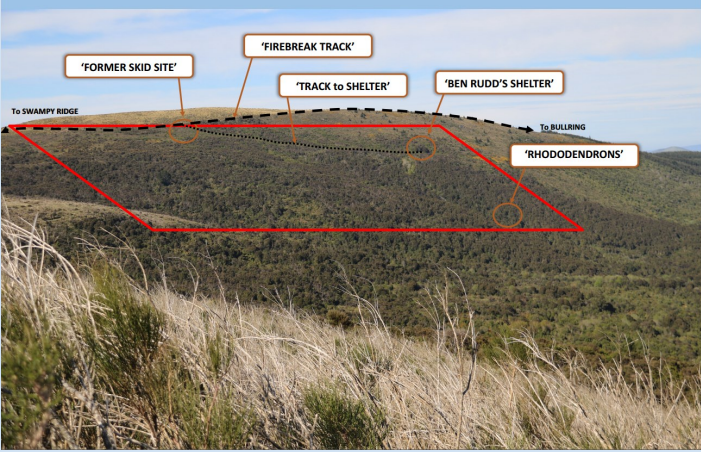


Location photo for Ben Rudd's Property (OTMC) on Flagstaff—as viewed from near Swampy Summit
OTAGO TRAMPING and MOUNTAINEERING CLUB



Directions (refer to map on reverse)

From the Bullring carpark on Whare Flat—Flagstaff Road, walk 30 minutes up the firebreak track to the cairn (and silver beech cluster) on the left marking the top of the access track to Ben Rudd's hut site and shelter. It is 15 minutes down to the clearing where you will find this pleasant spot for lunch and can see the foundations of Ben Rudd's hut.

An alternate route is from Booth Road to Ben Rudd's property, via the Pineapple Track. A further route is from Swampy Summit, which itself can be accessed via the Leith Saddle Walkway. By using the circuit of tracks to the summit of Flagstaff a pleasant round trip can be completed, including excellent views of Dunedin City.

There is a visitors' book at the shelter, inside a clear plastic container. Please sign it to show you have visited - this helps the Trust gain a record of usage of the property, which can be used in applications for funding of the ongoing restoration work.

The Trust and the OTMC owners actively encourage full public access to the entire property but, in keeping with the adjacent scenic reserve, do ask that vehicles or dogs not be brought onto the land except upon the firebreak track itself.

Further information about the property, Ben Rudd's Trust and the Otago Tramping and Mountaineering Club can be found here:

www.otmc.nz



BEN RUDD'S PROPERTY Flagstaff Scenic Reserve, Dunedin



The Otago Tramping and Mountaineering Club, along with the Ben Rudd's Management Trust, welcome visitors to our Ben Rudd's property, located on the western slopes of Flagstaff.

This privately owned 45 ha property is the former home of Ben Rudd, a well known Dunedin farmer and gardener in the early 1900's. The vision for the property is to restore the natural values of the landscape. Following a period of forestry, the property is now regenerating kanuka / broadleaf forest, with an upper section of tussock grassland being restored in keeping with the adjacent Flagstaff Scenic Reserve that borders it.

The property is protected by a QEII National Trust Open Space Covenant.

Flagstaff, Ben Rudd and the Otago Tramping and Mountaineering Club

The Otago Tramping Club was formed in Dunedin on August 23, 1923. Just over one week later, the first club trip was held - a Saturday afternoon trip to Flagstaff from the Ross Creek Reservoir - the route was described as 'via Ross Bush track to Pineapple Point, and then over Flagstaff'. This initial outing attracted 50 or so members, and started the tramping club's continuous association with the wider Flagstaff area.



Flagstaff Summit with original Trig

It was on a subsequent day trip in late September, 1923, that members of the tramping club first encountered Ben Rudd, the 'Hermit of Flagstaff'. The club trip had inadvertently trespassed on Ben Rudd's property, and recalled of their alarm at being stopped and warned off by the 'stocky, bearded little man with the shotgun'. The tramping club arranged with Ben Rudd to cut a bypass track (for which the club paid Rudd £5). This track was well used by local trampers until 1935, when it was blocked by extensive scrub fires.



OTC Party with Ben Rudd (1920's)

Ben Rudd

Ben Rudd was a well known local gardener - up until 1919 he owned and farmed land at his property 'Woodside', at the top of the current Rudd Road. Ben Rudd retired to Dunedin for a short time, but finding city life unbearable, he purchased a 45ha (112 acre) block of land on the far side of Flagstaff in 1921, where he lived in his stone hut until passing away in early 1930.

Following Ben Rudd's death, his property remained a popular destination for local trampers.

In 1946, by chance, the club committee learned that the former Ben Rudd property was for sale - the club recognised the strategic importance of acquiring this land, as it was probably the only area of land not spoken for by the Dunedin City Corporation - private ownership was seen as important to maintain public access to the water reserve. A new hut was built on the property not long after the club purchase was completed, as part of a failed attempt for a ski run, following a couple of significant snowfalls (which didn't reoccur).

This hut became a base for club activity, until ongoing vandalism prompted it's removal in 1970.



Second hut on Ben Rudd's Property

The late 1940's saw Bruce Campbell's rhododendrons planted at the lower end of the property (beside the Jim Freeman Track), and the planting of several thousand radiata pines was commenced in the 1950's. These trees were planted as a source of income for the tramping club, but changing views saw the harvestable trees removed in the late 1980's, with the income received dedicated to the ongoing restoration of the property to it's original native state.

The current Ben Rudd's shelter occupies Rudd's stone hut site, and is a pleasant picnic spot - good views can be had from the Linda Mercier memorial seat, located just above the shelter.



Current Ben Rudd's Shelter with late winter snow

Walking Tracks

With Flagstaff being such a prominent landmark from much of Dunedin City, it was inevitable that it would be become a popular walking destination. The views over the city from the summit of Flagstaff are outstanding, particularly at sunrise. Early tramping club trips mention trips to Flagstaff 'via Pineapple Point' - a name dating back to the 1920's, where a local grocer acting as a guide, handed out tins of pineapple along the way - the empty cans were left behind, and were able to be observed as unofficial track markers. Today, the Pineapple Track is a well formed walkway between Flagstaff / Whare Flat Road (The Bullring) and Leith Valley (Booth Road), traversing the 666m summit of Flagstaff.



Dunedin City from Flagstaff

An early pack route out of Dunedin was via Spiers Road (Halfway Bush), and onward to Swampy Summit after passing near the summit of Flagstaff. This route is a public road, and still able to be followed today (*there is a map and route guide on the OTMC website*).

The 1990's saw the Jim Freeman Track developed from the Ben Rudd's Shelter down into the Whare Creek catchment - from here there are many tramping options over the various tracks - including alternate routes to Swampy Summit. See the local guidebook 'Dunedin Tracks and Trails' (Antony Hamel) for more details.

The track from Flagstaff / Whare Flat Road over Flagstaff also form one section of the Dunedin Skyline Walkway, a continuous walking route from Flagstaff to the far side of Mt Cargill via Swampy Summit.



OTMC Anniversary Plane Table on summit

The Otago Tramping and Mountaineering Club celebrated their 50th Anniversary in 1973 by installing the current Plane Table on the summit of Flagstaff - the impressively engraved plaque locates the many landmarks visible from the summit, from the Otago Peninsula right around to Mt Cargill.

Today, the tramping club still visit Flagstaff regularly, either as official club trips, map and compass training exercises, or as private outings. By owning a very special section of Flagstaff, the clubs long association with the area will continue as the OTMC approach the centenary of the club in 2023.



Ben Rudd - The Hermit of Flagstaff