The Bulletin

Newsletter of the Otago Tramping and Mountaineering Club Inc #834 August 2023

Trips & Events

✶ *WEEKENDS* ✶

Winter Routeburn

✶ *SUNDAYS & SATURDAYS* ✶

Spiers Road – Ross Bush Track ✶ Head of Race (Whare Flat), ✶ All Day on the Peninsula ✶ Midday Trip to Ben Rudd's ✶ Annual Dinner – OTMC's Actual Centenary ✶ Flagstaff – Swampy – Swine Spur ✶ The Catlins (short trips)

Near Swampy Summit. 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 for fuel costs later (check with the trip leader or Treasurer Amy 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!

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

Your Committee

President/Centenary/Web site + media enquiries	Antony Pettinger	(03) 473 7924	antony.pettinger@gmail.com
Vice President	Wayne Hodgkinson	(03) 473 0950	
Secretary	Jade Pettinger	022 344 7034	jadempettinger@gmail.com
Treasurer	Amy Telfer-Chiles		amytchiles@gmail.com
Chief Guide	Mark Stephenson	027 615 1870	markstephenson@xtra.co.nz
Membership Secretary	Tracy Pettinger	(03) 487 9488	Tracy@pettinger.nz
Bulletin Editor	Helen Emerson	021 170 3302	helenemerson@yahoo.com
Daytrip Convener	Rebecca Armstrong	021 129 3802	bex_armstrong@hotmail.com
Thursday Night Planner	Rebecca Armstrong	021 129 3802	bex_armstrong@hotmail.com
Weekly Updates	Amy Telfer-Chiles		amytchiles@gmail.com
Clubrooms Maintenance	Dave Bunn	029 779 7006	
Committee	Debbie Guthrie		guthrie_deb@yahoo.co.nz
Committee	Tina Anderson		Tina.Anderson@asb.co.nz

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

August 2023

4-6 (weekend) (100 Trips 076) Winter Routeburn (Falls Side), All, Rodger Clarkson

Eleven keen trampers headed up to the Routeburn Track for a quick weekend foray into a wintery Great Walk starting at the shelter (Glenorchy end of the track) on Friday 4th August 2023.

Six people were able to head off early and hiked up to Falls Hut during daylight hours on Friday night. The remaining five of us made our way up to Flats Hut in the dark and misty drizzle later that night. Snow was on the ground in the flats but the track was clear and easy to navigate in the dark (approximately 2 hours). After a quick round of hot tea we all hit the sack, keen to leave early in the morning to head up to Falls Hut and join the rest of the party.

Morning brought a stunning pink and orange sunrise with mostly clear skies and beautiful views towards Routeburn North Branch – a quick delay for photos was required. We then proceeded up the track behind Flats Hut. The track is well maintained and for the most part easily walked with bridges still in place. We encountered a relatively new area of landslide, with a path clearly marked through it albeit with a bit of scrambling over logs required. We heard kaka in the bush and kea in the valley. The closer we got to Falls Hut (1000m), the more snow was on the ground and with Falls Hut completely surrounded in the white stuff it almost felt like heading to a ski lodge (with trees).

The team of 11 all back together, and second breakfast inhaled, the group soon set off for a day walk further up the track. This section was thigh-deep in snow in places where the snow was soft and in other places, we were walking on top of the snow or rock. The falls were flowing and some melt was running down sections of rock on the track so a bit of wet feet ensued when you stepped through snow to find a puddle or stream that you didn't know was there. The track was still easily navigated with track markers evident well above the snow level. Most of the group headed towards Lake Harris for a spot of lunch. Some of the keener parties headed up for the Harris saddle, cutting steps into the snow as they went. And an even keener party with alpine gear headed up Conical Hill (1515m). I believe there may have even been a bit of sliding down for fun when descending back. The weather remained slightly cloudy but dry and warm throughout the afternoon making for a pleasant day trip and explorations.

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Left: Looking down the Routeburn track (Left Branch) in the direction of Falls Hut
Right: Looking up the Routeburn track (Left Branch) towards Lake Harris.
Photo credits: Rebecca Armstrong

Back at the hut later in the afternoon and with the temperatures cooling off considerably, the Hawaiian attire made an appearance while the fire was stoked, dinner was cooked and the games were broken out. There may have been some imbibing but what happens in the hut stays in the hut right?! Rodger's quiz was a great success, much hilarity ensued and we all quickly realised that our geography skills for South America were probably a little wanting. The losing team was given the task of writing the trip report – apparently, it pays to answer all sections of the quiz and not skip a section!

Falls Hut is huge (48 bunks) and we largely had full 4-berth sleeping areas to ourselves as there were only five other trampers there at the same time. I can imagine this hut fairly hums with activity during the Great Walk season so the peace and quiet was amazing. The sleeping areas are not connected to the main dining area so are colder

but quite tolerable with the right gear at this time of year and it is certainly worth the effort to see such a spectacular location in the off-season.

Looking past Falls Hut and Lodge towards Routeburn Flats. Photo credit: Rebecca Armstrong

Sunday morning was drizzly but not overly cold. Most of the group decided to start heading back early as heavier rain was predicted towards midday. We made quick time back down to Flats Hut (40 minutes) and continued on down towards the Shelter in the increasing rain. This made for less conversation and offered time to reflect and take in the beautiful surroundings whilst hearing the constant pitter-patter on the hood of your rain jacket. We made quick time and the walk out was just over 2 hours. There was ample room at the Shelter to regroup, sort out gear out of the rain and get changed into dry clothes.

The team regrouped again at Mrs Wooley's General Store for coffees en route back to Dunedin – a fantastic (and very civilised) way to finish a tramp. The weather was clearer away from the track; we could see the snow-capped mountains and access areas for other tracks across the lake. All up, a great tramp was had by all – Thanks Rodger.

Rodger Clarkson (Trip Leader), Kristin Bebell, Michael Priestnall, Brendan Penwarden, Murray Hyslop, Wayne Hodgkinson, Wendel Broek, Richard Forbes, Rose Colhoun, Greg Slui and Rebecca Armstrong (writer, and yes on the losing quiz team!!)

6 (Sunday) (100 Trips 077) Spiers Road – Ross Bush Track, E-M, Antony Pettinger

Spiers Road was the start of the old bullock track, also known as the Snowy Mountain Track, and was the first road northwards out of Dunedin until the coastal route was established. Our mission for the day was to follow the Snowy Mountain Track from Spiers Road, across the tussock to the OTMC's Ben Rudd property before taking the Pineapple Track to Pineapple Point and down the Ross Bush Track. It must have sounded like a good plan because a group of 16 people wandered up Spiers Road on an overcast Sunday morning.

Once we had crossed over the style and onto the paper road the going became a little rougher as the 'track' threads its way through a gorse patch. Navigation of the track was easy but did involve pushing through some prickly gorse that blocked the way forward along with the occasional slippery, muddy section. This slowed us down for a time but thankfully the gorse only covers the lower section of track. As we climbed higher the gorse thinned and the track became clearer, and we started to get glimpses of the city opening out below us. After climbing 100m from the start of Spiers Road, the gradient flattens off and the gorse gives way to paddock, and we were rewarded with panoramic views of the city.

The wintery sunshine warmed us as we crossed the open and we found a good spot to stop for a break and catch our breath. We chatted while admiring the views in all directions with the city and harbour spread out in behind us, the coast towards Taieri Mouth the distinctive shape of Saddle Hill, the township of Mosgiel and flat of the Taieri Plains to the right. We turned our attention to the next part of the track which involved another small section of gorse before entering the native vegetation of the reserve. The track through the head high flax and tussock makes navigation reasonably easy which is just as well because the gradient steepens as we gained another 120m in height before reaching the Pineapple Track.

We regrouped before starting our next part of our trip which involved us going 'off track' to follow the old bullock track or Snowy Mountain Track, the first road northwards out of Dunedin. While this road is no longer used and has mostly been swallowed by the native vegetation, there are still some parts visible and our aim was to follow this indistinct trail through the tussock and flax. Anyone watching from afar might have thought we were wandering aimlessly through the tussock but using a GPS we stayed on the old bullock track. While it would have been much quicker to stick to

the Pineapple Track, we all enjoyed our trek along the old bullock track and were a little sad to reach the Firebreak track which felt like a highway after wandering through the tussock.

We followed the Firebreak track to the seats on Ben Rudd's where we stopped for lunch. Some sat at the low seats while others climbed the bank to the higher seat which had a panoramic sign showing all the areas/hills of significance. A lot of the #100 trips have already been to many of these areas/hills and we were able to sit and reminisce about those trips while eating lunch.

The panoramic sign at Ben Rudd's. Photo credit: Antony Pettinger

As much as we would have liked to stay longer, time was getting on so we packed our bags and continued along the Firebreak Track to the Swampy Summit/Pineapple Track turn off where we opted for the right hand track which took us back to the Pineapple Track. From here it is a steep 100m knee jarring descent to Pineapple Point where we took the short detour to admire the views and newly installed seat.

After a brief stop at the seat we took the Ross Bush Track (also known as the old Pineapple Track) dropping 260m down through the native bush. The Ross Bush Track is narrow, muddy in places and often overgrown with ferns but also much more interesting as it winds it's way past gnarly, papery fushia, before reaching the car park 4 hours and 8.7km after starting

Debbie Pettinger for Helen Jones, Leonie Loeber, Charlotte Handley, Chris Handley, Mike Klemerston, Helen Emerson, Jessica Carroll, Lucy Jones, Jade Pettinger, Antony Pettinger, Mark Stephenson, Sandy Webb, Deb Guthrie, Kristy McNeill, Deb Nichol

Trip 77 team photo. Photo credit: Jade Pettinger

12 (Saturday) (100 Trips 078) Head of Race (Whare Flat), E, Debbie Pettinger

There was always going to be a good chance that most of us were going to get wet feet but getting them wet within the first five minutes of starting was a bit much for most of the 10 people who knew straight away that the water was deeper than the top of their boots. Most bravely gritted their teeth and waded across the ford with the icy cold water quickly making its way into boots, and emerging on the other side with feet that felt like they were encrusted in blocks of ice. Walking was the only option to warm our feet so when we came to the second river crossing, everyone (unsurprisingly) opted for the bridge.

After the bridge, the track was easy to follow as a muddy trail through the long grass before reaching the turn off to the lower weir. As the weir is part of an historic water race with nearly 30km of water races built in 1877 until the 1960's, it is looking a little neglected with parts of the weir missing and since most of the group already had wet feet, they waded through the river crossing without a thought while those who had managed to keep dry feet tried to walk over the weir, although the missing parts were daunting and made for a long jump. After this second river crossing, the pace picked up in an effort to warm the feet again and we wandered through an open grassy area before heading back into the native bush. The track to Powder Ridge is muddy in places and marked with some tree fall but nothing that couldn't easily be negotiated. We stopped at the Powder Ridge turn off to refuel before continuing on for another 100 meters or so and another stream crossing - just as our feet were starting to feel warm again.

Once the 40m of height was gained to reach the water race, it was reasonably easy walking as we followed the water race for another 2kms to the top weir. The track beside the weir is wide and easy to follow with the overgrown water race on the right and a steep drop down to the Silverstream river on the left. Along the way we were able to see how dilapidated the water race is with minor slips and broken pipes showing how much work it must have taken to keep the water race in working order. After a couple of kilometers of this easy walking along the water race which generally drops 1 inch in 16 feet, we reached the top weir. We had been here back in April and it was interesting to see how much more water was flowing over the weir. The noise of the water over the weir is quite loud in the narrow confines of the valley where very little sun reaches at this time of the year.

Reaching the top weir was the halfway point in our trip and we retraced our steps back along the water race for about a kilometer till we reached a dry, sheltered spot on the track that was wide enough for all of us to sit and chat while eating lunch. As often happens in winter, once stopped it doesn't take long to cool down and as soon as lunch was eaten, it didn't take much encouragement for everyone to be happy to continue on our way. We had the option of making the trip longer at the McRaes Weir track junction, but the unanimous decision was to take the shorter route so detoured from the water race and dropped 60m down to Silverstream. After about a kilometer we came to another track junction with some in the group opting to take the dry route over the bridge while those of us already with wet feet happily took the river crossing option. The final kilometer was an easy walk that gave enough time for feet enough to warm up again before reaching the car. An enjoyable walk on a colder winter day with over 14km of walking in 4 hours.

Trip 78 team photo. Photo credit: Jade Pettinger

Debbie Pettinger for Helen Jones, Mike Scott, Steffan Rolfe, Ash Flintoff, Jade Pettinger, Karen Herd, Chantalle Harrison, Christian Morag and Antony Pettinger

13 (Sunday) (100 Trips 079) All Day on the Peninsula, M, Antony Pettinger

Seven keen trampers started off at Macandrew Bay on a fresh winters morning and proceeded to Broad Bay on our lovely, shared walkway taking in views of Otago Harbour. As we headed up camp road with a well-deserved morning tea snack, and stripping off some unneeded jackets and gloves, it was warming up to be an awesome day.

After climbing over farmland and looking at some lovely stone fences we proceeded to Highcliff Road with some road walking. We had lunch at the lime kiln.

On the Peninsula. Photo credits: Antony Pettinger

Heading down the road to Ridge Road track to Sandfly Bay where quite a few seals were basking in the sun. It was a up and down day, once we climbed up Sandymount to Highcliff track it was down, down to Boulder Beach for another fuel stop to get us up Paradise onto Hightop. Walking a few kms we headed down Greenacres; Jade decided to be little girl again and found a swing that was partway down the track. Then it was a steady walk back to our cars.

Thank you to Antony and Debbie for a lovely day, covering 23kms, around 7hrs. Cheers to Jessica Carrol, Ricky Kim, Laurence Prattley, Jade Pettinger, Lynley McArley for your company.

20 (Sunday) (100 Trips 081) Midday Trip to Ben Rudd's (OTMC tribute to the Family Tramping Group), E, Leonie Loeber

We parked the cars at the Bullring and headed up the Firebreak Track. It was not long before we had stunning views out over Mosgiel and up towards Maungatua. Before we reached the top of the track, Arthur took us down a recently developed track (that he had developed) towards the Ben Rudd Shelter. This track has stunning rock

outcrops which did necessitate a bit of a scramble through the boulder field. Thank you for showing us the track, Arthur.

Descending the track from the Firebreak to Benn Rudd's shelter. Photo credit: Antony Pettinger

Once we were at the shelter, it was decided an early lunch was in order. Teresa produced yummy chocolate brownies and biscuits, what a treat! Thank you, Teresa.

Once we had finished lunch, we continued on along the Firebreak Track until we came to a cairn with a small plaque bearing the name of Bruce Jenkins, 2015. Who was Bruce Jenkins? The only reference that I can find to a Bruce Jenkins that may be relevant is an Otago Daily Times article dated 3 October 2015 where it states that the body of Bruce Jenkins was found in a semi-remote location near Milton. Perhaps other readers may be able to confirm whether or not this is correct. This must have been a special place to him, so I hope he is enjoying the views. Whenever I pass the cairn, I often put another rock or stone on it.

From the cairn, we headed towards the Flagstaff track and back to the cars.

Thank you for a great morning out to Helen Jones, Ruth Thomas, Lucy Jones, Lindsay Aitcheson, Antony, Debbie and Jade Pettinger, Teresa and Arthur Blondell, Ash Flintoff, Leonie Loeber

23 (Wednesday) (100 Trips 082) Annual Dinner – OTMC's Actual Centenary

The Otago Tramping Club was formed at a meeting in Dunedin on August 23, 1923 – exactly 100 years later we are celebrated this milestone with the 'OTMC Annual Dinner'. Despite the date falling on a Wednesday, 31 people enjoyed an evening of pizza at 'the usual' place for the Annual Dinner, at Filadelphio's.

Being a Wednesday night, the place wasn't busy so we had the back room to ourselves which was perfect because we could move around and chat while waiting for our dinner to be cooked. Most people opted for pizza but there were other options such as pasta, burgers, wedges, etc. As there were no set tables, people chose where to sit when their food arrived and there was plenty of opportunity to move around during and after eating to be able to chat with different people.

Photo credit: Jade Pettinger

There was a brief pause during the evening for Antony to give a brief speech at 8pm about why we were here - to celebrate exactly 100 years of tramping by the OTC/OTMC with the very first club meeting starting at 8pm on 23 August 1923. After dinner, it seemed most people were happy to continue chatting and were in no rush to go home - that is until it became obvious that we were the last ones left and the staff had most of the restaurant tidied for the night.

All in all, a fun night for everyone who attended, and the food was delicious!

Debbie Pettinger for Leonie & Peter Loeber, Mandie Lungley, Sam Patrick, Sarah Chisnall, Ivan Mason, Tina Anderson, Sandra Divett, Richard Forbes, Rodger Clarkson, Chris & Charlotte Handley, Lucy Jones, Brad Wilson, Saskia Brongstring, Andrew McConnell, Helen Jones, Barry Walker, Arthur & Teresa Blondell, Michael Priestnall, Kathy Woodrow, Chris Pearson, Wayne & Pam Hodgkinson, Amy Telfer Chiles, Jade Pettinger, Dylan Pettinger & Antony Pettinger

26 (Saturday) (100 Trips 084) Flagstaff – Swampy – Swine Spur, M, Ash Flintoff

On a sunny morning a total of 7 left Woodhaugh for the Bullring where we headed off up to admire the views from the top of Flagstaff. We also took is photo of us sitting around the OTMC 50th anniversary plaque. After our brief stop, we continued along and headed up the Swampy track with a stop for smoko at the junction with the Moon Track and prepared for the last climb up to Swampy. But first we had to head down before we started the steep climb up, once up on Swampy we continued up to the top just past the UFO. The sun was shining, there was a gentle zephyr blowing, and after a few photos we retraced our steps back to Swine Spur where we had lunch.

From Swampy Summit, looking towards the Chalkies and Long and Powder Ridges. Photo credit: Antony Pettinger

After lunch we then headed down Swine Spur where it got steep and muddy in places, but we made it down without any issues. We then came to the Possum Busters Track and followed that passed all the other tracks that intersect with it.
We then came to the Jim Freeman Track; we had a short break then headed up the steep track stopping a couple of times to rest but also talk about the history of the club land we were now on.

We then stopped for smoko at Ben Rudy's shelter and filled out the book for a 2nd time in a week before we continued up to the Firebreak track which took us back to the Bullring.

We travelled around 16km, and it took around 6 hours with lots of breaks to get back to the Bullring. I can't think of a better way to spend a fine winters Saturday than heading up to Swampy Summit and back.

On behalf of Antony, Debbie, Jade, Leonie, Helen, Annise and myself we had a most enjoyable trip today. Ash

27 (Sunday) (100 Trips 085) The Catlins (short trips), E, Jade Pettinger

The weather today was a complete contrast from yesterday but that didn't deter the 9 people who were keen to explore some short walks in The Catlins. We made the 2-hour drive south to the McLean Falls which was the first of our short walks. The temperature was very cold with evidence of a recent hailstorm lying on the sides of the track so we donned jackets for the 20 minute walk to the falls. The bush in The Catlins is a beautiful rainforest with the trees dripping water and moss with the track being wide and graveled making for good walking beside the river. Near the end of the track there are a number of steps that take you to McLean Falls.

The 22m McLean Falls are one of the more spectacular falls in the area and we spent some time here, taking photos and marvelling at the sheer power of the water cascading over the falls. While we could have stayed longer, we had other walks to do so with regret we headed back to the cars where our next stop was the Tautuku Estuary Walk which is a short 30 minute return walk that follows an old sawmill track through native podocarp forest. We found the information signs dotted along the track telling us a little of the history interesting and before long we were onto the boardwalk that took over the mudflats, through the coloured jointed rush/oioi to a viewing platform in the middle of the estuary.

The team at McLean Falls. Photo credit: Jade Pettinger

We were encouraged by the blue sky that was trying to make an appearance and we enjoyed the calm and peace of the estuary. Aware that time was getting on, we retraced our steps back to the cars and crossed the road to the Lenz Reserve which was once a sawmill site and was purchased by Forest & Bird in 1964. Today the front part of the reserve has information signs and some historical relics from the sawmill days while the majority of the land has been left to regenerating native forest with a couple of tracks following old tram tracks.

We opted for the short nature walk, saving the longer tramway for another day. The bush walk was interesting as it followed the tram line up the hill and through a number of cuttings before coming to the track junction that designates the shorter nature walk. It was about now that the fun really started with a loud noise as the it started to hail with large hail stones piercing the upper forest canopy. As we were about halfway through the walk, there was nothing we could do, except keep going. The hail got larger and heavier as we continued walking and didn't start to ease off until we reached the end of the nature walk, changing instead to rain.

The rain got heavier as we raced back to the cars and then drove to the Florence Hill Lookout for lunch. The wind was blowing, and the rain was still heavy so we opted for lunch in the car. Unfortunately, it appeared the rain had set in for the day so the decision was made to cut our day short and head home. Despite not getting to complete all the walks we had intended, the day was still a lot of fun and we managed to get most of the short walks in, leaving a few meaning a return visit is needed.

Debbie Pettinger for Ruth Thomas, Lucy Jones, Mandie Lungley, Janice Hodges, Heather Taylor, Dylan Pettinger, Jade Pettinger & Antony Pettinger

Upcoming Trips

In next month's bulletin, September 2023, read all about the Club's trips:

WEEKENDS
Day trips from Mt Cook (Unwin Lodge) ✶ Mt Somers

DAY TRIPS
Unveiling of Pineapple Point Lookout ✶ Nicols Creek – Peppertree Track - Pineapple Point – Ross Bush Track ✶ Nicols Creek – Powerline Track – Morrisons Burn ✶ Trotters Gorge ✶ Mt Grand (via Frasers Bush) ✶ Normanby – near Waitati – Waitati Valley – Leith Road ✶ Ross Bush Track – Ben Rudd's (OTC first encounter with Ben Rudd, 100 Years to the day) ✶ Hightop – Greengage – Raingauge – Swampy Ridge ✶ Work Party – installation of Pineapple Point signage.

For the next day and weekend trips see:

OTMC Sept 2023 to Oct 2024 Trip Programme

Flagstaff Summit and the Plane Table installed by the OTMC to celebrate our 50th Anniversary. Photo credit Antony Pettinger.

Note from the editor

The 100 year OTMC anniversary trips are nearing an end. History has been made – and it will continue to be made beyond the Centenary!

We will continue to publish monthly bulletins during 2023 so please email your trip reports for the next issue to **helenemerson@yahoo.com within a week after the trip**.

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!