The Bulletin

Newsletter of the Otago Tramping and Mountaineering Club Inc # 825 November 2022

Upcoming Trips & Events

✶ WEEKENDS ✶

✶ East Matukituki (Waitangi Weekend 3-Day) ✶ Milford Track) ✶

✶ SUNDAYS & SATURDAYS ✶

✶ OTMC Half-Marathon (or Powder Ridge / Long Ridge / Pulpit Rock / Green Ridge / Swampy circuit) ✶ OTMC Picnic - Long Beach ✶ Rosella Ridge - River Track - Gold Miners Direct ✶ Cloud Forest Of Leith - Escarpment Track - Three Peaks Track (circuit) ✶

The Powerline Track. Photo credit: Antony Pettinger.

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

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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

Saving the Silver Peaks

Saving the Silver Peaks

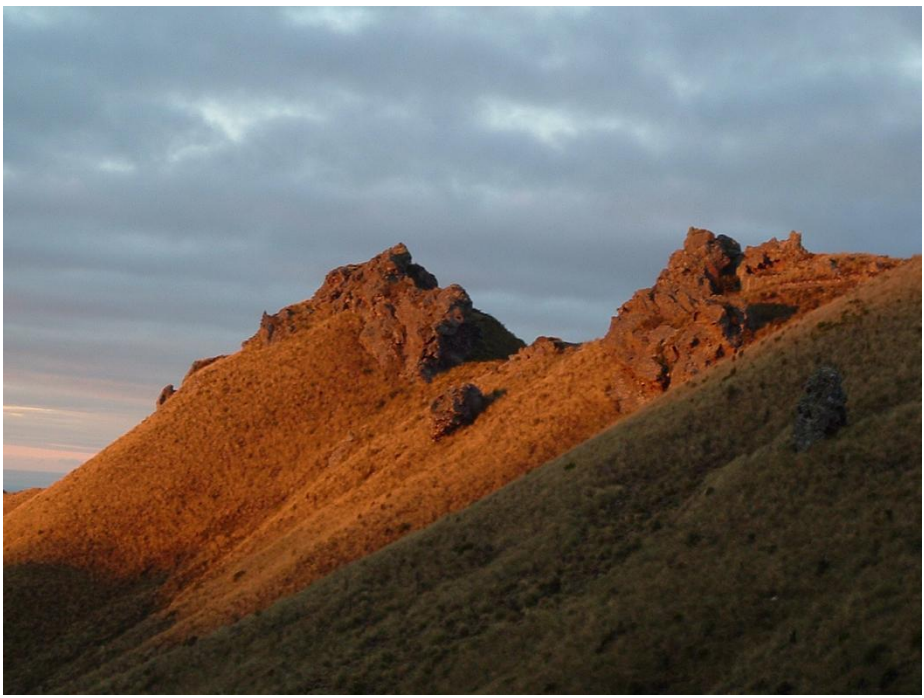
Silverpeaks. Photo Credit: David Barns.

As we head towards our centenary, the Club rightly remembers the 1965 Milford Track Freedom Walk as a key moment in its history. It was a monumental success, directly bringing about a change in the approach of government agencies and allowing hundreds of thousands of trampers easier access to our most famous track. As a piece of recreational advocacy, it is undoubtedly what the Club is best known for.

But I'd like to suggest that there was another key piece of advocacy which may have been just as important. Certainly, its effect on the Club's activities was more significant. I'm talking about the successful campaign in 1982 to save the core part of the Silver Peaks from exotic forestry. I base my claim that the effect on the Club's activities exceed that of the Freedom Walk on the fact that between 1982 and 2021 there were 477 Club trips to the Peaks, while since 1965 there have been seven to the Milford Track.

Being Dunedin's immediate hinterland, the Silver Peaks has been important to the Club since 1923. As well as tramping there regularly over 100 years, it built two huts there and maintained several more. In the first sixty years, much of the area was extensively farmed and little developed. But by the 1970s, change was afoot. When I first went there in 1974, the road from Waitati stopped at Double Hill, and there wasn't a pine tree in sight. By 1978, Semple Road and Mountain Track Road, formed a loop back to the Kilmog, taking in the dray road that dated to the mid nineteenth century and which had latterly been a link route for trampers – as well as the site of Red Hut. The road was there because the NZ Forest Service was developing the area for exotic forestry. Development of Invermay Research Station's Whare Flat farm – particularly with roads and exotic grasses - was changing the face of that end of the

Silver Peaks. Catchment Board-subsidised farm tracks carved their way along some of the high ridges of the range, and are still prominent today – often as an avenue of gorse. All this marked the gradual erosion of the historic visage of the range – tussock ridges, schist tors, and remarkably little sign of human activity – that made it such a great place to tramp.



Silverpeaks. Photo Credit: David Barns.

In 1982, the Silverpeaks County Council, an amalgam of the former Taieri and Waikouaiti counties, covering much of what is now Dunedin between Flagstaff and the Rock and Pillar Range, decided to get on the forestry bandwagon by rezoning much of the Silver Peaks to allow for exotic forestry as a permitted activity. No-one tramps far in a monocultural pine forest, and the Club realized its homeland was under serious threat. It swung into action. Fortunately, there was a considerable number of Club members with an activist bent, brought up on Save Manapouri and the native forest campaigns of the 70s, as well as the Club's key (albeit unsuccessful) role in Hands Off The Remarkables. We were also able to call on some members with particularly useful skill sets. Key amongst those were former Lands and Survey Ranger Bruce Mason and planner Bruce Chapman.

The two Bruces gave evidence at a hearing in June 1982, supported by a swag of Club members - including an impressionable teenager called David, who considers

this a key starting point for a lifelong passion for recreational advocacy. Bruce M set the scene, explaining the history of recreation in the Silver Peaks, its inextricable link with the Club, the reasons tussock is and pine forest isn't a great place for tramping, and the importance to the wider Dunedin community of retaining the area for tramping. He also noted that the Club was a county ratepayer (for B
en Rudd's), and that we were starting the process of removing our own small conifer plantation and restoring native vegetation. Bruce C then commenced a rigorous explanation of the technicalities of why the proposed rezoning was wrong and why Scenic Appreciation designation was a better fit.

And then we won – well, sort of. Forestry wasn't going to be allowed as of right on the key central and eastern parts of the range, which were zoned for "scenic appreciation", but it would be allowed without seeking Council approval in the area around Mt Allan and Big Stream. The Silver Peaks had shrunk further, and my schooldays trips to Poplar Hut and then often out to Whare Flat would soon lose their appeal. But Green Ridge, Rocky Ridge, the Painted Forest and Cave Creek (home to Jubilee Hut) were safe – or at least safer than they had been. The council still had some discretion to allow forestry. Water catchment areas in the Silver Stream catchment were also not threatened.

Within a year or so, there was some more good news. Most of the Scenic Appreciation Zone apart from Silver Stream was purchased by the Lands and Survey Department and soon after were designated as a scenic reserve – thus giving far more effect to the term "scenic appreciation" than the council had, and paving the way for those 477 trips – and many more to come. It really was an important event in Club history.

David Barnes

Snowcaving trip 3-4 September, Old Man Range. Richard Pettinger.

Well another great snow caving trip went last year and I'm sorry some of you didn't make it because it was real good. The normal leaving time of 7 o'clock came and 14 of us took off for a chat and a coffee in Roxburgh followed by a drive up the hill. All the cars managed to get well up the hill and we got all packs into our friendly four-wheel-drive courtesy of the Alpine Club's Alan Carstens for the last bit. It was a very short walk, as Fynn's Dad Mark J suggested we would have. We inspected the rock bivvy dwelling on our way. It was all very inviting, but we had a job to do.

We found a splendid site just up from our traditional gully and started digging very quickly on a very good slope. We had a few people who wanted to try tents out in such alpiny conditions. Two of those people put up a tent while the other two decided to join in to dig a cave. All the caves (and tent) were in very close proximity so we could move around and see what was working well and what needed a bit of a nudge. It was very quick work and three almost perfect homes were constructed. I do believe some people got quite tired and cold at times. I was lucky to have diggers who just kept on going. Ivan and Amit got on with digging our 6-person snow-cathedral allowing me to concentrate on digging out entrance-ways or just encouraging others. We had such a cosy and safe night, while the wind raged stronger and stronger out there.

Ivan showing off shoveling skills. Photo Credit: Richard Pettinger.

Snow-caving time! Photo Credit: Richard Pettinger.

We heated our ready-made food and retired to bed quite early, increasingly ignoring the wind. Something that stuck in Ivan's head at this point: Nina's request to Alan - "Mum and you pass me the Chocolate Milk".

We had very comfortable and warm caves (well, as far as I knew). In the morning after many hours of peaceful sleep, we emerged to a lovely sunrise. But the wind was still there, and looking like increasing. Ivan and I noticed a well-sealed plastic bag of goodies was bulging and we knew straightaway that the atmospheric pressure must be rapidly falling. Although we were all warm and snug in our caves, we were advised the two tenters, who shared their car with two cavers, were up early and keen to go home. Maybe they had noticed the wind a bit more than the cavers had? They took off down the hill and the smiling cavers got up and followed - which was okay because we got to the hot chocolates, coffee and cakes much earlier. - Even though some of us had had hot drinks provided by very nice/keen people up on the hill. For me the best moment of the trip was receiving a fresh, Aeropress coffee, thanks to Allan, whilst I was still warm in bed, reminding me so easily, this Fathers' Day, how my lovely daughter Rosa bought me my own Aeropress a year or two ago! In a snowcave, that was a special moment, thanks Allan.

Happy Cavers. Photo Credit: Richard Pettinger.

I guess the worst moment was the rumbling tummy I developed. All I can think of was the stream water I had drunk a lot of, without boiling. Amit commented it looked a bit yellow and I (laughingly) dismissed it as being somewhat “sheepish”.

After some brief debriefing in Roxburgh, we all went home quite early while the wind continued to thrash the hill. I said at the debrief I was rather pleased we were there on Saturday and not venturing up a day later, when the weather became so stinky on the tops – at the very moment the Norwegians weather service was still promising light breezes!! (I know what you are saying, Rodger and Allan.)

Ivan noted what a fantastic weekend we had had and, with the current weather at the time, it was a timely reminder on how important it is to dig in if things get funky above the snowline. He added in an email to all attendees that there were some awesome photos taken during the weekend and that he had created a Google-drive folder that people were invited to put photos up on. https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/17tQ012PY7TW2FcQEfYWImhe94-CAO4MR?usp=sharing

I felt privileged to be there, in one of my favourite places on the planet, to share it with such lovely people. A one-in-a-million trip to treasure. I believe it is one of the best OTMC trips, to experience snow caving and enjoy the company of some really good people. Thanks for coming:
Richard Pettinger, for Amit Myint, Ivan Mason, Steffan Rolfe, Gayle Somerville, Alan Carstens, Nina Carstens, Fynn Jackson, Jonathan Molloy, Phil Sidaway, Rodger Clarkson, Allan Cox, Sharen Rutherford, Sue Williams.

Labour Weekend - lucky last of the trip reports

Home Hill

The original plan for the weekend was for the 7 of us to walk straight in to the Caples on the Friday night and look for somewhere to camp on the western side of the valley, however traffic was a bit heavier then anticipated on the drive over (it was a long weekend, after all) and matters were not helped by an hour and a half stop in Cromwell to get some kebabs! Finally arriving in Glenorchy about 8pm, we decided to have a look at how busy the campground in Kinloch was so that we might still be able to set up tents without torches. Thankfully, there was plenty of room, so we pitched out tents and settled in for the night.

Saturday dawned clear and blue skies. We were soon at the car park at the Greenstone where it was on gear and off along the track to the bridge over the Caples. Once over the bridge we left the track and headed north up the western side of the valley where found a good stock trail that headed up through the various scrubby bits and across open grassy flats, and was easy enough to follow. Tall poplar trees soon came into view which marked the location of the Birchdale Homestead, scenically mounted on a terrace above the river flats, and it didn't take long to reach it for a break before the real work of climbing Home Hill began. The homestead is now nothing but ruins, but the surrounding dilapidated fences and fruit trees in blossom offered hints to a past where people once lived here and called the Caples Valley home.

For the climb of Home Hill, I had read multiple accounts online of how diabolical the old "spur route" was, now completely consumed by scrub. I had a couple of alternative routes in mind, one of them by online tramping personality "Madpom", (those who have tramped with me before may remember I have mentioned him and his antics once or twice before), the other off the Backcountry Trust's Facebook page. Both routes followed Reids Creek until about the 700m contour before heading up through a scrubby gully to reach open bush that led to the historic Home Hill Hut. While Madpom's route started off on the true left of Reids Creek and had to cross higher up, a guy on the Backcountry Trust's page had posted, only a couple of

months ago, that he had flag taped a route entirely up the true right. We started looking for markers in the bush behind the old homestead and it didn't take long to find a strip of pink tape hanging from a tree, and so we headed uphill following the occasional marker.

Bush soon gave way to dense manuka scrub, and as we battled our way up, we routinely lost the tape markers, only to find them again a bit higher up. The large side stream on the topomap provided a welcome drink break as it was quite hot in the scrub. After another patch of bush, we reached the "large scoured out gully covered with grass and scattered scrub" (Madpom's words) which begins at the 700m contour, but in reality, the gully was covered in scrub with scattered grass! Thankfully the tape markers led us up onto an exposed ridge on the western side of the gully, so we ended up high above the scrub with quite nice views out over the Caples. At the top of the gully the ridge plunged back into the scrub briefly before finally hitting open bush which stretched up to the hut. After a last battle with quite a large amount of wind fall near the bush edge, we exited the forest onto open grassy tops just below the hut where we collapsed for lunch. Home Hill Hut, an old musterers hut, looked in very good nick for something dating back to the first half of the 20th Century, and seemed well cared for.

Home Hill Hut. Photo Credit: Ian Billinghurst.

Meanwhile, Alex had carried on ahead of us while climbing up the scrub and bush, as he was concerned about the winds rising in the afternoon and hadn't stopped at the hut. So, as we were climbing the open slopes above the hut, we saw him circling higher and higher above in his paraglider. We kept an eye on him as we slogged our way up the snowgrass slopes, but he soon disappeared beyond the ridge. It turned out he landed back at the Greenstone car park and met up with a friend who happened to be there and went boating instead!

On top of Home Hill. Photo Credit: Ian Billinghurst.

The rest of us finally found a place to ditch our packs near Pt1354 and tackled the last couple of hundred metres up the main ridge onto the summit of Home Hill. Home Hill is a location I have long wished to visit, so it was an absolute joy to finally stand on its summit and drink in the 360-degree views out over the Caples and Greenstone Valleys, Lake Wakatipu, the Humboldt and Ailsa Mountains, and peaks and ranges further afield. I could have stayed up there all day, but it was getting late, and we still had to reach our camp site a couple of kilometres to the west. After picking up our packs we carried on. We followed the ridge line over Pt1425 and then sidled around the northern side of Pt1388 to reach the large open area around Pt1312. After crossing the multiple branches of the unnamed stream on the topomap, some dry, flat ground to pitch tents was found between the 1340m and 1360m contours. It was a magical spot, with a lot of snow on the ridge line to the north of us extending in long tongues down towards the basin we were camped in, Home Hill looming on the skyline just a couple of km away, and views down into the Greenstone. We rapidly lost the sun while setting up camp and the temperature plummeted, so after dinner we soon retired to the relative warmth of our tents.

It was another early start on Sunday morning. I had vague notions of maybe getting around the head of Slip Creek and down to the Steele Creek Valley floor early afternoon, leaving plenty of time to cross over to the Caples, but the big unknown

was the state of snow conditions in Slip Creek. From our camp site we climbed snow grass and scree slopes up to a V notch pass that separated our basin from the next one to the West. On the western side, very steep scree and snow slopes plummeted down to a small melt water lake at the foot of the slopes. Tomas and Phil both had crampons so decided to descend the hard, frozen snow. The rest of us picked our way down the scree to the lake.

Between this small basin and the much larger one of Slip Creek was a ridge covered in snow slopes. We picked our way down its western side, sticking to rock outcrops between the snow. Tomas and Phil cut steps and using our micro spikes and ice axes we made our way down to open tussock near Pt1395. After a rest in the sun, we headed up the valley, Tomas and Phil cramponing across snow near the large tarn at the head of Slip Creek while the rest of us crossed the creek lower down and climbed up gentle scree slopes on the western side of the valley. Near the valley head the snow was exposed to the sun and was softening rapidly, so Tomas and Phil joined us on the scree and we slogged our way up steep slopes that led up to the saddle near Pt1548. The forecast was for 80kph winds in the afternoon, and arriving on the saddle, we stepped into an absolute howling gale northwester. Across a small basin on the saddle, magnificent views stretched over Steele Creek, an emerald-coloured lake lay shining up the unnamed north branch of Steele Creek, nestled beneath the snow-capped mid Ailsa Mountains.

Descending snow and scree into Slip Creek. Photo Credit: Ian Billinghurst.

It was another place I could have stayed hours at, but the wind was too strong, so reluctantly we started heading down scree slopes to the northwest of the saddle. We rapidly lost 300m, hitting a stream at about the 1200m contour where we stopped for lunch, mostly out of the wind. Carrying on, we followed the stream down as the sides of the stream began to rise above us. Madpom's notes mentioned climbing out of the stream upon hitting the first waterfall and it was only 100m later that the ground suddenly fell away and I peered over the top of a large drop. No more going this way! On the true left side of the stream, a steep scrubby gut led up through the canyon walls to the top of the ridge above the stream, so with some difficulty we scrambled up it. After a breather on the ridge, we now zigzagged down steep but open bush, the natural slope of the hillside leading us towards the large side stream on the topomap that drops into Steele Creek at the head of the flats above the hut. Once in the side stream, we followed it down, finally hitting Steele Creek about 3pm. By this stage nobody had the motivation to carry on to the Caples, so instead we headed down river to reach Steele Creek Hut about 4pm. According to the hut book there had been 10 people there Saturday night, including Caitlin's OTMC party, but we found the place deserted. We all pitched our tents in the shelter of the scrub and that evening used the hut for cooking and socializing in.

Decent into Steele Creek. Photo Credit: Ian Billinghurst.

It rained lightly overnight and continued into Monday. After breaking camp, we headed down Steele Creek, relatively dry under the trees, but it was raining much heavier by the time we reached the Greenstone track. It was a soggy walk back to the cars with not much hanging about, and a relief to change into dry clothes for the trip home.

Cheers everyone for a thoroughly enjoyable weekend. Ian Billinghurst for Alex Tups, Philip Somerville, Wendel Broek, Tomas Sobek, and Joe & Sharon Bretherton.

November
20th (100 Trips 011) Rock and Pillar Range. David McArthur.

Departing the Clubrooms at 8am on a very overcast morning, with occasional drizzle throughout most of the road trip to Middlemarch. Only 2 vehicles were required.

Tramping commenced at around 9:50 from Kinvara DoC car park, after parking a vehicle at Glencreag to provide transport back to Kinvara at the completion of the Leaning Lodge - Big Hut circuit.

After about 5 minutes tramping, we reached the first gate which leads onto the 4 wheel drive access track to Leaning Lodge. As we were approaching the second gate, we noticed a large bull walking quietly ahead of us, as we were about to open second the gate, the bull charged towards us, initially giving the impression he was charging at us, luckily, it seems that the bull thought it was cornered, and simply was making a break for the open spaces of the padlock we just walked through.
After being "Bull-rushed" we thought that was enough excitement for the morning.
At around 11:20, we stopped for a late morning snack, unfortunately, not much of a view because of quite foggy conditions.
Upon reaching Leaning Lodge at around 13:15, it was time for a much deserved lunch. Leaning Lodge area was foggy, visibility was rather poor.

The (silly) Leaning Lodge gang. Photo Credit: Dave McArthur.

After lunch, it was still foggy, so we decided to tramp to Big Hut via the poled route, and if the fog lifted, we could make a "B line" for Summit Rock..

Hughie was very considerate indeed, approaching the Rock and Pillar summit, we climbed above the fog and the view from Summit Rock (1450meters) was very rewarding.
Given that we were at the highest altitude on the Rock and Pillar Range, the weather was absolutely exceptional, clear warm and calm. Thanks Hughie.

After taking time to appreciate the views and take group photos, it was time to move on to Big Hut.

About 100 meters from Summit Rock, Mark Stephenson found a Mountain Stone Wētā, this was a nice surprise, great spotting Mark, and thanks for sharing your find with our group, really appreciated by all.
As we were approaching Big Hut, the fog rapidly returned, by the time we reached the Hut, visibility was down to around 25 meters.

Poles providing guidance in fog. Photo Credit: David McArthur.

Arrived at Big Hut around 15:15, stopped for another snack while being entertained by Tracy and Rodger playing table tennis. I suspect that "table tennis" maybe a reasonable rare activity on club trips?

Departed Big Hut at around 16:00 in fog conditions, however, about 10 minutes below the hut we dropped below the fog to great views of the Strath Taieri Plain.

We arrived at Glencreag car park at 17:30. By the time we sorted out our transport, we departed for Dunedin at around 18:00.

As trip leader, I wish to thank;
Caitlin Robertson, Richard and Tracy Pettinger, Rodger Clarkson, Mark Stephenson, Penny McArthur and Wendel Brock for their much appreciated team support and camaraderie, an awesome group to tramp with, well done!

David McArthur

26th (Saturday). (100 Trips 012) Tomahawk to Highcliff & Monument. Laurence Prattley.

This day trip is one that was first completed by the Otago Tramping Club on 6 October 1923. 99 years later, a group of 8 OTMC members met to recreate this early OTC trip, which is predominately a road walking trip over what would have been gravel roads and is now sealed. Starting at the old tram terminus (junction of Silverton, Highcliff and Tomahawk Road), we followed Tomahawk Road around to the Andersons Bay Cemetery where we took a detour through the cemetery before rejoining Tomahawk Road to cross the bridge and then take another detour onto Tomahawk Beach

With the tide out there was a large strip of exposed sand and very few people which made for very pleasant walking. All too soon the beach came to an end and we headed up through the soft sand dunes to the Ocean Grove playground, where we again rejoined Tomahawk Road and then onto Centre Road. Now the fun part began as we started the steady climb up Centre Road. There was much to see on Centre Road, from admiring the old stone cottage, marveling at the windswept trees, checking out the sections for sale, patting the horses and looking behind at the vast ocean.

It's a climb of about 200m over nearly 3km and with very little traffic we were able to walk and chat in pairs and in small groups which made the climb pass very quickly. Once we reached the top of Centre Road and onto Highcliff Road we were rewarded with our first views of the Otago Harbour. We spent a few minutes looking across the harbour to Signal Hill and the Burns Reserve which is where we'd been nearly a month ago for trip #4/100 trips.

Road walking. Photo Credit: Debbie Pettinger.

A short walk along Highcliff Road and we took another short detour up the hill to the Soldiers Monument with panoramic views of the harbour, Mt Cargill, Dunedin City and Saddle Hill. It is not often that there is no/very little wind at the monument and we made the most of this rare opportunity by having a break and refueling with snacks and a drink. From the Soldiers Monument it is all down hill, following Highcliff Road back to the junction with Silverton Street and Tomahawk Road, where we had started 11 km and 3 hours earlier.

Soldiers Monument. Photo Credit: Debbie Pettinger.

Despite being a predominately road walking trip, it ticked all the boxes

- great social trip by being able to walk and talk with others more easily on a sealed road
- wonderful views of our harbour that are often only glimpsed when traveling by car
- exercise with a 200+m climb and time to notice things we'd not seen before

Debbie Pettinger for Laurence Prattley, Debbie Guthrie, Antony Pettinger, Sandy Webb, Mandy Lungley, Richard Pettinger & Tracy Pettinger

27th (Sunday). (100 Trips 013) Complete Skyline Track (Bullring to Organ Pipes). Debbie Pettinger.

By Victoria Bruce

The jokes were bad, the company was good, and the weather held out for most of the seven-hour walk along Dunedin's skyline.

Newcomers Victoria and Emilie joined OMTC members Debbie and Debbie, Antony, Sharon, Joe and Lynda on a classic traverse of Flagstaff, Swampy and Mt Cargill, marking the 13th of the Club's 100 trips.

The day began at the George Street bridge where we said our hellos and hurried to grab a seat in Joe and Sharon's car before zooming off after the rest of the group.
We reconvened at Flagstaff's southern carpark to officially commence our trip, warming up with a brisk ascent to the lookout, passing an array of flowering hebes and daisy bushes.

Emilie flitted between the group, sharing a series of mind-boggling jokes/riddles about bananas, chickens and mountains, until we reached the turn off to Swampy Summit, with "Friendly Old Joe" bringing up the rear.

Pigeon Rock. Photo Credit: Victoria Bruce.

As another ascent began, Emilie and Debbie hung back to chat while the rest of us powered over the Swampy Ridge Track, admiring sweeping views of the Silver Peaks and Rock and Pillar range on one side and the city, harbour and peninsula on the other. After a quick snack we began the descent to the State Highway, passing flowering dracophyllum and tiny white orchids before entering the forest canopy and descending to the highway.
Once across Leith Saddle, the real climbing began with a short, steep scramble up to a rocky outcrop and then on through the gloriously lush and damp Cloud Forests of Leith to the Escarpment Track.

Emerging with mud-splattered legs, grumbles, a couple of bruises and a bleeding head, the group paused to admire sweeping views over Blueskin Bay and the Silver Peaks and reinforce their spirits with some of Debbie's lollies.
Windfall and forestry detritus deterred us from completing the full Escarpment Track and instead, Antony led us on a tour through the forestry plantation to the start of the A.H Reed track.

From the summit of Mt Cargill, we descended to view the geological wonder of the Organ Pipes before finishing our walk at Mt Cargill Road.
It took us just over seven hours to complete the 17km Dunedin Skyline Walk.
That's not a bad effort when the youngest group member is eight years old (despite an attempted guessing game, the rest of the group managed to keep their true ages on the down-low).

Buttars Peak. Photo Credit: Victoria Bruce.

Emilie's joke highlights: Why didn't the banana go to school? Because it wasn't peeling well. Why did the chicken cross the road? To get some egg-cercise. Why are mountains funny? Because they're hill areas.

DECEMBER 2022

3rd (Saturday). (100 Trips 014) Hawksbury Lagoon - Waikouaiti Beach. E Antony Pettinger.

What had started as a beautiful sunny Saturday morning had turned to some light rain as we headed to Woodhaugh Gardens for Trip 014, an impromptu Saturday afternoon trip to Hawksbury Lagoon and Waikouaiti Beach to make up for the cancelled Routeburn in a Day trip. As the clock ticked closer to 1pm, we were starting to think it would just be the three of us when Lindsay pulled up. We bundled into the car and headed north, our spirits lifting as the weather improved the further out of the city we got.

"Dunedin Fauna". Photo Credit: Antony Pettinger.

Four of us quickly turned into six as just as we locked the car and were heading down the track Tina and Laurence turned up. We set off to Hawksbury Lagoon from Scotia Street North in Waikouaiti, crossing the unusual land bridge whilst happily chatting away.

It soon became apparent that Hawksbury Lagoon was a bird watcher's paradise and we were kept thoroughly entertained as we wandered through the lagoon. There was an abundance of Black Swan/Kakīānau, and we were delighted to see some cygnets (baby swans) bobbing around the place. Other highlights included Royal Spoonbill and Plovers, the photographers in the group spent a great deal of time capturing the winning photo for the 'Flora and Fauna' category of the photo competition.

Before long we arrived at the northern end of Waikouaiti Beach and were soon making good time along the beach. We were relieved at the lack of wind, which combined with the firm sand made for easy walking for the 4½km to the southern end of the beach. The next 45 minutes or so passed quickly as we walked along chatting.

The sun had started to peek through by the time we reached the southern end of Waikouaiti Beach, opposite to Karitane. The crazy ones amongst us enjoyed some time paddling in the cold sea while the more sensible ones stayed firmly on dry land. Having stood at Karitane multiple times looking over the channel to the beach, it was really cool to be on the other side. While we were enjoying some jet planes (thanks Lindsay) we saw two figures approaching in the distance and soon were joined by Barry and Helen.

With the thought of another long slog along the beach ahead of us, we decided to be adventurous and head back along the beach on the inlet side. This soon turned into quite the workout as the sand was incredibly soft and each step took immense effort. The rest of the group quickly learnt to follow in the footsteps of the first person which made their journey much easier - not so much for me in the front!

Once it became apparent that the beach was running out and would no longer be a viable option, we went bush to try to find our way back to the main beach. Although we all started out following Antony, we somehow ended up going our own ways as we battled the head height grass. Thankfully we all made it safely to the beach and regrouped for the last few km back to the road. Having re-fuelled on jet planes and with good company the walk back whizzed by and in no time we were at the road. A quick 1km or so up Beach Street to where we left the vehicles and we were soon headed back home.

It was a really enjoyable Saturday afternoon trip to somewhere I hadn't been before. We covered 11km in just under three hours, slowed down a bit by the soft sinky sand at the southern end of the beach but a great afternoon out nonetheless.

Team Photo

Jade Pettinger for Antony & Debble Pettinger, Lindsay Aitcheson, Tina Anderson, Laurence Prattley, Helen Jones and Barry Walker.

4th (Sunday). (100 Trips 015) Leith Saddle - Morrisons. E-M. Saskia Bronstring.

Meeting at the George Street entrance to Woodhaugh at 9am, in the group were, Saskia, trip leader, Mandie, Charlotte, Chris, Ricky, Sandra, Lucy, Jane, Debbie, Antony and Debbie. We headed up to the Leith Saddle carpark.

The last few trips have seen us coming down this track, but this time we were heading up. Definitely an easier track and less slippery going up was the consensus.

Great views from the old trig lookout, as always. Clear views over Blueskin Bay and the Harbour Basin.

We had a morning tea break at the Telecom tower, then continued down the Powerline 4WD track, lots of knee high gorse, so it was good to get into the bush section of the Morrisons track. Most of us took a slip or stumble at some stage on this track, we were all left wondering how the runners of the Three Peak race manage in the mud and slippery conditions.

We joined the Leith Valley gravel road and continued up to Sullivans dam. Thus made a picturesque lunch spot complete with fish jumping in the dam.

Onward and upwards after lunch, round the back of the Dam and thru the bush to the track split, we took the left turn and headed over to the Lookout Rock Track. Again, going up these slippery and sloped board walks was so much easier than last week descending them. Before long we popped out and the Lookout. It's a lovely spot and not a big wander up from the Dam.

Down, following the good, well worn and sometimes muddy track brought us back out at the Leith Saddle Carpark. Taking care to cross safely we arrived back at the cars around 1.30pm.

Thanks Saskia for leading a really lovely walk, and well done to Lucy who took her big pack, 10kg plus, as training for Milford next year.

8 (Thursday Evening). (100 Trips 016) Tunnel Beach (clubnight).

This day trip was in place of a club Thursday night talk and is part of the 100 trips because the third weekend of the Otago Tramping Club in 1923 included two trips from the St Clair tram terminus to Blackhead via Cargill's Castle. Similar trips appeared sporadically through the trip programme up until 1983, but urbanisation and more private owners of the land now make the original trip impossible and hence this trip was added to the 100 trip list.
Being a windy evening and with the threat of rain, it was very heartening to see 19 people turn up at 6pm for the 1km wander 150m down the hill to Tunnel Beach. It was a reasonably fast walk down with a short stop for a team photo.

The magnificent sculptured sandstone cliffs and arches provide a stunning backdrop for the turbulent waves that slam into the cliffs. It's an impressive place to be to see how ferociously the waves are thrust into any small crevices in the rock, creating a larger crack which eventually breaks off from the main cliff. There was plenty of evidence of the power of the water with large slabs of sandstone littering the base of the cliffs and billowing plumes of water crashing into the rugged cliff face.

Turning our attention away from the surging sea we descended the 72 steps down the hand carved tunnel that gives Tunnel Beach it's name. The tunnel was commissioned by a local politician, John Cargill in the 1870's for his family to access their own secluded beach near the family home of Cargills Castle. The tunnel is sloped and steep but easy to navigate and at the bottom we were

rewarded by being able to see up close some of the large sandstone boulders that had fallen from the surrounding craggy cliffs. The boulders are a variety of shapes and sizes with most being easy to clamber up onto.

Tunnel beach. Photo Credit: Debbie Pettinger.

The tide was on it's way out so more sand was slowly being exposed and if you were quick, you were able to run around a small headland to a sheltered cave without getting wet. A few people were not quite as quick as they should have been and ended up with wet feet. The cave is also a favourite overnight retreat for sea lions and some of our group were lucky to see one come surfing into the safety of the cave.

All too soon it was time to retrace our steps back up through the tunnel and then continue following the track up the hill. The climb up the hill was much slower than the descent but we all made good time, with only the occasional short rest and arrived back at the cars about 1 hour after leaving.

Debbie Pettinger for Antony Pettinger, Jade Pettinger, Lindsay Aitcheson, Joe Bretherton, Sharon Bretherton, Alan Hanson, Richard Pettinger, Tracy Pettinger, Saskia Brongsting, Natalie Jones, Lucy Jones, Jane Cloete,Trevor Barlow, Charlotte Handley, Chris Handley, Rodger Clarkson, Andrew McConnell, Lily McConnell.
(photo below)

10th (Saturday). (100 Trips 017) Leishman's Falls - Chalkies (circuit).M .
Caitlin Roberston.

After a forecast of overcast and a storm coming, Caitlin pulled together the epic team of 7 for the trip. With the predicted overcast clouds no where in site the team bounced along the road under the glorious yellow thing in the sky. After a few photos at the sign we were on and up the track. It wasn't long until we hit the rock face with a rope climb.

At this point Caitlin guided us off the track and up the West branch of the river passing around our feet. Just as a few had began cautiously climbing the wet and slippery rock to the Leishman's falls, Caitlin lost her foothold on the big slippery rock and slid right down the rock and into the river!

Mandy roared with laughter. Caitlin launched her phone from her pocket onto the dry then hauled herself back onto the rocks shaking her head. Just typical.

Everyone having a bit of a chortle along with Caitlin. The waterfall, was just a lovely little waterfall. Quite a sweetie hidden in the bush.
After we slightly more cautious on our way back out of the falls. Back on solid track we all climbed the rock face with the rope without bother. Quite a novelty when hiking.

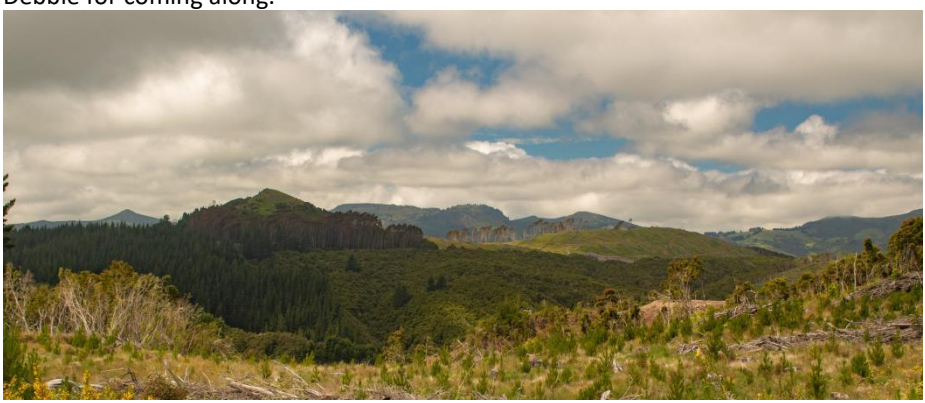
The rest of the track we bounded up, stopping for snacks and geo-caching as we did the last leg to the top. Went and visited the unloved Powder Trig, we were rather surprised that the track had been recently maintained and trimmed back making it easy navigating.

Lunch at the Limestone formation and then our last leg back down to the road and carpark. All and all an amazing and sunny day out in our big backyard with awesome hiking buddies.

Caitlin Robertson on behalf of Stephen Rolfe, Helen Jones, Mandie Lungley, Richard and Tracy Pettinger, and Sandy Webb.

11th (Sunday). (100 Trips 018) Leith Saddle - Burns Track - Swampy Ridge - Mountain Road - Red Hut Site - Rongomai - Evansdale. F. Antony Pettinger.

Smaller turnout today for a through trip that hasn't been run by the club for many years. Starting at Leith Saddle, we went over the Burns Track to Swampy Ridge, then past Sleepy Hollow to the top of Hightop. A section of roadwalking along Mountain Rd (at least there are some views now with the trees being harvested), followed by a descent of Rongomai Track to Evansdale Glen.
The mud on Swampy Ridge makes the mud on the Burns Track insignificant!
19.2km, a great day out, with the weather behaving again. Thanks to Rob and Debbie for coming along.



Mt Kettle, Double Hill and the northern skyline of Dunedin City from Mountain Road. Photo Credit: Antony Pettinger.

17 (Saturday) (100 Trips 019) Gardens - Brown House - Upper Junction - Blanket Bay (return to Dunedin via cycleway or bus) M-F Antony Pettinger
Five go mad on a road walk.

Five intrepid trampers met at the Gardens corner to recreate one of the early tramping trips of the Otago Tramping Club which involved a lot of road walking which, for the early trampers, would have been on narrow, winding gravel roads but for us was on mostly narrow, winding sealed roads and a wide, flat, smooth cycleway. We were quietly confident that the sea fog would lift by the time we had reached Upper Junction so that we would be able to see the views, little did we realise how wrong we were. Meeting at the Gardens corner we set off walking up North Road towards Upper Junction.

The first two and a half kilometers has only a mild gradient and the time went quickly as we walked and chatted our way up North East Valley. Once we reached Normanby the gradient increased and the sea fog seemed to come lower down the hill so that it felt like it wouldn't be long before we walked into it. It was a nice surprise to meet my father out for his morning walk and we stopped for a brief chat before continuing on. Only a short distance on the footpath ran out and we were walking along the edge of the road.

One of the reasons for the early start to the walk was to avoid the traffic on this part of the road and for the most part it worked with only spasmodic traffic. The higher we climbed the thicker the fog became and by keeping well to the side of the road, we didn't disrupt any traffic. One of the good things about road walking is that the slower pace means that you get time to see things that you'd normally miss when driving past which is exactly what we did - chatting to passing cyclists, listening to the birds, spying bugs in the long grass, watching the sheep and cows (who were watching us), admiring the flowers and our most unusual find was one new, unused boot.

The Five Mad Walkers. Photo Credit: Antony Pettinger.

The higher we climbed the thicker the fog/mist became so that when we reached the highest point at Upper Junction, disappointingly there was no view. Instead of admiring the view of North East Valley and the city that was hidden to us, we took a small detour to visit the war memorial on the site of the former Upper Junction School that was destroyed by fire in 1945. There are 17 beech trees planted beside plaques in remembrance of former pupils who were killed during the first world war. This is a

particularly poignant war memorial for me as my fathers uncle has a plaque and beech tree planted in his memory here. John Williams was 17 when he signed up, lying about his age so that he would be accepted into the army and killed at the Somme, aged just 19 years. It seemed very fitting with the muted light from the mist swirling around the hundred year old giant macrocarpa trees creating an ethereal atmosphere during our visit of this site.

What goes up must then come down and that is exactly what we did, heading 300 metres down hill on Upper Junction Road, all the way to sea level. It seemed almost impossible but the mist seemed to grow thicker and we were barely able to see each other at times. The striking views were non-existent so had to keep an ear open for cars to avoid being hit on the narrow, winding road. Knowing that most of the hill was behind us, we continued down the hill where we eventually met up with the main road to Port Chalmers, State Highway 88. We admired the yet to be completed new cycleway/walkway including the blue surface from a distance. Despite the cycleway looks like it is completed, there are large fences stopping access so we continued walking along St Leonards Drive.

A lunch stop was called at St Leonards Park where Mandy found a swing to sit while the rest of us opted for the picnic table. Lindsay arrived with his dog and a box of cherries which he shared while we watched a large ship sail past on it's way to the inner harbour. By now we were over halfway through our walk and were about to start on the 'easy' part of our walk, along the flat cycle/walkway which runs beside the railway line. This proved to be more difficult than first thought as the 8km of flat, hard surface made for tired legs and feet. The fog was lifting with the views of the harbour opening out and we were able to distract each other by seeing who could spot the most interesting sight. Some of the interesting things we saw were kayakers getting tooted at by the harbour tug for being in the main shipping channel, swimmers jumping off the harbour channel markers, a speedboat jumping the tug boats wake, a grey spoonbill, a few sad, rotting boats, some exercise equipment, lots of walkers and only a handful of cyclists but no trains.

Once we reached the stadium we turned off the cycle/walkway and continued past the University, skirted around a cricket match in progress and wandered through the student housing until we reached the Water of Leith. We followed the Water of Leith through the Gardens and back to the main gates where we had started 5.5 hours and 21km earlier.

Debbie Pettinger for Helen Jones, Sandy Webb, Mandy Langley, Antony Pettinger.

The gals. Photo Credit: Antony Pettinger.

17th-18th (100 Trips 010) Ahuriri / Canyon Creek. Andrew McConnell

The group lead by Andrew: Kristy, Esther, Wendel Broek, Sue, Sharon Campbell, Clare Noakes, Meredith Walton and Rodger Clarkson.

This was our second attempt to get to Canyon Creek due to bad weather reports and although rain was again forecast we set off Friday night with a plan B just in case. After tea in Oamaru we camped at Omarama bridge.

The next morning in sunshine we set off early to tackle the road in but thankfully it had recently been graded and we were able to drive all the way to the end. The walk up the valley firstly involves a steep bluff at the top of which we stopped to take in the amazing view of the valley and waterfall at the end. Going down the bluff there were quite a few tree falls to go over and around. We had lunch at the base of the waterfall then it was a steep climb up to the flat area at the top. After wandering across the top valley we chose a camping spot at the far side by the stream. As we had plenty of daylight left one group decided to go up the mountain to look at a lake while another group including me went to look at the avalanche debris at the end of the valley. We played in the snow and explored and ice cave before wandering back to camp.

The other group had a tough climb up to a very frozen lake. The next day was misty as we walked back across the valley but this lifted as we made our way down. This is a stunning valley to visit, the scenery changing constantly. On the drive back we stopped at Base hut to admire the mistletoe growing in the trees. Thankyou Andrew for leading and organising this amazing trip.

Photo Top Left: Ice Cave. Photo Top right Campions of ice. Photo Right. Sharon C looking back towards camp.
Photo Credit: Clare Noakes.

Upcoming Trips

OTC / OTMC Centenary - 100 Trips for 100 Years
Celebrating 100 Years of Tramping and Mountaineering - 1923/2023

JANUARY 2023

21 (Saturday) (100 Trips 025) Mt Cargill & Organ Pipes (from Bethunes Gully) E Sharen Rutherford

22 (Sunday) (100 Trips 026) Leith Saddle - Burns Track - Swampy Ridge - Mountain Road - Red Hut Site - Rongomai - Evansdale M Antony Pettinger

28 (Saturday) (100 Trips 027) Brighton via Green Island Beach E Gayle Somerville

29 (Sunday) (100 Trips 028) Gold Miners Direct - River Track - Phil Cox Hut - Yellow Spur - Tunnels Track M Antony Pettinger & Arthur Blondell

FEBRUARY 2023

4-6 (3 Day Weekend) (100 Trips 029) East Matukituki (Waitangi Weekend 3-Day) M + Richard and Tracy Pettinger

5 (Sunday) (100 Trips 030) Cloud Forest Of Leith - Escarpment Track - Three Peaks Track (circuit) M

11 (Saturday) (100 Trips 031) OTMC Half-Marathon (or Powder Ridge / Long Ridge / Pulpit Rock / Green Ridge / Swampy circuit) F-FE Sharen Rutherford

12 (Sunday) (100 Trips 032) OTMC Picnic - Long Beach E Informal Long Beach (north end)

19 (Sunday) (100 Trips 033) Rosella Ridge - River Track - Gold Miners Direct M Mark Stephenson

23-26 (4 Day Trip) (100 Trips 034) Milford Track (OTMC Members Only - trip is fully subscribed & closed) MF Antony Pettinger

http://otmc.co.nz/tripcard.html

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

The 100 year OTMC anniversary trips are finally here!
Get yourself on a trip to be a part of our great history

We will be running close to monthly bulletins during this time so please email your trip reports for the next issue to caitlinr007@gmail.com within a week after the trip. This is due to the shear volume of reports.

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!

Scrambling club. Photo credit: Dave McArthur.