

OTMC Bulletin

Bulletin Number 694, April, 2009

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.**

2 April

Wally Hockley tells us about walking the Pacific Continental Divide Trail, which is from Mexico to Canada, a VERY long way. He has also walked other long trails in the USA.

9 April

No club night as its Easter weekend.

16 April

Matt Corbett tells us about his trip to the Olivine Ice Plateau wilderness area in January, the ultimate area for southern trampers.

23 April

See Cathy & Mark Price's bicycle tour through Spain, France and Germany. Cathy will also give us advice on organising a long distance bicycle tour.

30 April

BYO. Show and tell your Easter or other recent trips. Lets try and equal the last BYO, which was great.

Any ideas, and contact names in particular, are welcome for the Thursday evening activities. If you can help please contact Tony Timperley (phone 473 7257, email cathy.tony.t@actrix.co.nz) or Ralph Harvey (phone 453 4330, email ralphh@ihug.co.nz)

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

In February 2009, I was part of a group that lost its footing at a ford and got swept down a river, where, tragically, Trevor Mason drowned. I'm not going to focus on that, however, but on what happened afterwards. Once Brad managed to contact the police, an organisation consisting of volunteers drawn from such organisations such as the Red Cross, Amateur Radio Emergency Communications, Rescue Dogs, the Four Wheel Drive Club, the OTMC and several others, supported by the police, swung into action to look for Trevor. This organisation is known as Land Search and Rescue (SAR). SAR volunteers bring many types of skills and training to a search, and are ready at a moment's notice to drop what they are doing and operate in all sorts of conditions. The search was managed from the police station. A helicopter was used to get people there quickly (also to get people over the flooded Silverstream) and the Whare Flat Scout Camp was used as a base of operations in the field. Brad and myself were debriefed as to exactly what had happened. A time-line and a profile of Trevor was created. People with skills in water search were brought in. Trevor's body was found 2-3 hours later.

I'm a SAR volunteer through the OTMC, and I've been on several search and rescue exercises and courses (which are a lot of fun), and experienced how these diverse people can work together as teams in an environment where information and priorities are constantly changing. One thing I've found out is that search techniques rely heavily on getting as good information as possible to narrow down the possibilities.

In the event of missing or injured trampers, SAR are going to want to be notified as quickly as possible before the search area or injury gets worse and are also going to want to know as much as possible about:

- * the route where the group was planning to go, and possible alternatives,
- * the group itself, including fitness, skills, equipment, what the members look like and what vehicles they would have parked where,
- * anything else that might give some clues, or help them work out whether clues they are finding are relevant or not.

Our club has a good protocol with SAR forms for all trips, which makes a good starting point for this. I've also updated the level of profile detail (I intend to add in boot prints – this can be very useful!) I leave with my SAR contact for private trips.

Land SAR makes what we do safer. Having seen them in action from both sides, I'm reassured by the organisation, skills and enthusiasm that these volunteers bring to a search. Apart from doing our best to never need them, we can help by making sure they have enough information to do their job well if they are needed.

Roy Ward

Membership

Two new members have joined us this month; Sebastian Clar of 24 Brighton-Scroggs Hill Rd, 481 1784; and Jacqui Colbert of 24A Melrose St, 471 7339. We are very pleased to welcome them both.

Ian Sime
Membership Secretary

WANTED: DAY TRIP LEADERS

As you read this, I'm putting together the winter day-trip programme and need YOU! Ideally it's great to have people willing to lead a trip with a trip idea in mind, but leaders who don't have a particular trip in mind are also very welcome, since I can help you pick something suitable. I'm also looking for trip ideas, particularly places we haven't been to before, or for a while, or where you have some particular local knowledge. Winter suits slightly shorter trips, but there's plenty of scope for exploring the area around Dunedin.

All this can't happen without leaders. Even if you've not led a day trip before, here's your chance to get some help developing a new skill, so there's no excuse - contact me now!

Roy Ward (Day Trip Convenor)
473-9518 or royward770@actrix.ac.nz

LEANING LODGE HUT ROCK & PILLAR MOUNTAINS

This is to update you on where we are at and also to ask for your support in the form of a supporting submission.

Back in 2003 DoC announced that part of a revision of local assets was the removal of the two huts on the Rock and Pillars. The OTMC owned both huts at the time, but has subsequently sold 'Big Hut' to the Big Hut Trust, who have done a wonderful job of bringing it up to standard.

The Leaning Lodge Trust was formed in 2006 for the purpose of either bringing the existing Leaning Lodge hut up to standard or replacing it. Replacement is the realistic option and this is what we have been working towards.

Since the trust was formed we have tidied up around the existing hut, provided a new toilet and pre-constructed some of the framing. We now need to obtain the "concession to occupy" before we can apply for the funding that will be required to complete the replacement hut. To date we have received over \$3,500 in monetary donations as well having received donations of some of the building materials. We received our IRD number in 2006 and in September 2008 we received our certificate of registration from the Charities Commission – Registration number CC31508.

The existing hut has been there since 1958, and we believe that just as past generations have left these facilities for us to enjoy, we should at least preserve or replace them for future generations. You will agree that this location is a great place to safely introduce younger people to an alpine environment that is in relatively close proximity to a city.

It is hoped that the new hut will be built within twelve months of our receiving the concession and obtaining the required funding.

Your submission should be sent to:

Director-General,
Otago Conservancy Office
Department of Conservation
P O Box 5244,
DUNEDIN
Attention: Dave Johnstone

Submissions will be accepted up to and including Wednesday 22nd April.
Contact Alan Thomson if you require further information – 455 7878

New Zealand's Wilderness Heritage

by Les Molloy and Craig Potton

Is this the best book I've ever bought? Very probably.

At first glance, it could be dismissed as another glossy coffee table book. Sure, the photos are by Craig Potton, undoubtedly in the top echelon of local backcountry photographers, and the production values are as good as in any rival tome, but unless you have a lot of coffee tables, do you need another coffee table book? Yes, you do.

What sets this book apart is the text by the godfather of New Zealand wilderness areas, Les Molloy. This is the man who led FMC's efforts that ultimately brought about the formal recognition of wilderness areas as places without the permanent footprint of man. Add to that his scientific background, including a period as DoC's chief scientist, and there would be few people better qualified to write this book.

The book goes a lot beyond formally designated wilderness areas and instead covers the whole gamut of wild places throughout the country, including New Zealand's Antarctic and Sub-Antarctic possessions. The opening chapter considers what is wilderness, and then explores the origins of our geodiversity and biodiversity before moving on to human impacts. It then considers the developing history of the protection we grant to these places.

The next fourteen chapters each look at a region, discussing the places and lifeforms that we value in that area before moving on to an examination of threats and conservation priorities. Despite his scientific background, Molloy is writing for the layman and does so evocatively. In the threats and priorities sections, he pulls no punches. Typical of this, he describes aerial rafting access to the upper Landsborough as "another manifestation of the 'wilderness adventure tourism' oxymoron, the irony of which is seemingly lost on participants in such commercial air access approaches to backcountry adventures". The final chapter examines the future prospects for our wilderness.

So there are myriad reasons to get this book. Ogle at Potton's photos (and scheme of places to visit). Improve your appreciation of our geodiversity and biodiversity. (I was astounded to read that the population density of

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tuatara on Stephens Island is such that there would be seven living in an area the size of my lounge). Be grateful that we didn't lose more wild places. Be annoyed at those that we did lose. Get involved in looking after the ones that we've got.

David Barnes

Showing photos at OTMC meetings

The committee have heard comment regarding the speed of the club's equipment when showing photos at club meetings. The lag (from when you push the button to when the picture appears) is caused mainly by the growing size of the photo files from modern digital cameras. As the 'mega-pixels' increase, so to does the file size, hence the computer takes longer to transfer the photo from the medium it is on to the screen. As the club cannot justify upgrading our equipment we offer the following solutions:

1. (Preferred) Reduce the size of your photos before putting them on your USB Drive or CD. Always work off a copy of your files for this. JPEG photos that are around 200Kb will be fine for projection.

2. Copy your photos to the hard drive before the meeting starts. This will access the files quicker than USB/CD. (Remember to remove them from the hard drive when you finish your presentation!)

Trip Reports

Mt John Hut – The Long Way

7 December 2008

My phone had been ringing red hot all week, and I was a bit nervous about dragging a crowd of neophytes through the Silver Peaks for nine hours. Everyone got dire warnings of what they were in for, as well as a grilling about their gear. But, with the exception of one that I pointed at the following week's easier trip, they still turned up. So a dozen of us – 2 members, 3 of my friends and family and seven other non-members from five different countries – embarked on a day to remember.

The route had been chosen as it was an abbreviated version of a 3 day trip I did with my brother Chris and erstwhile OTMCer Paul Olsen exactly thirty years before. That was our first trip *sans* adults, and the start of three pretty active tramping careers. It was great that Chris was able to join me for this nostalgia fix.

Setting off from Hightop in thick fog we set a good pace to Green Hut. The climb to Pulpit Rock saw us spread out a bit, and as I waited to check on the stragglers I was concerned that the enthusiastic frontrunners would hang a right at the Track sign above Painted Forest. Fortunately they waited, and we regrouped for the descent towards Mt Allan. With the fog the result of a typical nor'easter, heading west meant we were now out in the sun and away from the wind. Finding the shortcut, we cut the corner and headed up to Mt Allan itself and stopped for lunch at the corner of the plantation. From there, we dropped to the spot I knew as Sheepyard Saddle, only to find that the sheepyard is no more. Carrying on down, we arrived at Mt John Hut, which is still in excellent condition.

One last drop brought us to Christmas Creek, followed by the cruel reality of immediately regaining most of the height on the vehicle track. Time flew, and in no time we were dropping into the creek again and then following Cave Creek to Jubilee Hut. People who had never heard of Barry

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Atkinson cursed him for locating the hut at the top of such a grunt, but all savoured a break on the deck as we made a serious attempt to drain the water tank.

We'd decided to flag the ascent of Raboh Ridge and instead headed for the Staircase. It's a cruel hill to tackle when you've already been on the go for six hours. The nor'easter hadn't abated, so we were climbing back into the murk, where we were to remain for the rest of the trip. After a brief spell out of the wind at the summit, we soon joined the ends of our loop before carrying on to Green Hut for another spell and regroup before the last hour out to the cars, arriving at 7:15 pm.

Despite such a full day, I'm sure that the group thoroughly enjoyed what for many was their introduction to the club and to the wonders of the Silver Peaks. My thanks to Mike (the member), Chris, Lindsay and Rob (the ring-ins) and David (Oz), David (US), Alex (Germany), Emma (NZ), Polly (US), Shannon (NZ) & Isobel (France) (the non-members) for a fantastic day in the hills.

David Barnes



Mt John Hut

29 Dumb-bell Lake February – 1 March

On the evening of Friday 20th Feb a group of potential trampers gathered under the shop veranda and contemplated the weather forecast which included severe rain warnings for much of the lower South Island. After half an hour debate we decided to postpone the Lake Ohau / Dumb-bell Lake trip....therefore at 6.30 am Saturday 28th February five of the previous eight trampers headed north for Lake Ohau in much more clement weather. We started tramping at 10.30am with high cloud and mild temperatures. We set off, as planned, up the true right of Freehold Creek. There are substantial bridges crossing both Sawyers and Freehold Creeks which allow a safe access from the carpark to the track. We had a steady climb (560 m) up through beech forest for 1½ hours to the bush-line where we stopped for lunch. After this the route to the ridge top, a further 800 m climb, was through alpine meadows with sporadic snow poles and cairns plus the occasional rock splattered with red paint. About ½ way we hit cloud which severely reduced our visibility. Here it was felt prudent to bring out Malcolm's GPS and log way-points on it – and so we headed into the murk. The alpine meadow eventually gave way to rock scree, ranging from tiny shards to rather large boulders, which we duly scrambled up. It was fortunate for us that the texture of the rock was exceedingly grippy and that they were generally very secure, but a lot of concentration and good foot-eye coordination was still required. We eventually reached the saddle on the Ohau Range and popped over the top at the same time that the predicted wind and rain caught up with us – lowering the visibility down to about 10 metres. After a quick snack and donning of wet weather gear we headed more or less north along the ridgeline to just below the high point of 1922 m, still clambering over boulder fields. Half an hour later saw us in rather unsavoury weather, very poor visibility and much doubt as to where we were exactly. (Unfortunately the GPS was not calibrated for New Zealand so we were unable to get our position on the map). The prudent decision was made to descend back down to the bush-line and camp. Here we were

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most grateful to be able to back-track along the way-points previously logged into the GPS.

We eventually reached the bush-line at 7 pm with Malcolm suffering from a sore back and feeling quite unwell, and Wayne nursing an injured wrist as a result of a fall on the rocks (apparently he actually sustained a fracture!). Tents and dinner were both rapidly attended to in the rain and all were tucked up in bed by 9.30pm. The smaller tent was pitched on the track and we in the 3 person tent were fortunate that Wayne discovered a beautifully formed tent site about 10m off the main track.

The rain stopped sometime during the night and, after a leisurely breakfast and pack-up, we had a quick sprint up and out of the trees to get the views that Gordon had been describing to us the day before. While standing there the mist came up the valley and hid the tops once again so we shouldered our packs and headed on down, we were back at the carpark in time for lunch in the sun. Thanks very much to Gordon for organising and Malcolm for transport. It was an enjoyable first weekend out with OTMC.

Sue Taylor for Gordon Tocher, Wayne Hodgkinson, Jenny Conroy and Malcolm Gollan



GEAR FOR HIRE

*Including....
Tents & tent flies
Backpacks
Crampons & ice axes
Billies*

*Contact
Ralph Harvey 453 4330
Matt Corbett 487 6595*



Makarora Region in Summer

24 - 25 January

Leaving Dunedin at the regular time of 6 pm, all eleven in our group headed out to Central Otago and then on to Wanaka in the minibus. As always the journey was straight forward but long. With a break for food in Alexandra, we reached Hawea as darkness fell, and continued the extra hour up to camp at Boundary Creek on the east side of Lake Wanaka. With a muddle over rucksacks and head torches and a fumbled pitching of tents in the darkness, the group had managed to hit the hay by midnight in near perfect conditions.

The following morning, we arose early, leaving the site at about 8 am and dropping four off at Makarora. The rest continued north to just short of Haast Pass to start the trek up to Brewster Hut. The route started with the only, but immediate, river crossing over Haast River. Some of the group chose to cross in old shoes, which were then hidden in plants until they returned. The track immediately entered the bush with a short 2 km but very steep climb to about 1000 m. We were in bush for the first 2 hours, before we emerged to a cloudless blue sky with spectacular views over Haast Valley. The final hour consisted of walking a dramatic ridge with stunning views over Mount Armstrong, Mount Brewster and Brewster Glacier before approaching Brewster Hut. This recently renovated hut sits dramatically on the hillside, with a comfy deck surrounding the hut allowing appreciation of the views from all angles.

Five of the party (Dave, Michael, Colette, Alan and Gordon) left the hut for an afternoon walk uphill with a view to getting to the top of Mt. Armstrong (2,194 m). The weather was perfect, clear and sunny with almost no wind. It was the usual story of numerous phantom summits, but after climbing up through the tussock followed by a fair amount of rock hopping we got to a point where we could see the jagged ridgeline between us and Makarora Valley. During our ascent we had been trying to keep an eye on a party of five who had lunched at Brewster Hut - they were trying to cross the ridge and head down to Makarora Hut.

We passed the hut warden and her two friends practicing their snow skills on a small snowfield and headed up to choose our path towards the summit. Given

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our lack of crampons we chose to head to the right of a snowfield and scramble up the rocks, we gained the ridge and the magnificent views it afforded – snow covered peaks as far as the eye could see in all directions. The view down into Makarora Valley gave rise to a few comments along the lines that the party aiming to descend into it had their work cut out (its steep!), we could not see them anywhere.

Travel further up the ridge became difficult, so we marvelled at the sheer drops beneath us, took plenty of photos and decided to head back to the hut. However, a short distance below we spotted three other people walking with relative ease across the snowfield we had chosen to avoid, one of them quickly climbed up a rocky chute onto the ridge and headed off to the summit. This was motivation enough for Gordon and Michael to drop packs and follow, the snow was soft and kicking in gave good grip. A few minutes later we were standing on the top. Shortly after we were joined by two members of the other group, they had aborted their trip to the Makarora having got the wrong pass. The pathfinder turned out to be Rosie Rawlinson, dubbed Rosie Rock-rabbit by her husband, Frank. We drank in the views which included Mt Cook to the north and Mt Aspiring to the south, took lots of photos and scurried back to the hut. Getting to the summit was one of those brilliant moments to be remembered, and capped off the day nicely.

The rest of the group had lazed in the sun at the hut enjoying the sound of gushing waterfalls from Brewster glacier, good weather and, most of all, no sand flies. The hut was busy with a number of travellers needing to head back down the hill with no room at the inn. The sun sank to the west, tinting the scene a beautiful shade of pink, whilst in the east a darkening blue sky sat in contrast with the late sun-covered glacier.

Most hit the hay early with a thought of re-attempting Mount Armstrong in the morning. Unfortunately the weather chose not to play on the Sunday, with wind and showers rapidly moving in from the south. We returned to the mini-bus and picked up those who had walked Young Valley. The weather left us with little option but to head on home with a memorable stop at Blue Pools. A great weekend had with a relaxed group of folk and perfect weather on Saturday. Many thanks to Jill for leading the trip.

Adrian Chamberlain and Gordon Tocher for Jill McAliece, Matt Corbett, Alexander Wollert, Lisa Blum, Dave Chambers, Jenny Chamberlain, Alan Perry, Colette Nicholson and Michael Firmin.

TripList

CHIEF GUIDE COMMENT

April 10-13

NOTE: Change of location

Wilkin/Young via Gillespie Pass (M-C)

Antony Pettinger 473 7924

Early indications have led me to believe that transport for the club trip to Skippers will be difficult, given that 4WD vehicles are preferred. Rather than wait until the trip closes I have decided to now head for Makarora instead.

The Wilkin/Young circuit is a very popular trip, and rightly so as it traverses some spectacular country. DoC advertise this as a four day trip by utilising the hut network. We have four days as well, which allows time for a side-trip. In recent times we have used the jet-boat to get to Kerin Forks, which allows us to reach Siberia on the first day. A side trip from Siberia to Crucible Lake is recommended and makes a nice day trip from the Siberia Flats. The third day will be the climb over Gillespie Pass (around 1600m) and down into the South Young. If the Crucible option wasn't taken then there would be time to make an attempt to view the recently formed lake in the North Young. The last day sees the return to Makarora.

The jetboat option will add around \$75 per person to the trip. Trip list closes April 2.

April 25-26

Kea Basin / Esquilant Biv (Rees) (All)

James Harrison 027 464 3797

Although the days are getting shorter, early frosts can make late April great for tramping. This trip is to Kea Basin, a mountain basin in the Rees,

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tucked under Mt Earnslaw. Kea Basin is a moderate trip from Muddy Creek and is a pretty special place. There is a rock bivvy near the entrance, and good camping beyond.

James is looking at a fitter option, which goes on from Kea Basin to Esquilant Biv, located past Wright Col between Earnslaw and Leary at 2200m. An attempt may be made on Earnslaw, but this is only for people with the right fitness and experience.

This trip will close on April 16.

Committee Members 2008-2009

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
	Ralph Harvey	453 4330
Daytrip Convenor	Roy Ward	473 9518
Funding	Greg Powell	454 4828
Library	Wolfgang Gerber	453 1155
Clubrooms Officer	Terry Casey	454 4592
Website/Bushcraft Director	Antony Pettinger	473 7924
Publicity & Social Conven.	Tony Timperley	473 7257
	Ralph Harvey	453 4330
SAR Committee Liaison	Marina Hanger	476 2013
(outside committee)		
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 17/4/09, publication 30/4/09. 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

Mystery Trip (Cycle) 29 March

This day trip will start and finish from the club rooms. The destination/duration will be decided on the ability of the riders that turn up on the day.

Leader: Matt Corbett 487 6595

Gabriels Gully (Family) 5 April

The presence of gold in Otago had been known for some time before the first Gold rush occurred at Gabriel's Gully (May 1861) situated a short distance from what is now known as Lawrence. It's a relaxing 1.25 hour drive from Dunedin, so bring a picnic lunch, camera and enjoy the historical area. There is an hour's circuit walk around the gully suitable for all ages. For the people wanting a bit more, a trip to the dam is there for you. Families with younger children/grandchildren are very welcome as there is lots of exploring to be done. Carpool \$10. Transport leaves 9.00 am

Leader: Wolfgang Gerber 453 11 55

Please note that this trip can be combined with Jane Cloete's birthday bash, which starts on Friday 3rd April. See page 5 in the January/February Bulletin for details.

Easter 12 April

No day trip (Easter Sunday)

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South Rock and Pillar Range (M)
19 April

A chance to explore this (I suspect) little-visited part of the R&Ps. Most of us will know the area around Leaning Lodge and Big Hut but this trip explores the ridge some 10 kms further south. Here the map promises the rock formations of The Window and The Castle in the headwaters of the Loganburn, which should at least provide a sheltered place to have lunch if not superb views. The range is lower here but still expect a good workout on the ascent and quad-building descent. If it's very windy but fine, we'll do a low-altitude alternative in the area. Carpool cost is \$12.

Leader: Rob Seeley 472 7646

Mt Cargill (E)
26th April

We park at Bethunes Gully, walk up Mt Cargill, maybe go over to Buttars Peak and the Organ pipes if time permits, and then stroll back to the vehicles. Allow 4-5 hours, carpool \$5.

Leader: Alan Thomson 455 7878

Maungatua (M/F)
3 May

It is no longer possible to get permission for the Munro Road end of the Maungatua traverse, so we will be going up from the Woodside Glen end, through bush, then into tussock on to the top. We go along the top, which is covered in tussock and patches of swamp until we get to a trig station, then back along the top and down Graingers Road (some of this may be steep!). This is the reverse of the last trip. 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