

I SURVIVED AN OVER-THIRTIES CLUB DAY TRIP *OTMC Bulletin, April 1987, (Page 7)*

Possibly you, like me, have wondered what the OTC is. It's an informal walking group that started off as an OTMC splinter group 15 years ago and now consists of about half and half old trampers and non-trampers. I turned up at their February day trip to the Mangatuas and this is what it was like:

We met at 8.30 am (9 am in winter, apparently!) in the Dowling St carpark - that's the one just up from Queen's Gardens. I knew only a couple of faces, but a lot of other people were also on their first time out with OTC and the regulars were nice and chatty. There were a handful of people under 30, including a couple of children, and the rest ranged from "early middle age" to "the older they are, the tougher they get". We shared cars out to Grainger Road, which gave me a chance to get to know some people; one had been walking with the Phoenix Club before, and the other two were regulars who delighted in telling me how long their last trip was. Some more people were waiting at the road end, making 30 in all - an average turnout.

There are two leaders on each trip, who share responsibilities. George Palmer was leader in charge of the uphill part, so he led off up a farm road past a swimming pool and teahouse that used to be used by a Sun Club. Then a lightly marked track took us up a bushed spur to the bush line. We straggled up to the top of the ridge where the faster groups sat for half an hour, wrapped in parkas and chewing chervil, while the second leader herded the back end along.

By this time it was 11.30 am, and the walk along the top of the Maungatua to the trig took us until 12.30 pm and lunchtime. This area is Scenic Reserve and is well worth a visit - lovely tussock and alpine plants, and even a couple of tarns. The views are magnificent, from the Taieri right over to Lee Stream and the Rock and Pillars.

On the way back we changed leaders and followed Steve Amies northwards along the ridge on the true left of the Maungatua Stream. An electric fence with a very slow but powerful jolt provided some entertainment - further along we found the solar cell which ran it. We had afternoon tea by a rocky outcrop overlooking Woodside Glen.

The route from here was a bit complicated, especially since some of the beginners were feeling tired by this time. We bashed down to the lowest point in a tongue of head-high scrub, then into the bush and sidled left to avoid bluffs. Then we got onto a spur that takes you right down to the Woodside Glen stream, crossing the Maungatua stream on the way. A rimu marks the spot where you join the stream. From here it would be easy for a smaller group to follow the stream, but we used an old water race on the true right which used to supply a sawmill. We dropped back down to the stream at a grove of totaras (or if you go too far, at the farmer's fence) and right onto the Woodside Glen track. We reached the Glen at 5 pm, just as it began to rain, and the drivers were driven back to pick up the cars and return.

A satisfying trip - I'll be going away again with the Over Thirties. Especially when I turn over thirty myself!

P.S. Who's coming on my day trip to the Maungatuas on April 12th? Since it will be the day after the Pre-Easter Social, I won't take you down that way!

Jane Bruce