

OTMC THEN AND NOW

Recreating images from the OTC / OTMC Archives

Glade House - Milford Track: *December 1928 & April 2015*

1928



2015



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One of the first Christmas Trips undertaken by the Otago Tramping Club was to the Milford Track - the 'Finest Walk In The World'. The trip headed to Lumsden by train, and then onto Te Anau by motor. Christmas Day saw 33 trip members travelling up the lake to Glade Wharf and then onto Glade House. There were no bridges across the Clinton or Arthur in 1928/29, so rowboats were utilised. After three days, and stops at Pompolana and Quinton, Milford Sound was reached on December 28. There was no Homer Tunnel in 1928, so a trip over the Milford Track meant a return trip for most, with the OTC party retracing their steps. On New Year Day Glade House was reached again. During the midday dinner the party were called out, and had the unwanted experience of seeing Glade House burnt to the ground.

Despite efforts from club members and others, the 60-70 guests staying at Glade House lost most of their possessions. Despite this disaster, the club considered the trip successful, and the participants would remember it for a lifetime.

Of course, by the 1950's access to the Milford Track was restricted to those walking the track with the government run Tourist Hotel Corporation. In one of the defining moments for the club, this policy was challenged by the club, requesting permission to walk the Milford Track. When this was refused, the club undertook the famous 'Freedom Walk' over Easter 1965. Parties accessed the track via Milford Sound and Dore Pass - this action receiving significant national media coverage. In the end the National Park Board backed down and the current Freedom Walk option became available. Within a couple of years three huts were built - at Clinton Forks, Lake Mintaro and in the Arthur Valley (Dumpling Hut) to cater for the non-THC walkers. These huts (although all now replaced) are the current DoC huts, and remain as a reminder of the bold step taken by the OTC in 1965.

In 2015, the OTMC celebrated the 50th Anniversary of the original trip, happily with nine from the original party.



Glade House and Clinton River

Glade House on fire, January 1, 1929

