The Bulletin

Newsletter of the Otago Tramping and Mountaineering Club Inc # 822 February 2022

Hike more, worry less

Upcoming Trips & Events

✶ WEEKENDS ✶ Nelson Lakes ✶ Dome Hills ✶ Rees - Dart - Cascade Saddle ✶ Acheron Lakes Livingstone Mountains ✶

✶ SUNDAYS ✶ 3 Peak track ✶ Waianakarua ✶ Chalkies ✶ Whare Flat ✶ Heyward Point ✶ Frasers Gully to Jim Freeman Track ✶

Gordon at Brewster Glacier. Photo credit: Sharen Rutherford

OTMC Bank Account

The OTMC bank account with ASB is … 12-3150-0311684-00
Please include your name and the reason for the payment when using internet banking (which is the preferred option). Non-members must pay for trips when signing the trip list,members should pay before departure. Vehicle suppliers/drivers will normally not pay the trip fee and will be reimbursed fuel costs later (check with the trip leader or Treasurer Sharen if in doubt).

Gear Hire

OTMC has a large amount of gear available for members to hire.
NO hire charge for members for the first week!
See or phone our Gear Hire Committee member.

- Ice Axes
- Crampons
- Cookers & Billies
- Packs
- Tent/Flys
- Climbing Helmets

Your Committee

President: Sharen Rutherford	027 2291961	sharen.rutherford@gmail.com
Centenary/Website: Antony Pettinger	473 7924	antony.pettinger@gmail.com
Vice President: Antony Pettinger		
Secretary: Debbie Pettinger		debspettinger@gmail.com
Treasurer: Rodger Clarkson		rodger.clarkson@xtra.co.nz
Chief Guide: Wayne Hodgkinson	03 473 0950	wphodgkinson@xtra.co.nz
Membership Secretary: Andrew McConnell	022 089 6537	sossie_the_great@hotmail.com
Bulletin Editor: Caitlin Robertson	0274891153	caitlinr007@gmail.com
Daytrip Convener: Mark Stephenson	027 6151870	
Thursday Night Planner Tracy Pettinger	(03) 487 9488	
Weekly Updates: Tom Wager	021 0528151	tomwager3@gmail.com
Clubrooms Maintenance: Dave Bunn	029 779 7006	
Gear Hire: Ralph Harvey	03 4534330	

Get in touch

Otago Tramping and Mountaineering Club, 3 Young Street, Dunedin
http://otmc.co.nz https://facebook.com/groups/otmcnz
otmcnz@gmail.com
Thursday meeting at 3 Young St, South Dunedin Doors open 7:30 for 8pm start, all welcome
Sign up to our email list: https://lists.otago.ac.nz/listinfo/otmc

Whats new?

A big welcome to 2022!

New Videos
Want to get track savvy? Well the Mountain Safety Council has released videos some new videos of popular walking tracks.

For those who haven't seen them, in 2018 they release 12 track specific videos and they talk about some track specific advice along with drawing attention to some of the common risks

The new videos include some local tracks - Gillespie Pass and the Rees-Dart Circuit in Otago. Along with several across the country including; Kauaeranga Kauri Trail Pinnacles Walk (Coromandel), Tararua Southern Crossing (Wellington), Mt Somers Tracks (Canterbury), and Copland Valley (Westland)

Watch them all here https://www.youtube.com/c/NZMountainSafetyCouncil

Or search NZ Mountain Safety Council on youtube.

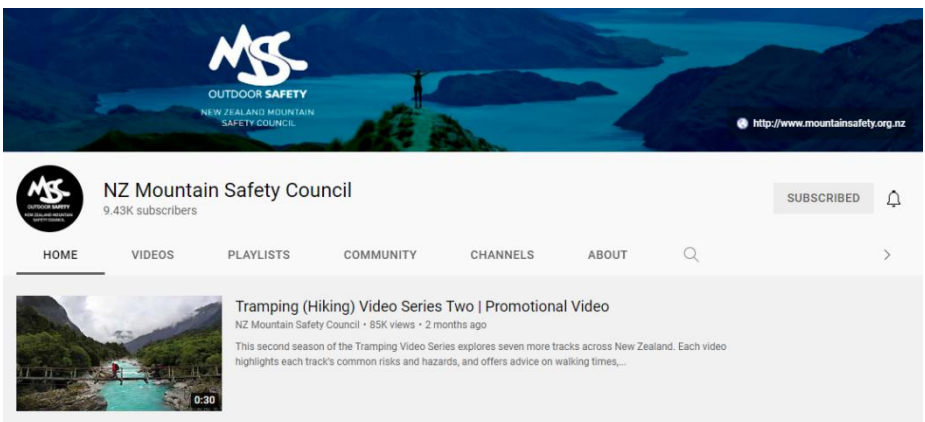


Photo Credit: https://www.youtube.com/c/NZMountainSafetyCouncil

Trip Reports

December

The Return. David Barnes

Imagine you'd tramped an average of 36 days a year for 40 years. Minimum 12, maximum 68. And then BANG – nothing, nil, nada, zip, you don't take your boots off the shelf for 874 days[Technically an exaggeration – last November I snuck up from the Desert Rd to Waihohonu Hut to meet Anne-Marie and some friends who were on the Tongariro Northern Circuit. But that's an hour each way with a 100m ascent, so I'm not counting it.]. That's been my last two and a half years, from when my knees, which had been threatening to give up the ghost for about 15 years, finally did. I struggled back to the car on an easy trip I was leading for Hutt Valley Tramping Club (HVTC) in March 2019 and said "enough". 2 years later, I had two shiny new knees installed and began the tedious and time-consuming process of rehabilitation. (Time consuming to the extent that I retired from the Federated Mountain Clubs executive to clear some time in my days for it).

My first foray into the hills was in July, when a friend (who's had one knee replaced) proposed a short trip to what might be the biggest rata tree in the country. "It's only an hour, and it's mostly flat on an old tram line". Both statements were wildly inaccurate, but it was so nice to be out again. But it was a step too far, and some heavy-duty painkillers were needed when I hobbled into the house.

Over the next few months I did some more measured day trips, and by November I thought I was ready to tackle an overnighter.

Powell Hut
Photo Credit:
David Barnes

I knew exactly where to go. Powell Hut sits at bushline on the eastern side of the Tararua Range. The track is a big wide one, albeit with some steep bits towards the end, the location means the hut is accessible in most weathers and has great views if the weather is good, and there's the option of carrying on to Mt Holdsworth. The only snag is that it's a booked hut and it's impossible to get a bunk on a Saturday at short notice. So I booked Monday off – and, as a bonus, the weather forecast was better.

The DoC time is 4 hours, and I knew it had taken me 3 the last time I went up there. So a Sunday afternoon departure was planned. It was a warm muggy day as I headed over the bridge over Atiwhakatu Stream. Soon, the track forked, and I took the left option, starting up the Gentle Annie Track. Although named for a nearby stream, it's a fitting name for the track, which gains altitude in a fairly casual manner. After a little over an hour, a sign marked the turnoff to Rocky Lookout. I wasn't in a hurry, so wandered up for a look at the expansive view over the Wairarapa.

Back on track, the upward meander continued, and there was a steady stream of downhill traffic. One day tripper mentioned that there was already a fair crowd at the hut, and I began to worry about unbooked people pinching the bunks – a hazard of unwardened booked huts – and wishing I'd brought my sleeping mat. Before long, I'd passed the junction to Totara Flats and the Waiohine River, at which point the track levelled off. After the next junction, to River Ridge, the track dropped gently – wasted altitude gain – and soon I was at Mountain House Shelter, a replacement for a historic hut.

North from Mt Holdsworth. Photo Credit: David Barnes

I'd been looking at the ridge ahead and wondering about my recall that only the last 20 minutes to the hut was mercilessly steep. The whole thing looked like it was. I took a break and got the map out. It confirmed that I had another 500 metres to climb – I had only gained 400m in the 2+ hours I'd been going. Sure enough, a few minute after getting underway again, I encountered the first of many sets of wooden steps (mostly soil-filled, rather than stairways, until the end). The steps were quite high – maybe 400mm – and took quite a toll on my recovering knee muscles.

I was fairly weary as I approached bushline. I could hear voices, and imagined that would be from people on the hut deck. I was really surprised to come around a corner and find that the voices were from a group that I'd caught up with. I didn't think my pace would have caught anyone, let alone some guys half my age and no doubt with the knees they were born with. Of course, the disappointing thing about catching them is that I wasn't quite at the hut. It lay 10 minutes away.
The Tararuas have a deserved reputation for bad weather, with the tops said to be clagged in 200 days a year. The first time I'd been here, while descending from Mt Holdsworth wearing a weekend pack, the gale winds had picked me off my feet and I'd been airborne for a couple of metres. Not today, though. Not a breath of wind, and it was lovely and warm. Cloud cloaked the Wairarapa below me. I was stoked to be somewhere like this after such a long absence, and it was great that conditions allowed me to sit outside and lap it up.

The hut is new since my last visit, the fourth on this site. It sleeps about 30, and it was only half full. That worry about a bunk was all for nothing. After a curry, it was back out to the deck for a dram. So nice!
I wandered up to the helipad for some photos and when I returned to the deck was surprised to see some new arrivals, an HVTC trip. They were on an epic out-and-back weekend to Aokaparangi Biv on the Tararua Main Range, and still planned to head down to the carpark.

David Barnes, Mt Holdsworth
Photo Credit: David Barnes

I had a fantastic sleep, and awoke to another still, clear day. Unbelievable. I grabbed my camera and wandered up Mt Holdsworth (1430m), an hour or so above the hut. I spent an hour up there, just soaking it up. You just wouldn't expect to be able to hang around there in shorts and t-shirt. Eventually I dragged myself away, dropped down to the hut and shouldered my pack for the descent. Mountain House was a good spot for lunch, particularly as it marked the transition from the steep steps. By the time I reached the bottom of the hill, the body was protesting a bit, and the last 20 minutes, although flat, really dragged.
I'd done it. I was back in the hills, and was able to start thinking about them being a regular part of my life again. The jury's still out on how big the trips will be, but settling for short easy-ish trips is a hell of a lot better than settling on the couch. Here's hoping!
David Barnes

January 2022

16 Mihiwaka Bushbash. Gordon Tocher

On this sunny Sunday Andrew, Ricky and Wendel gathered at the club rooms to head to Mihiwaka with Gordon as the trip leader for the first trip of the year. After a short drive we got to the starting point at Deborah Bay, where we geared up and started walking towards the mountain that towered over us in the background.

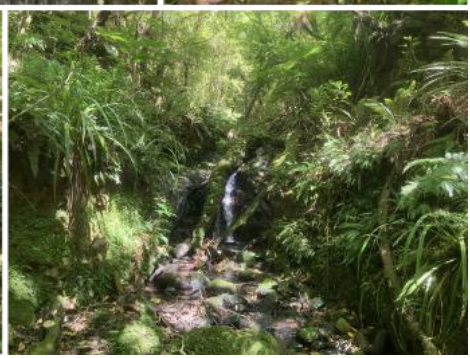
Photo Left: Mihiwaka, the goal of the trip in the background. Right: Bashing our way to the railway line. Photo Credit: Wendel Broek.

A short walk brought us to the start of the 145-year-old donkey track. We followed the track, which is nice and easy, for a little while until it was time to jump the fence and work our way up towards the railway line. There had been quite a bit of new growth slowing us down, so it took some time to get up.

After that it was a short easy walk along the railway line towards the long and dark tunnel.

Photo Left: An easy walk along the railway line. Photo right: The entrance of the tunnel. Photo Credit: Wendel Broek.

After gazing into the darkness, we continued uphill by following Cold Water Creek. Zigzagging between the right and left bank depending on where the easiest terrain was, we worked our way up.



Previous page: Top Left Photo: Entering Cold Water Creek. Middle and Bottom Right Photo: Some small waterfalls. Top Right and Bottom Left Photo: Working our way up and along the creek. Photo Credit: Wendel Broek.

Getting to a fence crossing the creek, we left the little gully behind and worked our way up along a little spur. Here we had a short snack break which was very welcome in such hot conditions. Shortly after the break Ricky found out he lost his hat, so it was decided to take the same route on the way back.

A little bit later we came out of the forest and had a look around. The harbour was bathing in sunlight, but there were some low clouds coming from the north. Turning around towards Mihiwaka, showed the top all covered in clouds…

Left Photo: View over the sunny harbour. Right Photo: Mihiwaka's top covered in clouds. Wendel Broek.

We continued up the paddock towards Blueskin Road. Following the road for a little while, we reached the track towards the climbing area on Mihiwaka. The muddy track led us through a nice forest to the base of a cliff (the climbing area).
From here on the track continued up and we reached a little look out with….no views… the clouds were obscuring everything.

Left Photo: The track up Mihiwaka. Right Photo: It was a little bit cloudy at the top. Photo Credit: Wendel Broek.

Nevertheless, we continued along the track that became quite steep at places (luckily there was heaps of vegetation to use as handles). On more exposed parts the only thing you could see was still just clouds. After a while we reached a sort of a plateau and the track became reasonably flat towards the peak where there used to stand a trig station (it got tired and decided to lay down). Here we had our lunch and looked at the clouds passing by. At times you could see some slitters of the surrounding landscape, not exactly what we came for.

Left Photo: Glimpses of the surroundings are visible through the clouds. Right Photo: Finally the clouds clear and we can enjoy what we came for. Photo Credit: Wendel Broek.

However, after a little while relaxing at the top, the clouds suddenly gave way and a stunning view of the harbour unfolded.

Photos: Otago harbour. Photo Credit: Wendel Broek.

After taking in some more of the view, it was time to head back down. The lack of clouds made it a totally different experience, with a stunning view.

The view to the north-east on the way down. Photo Credit: Wendel Broek.

We followed the same track down, albeit with a slight shortcut.
Back at the paddock we managed to find where we got out, so we started to trace back our steps in order to find Ricky's hat. Unfortunately due to the terrain (and vegetation) we couldn't exactly find the path taken, so we reached the creek via a slightly different route. Just before we got out of the creek a train passed (nice timing) and we saw its taillights disappear into the darkness of the tunnel.

A short walk along the railway line later we got to the spot where we went down through the bush to get on the old donkey track again. From here on it was just an easy walk back to the cars at Deborah Bay, concluding a wonderful trip.
And the hat, it is still hiding in the gully…

Wendel Broek for Ricky Kim, Andrew Mariskind and Gordon Tocher

30 Nichols Creek - Swampy Ridge - Pineapple Track. Chris Handley.
Early morning rain didn't bode well, but by the time I reached our meeting place at Woodhaugh Gardens the weather had improved - ideal for a day out walking and not too hot. The eight of us, masked, headed up the road in two vehicles to the start of Nichols track. Chris Handley lead the group up the Workers track which crossed a number of MTB tracks along the way. This first section was reasonably steep but Chris lead such a leisurely pace that I don't thinking anyone struggled. We stopped for morning tea at the top with light rain still persisting.

Dev was nearly run over as she sat on the grass verge enjoying a cuppa by a cyclist tearing down the track - not the last close encounter with MTBs we were to have on our tramp. Then it was on to the newish MTB track — an impressive construction installed by MBO. This section was muddy in places and bush had begun to encroach on the track. Near the top some of our group were lucky enough to observe a pair of secretive fern birds calling to each other in the flax. There must be a healthy population of the birds in the Silver Peaks area because I have often heard them on tramps but rarely seen them. We joined the Moon track and continued through a badly eroded section to the Swampy Track which proved quite slippery and resulted in a few falls but only loss of dignity.

We followed that to the top of the Pineapple Track where we had lunch and were met by a number of other like-minded people out enjoying the pleasant conditions. Chris then led us part way down the Pineapple Track and then deviated on to the Shortcut Track which in the long grass looked for all the world like a small animal trail, obviously not well used. Once we reached the bush line it did open up to a decent bush walk with substantial stands of native trees and one in particular the home of a native bee's nest in its lightning-struck trunk. As we wandered further down we met the intersection of the NIchol's Falls Track and made our way down the path to our vehicles.

The tramp was a pleasant 4 hours with great company and nice to see a couple of potential members joining us. A big thanks to Chris Handley for leading us and the trip filled in a few blanks for me about how the tracks in the area are laid out. Dave Bunn for Chris (L), Mark, Lucy, Laurence, Leonie, Dev Nichols (V) and Gayle Somerville (V).

Hikers in the pic (Left to Right): Leonie, Lucy, Laurence, Dave, Gayle, Dev, Mark.

FEB 2022
5-7 (3 Day) Camerons Creek - Mt Shrimpton. Mark Stephenson
"Not for the faint-hearted."

That was Matt's verdict on the Waitangi weekend trip between Makarora to Camerons Creek.

Trip leader Mark send out an email about three weeks earlier asking if anyone knew much about the route.

Foolishly, I said I'd been there about 15 years ago. Foolishly, I said it was an appealing venture and that I'd be keen to join.

I'd memories of a steep sidle, of nearly losing Bruce Bernasconi when he chased his dropped mug towards a bluff, and of an awful scrub bash near the creek hut. Because the trip had been over just two days, I'd thought Mark's three days and a camp on the gorgeous tops would be perfect.

We all, however, underestimated the challenge of travel in mist, across wet snow grass, through some broken country and finally down a precipitous ridge to the hut. Comfort zones were pushed and supposedly shortish days stretched out.

The five of us walked the original plan in reverse and started from Makarora because of the tail end of West Coast floods. The grunty river crossing on Camerons Creek should wait until Monday.

Rowena, Matt, Mark and Phil in the mist on day 1. Photo Credit: Tomas Sobek

After the tracked climb to the forest line, we continued up the ridge in the mist to about 1800m. Time to sidle, but it looked too steep. Next, we investigated and partly descended a rocky gut. But we were uncertain on its outcome, and we were in danger of bombing each other with loose stones.

A retreat was called, and back to about 1600m we scurried, before crossing gullies and snow grass. This transformed into a straight-forward ramp, and we topped out at a saddle. We camped nearby about 6pm in the bleak and cold. The mist only cleared spasmodically.

Visibility began to improve the next morning, and we patiently crossed rocky dissected country. Lunch was in the sunshine by a spectacular basin tarn. Matt and Tomas duly dipped in the frigid lake.

Ready to head further across the tops. Mt Brewster is in the distance. Photo Credit: Tomas Sobek

We ambled for a couple of hours across exquisite tarn-sprinkled grasslands before scrambling down the steep ridge to the hut. Exacting care was occasionally required. We were next thankful for gravity's assistance through a thick band of sub-alpine scrub and through the tangled bush.

Rowena and Phil negotiate a steep section of the ridge to Camerons Creek. Photo Credit: Tomas Sobek

Bluffed at the bottom, we zigzagged into one branch of the stream. We were at Camerons Creek Hut by 4.30pm - ready each to bathe in brisk waters.

Rowena, Matt, Tomas and Matt at Camerons Creek Hut. Photo Credit: Philip Somerville

The gorge track to the main road, and its river crossing, kept us honest on the final day.

There is, indeed, nothing like the tramping satisfaction from obstacles overcome and a thorough physical and mental workout.

The last word should go to Matt. He said, after negotiating, or in his case mostly bounding down, the ridge to the hut, “that’s not a good place for those with vertigo”.

Philip Somerville, with Mark Stephenson, Tomas Sobek, Matt Johnson and Rowena Simons

13 **Rogaine Event - Flagstaff. Jane Cloete**

Rogaining is the sport of long distance cross country navigation. In contrast to orienteering, rogaining is a team sport, with 2-5 people per team. There is no given order to the checkpoints; instead, every checkpoint gives a number of points. The task is to get as many points as possible within a given time limit.
Some rogaines last for 24 hours or more, a few last only 1 or 2 hours, but the one that we tried was for 3 hours.

Three of us (Jane Cloete, Ruth Thomas and Gaye Somerville) met up at Craigieburn – that's the old farm buildings at Ross Creek.

Alas the weather forecast wasn't too good. Light rain coming in mid-morning. Jane and Gaye only had trainers on but Ruth had some common sense and had come in boots – very wise, because the tracks were MUDDY and STEEP and SLIPPERY! Jane was the main navigator, Gaye was the main searcher as we got near a checkpoint, and Ruth was keeping track of where we had been. If it's not recorded, then your team is deemed not to have been there!

But we set out, noting the time because every minute late to return was going to cost us lots of points! First checkpoint was at the top of Ross Creek – easy as! 30 points on our score board. Then over to the lower Flagstaff forests and up towards the top of the Redwoods – good tracks, though the rain was setting in by now.

On up the Davies track – where the mud began! There are many side tracks off the Davies track and we used plenty of them, though we discovered that some were a bit overgrown. One or two checkpoints were on the track but most were off it.

We developed a rhythm whereby Ruth stayed on the track as the anchor, Gaye headed off into the bush to locate the flag and its number, and Jane went about half-way: that way we could always talk to each other and thus find the track again! It was rather dark in the bush and it would have been quite easy to get disorientated.

2 hours gone. Gaye managed to search out a flag near a swamp but then what next? The 'obvious' way was to plough on but Jane was getting brain fog, and all had had enough of overgrown tracks, so we went back to the Davies track, down that, and then a final fast walk up the McGouns track to collect another 80 points on the way back to the finish at Craigieburn. Whew – we'd made it with 10 minutes to spare!

Our final score was about 500: some of the fit 20-year-olds got over 1000! But we certainly weren't last – that ignominy went to a team that were so late back that they lost all the points that they'd spent 3 hours carefully collecting!
All in all, a wet and muddy 3 hours in the bush, but enjoyable none the less. My thanks to Gaye and Ruth for braving the weather and coming along to have a go!

27 Whare Flat. Saskia Bronstring.

Saskia, Barry, Mark, Gayle and myself (Caitlin) had a day of glorious weather and a well groomed track. Powder Creek ridge led us up and onto long ridge were most of the team made the final climb up onto Pulpit rock.

The view were spectacular out over the Taieri and we had a brilliant time.

Thanks so much Saskia for another successful trip

Saskia leading the team to powder ridge
Photo Credit: Caitlin Robertson

Upcoming Trips

2022

MARCH

5-6	Acheron Lakes Livingstone Mountains) or Symmetry Peaks (Eyre Mountains)	Andrew McConnell	022 089 7637
6	3 Peaks Track - Escarpmant Track - Cloud Forests of Leith Track	Clare Noakes	021 186 3579
13	Waianakarua	Rodger Clarkson	021 0268 2778
19-23	Rees - Dart - Cascade Saddle (Otago Anniversary 5 Day Trip)	Joe Bretherton	027 362 1221
20	Chalkies	Richard and Tracy Pettinger	03 487 9488
27	Hayward Point	Rose Clohoun	0211513791

APRIL

3	Frasers Gully to Jim Freeman Track (Flagstaff)	Sue Williams	021 712 606
13	LeithValley to Flagstaff area	Rodger Clarkson	021 0268 2778
15-24	Easter / ANZAC 9 Days - Nelson Lakes (OTMC Members Only)	Sharen Rutherford	027 291 1961

Thursday Night Meetings

Club Social meetings at the Club rooms 3 Young Street, South Dunedin

Members, non-members, visitors , all are welcome to these social events.

Doors open at 7:30 for an 8 pm start.

All ideas are welcome for future up-coming evenings.

As a reminder you must pre-register on the Weekend Trip Lists at the club rooms (or contact the leader direct) before the closing date (normally two weeks before the trip start). Members must pay before departure, non-members upon registering (non-members pay $13 more than the members fee shown below.Vehicle providers may be exempt from the fee (check with the leader).Trip organizational details will follow by email.You are responsible for your gear and medical / first-aid needs (also see Gear Hire). (E)asy, (M)edium, (F)it required.

Note from the editor

Hi everyone, as the Bulletin Editor I am settling in nicely and appreciating all the lovely feedback and critical analysis. Got something on your mind for the Bulletin? Feel free to drop me a line and as always. I LOVE YOUR REPORTS! So please email your contributions for the next issue to caitlinr007@gmail.com by approximately June 3rd. Though I appreciate earlier delivery, so that I can start piecing it together.
The trip leader does not have to write the report so put your hand up to take some load off their shoulders! If you include a photo or two, please note appropriate captions (names of people pictured, names of land features, etc.)
A BIG THANK YOU TO ALL THAT CONTRIBUTE!

Our Club - the Highlights

Celebrating everything and everyone OTMC. Send your favourite hiking photos to the editor. I may even choose it as the front cover!

Camping at the tarns in the basin high up in Death Valley
Photo Credit: Sharon Rutherford