for ourselves, as we had to push through Matagouri and Spaniards to get back on route. Several stops were made for people

to put on more clothes as it got progressively colder and wetter.

When the valley opened out again (about 1 ½ km further on) the rounded hillocks of glacial moraine (drumlins?) were clearly visible up ahead. Andrew pointing out the hillock which was hiding the hut.

The trick to finding the hut seemed to be to keep to the left of the valley and the stream until level with the hut and then to turn in across the valley. There is a cairned route to follow and the hut is obscured by small moraine ridges and dips until virtually upon it.

We arrived at the hut about 3:30pm with everyone pretty chilled and the wind and rain making it a dismal prospect for camping. Luckily the 9 bunk hut was empty and we decided we would manage somehow to make room for the 13 of us.

Getting into dry clothes and getting out of the way was everyone's goal. Jen needed a bit of help to warm up so some of us put that on priority and pretty soon she was toasty in her sleeping bag. Trevor had let his feet get cold and he too was soon in his sleeping bag. Nigel learnt what plastic bags are really for. Eventually we were all dry and warm with hot drinks in our hands. Despite there being no fire in the hut our collective warmth made it a cosy place – aided no doubt by some clearly well placed bats in the roof – thanks to the CMC. After

dinner we went off to bed pretty quickly, with Nigel and Liam on mattresses on the floor. What joy it was to find that out of the 13 people present there were only 2 sporadic gentle snorers.

It rained and howled all night, but in the morning the weather abated for an hour or so while we all attempted to get up, breakfast, and pack in close quarters. We were able at last to get a half passable view of Peg Col and surrounding peaks. Eventually we left around at five past ten just as the wind and rain started up again. As we descended though the weather got better and by the time we were out of the glacial moraine a rainbow was visible along with some patches of blue sky in the lower valley.

By lunch time we were stripping off our wet weather gear and strolling along in base layer polypro. An enjoyable lunch was had enjoying the sunshine. We were back to the cars by 15:35 making it a 5 and ½ hour return journey. The Sunday sunshine and views had saved the weekend for most of us. A good trip after all!

15.7km each way. Height gain/loss of 550m.

Participants: Andrew Wrapson, Susan Pearson, Ron Keeble, Kerrie Skinner, Bronwyn Strang, Wim, Richard, Helen Harkness, Jenn, Trevor, George, Nigel Watson, Liam Garlick.

Basic Snow Craft Course: 12 and 13 July

We drove up to Arthurs Pass on Friday night with fairly icy roads around Porters Pass – thanks to the iron-nerved drivers for delivering everyone safely. Can we go to bed now? Not before you work out everything you never previously knew about crampons and the different and intriguingly named patterns for strapping them on. Adrian brought up a tool kit complete with vice and seemed mildly disappointed that no one needed radical re-engineering of their spiky footwear. Next morning we scrambled ourselves and our laden packs out for a day playing in the snow in the Otira valley. Which way up to hold an ice axe (some of us took a while to get the hang of this), maintaining two points of

contact (this seemed to be beyond my coordination limits but got better with practice), and finally the exciting moment - sliding and self arresting in two separate groups. Who would have thought that throwing yourself around on the snow and trying to make it second nature to want to land on an axe (properly held of course) could be so much fun? When Steve thought that either the group, or the snow, or possibly the axes, could take no more we tried crampons. Not the best snow for them, according to the experts, but still very useful – once we had got them on of course. After lunch we cramponed uncertainly up the valley and tried to build a snow shelter. There must have been a lot of

the wrong sort of snow around because it looked more like a snow paddling pool to me. Digging was very warming though, and we got to watch the Intermediate group looking very professional in harnesses and hunting like demented truffle hounds for buried transceivers. Dinner that night for the social souls was at the Chalet restaurant ("yes you can all come, provided you all order pizza").

Next day was dominated by the attempt of the Chalet restaurant to kidnap Adrian's car keys and then deny all knowledge. Not only did this leave Adrian unable to use his truck but it was also blocking in other vehicles. After spending over an hour turning the hut, the Chalet, and Adrian's pack upside down repeatedly, we made elaborate plans for Trevor to drive him back to Christchurch and then to get him back to the hut with a spare set while the rest of the group went up Avalanche Peak. This is not exactly an easy trip in summer and I at least found it a challenge for a brain still trying to implement two points of contact properly. We slipped and scrambled up the steep icy path to the bush line and then floundered through the snow almost to the summit (leaving a trail that looked, as Steve so eloquently put it, like a herd of snow buffalo has passed through). It was a perfect day with blue sky, bright sun, and

wind only on parts of the ridge. Even more perfect, Adrian and Trevor reappeared, having rescued the car keys in a final commando raid on the Chalet. During lunch three snow boarders swooped down off the summit, swishing in great perfect curving sprays of snow into the huge white basin, while we watched in awe.

Coming down the same way definitely came into the not-easy category. It was steep and either slippery or deep snow. Like the way up, good practice. The descent was safely and steadily negotiated, although I do have hearsay reports of one trip member attempting a nose dive from the path below the bush line and having to be extricated from an upside down position entangled in a tree – thus proving that ice axes are useful even for aerial, arboreal self-arrest. Back at the hut we had another key drama but eventually managed to get in, pack up and get out. Many, many thanks to St Steve and St Adrian, our ever-patient and totally inspiring leaders, and to John Henson for organising the whole thing.

Steve Brasch & Adrian Busby (instructors), Michael, Trevor, Michelle, Rachel, Bruce, Alice, Gary, Margee, Kerry, Catherine, Ben, Jenny

Please post or email articles for the September newsletter to the Editor (Joanna Ibell)
by Thursday 21st August 2003
Email: joannaibell@ihug.co.nz
Telephone: 980 3824
Post: 78 Cuffs Rd, Wainoni, Christchurch.

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