

OTMC Bulletin

Bulletin Number 681, Jan/Feb 2008

Newsletter of the Otago Tramping and Mountaineering Club (Inc.) P.O. Box 1120, Dunedin.

**The OTMC meets socially at 3 Young Street
every Thursday - doors open at 7.30pm,
programme begins at 8.00pm.**

31 January

Alan Scurr will lead a walk to the penguins at Sandfly Bay
Note: Depart clubrooms at **7 pm**)

7 February

Unavailable at time of printing, to be announced at club-night.

14 February

. Dave Stevenson - from the SAR radio team

21 February

B.Y.O. - bring your photos and stories to share

28 February

Neville Peat has recently published a book on our national bird and will bring some copies for sale on the night.

Any ideas, and contact names in particular, are welcome for the Thursday evening activities.

Please contact Fiona Webster (Social Convenor) at "fionaw@callsouth.net.nz", or 487 8176 if you can help.

**Visit us on the Internet at:
www.otmc.co.nz**

Welcome to the first bulletin of 2008 – I hope everyone managed to get out and enjoy the outdoors over the holidays. Activity within the OTMC is just starting to pick up again after a four week break, with trips to Mt. Cook and Mt. Domet. As we are heading into what has traditionally been the most settled weather period, now is a good time to consider joining us for a weekend (or day) trip. There are some great opportunities coming up, culminating in a very early Easter this year.

One of the reasons people go tramping is to get away from technology, but sometimes new technology can prove very useful. One tool I have started to use quite a lot in researching trips is 'Google Earth' aerial photography. As the name suggests, Google Earth provides images of the Earth's surface from satellites. The only useful images are the 'hi-resolution' ones, which are progressively replacing the low-res ones. Using Google Earth in conjunction with conventional maps provides a comprehensive overview of an area. The downside is sometimes you feel you have already seen the views – armchair tramping could now be here! A very useful aspect is the ability to tilt the image to create a 3D effect that can be quite realistic. If you are interested in trying this free program out, a good area to start is viewing the Routeburn Track – you will be surprised by the detail.

The club is saddened by the death of Sir Edmund Hillary in January. All outdoor people share an affinity with Sir Ed, who started his adventuring in a tramping club similar to the OTMC. A lot of great tributes have been made about the most well known New Zealander, but I really admire Sir Ed for his mountaineering ability, particularly with the equipment available 55 years ago. Last year I was privileged to visit the original TAE hut at Scott Base, built under Sir Ed's leadership in 1956/57. Although basic compared to the modern day Scott Base, it was practical and comfortable, and has a neat atmosphere. There have been many enjoyable nights at the OTMC but the best I can recall is when Sir Edmund Hillary spoke in February 1990 – the place was packed. Someone asked Sir Ed how big the top of Everest was. Sir Ed was rather amused to hear this question as it was the first time he had ever been asked. Turns out the top is about 8 feet or so in diameter. New Zealand has lost an amazing person but we will never forget his achievements, be it in the mountains of Nepal and India or the expansive Antarctica continent.

Antony Pettinger

Membership

We are pleased to have Hilary Phipps, 218 Helensburgh Rd, 476 2230; and Kate Barnard, c/o Dunedin Botanic Gardens, Box 5045, 471 7128, join recently; but quite a number of other members have decided not to renew their membership. Some have moved away from Otago, some have moved and not left any forwarding address, while others are now pursuing other interests. We wish them all well.

Ian Sime
Membership Secretary

YOUR CHANCE !

**The much sought-after position of Social
Convenor has become available.**

If you think this is you, be in quick!

Contact Antony Pettinger at 473 7924

**(In the interim, the Committee would be
grateful for any ideas for our
Social Programme.)**

MOUNT ASPIRING NATIONAL PARK TUNNELS AND BEYOND

No light at the end of this tunnel...

The NZ Conservation Authority has listened to the submissions of the OTMC and many kindred groups and individuals in refusing to allow the Mt Aspiring National Park Management Plan to be varied to facilitate the Routeburn tunnel project. The proponents hadn't applied to build the tunnel as such. They had sought to change the bit in the Plan that said "no more roads will be allowed in the park" to "apart from the tunnel road". We argued that, as the Plan was already several years overdue for its ten-yearly rewrite, any proposal should be considered in the wider context of planning for the whole park. We also argued that there was no evidence that a tunnel would do anything positive for National Park values – after all, it would only facilitate people rushing through the park

A cunning plan ...

The Plan review process is now underway. This is a really big deal for the club. Mt Aspiring National Park is vitally important to us, containing areas we hold dearly and visit often, like the Routeburn, Matukituki and Wilkin, and places that some of us dream of getting to while others reminisce fondly about, like the Olivines and Mt Aspiring/Tititea. This is our chance to influence the way our park is managed for the next ten years.

Some of the issues to consider include:

- Zoning – what zones should there be, where should they be, how should they be managed?
- Facilities – should there be bigger huts in some places? Higher standard tracks? Bridges and huts removed?
- Concessions – what level of commercial activity is appropriate for different zones? Should there be limits on the number of concessions as well as their size?
- Aircraft – where should they land? How often?
- How should aircraft be managed at Bevan Col? Status quo, a total ban, seasonal or weekly restrictions? (I imagine Phil Somerville has a view on

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this!)

Should there be a second exception (the first being Bevan Col) to the ‘no aircraft in Remote Zone rule’ to allow kayakers onto the Waitototo?

Rob Mitchell and I attended a really useful meeting of DoC planners and area managers and key recreational groups last month. Hopefully, some of the ideas from that meeting will be in the draft Plan, due out in February or March. In March and April, there will be public meetings to enable the community to air their views. Submissions will be due in towards the end of that period, and then there will be hearings.

What you can do ...

Any or all of the following:

- Let me know if you're interested in being part of a group that will form the views that become the OTMC submission. (I have one name already).
- Read the draft plan when it's available.
- Write your own submission. (Oral presentation is an optional extra).
- Write part of the OTMC submission, especially if there is a topic that really interests you.
- Put your two cents worth in when I do a presentation and brain-storm one Thursday night (when the draft is out).
- Attend the public meetings.

Present part of the OTMC submission at the hearings. (It's likely that they'll deal with the submissions on a topic basis – so all the Bevan Col issues at one session, the Routeburn ones at another etc).

Don't be afraid to put your hand up, and don't feel that you'll get landed with more than you bargained for. Ownership of this process comes with my role in the club, and I'm not trying to fob it off. But it would be good if this critical opportunity to influence our park's future had input from a cross-section of members.

David Barnes
Conservation & Recreation Advocacy Officer
4544492, mcilroy.barnes@clear.net.nz

Note for Day Trip Leaders

While most people turn up to a trip adequately prepared, there are occasional cases (particularly with new people) where someone will arrive with inadequate gear or insufficiently prepared in some other way. In these cases, as a leader you have to decide whether they can undertake the trip safely, and if not, you should refuse to take them (also, please let me know if this happens). As written in on the back of the trip card and the OTMC Day Trip Guidelines (check under Downloads on the website) "The trip leader has the authority to refuse to take persons without adequate equipment". The chance of having to do this can be reduced somewhat if new people call beforehand, which the trip card says they should do. The leader should draw attention to the minimum gear list on the back of the trip card (which is a very good guide) and ask about their fitness.

The discomfort / embarrassment of turning someone down should never be a reason to compromise on safety. After the Le Race case (where a bike race organiser was prosecuted after a participant died), the FMC did some research into liability of clubs and leaders and found that having and enforcing good safety procedures was the best defense. The minimum gear list and the right to turn people away are long-established parts of the club's safety procedures. This club has a very good safety record. With your help, we'd like to keep it that way.

Roy Ward
Daytrip Convenor

**Nelson and Marlborough
Foothills and Coastal Regions
A Walking and Tramping Guide
by
Pat Barrett**



This is a guidebook to the walking and tramping opportunities in the North and Northeast of the South Island. It covers short walks to multi-day tramps throughout the region which includes the National parks of Kahurangi, Nelson Lakes and Abel Tasman. Highlights of this area are stunning coastal walks but there is a wide variety of terrain covered for all abilities and inclinations. Pat Barrett is well known in the tramping community as a regular contributor to Wilderness magazine and several other guidebooks to the Westland, Canterbury and Lewis Pass regions.

For each region the book provides an overview of the local history as well as information on the vegetation and wildlife which may be seen during your visit. Each walk is described with a walking time, access information, a grading of the walk for fitness level and terrain. There are often safety recommendations about weather and equipment that may be required, and maps and photographs accompany the text to give more information and provide some inspiration.

I found the route descriptions given were clear and easy to follow and walks were available to cover all abilities and conditions. It gave me more information about walks I have completed, and certainly gave me plenty of ideas for an upcoming holiday in the region. The quality of the photography was excellent. I also enjoyed the short inserts describing the author's experience of memorable trips within the area.

In summary, this book provides a comprehensive guide to the varied walking opportunities available through this very wide area which would be suitable both for the local or international tourist and experienced trampers. Highly recommended.

Kathryn Jeyes

Trip Reports

Jacksons & Stafford Bays

17 - 18 November

First things first, I should introduce myself as a newcomer to the club. Having been initiated (I think that is the appropriate word having survived two trips with the ever-enthusiastic Greg Powell), I have been entrusted to give a 'reliable' account of our eye-opening journey to Stafford Bay.

Two van-loads of us set off to wind our way across the island, giving me plenty of time to start to get to know fellow trampers and admire the stunning scenery that the surrounded us. I must say a big 'thanks' here to those who got behind the wheel of both vehicles, making for a speedy and safe journey in both directions.

Upon arriving at the Wilderness Backpackers in Haast we were duly informed that the rest of the party were – surprise, surprise – at the pub. Further questioning revealed that they had the only room keys that were on offer, so all that was left was for us to join them (a hardship, I know!). Having unwittingly secured a position in the 'rowdy' bunch, left still supping our beverages as the pub closed around us, I learned that I have some work to do perfecting sneaking quietly into a bunk room without disturbing fellow room-mates who had very graciously left the lights on. Luckily my newly acquired misfit friends are full of advice on how to master this feat.

On Saturday we rose early to a stunning day (some especially so, thanks to a non-spectacled check of a watch) and set forth down the remaining leg of the van journey to Jackson Bay. It was my first time on this road, but it certainly won't be my last! Any pre-departure reservations that it might not be worth the epic six hour van ride over were well and truly quashed.

Our rather large party of 19 set off on the track to Smoothwater River where we discussed the option of splitting up, with three groups opting to stick to the original plan (heading up Smoothwater River over the mighty Stafford Saddle to Stafford Bay on the first day, leaving the coastal leg for

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the second), while two groups (of which I was a member) decided to take advantage of the glorious day and tackle the coastal leg on the first day after figuring that we'd still get the tides right. We said our goodbyes and set off on the easy stroll down the river down to the gorgeous Smoothwater Bay.

We were grateful to strike low tide at this point as it was remembered by those who had gone on the last OTMC trip here as being one of the trickier points. Our progress around the coastline was relatively easy, even where more care was required. The headlands either side of Homminy Cove were the source of the only serious grunting and scrambling, with a slip removing most of the vegetation on our first climb that would have been a help getting up. The track markers at the base of the headlands were a little tricky to find, but once on our way we saw enough markers to find our way up and over alright. I believe the other party had a wee bit of trouble finding the tracks heading back the next day – despite the skid marks left behind by our group!

Homminy Cove itself was a fabulous haven. The sea was so inviting that our esteemed club president disrobed with reckless abandon for a quick swim (no doubt assured that the rest of the party were far enough behind to not obtain reliable photographic evidence). This inspired the rest of us, with the whole group enjoying a fabulous swim and extended lunch break. It was inviting enough to entice some to have their first ocean swim in 14 years!

While enjoyable, our extended lunch break did make the final leg of our trip around the coast a little more 'interesting' with the tide now a bit higher than if we had kept plugging on after a quick lunch break. It was still very do-able, we just got a little wetter than we would have otherwise; as Ann can attest.

Stafford Bay offered no shortage of great campsites and dry driftwood to make a superb bonfire. This made for a very pleasant evening, especially given the surprisingly few sandflies to disturb us.

Day two saw the other group setting off early to tackle the coastal route, while we got to enjoy an easy stroll up the Stafford River nursing our sunburns. After a brief pause to contemplate the mighty task of climbing Stafford Summit we set off. It may not be high at 234m, but it certainly

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worked up a good sweat. All that exertion meant that another rest and extended lunch break couldn't be far away. Then it was back to the vans via Kakapo Creek and Smoothwater River and the return track to Jackson Bay. So all in all, while it may not be the most challenging trip the club runs, it certainly has enough variety to keep it interesting, and the scenery is just stunning! Especially if you are lucky as we were and strike two beautiful days. We had plenty of time to admire the wildlife, coming across seven Fiordland Crested penguins, a seal showing off for us and lots of great rock pools to admire starfish and other creatures. It is a thoroughly recommended trip!

Hilary Phipps

Snowy Gorge Creek

24 – 25 November 2007

A newspaper article about a DoC restoration job was the first I heard of Hideaway Bivvy. I found that it was in a valley on the east side of the Ahuriri, and an hour and a half from the road. It wasn't enough to justify driving that far, but a bit more digging suggested it would tie in nicely with a trip into the rarely-visited Snowy Gorge Creek.

After a night at Ahuriri Base Hut, Dad and I returned down valley, looking for a crossing spot. The Ahuriri is a deceptively large river and quite deep in places. After a bit of scouting, we found a crossing that was OK, apart from the need to take a slightly upstream approach. At least that meant that it would be easier on the return. We had half an hour of straight line travel on river flats before climbing around the base of the hill that hides Hideaway. At a large tarn, we dropped packs and climbed up to a low saddle. We found the hut tucked away at the side of the hill. The restoration job is magnificent, and DoC has supplied replica furniture and created a

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poster detailing all the names and dates graffitied by 140 years of musters, shearers and trampers. There's even an entry by Lord Bledisloe, the governor general in 1931.

Returning to our packs, we contemplated our next move. While Moir suggests better travel on the true right, that would involve a significant descent to the stream and climb up the other side. We could see reasonable travel on the true left that would lead us down to the stream eventually, so took that option. When we got to the stream, we had lunch before tackling a demanding crossing of Snowy Gorge Creek.

Easy travel led to the base of a gorge formed by a slip – for all the world like an Otago version of Arthur's Pass's Falling Mountain. Moir suggests the option of a true left route and so, again eschewing unnecessary height gain, we took that approach. It was slow going, but eventually we broke out onto the flats and soon found the hut behind a low moraine.

It was too early to call it quits, so after a short break we headed up valley before taking to easy slopes leading to a saddle with the Maitland. The hut book talks of views of Mt Cook, but cloud was obscuring the Neumann Range so there was no chance of views further afield. However, there were great views of the tops around us. We returned to the hut to finish a fairly full day, which was followed by a very windy night. It's no wonder that this hut, a 1960 Forest Service 5-bunker, has guy ropes.

On Sunday, we opted to go all the way on the true right. The high terrace we'd avoided wasn't much higher than the river at this end, so is definitely the best option, even though it looks discouraging from below. We made good time on the return journey, but had to contest with a howling nor'wester once back across the Snowy and onto the Ahuriri flats. As expected, crossing the river was easier with assistance from the wind as well as the current, and we were at the car at lunchtime. This is a very nice valley although, as it's completely treeless, it could be bleak on a bad day. Probably best avoided if the forecast suggests that the river will go up much while you're away.

A Maitland-Snowy Gorge crossover would be a really good weekend trip, with one longer day and a shorter one, in either direction. The hut book also mentions people coming over from Freehold Creek. Longer round trips mentioned include an Ahuriri –Temple-Maitland-Snowy route and one by OTMC alumni Sue and John Robinson from Quail Burn-East

TripList

CHIEF GUIDE COMMENT

23 – 24 February

Earnslaw Burn / Rees Crossover (All)

Greg Powell 454 4828

The Earnslaw Burn is a lovely valley that lies between the Dart and Rees, with Mt. Earnslaw providing a dramatic panorama at the head of the valley. This trip is suitable for all. The valley itself has easy access via a track, with the option to travel back down the ridge on the Rees side. I would suggest camping near the bushline, and exploring further up from here. Sunday can be back via the ridge, or back down the track. If conditions and experience allow, then there may be an option for parties to travel to the head of the Earnslaw Burn via the Rees and Lennox Pass. This is a route that requires experience in navigation and unmarked terrain. Alpine skills may also be required if snow still lies in the vicinity of the saddle. Trip list closes February 14.

8 – 9 March

Mistake Creek / Hut Creek / U Pass (All)

Ann Burton 476 2360

We had a trip planned here for September 2007, but with an unfavorable forecast we ended up at Mt. Somers. This is a great round trip, and has been used extensively for many Bushcraft courses in the past. Leaving the Milford highway around 5km before Cascade Creek you are soon confronted with a muddy traverse to the west branch of the Eglinton River. After crossing the bridge the track leads into Mistake Creek, where there is one crossing of the creek to undertake. The marked crossing is the best in the area, but still take care. Soon you are at the bush edge and looking for

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the creek draining from U Pass. U Pass itself is aptly named and is quite impressive. Hut Creek is shorter, but take the time to find the track after each set of flats – it is certainly quicker than bashing through the bush. There is also an option to just visit Mistake Creek, which has a small lakelet in its head.

The trip will close on February 28.

Committee Members 2007-2008

President	Antony Pettinger	473 7924
Vice President	Greg Powell	454 4828
Secretary	Jill McAliece	455 6740
Treasurer	Ann Burton	476 2360
Imm. Past Pres	Terry Casey	454 4592
Chief Guide/Transport	Antony Pettinger	473 7924
Membership Secretary	Ian Sime	453 6185
Gear Hire	Matt Corbett	487 6595
and	Dave Chambers	454 3857
Daytrip Convenor	Roy Ward	473 9518
Funding	Greg Powell	454 4828
Library	Kathryn Jeyes	455 2473
Clubrooms Officer	Terry Casey	454 4592
Website/Bushcraft Director	Antony Pettinger	473 7924
Publicity	Tony Timperley	473 7257
	Ralph Harvey	453 4330
(outside committee)		
Social Convenor	<i>Position vacant</i>	
Bulletin Editor	Robyn MacKay	488 2420
Conservation/Advocacy	David Barnes	454 4492
SAR Contact	Teresa Wasilewska	477 4987

Contributions (limit of 1000 words) are welcome for the March Bulletin, deadline is 15/02/08, publication 28/02/08. You can submit material by email to “rebell@xtra.co.nz”; or post handwritten/typed copy or a CD to Robyn MacKay, 8 Roy Crescent, Concord, Dunedin. Thanks.

DAYTRIPS

Potters - Old Man Range (E) 27 January

I checked this trip out over the holidays. It took us 2 hours to reach the Waikaia Bush Road at Shingle Creek, and 35 minutes to drive to the top of the Range. It is then a 90 minute walk along a 4WD track to the 8 bunk historic Potters Hut which will provide a comfortable lunching place whatever the weather! We had a fine calm day with fantastic views. Expect to be home about 6pm.

Leader: Ian Sime 453 6185

Classic Silver Peaks Circuit (F) 3 February

A long day trip this one, probably 10 hours or so. We will start at the Tunnels Track, head via Yellow Ridge to the Gap, ABC Cave, Jubilee Hut, Rocky Ridge, and return via Yellow Ridge and Tunnels Track to the vehicles. Don't forget water bottles. Cost \$5, money to drivers.

Leader: Wayne Hodgkinson 473 0950

Bull Creek / Cook Rock (E/M) 10 February

As a follow-on to the successful Taieri Mouth/Akatore trip, we drive via Milton to Bull Creek. We then follow the coast south to Crystal's Beach and the unique Cook Rock, returning to Bull Creek for lunch below the flowering rata. After lunch we explore a native bush track up Bull Creek of about an hour and a half duration. We can return on the coastal route via Taieri Mouth if desired. Cost \$8

Leader: Roy Ward 473 9518

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**OTMC Silverpeaks Marathon (FE)
16 February (Saturday)**

See the December Bulletin for details of this challenging trip, but there are already confirmed participants, and I'd welcome volunteers for support. We probably have access to the Mount Allan forest, but we will have to go a particular route (which will almost certainly be the same as the usual route) with maps provided. This will be confirmed nearer the time. There is also a small reconnaissance trip of that area planned for Feb 6th (Waitangi Day). Please contact me for details.

Roy Ward 473 9518

**Trotters / Horse Ranges (M)
17 February**

Meet 9 am at the clubrooms, drive to Trotters Gorge, walk up the gorge and then to Pigeon Flat, turn left up the valley into the Horse Ranges, then follow back to Trotters Gorge along the ridge overlooking the Shag River Valley. Return to the cars about 4 pm. The walk has splendid views of the Trotters Gorge rocks and Shag River Valley, but is a fairly long walk. Cost \$8 to the driver.

Leader: Bill Wilson 477 2282

**Logan Park Valley / Signal Hill / St Leonards Explore (E/M)
24 February**

Work being done in the Logan Park Valley is due to be finished mid-late February so this should not be an issue. However it can be worked around even if not so. The plan is to park in Ravensbourne, go up and look into

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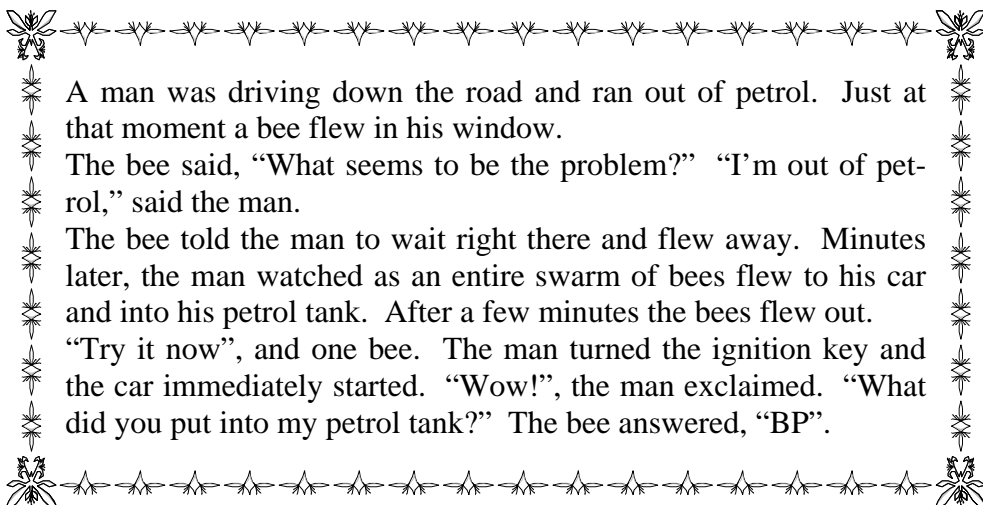
the Quarry, down to Logan Park, up and down at least twice on the north-west side of the valley (on tracks of various ages, with morning tea at a schist rock hut on the way), then up to the road near the Signal Hill monument and along to the track joining with Cleghorn St. From there we will go down a reserve to St Leonards. The way back from here is at present being negotiated, hoping to avoid using the roads!

Leader: Bronwen Strang 473 1610

All Day on the Peninsula (M) **2 March**

Many people think that, from a tramping perspective, the Otago Peninsula is really only good for Sunday afternoon strolls. But with some cunning planning and a small amount of road walking, we can fill in a day that will encompass a long loop from Turnbull Bay to Macandrew Bay via Hoopers Inlet, Sandymount and Sandfly Bay. There's more uphill than a Maungatua traverse, but there is also an opportunity for icecreams when the cars are retrieved at the end of the day. Bring plenty of water, as there's none en route.

Leader: David Barnes 454 4492

A man was driving down the road and ran out of petrol. Just at that moment a bee flew in his window. The bee said, "What seems to be the problem?" "I'm out of petrol," said the man. The bee told the man to wait right there and flew away. Minutes later, the man watched as an entire swarm of bees flew to his car and into his petrol tank. After a few minutes the bees flew out. "Try it now", and one bee. The man turned the ignition key and the car immediately started. "Wow!", the man exclaimed. "What did you put into my petrol tank?" The bee answered, "BP".