

OTMC THEN AND NOW

Recreating images from the OTC / OTMC Archives

View from Pulpit Rock: *Oct 1987 & Nov 2017*



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The Silver Peaks area has been part of the OTMC's history from the beginning - in fact the suggestion to form the tramping club was made while descending Green Hill pre August 1923. Over the years, the area has been an important tramping destination for the club, with a high number of trips heading for the Silver Peaks (not to mention home to several club owned or maintained huts).

The two photos shown here are only thirty years apart, but show a lot has changed in the Silver Peaks. In the early days the Silver Peaks area would have extended as far back as Double Hill (out of shot on the right hand side), and down to the current highway nearer Evansdale. Forestry was a big threat to the entire area, and it is thanks to organisations such as the OTMC and the efforts of some individuals that saw the creation of the Silver Peaks Scenic Reserve. This has protected the higher ridges and associated valleys from becoming pine plantations (no fun walking in these!) but other areas, like the Mountain Track / Road visible here have now been reduced to access routes to the Silver Peaks proper. Although the reserve area is a lot smaller than what the Otago Tramping Club would have enjoyed in the early years, the current reserve remains a special place for the club and wider tramping / outdoor community.

As recently as the 1980's (and into the early 1990's) one could more or less 'roam at will' in most places in the peaks, easily traversing lovely knee high tussock terrain (as seen in the 1987 photo). Nowadays, trips are more or less confined to the established walking tracks, as the more woody plants are now well established, inhibiting comfortable cross-country travel (prior to the reserve being established, a lot of the Silver Peaks was grazed, which kept the vegetation down).

In time, the slopes from Mountain Road to the South Waikouaiti will be cleared, leaving the area bare as in the 1987 photo, waiting for the next generation of exotic forest plantings...

