

OTMC Bulletin

Bulletin Number 700, October 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.

October 1

Jono Squire and Alexis Belton will tell us about their trip from Martins Bay to Big Bay, through the Red Hills to the Olivine Ice Plateau. Then out through the Forgotten River Col, along the Olivine River to Alabaster Pass, over the Bryneira Range to the Pyke River, and down the Hollyford to finish.

October 8

Craig McKenzie is a member of the photographic Society in Dunedin. He will show and explain to us how to take good photos and then return in March or April to judge a photo competition for us. So after his talk you can be trying to get the perfect shot for the competition!

October 15

Dave McArthur talks about the other half of the European trip he did last year in Scotland and Sweden. He promises to bring less pictures than he had on his Switzerland talk...

October 22

BYO - Mt Cook, Motatapu taster, and West Matukituki.

October 29

OTMC member Pam McKelvey tells us what it is like to spend 9 days alone in a remote West Coast hut. (Rescheduled from August)

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 tonytimps@xtra.co.nz) or Ralph Harvey (phone 453 4330, email ralphh@ihug.co.nz)

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

With the arrival of spring, activity within the OTMC appears to be picking up. While the recent Annual Report recorded what was perhaps the leanest of tramping years for some time, there are now positive signs that we have passed the cyclic lull and are heading back to being a more active club. Following the cancellation of many trips in May to July we have had four successful weekend trips away in August alone. We have also now had our first spring-time trip away and trip numbers looking forward appear to be positive.

The AGM is now behind us and I thank those who were able to attend. I found the comments made particularly helpful – we need to remember what a great club this is already, and the initiatives the committee and the AGM have discussed will only add to this. Weekend trips were covered at the AGM following comments written in the Annual Report. The feeling of the meeting is that the OTMC should actively encourage members to explore further from the beaten track. That said, we are mindful that the club needs to provide tramping opportunities for all grades and abilities of members – something we will continue to do. Most weekend trips in the past and going forward have options for all grades. What this means is that rather than following the trip leader, the individual party leaders will plan their own trips. To this end we are looking at holding training nights for leadership and other skills regularly throughout the year. If there is a particular topic you would like covered, please let us know.

Finally, please remember to keep promoting our tramping skills course, starting on October 20. This course is suitable both for people completely new to tramping as well as for those who want to brush up on the basic skills. Are you confident in map and compass use, or choosing a good place to cross a river? These and many other skills will be taught and reinforced during the course, which culminates in a practical trip to the East Matukituki in mid-November where all the new skills will be put into practice.

Antony Pettinger
President

Membership

This is my first report so please forgive me if I have left anyone or anything out. For those of you who don't know me "Hi, I'm Jacqui" and I look forward to getting to know all of you as I am still quite new to the club. I will be at the club rooms every Thursday.

First up – thank you to all members who have paid their membership fees. Second - we would like to welcome Andy Cunningham, he has already proven a valuable person to have around.

The club also warmly welcomes Tania and Jason Henwood.

Have a great month tramping.

Jacqui Colbert

DoC is running an online survey on Silver Peaks usage. I am quite concerned that this is the start of a process which could lead to moves to radically alter the character of the Silver Peaks as we know them. Following the recent spate of SAR incidents, I suspect there is pressure from some corners to heavily mark the route to Jubilee and the route on to ABC and back along Rocky Ridge. Such moves would destroy the 'weekend wilderness' characteristics of the tops and, rather than enhance safety, would encourage the unwise and unwary to go further beyond their comfort zone.

I urge you to complete the survey at <http://www.doc.govt.nz/silverpeakssurvey> . (You also go in the draw for a copy of Antony Hamel's "*Dunedin Tramps and Trails*")

Can I suggest that in the free text fields you emphasize two points;

1. Untracked tops travel is a valid recreational opportunity that will be destroyed by signposting Rocky Ridge etc. It is vital that a full range of walking opportunities exist near Dunedin, from the Pineapple Track to Rocky Ridge and beyond.
2. Marking more tops routes will encourage inexperienced people to exceed their abilities more often and in a more spectacular manner.

It's 27 years since I wrote pieces in the OTMC entitled 'Save our Silver Peaks'. That's when we nearly lost the lot to pine forests. Let's make sure we don't lose what's left because a few fools don't read the signs, guidebooks and weather forecasts.

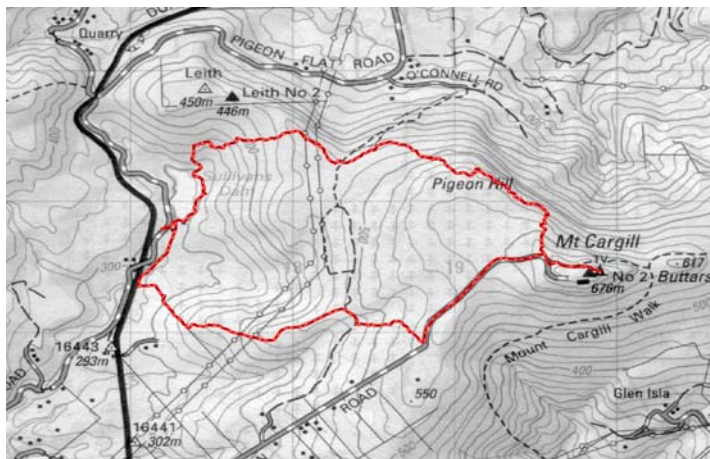
David Barnes

Trip Reports

Skyline Track 2 August 2009

The weather hadn't been too promising on Saturday night, so it was a relief to wake to cloudy skies and the promise of rain, rather than the rain itself. Still cold though, and wasting time making a flask of hot coffee meant I arrived at the club rooms just in time to see everyone else already piling into cars. Fortunately my frantic "WAIT FOR ME" was heard and we headed off to Sullivan's Dam to meet up with the others. 4 new faces included in the line-up, giving Jacqui a chance to practice her club marketing skills.

Janet was armed with a photocopy from Antony Hamel's 'Dunedin Tracks and Trails' and had a magnificent 4.5 hour tramp organized. We headed off



from Sullivan's Dam along the Waters of Leith, trying not to slip too much in the conditions. Then out onto open land close to the motorway. Followed a fence line through a logging area, across a stile and

up a steepish hill to the Three Peaks track. Stayed on this track through pine needled forest until reaching Cowan Road. Then along Cowan Road to the start of the Escarpment Track. As two of the 'new faces' hadn't been to Mt. Cargill, we made a diversion along the A H Reed Track to the look-out, with a stop for group photos.

Then the fun really started! Down the Escarpment track. Referred to as a 'tactile walking experience', the sign wasn't joking. We variously slogged through mud up to our knees, rock climbed, tree-hugged and board-walked with a short stop for lunch in a clearing. During the board walk section, we were treated to amazing birdsong and I saw a tui for the first time in ages! Off down to the Calvert Dell along the Cloud Forests of Leith track, checking out the telephone on the way.

And lastly back along the side of Sullivan's Dam, trying to get some of the mud off before clambering into the poor drivers' cars!

It was an experience not to be missed and thoroughly recommended. Many thanks to Janet Barclay for leading it.

Adrienne Dearnley for Janet Barclay, Gavin McArthur, Geoff Brookes, Paul Maurie (visiting from Chch), Jacqui Colbert, Michael Firmin, Peter George, Paul Raper, Marilyn Barkla and Kirsten Simonsen.



SnowCaving

August 1-2

The weather forecast and avalanche warning in the days before the trip had me worried about people pulling out, but instead we got 3 last minute confirmations and count-ins. Nineteen folk from Dunedin, Mosgiel, Invercargill and Herbert met up in Roxburgh at 9.30 for a hot chocolate, before seeing how our vehicles would get on, on the Waikaia Bush Road.

A bit of sliding around in deep ruts led to abandoning the lighter vehicles and the two 4WDs ferried people and packs to the place we often park, where this year there was a dog sled team heading out to have a run.

Landholder, Ash McGregor, had said there wasn't much snow in the gully we traditionally use, but we found it was adequate, which was good as it was out of the strong wind in there. The only issue was avoiding as much as we could the cornice that usually forms there. This year it was bigger, but we found it totally stable.

Three caves were dug. One was for 6 people with two living quarters (because they had hit the ground), one was for eight on a lovely big bench after the second entrance was filled in, and the other was a bog-standard cave fitting five. This year all the shovels worked well as the snow wasn't too icy, but the best headway seemed to have been made using small carpentry saws. The Mansons had learned about this technique from a YouTube clip.

Saturday's weather was perfect for the job, not too hot. In the evening a bit of a snow skiff passed through, then the moon came out and it was really beautiful. We got a visit from a SnowCat driver, who was intrigued about what we were up to.

Everybody had a warm, comfy night, with the people in the big cave talking about how rabbits sleep in a burrow, and how we had done everything we could to minimise risk.

There was only the chance of an earthquake to muck up our plans. Sunday's weather was a bit crappy, as forecast, so we stayed indoors as long as we could and then it was off the hill in a disorderly fashion and into Roxburgh for hot chips and more hot chocolates. Everyone said they'd had a great time. It was good to see so many young ones on a Club trip.

Thanks to Dave and Graham for the 4WDs, and Wilbert and Jason for bringing their cars.

Richard Pettinger for: Alison Johnston, Graham Johnston, Christina Johnston, Jasmin Johnston, Rosa Pettinger, Jean-Luc Payan, David Manson, Hamlin Manson, Fien Scheerlinck, Sue Taylor, Tracy Pettinger, Wilbert Stokman, Shelly Coleman, Roy Ward, Tania Henwood, Jason Henwood, Paul Cunliffe and Simon Carey-Smith.

Check out the pictures on:

<http://otmc.co.nz/archives/images/snowcaving2009/index.html>

Rongomai/Honeycomb

August 9

A small group of enthusiastic day walkers parked their car at Evansdale Glen and proceeded up the Careys Creek track to the Rongamai turnoff. We hauled our way up the Rongamai Ridge to the mountain road. It's quite a steep track and required a number of stops to get one's breath back. It was a glorious day, so we had lunch at the gravel pit on mountain road and took in the many fine vistas from that point. We proceeded down the Honeycomb track to the valley floor and followed the creek back to the car park. There had been little rain recently so the creek was low and the track not too muddy. On the way home we stopped at the Orakanui Visitors' Centre currently under construction and we were very impressed with the scale of the development and its fine view over Blueskin Bay. All in all an enjoyable day was had by all.

Present: Sue Taylor, Brent Dewar, Paul Cunliffe, Janet & Gavin MacArthur.

Winds and Wetas

Rock and Pillar Range 8-9 August

With the demise of the historic Leaning Lodge Hut due some time before the end of this century, the club decided to organize a trip, under the co-leadership of sexagenarians Ralph and Tony, (Why are these two always “co- this” and co-that?) to check out the hut and give a group some tramping experience in snow conditions. When our party of ten set off on Saturday morning, the weather was fine but with some menacing black clouds lowering over the tops; however, little did we know that it would not be precipitation that would be our problem – but gale force winds!



It normally takes about 3-4 hours to climb from Kilmory Station to Leaning Lodge. The route follows a zig-zag 4-wheel drive track for most of the way. It is a long climb even in good con-

ditions, but on this day the higher we got the stronger the wind became so

were we climbing against gravity but also pushing against extremely strong winds.

On a zig-zag track, logic should dictate that if you have the wind against you on the “zig”, you should have it behind you on the “zag” – but not on the Rock and Pillars! Here the wind gods conspire against you and have the gale force winds pushing you back on both the “zigs” and the “zags”.

This phenomenon also meant that we could not find a sheltered spot for “mornch” (a combination of morning tea and lunch – get it? - as by now it was about mid-day) so we had to wait until we reached the shelter of the small Botany Hut before a stop could be considered. It was obvious that we could not all fit into such a small hut, so five decided to press onto Leaning Lodge, “... only half-an-hour away” to quote David. But what a half-an-hour! One of the group was blown over, another found he couldn’t move when leaning both into the hill and into the wind, and another had his cap blown off. The stress was beginning to tell on Co-Leader Tony as memories of the “Death Zone” came to haunt him whilst he tried to make sure his small flock stayed together. Luckily the wind eased as they turned off the main track towards Leaning Lodge. We were now in quite hard snow and therefore decided to put on our crampons. David had a flash pair of snow shoes which he was able to put on very quickly, then took off at great speed and was already ensconced in the best bunk in the hut by the time the rest of us arrived.

And what of the others being cared for by Co-Leader Ralph? He and Andy were the perfect English gentlemen as they carried their packs beyond the Botany Hut, dumped them, then returned to the hut and offered to carry the packs of Jill and Jacqui. (Poor Sebastian would have to carry his own!) However, being staunch Kiwi women, the two “Js” politely declined, which was probably a wise decision as the extra weight probably prevented them from being blown away as they climbed higher. Nevertheless, the gentlemen’s assistance in the conditions was appreciated.

As predicted, it was very cold inside Leaning Lodge so no layers were discarded; but it did not take long for it to start warming up as we lit cookers

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and began to melt snow in the billies. (Unfortunately we could not locate the running water supply.) Soon, we all sat snuggled together in the small room, and with our hands wrapped around hot mugs of tea, it all became very cosy as we enjoyed “luafter” (lunch and afternoon tea combined – get it?)

But there are always some masochists who cannot endure comfort for more than five minutes! Under the pretence of having to go out and do a recce, Co-Leaders Ralph and Tony, accompanied by fellow claustrophobes Andy and Richard, went out into wind and snow uttering the immortal words: “We shall be gone some time.” (apologies to Captain Oates). They climbed to the summit plateau; but with the wind estimated at “half Death Zone” strength by full-strength Death Zone survivor Ralph, they turned to the shelter of Castle Rock, before descending to return to Leaning Lodge. Like the weather, we were all rather gloomy, as it seemed that if conditions remained the same our only option for Sunday would be to go back out the way we came in.



Happily, Sunday dawned cloudless and with much lighter winds, so, with our gloom lifted also, we decided to head over the tops to Big Hut. As we began our climb behind the hut, Jacqui stumbled into a hole - and

what did she find there? The running water we had unsuccessfully searched for the evening before! The rest of the climb was uneventful; but when we reached the summit plateau the views were well worth the effort: the whole of Otago was laid out before us, bordered by the Lammerlaw, Remarkable, Hawkdun, Kakanui, and Silver Peaks Ranges.

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As we headed across the plateau towards groups of schist tors, some of our group began to feel uneasy as they knew we were heading into the territory of the Giant Rock and Pillar Tramping Weta. This unique species of weta preys upon unwary trampers when they go behind a rock to relieve themselves. It clamps its large jaws on exposed body parts (male and female) thus causing both physical and psychological trauma. Victims usually need extensive counselling. Luckily one of these dastardly creatures was spotted on a rock before anyone fell prey to its jaws. It took all ten of us, wielding our ice-axes and crampons, to drive this large, ugly creature away. If, dear reader, you doubt our word that this giant weta exists, see the accompanying photo and remember that the camera does not lie (or does it?).

After this close encounter, we cramponed quickly to Big Hut where we replenished our courage with food and drink. The ensuing descent to road level is unrelenting, so it was with aching thighs and knees that we finally arrived at the carpark. Nevertheless, we all had a feeling of satisfaction and accomplishment: good weather, clear skies, beautiful views, crunchy snow, great company; and we managed to fight off a giant weta!

Tony Timperley for: Co-Leader Ralph Harvey, David Barnes, Andy Cunningham, Jacqui Colbert, Gene Dyett, Sebastian, Richard Forbes, Jill McAliece, and Sam Patrick.

(With apologies to the Hemideina maori or Mountain Stone Weta, a truly marvellous insect which, because its blood has anti-freeze properties, can survive extreme snow conditions.)



Trip list

CHIEF GUIDE COMMENT

The current trip card will be finished soon which means that trips for the summer tramping season are being organised now. We have compiled a list of destinations for the weekend trips and are now working on allocating leaders to them. Weekend trip leadership has relied on a small group of leaders over the past few years and I am keen to expand the number of club members leading the weekend trips. Most of the work is done in the week before the trip (a weekend trip leader doesn't necessarily need to lead a party – use delegation!) and the OTMC have plenty of advice and material available to support our leaders. The proposed trip list is on the club website – if you are keen to lead a trip talk to Antony.

October 24/26 (Labour Weekend)
Macetown and environs (All)
Antony Pettinger 473-7924

Gold was discovered in the Arrow River as early as 1862, and soon Arrowtown (formerly Fox's) and Macetown became the scene of intensive mining. As well as the miners there were the support industries as well, which formed the township of Macetown.

The first town consisted of calico tents. As the diggings became more permanent, so to did the town. The town was more or less self-contained, with a school, post office, butchers, bakers, and the hotels. There were (and still are) two main routes into Macetown; one following the Arrow River, the other over Big Hill. Both routes remain accessible today. There is a 4WD track all the way from Arrowtown to Macetown via the river, whilst the Big Hill track provides some great views.

The town is now deserted, and very few buildings remain, although there are many tall trees left as a legacy to the hardy people who lived in the harsh climate. At one time there were around 1700 miners working the Arrow River and the Twelve Mile (Macetown). Mining more or less stopped in the 1920's, leaving Macetown as a ghost town. There are two buildings

left standing, including the bakehouse, Needham's cottage. These two have had their exteriors faithfully restored to their original condition. There are no huts as such at Macetown, so camping is the order of the day. Most likely we will camp in the Rich Burn valley, away from the 4WD people who often frequent the main township area during long weekends. The route up the Arrow River features 24 numbered points, with a booklet available to explain the history at each point (some numbered pegs may now be missing). The alternate journey over Big Hill is rewarding in its view of Macetown, Advance Peak, Coronet Creek, the Wakatipu Basin, as well as the Remarkables. Once in Macetown there will be options to explore the remains of this interesting place, as well as having a go at climbing Advance Peak for some excellent views.

Trip list closes October 15.

November 7/8

Kay Creek / Scott Creek (other Caples options available) (All)

Antony Pettinger 473-7924

This trip is a classic one from the Greenstone car park, up the Caples as far as the Upper Caples Hut, then up Kay Creek to a saddle that connects to Scott Creek. The track up the Caples is of a good standard, as is the track up Kay Creek (Death Valley) derelict hut. Unfortunately Kay Creek was devastated in the floods of 1994 and where there used to be delightful grassy flats there are now extensive gravel beds. The track ends at the old hut and from here it is a relatively simple task of following the creek and grassy slopes to the saddle, where we will camp. There is time on Sunday morning to explore the area around the saddle before descending down Scott Creek, which is tracked through the bush. We end up on the road to the Routeburn. A great trip combining track, off-track and navigation skills.

If this doesn't suit then another nice option would be to walk into Upper Caples and perhaps head up to McKellar Saddle - plenty of daylight at this time of year.

The trip list will close October 29.

Introducing committee member Gene Dyett

For this year I will be taking care of the clubrooms i.e. maintenance matters plus the cleaning roster. Also helping Ralph Harvey with gear hire.

By the end of October I would like at least 3 other people to help me on the cleaning of the club rooms. Once a month , three times a year.

I am married with 4 children; have enjoyed tramping and the outdoors since 5 or 6 years old so that's almost 42years. Like bike riding and have done the rail-trial three times. Photography is a big passion. Have built my own 6 by 10 model rail-way. A bit of sailing and travel. Many years community work and scouting. Collecting for many community groups and training in Civil Defence. A warden at Waiora Scout camp; received the highest award in scouting - the Queen's Scout Award at Government House.

Many thanks Gene

E-mail m.gdyett@xtra.co.nz

!!!! New !!!! Committee Members 2009-2010

President	Antony Pettinger	473 7924
Vice President/Publicity	Greg Powell	454 4828
Secretary	Jill McAliece	455 6740
Treasurer	Ann Burton	476 2360
Chief Guide/Transport	Antony Pettinger	473 7924
Membership Secretary	Jacqui Colbert	471 7339
Visitor Liaison	Richard Forbes	453 1327
Gear Hire/Clubrooms	Gene Dyett	455 7465
Daytrip Convenor	Roy Ward	473 9518
Website/Bushcraft Director	Antony Pettinger	473 7924
Social Convener	Tony Timperley	473 7257
Social Convener/Gear Hire	Ralph Harvey	453 4330
SAR Committee Liaison	Marina Hanger	476 2013
(outside committee)		
Library/Publicity	Wolfgang Gerber	453 1155
Bulletin Editor	Adrienne Dearnley	455 5801
Conservation/Advocacy	David Barnes	454 4492
SAR Contact	Teresa Blondell	477 4987

Contributions (limit of 1000 words) are welcome for the November Bulletin, deadline is 16/10/09, publication 29/10/09. You can submit material by email to "adearnley@actrix.co.nz"; or post handwritten/typed copy or a CD to Adrienne Dearnley, 60 Musselburgh Rise, Dunedin. Or phone me! Thanks.

DAYTRIPS

October 4

Unexplored Silver Peaks [F/E] – Richard Pettinger (487 9488)

This day trip could end up anywhere. We will tramp in an area nobody on the trip has been before. Who knows what we'll find? There may be little in the way of tracks or other signs of civilisation, so a reasonable level of fitness and insanity is required.

October 11

Abbotsford Hill / Wingatui Tunnel [E] - Alan Scurr (489 5538)

This is a short walk to allow people to see the old Wingatui Tunnel. We drive up Taieri Road to Halfway Bush/Wingatui Road. Park up and walk through rough farmland to Abbotsford Hill and the top of the Lee Stream pipeline. Then down through farmland and forestry to find the entrance of the old Wingatui Tunnel. After lunch on the Chain Hills, we head up the Wingatui Road to our cars. Should be back to the club rooms by 2-2:30pm. (Trip cost \$4)

October 18

Taieri Aquaduct [M] - Alan Thomson (455 7878)

This trip will start from Taioma Road with a stroll through the forest and then a wee drop (quite steep) down to the Aquaduct. Then maybe a climb up Mt Hyde, or a walk upstream to practise your river crossing technique near where Mullocky Creek joins the Taieri. This is an ideal trip for those who don't know what an Aquaduct looks like, or for those who want to find out what contour lines close together on a map really mean. (Trip cost \$10.00)

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October 25
No Day Trip (Labour Weekend)

November 1
Spiers Road/Ben Rudd's/Rhododendron Dell/Davies Track
Roy Ward (473 9518)

An easy wander over Flagstaff by tracks not often used. This trip is intended to coincide with a picnic at Ben Rudd's hut site put on by the property's management trust. We'll go up from Halfway Bush, and come back down at Glenleith. We'll ferry a car to the end so we can be fully flexible and it will be very nice, as usual.

Wanted: Day Trip Leaders

Is there some area that you have local knowledge about that could make a good trip? Somewhere you'd particularly like to go? Have you enjoyed some of the day trips and want to help keep the day trip programme a success? There's still a space for you on the summer day trip programme!

Ideally it's great to have people willing to lead a trip with a trip idea in mind, but I'm also very interested in leaders who don't as I can help you pick something suitable. Or trip ideas, particularly places we haven't been before (or for a while), or where you have some particular knowledge. Even if you've not led a day trip before, here's your chance to get some help developing a new skill (on the job training provided), so there's no excuse - contact me now!

Roy Ward (Day Trip Convenor)
Ph: 473-9518 or e-mail royward770@actrix.co.nz