

OTMC Bulletin

Bulletin Number 683, April 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.**

3 April

To be announced at clubnight.

10 April

Peter and Sue Stevenson will talk about their recent trip over the Tongariro Crossing.

17 April

Kim Stewart will talk about her trip to Peru last year, which included doing the Inca Trail.

24 April

No clubnight, since this is ANZAC weekend.

1 May

Bring Your Own photos and tales to share with others.

Any ideas, and contact names in particular, are welcome for the Thursday evening activities. Please contact the Committee if you can help..

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

PRESIDENT'S PIECE

It has been an incredibly sad time within the OTMC following the death of Trevor Mason during the 2008 OTMC Silver Peaks Marathon. It is said that time can heal all wounds, but it has also allowed us time to reflect on the accident and the decisions made. To understand why this happened we must first look at the overall philosophy of the tramping club. The club is comprised of many people from all walks of life who come together to tramp. For this reason the tramping programme is designed to cater for all abilities. There has always been a group of people within the club who can pretty much tramp safely no matter what the conditions are like. This is one of the enduring aspects of the Marathon – it allows one to test themselves against the weather and environment. It is not uncommon for people to still turn up for a trip on the most diabolical days – generally the view will be something like ‘once you’re wet, you’re wet, and as long as you keep moving you can stay warm’. I imagine this was the thought at the start of the Marathon. It was a miserable day, but the participants took this on board and were completely prepared for a day in the rain.

We shouldn’t comment too much on the accident itself as it will be the subject of an inquest. However, there have been murmurings about the future of the Silver Peaks Marathon. In general terms the concept of the Marathon may go against some of the established tramping guidelines, in particular ‘never tramp alone’. On the other hand it is considered a great test of oneself against the environment. Roy needs to be complimented for the way the recent Marathons have been run. Safety has always been paramount, and Roy is particularly keen for people to travel in at least pairs. Communication advances over the past few years now mean that most of the route is within cell-phone coverage, and other requirements like carrying warm clothing and basic overnight gear are compulsory. Conceivably, what happened on February 16 could happen on any trip where a party of four chooses to cross a river together, using a mutual support method. The events of this day have already started to make members think twice before crossing a river – remember the first question you need to ask is ‘do I/we need to cross?’ It is so sad that such a tragic accident triggers this line of thought.

I would like to add how grateful I am to all those members and friends who have offered Roy, Brad and Chris support following the accident, and ask that people keep offering support. I imagine the impact of such an event will take time to sink in. Even now, as I write this, I find it hard to believe that Trevor won’t be coming back. I agree with what Philip wrote last month how ironic life can be, considering the strength of Trevor and the places he had been to alone.

I know Trevor’s family appreciated the significant attendance at his funeral, with many people from different aspects of Trevor’s life present unknown to the family. I thank the club members for everything that was done in the tough days following the accident. Everyone at the funeral no doubt learnt something further about Trevor and his ways, and there were quite a few laughs. We have lost a valued member of the club, as well as a truly unique character. I’m glad Trevor chose to tramp with the OTMC.

Antony Pettinger
President.

Membership

Again this month two new members have joined the Club: Jo Baillie, 56 Mihiwaka Station Rd, Purakanui, 482 1771; and Korvin Lemke, 40 Grandview Cres, 473 7831.

Judith Puchert has resigned; she's off to England to a professional job there.

Jeremy Thomas has moved to 125 Cargill St, and Kaylip Khoo to 5 Erin St, but both retain their old phone numbers.

Ian Sime

Membership Secretary

Learning to Breathe, by Andy Cave

I grabbed this book off a shelf at the library when I was short of holiday reading. Another Himalayan book by another Pom – I had no expectations, although the cover did mention that it had won a Boardman-Tasker.



Andy Cave left school at 16 to follow three generations of his forebears into the Yorkshire coalmines. He had been nagging his former scout leader to take him along to his rock climbing club, and when it finally happened he experienced an epiphany. Climbing was a sport that he could enjoy and thrive at, a welcome tonic from the grim reality of days in the pit.

Cave was a committed supporter of the year-long mine strike in 1984. It was an event that undoubtedly shaped his thinking, and yet ironically it gave him time to push his abilities as a climber to the limits. Audacious climbs in the Alps ensued. Disillusioned following a return to work in the mine, he resigned to study (ultimately gaining Ph.D in linguistics) and found, as many have, that as well as an opportunity to think and learn it gave him flexibility to spend more time in the hills.

The book successfully weaves the three strands of his life – miner, climber, scholar – together in a compelling tale that culminates in success and heartbreak on Changbang in the Indian Himalaya.

David Barnes

Trip Reports

Tasman Saddle 8 -16 December 2007

Four years ago, camped on the unforgiving Haast Ridge, Rob Seeley and I had gazed down on the Tasman Glacier and thought of one day making the long trudge to the saddle and beyond. This year I booked a weeks leave and thought “now’s the time”. The plan was to climb Elie de Beaumont and back via the Murchison Glacier.

We made an early start on Friday morning. The weather was beautiful but also very hot and we were glad to get out of the glare for a while in Ball Shelter, after almost three hours of 4-wheel drive track. On the way we had a good look at the return leg from the Murchison Valley and it did not look encouraging.

It was worse going than I remembered and soon every second step was preceded by a splash of sweat on the sun-heated rocks. Travel was easier on glacier ice past the Hochstetter Icefall, but soon more relentless moraine had us hating every step. I was reminded of the words attributed to Lincoln “This too will pass” and they were to become my personal theme for this trip. More ice followed, and we put on our spiky feet again, making good headway to the Rudolph Glacier confluence. Here we had the choice of more moraine and a steep cliff to the De la Beche hut, or scraping out a spot for the tent in the shingle. We had left our sleeping mats behind to lighten our packs but were so tired we opted to sleep on the stony ground.

Next day, with only ice and snow to contend with, I was able to get some use from my snowshoes. Telltale hogs back clouds began to appear and there was an ominous amount of air traffic. Things started to get a bit broken as we passed the Darwin Glacier and sighted our home for the evening, Tasman Saddle hut on its lofty, crumbling perch. The direct route to the hut seemed ill advised so we took a long detour, bypassing yawning crevasses and approached it from the NE via a gentle ridge. We entered the hut with five minutes to spare for the scheduled radio contact and weather report - Rain!

There followed three days of rain and near-zero visibility. The seven o’clock radio broadcast was always prompt....and always negative. Finally cabin fever began to take hold and we decided to head off the next morning if the weather wasn’t too bad – even if we just made it to Kelman Hut it would be a welcome change of scenery.

Thursday morning was not too bad – reasonable visibility and no rain. We plodded over to the saddle and surveyed our options. The steep slope was deeply crevassed

(Continued on page 5)

(Continued from page 4)

with apparently little in the way of crossings. We found a narrow snow bridge across the first obstacle and carefully threaded our way down through the fractured ice. We arrived at Murchison Hut after six and a half hours and a distance of only five kilometers but happy that the bad bit was over.

Here we spent a pleasant night before tackling the ill-reputed Murchison moraine. The first bit of the trip was great (even if the weather wasn't) and we made good time over the ice to the moraine. We opted to descend into a streambed on the true left which led to relatively easy benches. Our destination was Onslow Hut on the far side of the valley and although the going was fairly easy the stream on our right had grown to an impassible torrent. We thought our luck was in when it disappeared under a mountain of moraine and allowed us access to the far side of the valley, but further exploration revealed that the glacial lake had swollen to the extent that Onslow Hut was unreachable. We had been walking all day – mostly over steep moraine, I was exhausted! I looked over the lake blocking our way, sat down and laughed like a maniac. Oh well, "This too will pass." We got to our feet and began the long trudge back. In failing light we reached a grassy campsite with a convenient stream, the first green spot we had seen in six days, and set up the tent for the night.

At last we were in relatively flat country and the mornings walk was pleasurable. There were bumblebees and birdsong. I spotted chamois sign near a small stream and moments later Rob sighted the animal looking down on us from a high grassy ledge. The Murchison River was swift and deep so we made our way downstream to a braided stretch and attempted a crossing. It didn't look good, before we were halfway across the first braid our walking poles were humming like the strings on a double bass and we could not safely continue. We tried two more times at different locations with the same result before the river converged at a series of bluffs.

There was possibly further braiding beyond the bluffs so we decided to climb up and take a look. After a steepish climb through matagouri the braided section was in sight. We descended to the river, climbed a steeper bluff, fought our way through more matagouri and spaniard and down to the river. Three crossing attempts later and we were over the first braid. There things became generally easier and soon we were across. We made our way to the Tasman moraine wall and set up camp under a bivvy rock.

Next morning we crossed the Tasman moraine and picked our way up the moraine wall back to the 4-wheel drive track. The rain began again but nothing could now dampen our spirits as we meted out the final hours with soggy footsteps. Two Paradise geese with a brood of chicks (six balls of fuzz with little spindly legs) was a cheery sight and then the car was a better one.

Terry Duffield, for Rob Seeley and Pam McKelvey.

Potters Hut (Old Man Range)

27 January



It was Sunday, 7th of January. The Old Man Range Tramp was a picture-perfect day organised by Ian Sime. It was nice, calm and sunny, and the few clouds protected us from the heat.

After a long drive via Roxburgh, the 15 of us arrived at the top of a hilly gravel road, at the starting point of the track. Diana Munster, Will Sweetman and Geoff Crosswell did a great job driving on such bumpy roads. (in fact it was quite an adventurous journey as Ian, Gene and I had to get out of the car at some places to help Diana manoeuvring around the craters while watching out for mountain bikers flashing down the hill leaving big clouds of dust behind.) When we all got out of the cars, the view at the top was impressive! The scenery was mind-blowingly dry with scattered spaniards all around, and the hills were covered with irregular patches of shade from the clouds passing above. It looked like a painting! After about an

(Continued on page 7)

(Continued from page 6)

hour's walk, we arrived at Potters Hut – a very cute little hut with a chimney, a little table with an old candle in a beer bottle, and bunks with mattresses. There was another hut further along the path with stone walls and other reminders of the gold mining settlement that was here in the late 1800's (showing that life must have been tough here, especially in winter!). We had a nice and relaxing lunch break at the huts, and some of us even had a little digestive nap.

On the way back Will and his partner Leanne Pryde, the two love birds of the tramp, went ahead and returned back to the city before the rest of us. I vividly remember the friendly company of Gene Dvett taking pictures with the aid of his tripod stand and Gavin MacArthur sharing the fresh memories of his exciting adventures in Egypt and other places. Diana, Elizabeth Liefing and I were taking a great pleasure in listening while contemplating the outstretched hills and noticing the many mountain daisies. When we arrived to the cars we realised that we that we were missing Ian Sime and Liz Bryce. We had been so engrossed in conversation that we didn't even realise they weren't with us. They had been chatting with the local farmers, and it was a relief when they turned up. While waiting for these last ones to arrive, we all had a good chance to have more good chats and snacks. Finally, Geoff & Julie Crosswell, Bruce Johnston, Ken Powell, Alan Thomson and Sue Vosseler returned to Dunedin by the same way we came in while the rest of us took a detour via Alexandra, and past parts of the rail trail, including the lovely old train station at Hyde. Ian and Gene very kindly explained various historical events and good places to go (including an ice-cream stop in Ranfurly). I felt quite lucky as I had not been in that part of the country before.

All in all, it was a very lovely day, and I definitely recommend that anyone should go there for a nice bucolic walk, especially as the terrain is quite pleasant to walk on. I look forward to my next adventure with the OTMC!

Isabelle Gensburger

TripList

CHIEF GUIDE COMMENT

April 25-27

Ahuriri / South Temple Cross-over (M-C)

Antony Pettinger 473-7924

Here is an opportunity to make the most out of the last long weekend before winter starts to bite. With ANZAC day falling on a Friday we will head away Thursday evening to the Ahuriri and South Temple valleys. The idea is to have one group starting at the South Temple and another at the Ahuriri which will enable us to cross from one valley to the other easily. It is straight-forward up the South Temple to the saddle to the Ahuriri, which is about 2000 m. From the saddle we may side around to the pass that leads to the South Huxley (which I had always known as Gunsight Pass) before dropping into the Ahuriri, maybe passing the small tarn shown on the map. In the event that this trip does take a full three days to complete there are several side-trips available. In the South Temple it is a worthwhile heading up the side creek near the South Temple Hut. Likewise, in the Ahuriri both Watson Stream and Canyon Creek are suitable side-trips.

The trip will close on April 20.

May 2-5

Milford Track (MF) (OTMC Members Trip)

Antony Pettinger 473-7924

After a break of five years the OTMC is running a trip over the Milford Track again. There appears to be plenty of interest out there for this trip so here is what I am planning for this trip.

I have chosen the first weekend in May to avoid the severe overcrowding

(Continued on page 9)

(Continued from page 8)

encountered in 2003. We are leaving Dunedin on the Thursday night and staying at the Te Anau camping ground. Friday morning will see us taken to Te Anau Downs and across the lake to the start of the Milford Track near Glade House. The first day is a leisurely walk to Clinton Forks Hut for the night. We will then stay at Mintaro and Dumpling Huts before meeting the boat at Sandfly Point on the Monday afternoon. A bus will take us back to Te Anau from where we will drive home Monday evening. I had considered missing out Clinton Forks but with the logistics of a large group combined with the short daylight hours I have decided it would be wise to just plan on getting to Clinton Forks.

An indicative cost of the trip is \$160.00 for the Te Anau to Te Anau transport (bus/boat/boat/bus). Additionally the huts are \$10 per person per night (3 nights required) or annual hut pass. Food parties and transport from Dunedin will be arranged as for any other club trip (using private transport).

This a great opportunity for OTMC people to enjoy what is called the finest walk in the world (which is a subjective description). I haven't decided if we will set a limit for the trip but it is primarily being run for the OTMC and associates, hence the 'OTMC Only' listed on the trip card. You will need Friday the 2nd and Monday the 5th of May off work for this trip.

More details will be available next month, but the trip list is in the club-rooms now. Contact Antony for more information (473-7924).

Trip closes April 17

May 17-18
Jubilee Hut (M)
Leader to be advised

We tried to run an official OTMC weekend trip to Jubilee Hut last year but it fell during the very icy couple of weeks we had so was cancelled. We should be right in May. The new DoC Jubilee Hut was opened by DoC and the OTMC in May 2007, replacing the original hut built for the Otago Tramping Club's 25th Jubilee in 1948. The new site is superior to the original site, being on an elevated ledge above Cave Stream. The hut itself

(Continued on page 10)

(Continued from page 9)

is a standard 10 bunk hut, with a veranda and is well worth a visit. The route taken to and from Jubilee on this trip will be up to the participants but will either be from Leith Saddle or Hightop, or from the north via Yellow Ridge. The return can be done by heading up the hill directly behind the new hut. It is steepish in places, but there is a pretty good track on the ridge. The fence at the top marks the reserve boundary so this needs to be taken into account. The trip will leave town on Saturday morning and return Sunday afternoon. Hut fees for Jubilee are \$5 or annual hut pass. Trip list closes May 11.

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 May Bulletin, deadline is 18/04/08, publication 1/05/08. 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

Raingauge Spur / Steve Amies Track (M) **30 March**

See the March Bulletin for details. Leader is Jonette Service 454 2323

Orbell's Cave (M) **6 April**

This walk is inland from Waikouaiti, traversing hilly pastures with a steep descent and a long ascent (remember the old tramping adage – what goes down, must come back up again). We drive to Mcgrath Rd, just before Waikouaiti, and head inland via Buckland's Crossing and take a long drive down Blucher Road to where it becomes Lamb Hill Road.

The tramp begins from the stockyards and follows a 4-wheel drive track (still called Blucher Road) before descending steeply to Three O'clock Stream. We then go down stream until we reach Orbell's Creek and climb up to the cave, which is on the true left of the creek. After lunch in the cave, we will re-cross the creek, climb up to the ridge and head back to Blucher Road. On reaching SH1 again, a left turn to Waikaioiti could bring you a reward of an icecream. Cost \$10.

Leader: Tony Timperley 473 7257

Maungatua Traverse (M/F) **13 April**

The usual Maungatua Traverse departs from the old Wesleydale Camp at Munro Road. However we have been denied access by the new owner, so we will go up either a nearby paper road or Graingers Road. After a steep climb (which may include a little gorse!) we go along the top, which is covered in tussock and patches of swamp, then descend down to Woodside

(Continued on page 12)

(Continued from page 11)

Glen. Characteristics of the trip include being the highest point for quite some distance, so there are magnificent views (including the Taieri Plain) and that we walk through several types of vegetation at the different altitudes. Car pool cost \$8.

Leader: Roy Ward: 473 9518

Skyline Track (Cargill Section) (M) **20 April**

We will be walking the Mount Cargill ("Cloud Forests of Leith" and "Escarpment") section of the Skyline track. This runs between Leith Saddle and the top of Mount Cargill, and is unique for something so close to Dunedin in that it is designed to take the most interesting route, giving a similar back country or 'tactile' experience to what you might get on a more isolated track. Some sections have been boardwalked, but adequate footwear is essential. We may take the opportunity of walking the track to transport some of the remaining materials along the track. Trip cost is \$3.

Leader: Kathryn Jeyes 455 2473

Hare Hill and Hodson Hill **27 April**

This is a new route for the club. Assemble at the clubrooms at 9am, bring plenty of water and a camera or binoculars. See stunning views of the Coastline and Otago Harbour, a hidden railway line, the site of early wind power trials for Dunedin and maybe a former fitch farm. The route will include a bush track rising from the old torpedo boat station on the western shore of Otago Harbour to Hare Hill (350m), travel through local farmland to Hodson Hill and back down. This is a round trip not a "there and back". Approximate trip time 5 hours. Carpool cost \$5. If you live in the Port Chalmers area it may make sense to travel directly to the start point without going to the clubrooms first. Phone me for directions.

Leader: Gordon Tocher 472 7440