

**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.



Enjoying the view after the hard work.
The OTMC on Cascade Saddle (February 2012)

Committee Members 2011/12

President	Antony Pettinger	473 7924
Vice President	Richard Forbes	453 1327
Secretary	Peter Stevenson	454 4148
Treasurer	Tina Anderson	473 7015
Chief Guide/Transport	Antony Pettinger	473 7924
Membership Secretary	Richard Forbes	453 1327
Bulletin Editor	Debbie Pettinger	473 7924
Clubrooms/Gear Hire	Sam Patrick	487 6066
Clubrooms/Gear Hire	Gene Dyett	455 7465
Daytrip Convenor	Wayne Hodgkinson	473 0950
Website/Bushcraft Director	Antony Pettinger	473 7924
Social Convener	Tony Timperley	473 7257
Social Convener	Ian Woodford	455 5900
Conservation/Advocacy	David Barnes	454 4492

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

The early months of the year are always the busiest time for the OTMC, and this year is 'business as usual'. Weekend trip numbers have been variable, although we achieved what we set out to do on the Matukituki – Cascade Saddle – Rees cross-over trip. In the end we had two parties of nine heading out from their respective road-ends to enjoy this wonderful trip. In a repeat of 2007, we were lucky to have four days of fine weather (except for a short shower of rain for the groups in the Rees on the last night). Side trips were made to the head of Snowy Creek below the Tyndall Glacier, as well as to the 2100m ridgeline above Rees Saddle for a great view of Lochnagar a 1000m below. Speaking for the Rees – Matukituki direction, I was impressed in the way everyone looked out for one another (especially going down Cascade Saddle) and kept together – thanks for this and for making the trip truly enjoyable. There will be club night on this trip on March 22, presented by four participants of Bushcraft 2011.

As I said last month, the OTMC was one of the hundreds who submitted on the Dart Passage proposal for the Routeburn / Hollyford tunnel. Our next major submission will be on the Riverstone Monorail proposal from Mavora to Te Anau Downs. We can only submit on the monorail section through DoC lands – we are against this proposal. We are not anti-tourism, rather we need to remember that it is through organisations such as the OTMC that we currently have the conservation lands that we now enjoy. We have fought for decades to protect and expand our National Parks, Conservation Parks and other lands. If it was worth fighting for originally, then surely we should continue to protect what we have for future generations. The Kiwiburn in particular is an ideal place for families, with really easy access – the proposed monorail will pass the current Kiwiburn Hut (which would be relocated upstream), destroying this area as a tramping destination. The Dunton area in the Upukerora River is another area that would be destroyed by this proposal. Advocacy and consultation remains an important function of the tramping club – the committee welcome any comments or suggestions from members about the direction we are taking.

The open day on February 25 was a total success, surpassing the attendance from 2011. I am writing this as the walk up the Leith Saddle Track is underway – judging by the weather there is a good

likelihood that we will have attracted in excess of 100 people to our open weekend. This represents more than a year's worth of visitors to our weekly meetings, so is an excellent result. Of course, the weekend wouldn't happen without the commitment of many members. The committee sincerely appreciate the assistance from members who helped advertise the weekend and assisted out over the weekend. We already have a decent number of people enrolled for Bushcraft, with many others interested. This can only be good for the future of the OTMC.

Finally, I would like to acknowledge Debbie Pettinger and Ralph Harvey for taking control of the social programme, especially since Tony Timperley has been attending to family matters in England. Thanks to members who have offered to talk, or have passed on ideas - we currently have the programme filled into early-mid May, which is great.

Antony Pettinger
President

Membership

Club membership now stands at 188

Members joined during last month

- Jo Baillie (who has rejoined the club)
- Susan Lilley
- Steph McLaughlin

Welcome to the club and happy tramping.

Please remember to bring \$1 along to club nights to help pay for the clubrooms and supper. This can be left in the hat on the table as you come in.

Richard Forbes
OTMC Membership Secretary

Thank you to the following outdoor shops who advertised our open day and Bushcraft course.

- Centre Fire McCarthy's
- Macpac
- Bivouac
- R&R Sports
- Mountain Designs

Please support these business when shopping for new tramping equipment.

Trip Reports

Sunday 10th June Day Trip

Anchors and Cows:

Wales Point to Deborah Bay

Wow, one impressive long pine needle slide of a driveway straight up a spur between Sawyers Bay and Port Chalmers brought us to the elevated forest hidden enclave of Kim and Bill Currie's off grid tilt slab concrete house. One room wide the north facing windows let sun right to the south wall of the house. We inspected their Tri-way Invercargill built timber boiler used for under floor heating and once per week hot water luxury. Impressively long logs were fed vertically with a thermostatically controlled fan controlling the burning at the base. A chimney sweep wouldn't mark you with shaking his hand after cleaning this chimney.

Gordon had come pre-armed with a sliced foam tube and a curious contraption. The next destination was a horse paddock overlooking Sawyers Bay and it turned out that these aids were to help those of us who wouldn't do well in the steeple chase- especially over electric fences. Carrots were fed to horses, while my thoughts turned to the distant skewbald who I had watch transform from a dangerous rearing bucking bronco, with the talented skill of a local 13 year old and her horse whisperer guide, into a reasonably well mannered mount. After a brief (read "cold wind") group photo overlooking Port Chalmers we marvelled at two rock tors, making my fingers twitch with the longing to be climbing again. The narrow Reynoldstown Road lead us to an oh so quaint rural scene, of a straw-bale house with a single roof curving gently over little roof windows. Below us Merrel MacNeille was dressed in a bright red apron, busy sweeping down lime in the milking shed (an alternative to using water for his small organic jersey herd), while Alex was helping 2 young children prepare a sweet natured pony for riding.

Dropping down through a paddock towards Deborah Bay elevenes were called for allowing a pee stop not only for people but Buddy the terrier who joined us and decided to mark this tramping party with a precise aim at Ralph's pack. Thus claimed he then proceeded to follow us to the end of the walk. He taught us that possums can squeal like pigs: catching a young one

near the railway we were now following. Gordon had the pluck to claim the fur during lunch that followed our admiration of the Mihiwaka Rail Tunnel. ("Mihiwaka" perhaps named I have read after a Mrs Walker who ran a tea booth for railworkers). Its stone entrance framed a tiny spot of light in the distance. The minute size of the far exit emphasizing that this was a huge block for Dunedin's connection north - solved with... well lots of brick walling.

Leaving our warm sunny bush-gully viewed railway lunch-bank we followed a benched track through regen cut above a zigzag where Gordon said donkeys used to pull double ended drays/trams: the donkeys rehitched from end to end at each hairpin bend as they brought supplies to the brickworks. It is hard to resist the image of two donkeys making a long eared braying push-me-pull-you. We stumbled around somewhat stonewalled as to the whereabouts of the brickworks until we realised we had already been bumbling over piles of bricks. Gordon told us that the close location of the brickworks to the tunnel had enabled an unexpectedly early completion date requiring a substantial bonus for the contractor creating considerable consternation to the council - who did not initially honour the contract. A pipe gravitated us down "cold creek" (supply to many early ships to the port at 25 cents per litre equivalent) to the harbour and site of the anti Russian torpedo boat launching site.

Many thanks for the organisation and entertainment Gordon and to landowners for sharing their land and a little of their lives with us.

Chris Spencer, Michelle McGrath, Lucy Jones, Janet & Russell Barclay, Ben Scott, Jeremy Thomas, Ralph Harvey, Bronwyn Strang, Jan Burch, Tina Anderson, Gavin McArthur, Gordon Tocher (Leader) Anna Walls (Scribe)

Tongariro Northern Circuit

November 2011

I last visited Tongariro National Park over twenty years ago. Poor weather limited us to day trips below the cloud line, but that was enough to show me that this was a landscape unlike anything we have in the south. I wanted to go back, but it's taken till now to fulfil that wish.

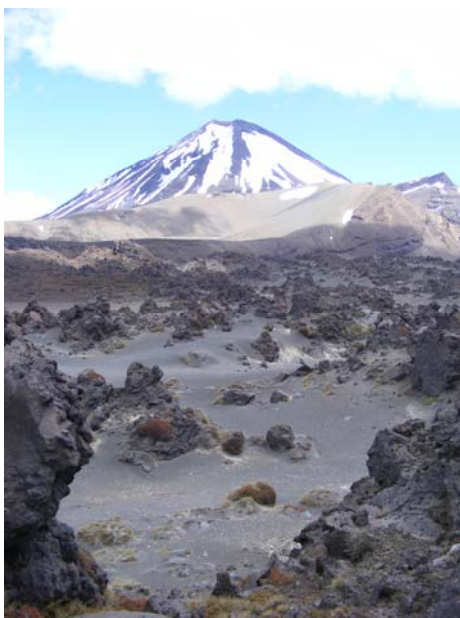
I decided that the Tongariro Northern Circuit, the park's Great Walk would provide a good introduction to the area. After driving up from Wellington on Friday night, I had a twenty minute stroll in fine conditions in to Mangatepopo Hut. The next morning, conditions were murky, so I put off my plan for an early start in the hope of a clearance. When the fog lifted a little, I was surprised to see that a skiff of fresh snow had fallen overnight. That might add some interest, I thought.

By the time I was ready to go, it was raining. However, ten minutes later I

was shedding the parka. The hut is on a short side track, and when I reached the main track, I realised that the first bus load of day trippers had already arrived. This leg of the trip was to include the famed Tongariro Alpine Crossing, widely regarded (particularly by people who haven't been on Ben Lomond) as the best one day walk in the country. Fame equals crowds.

As I made my way up the Mangatepopo valley, I was admiring the interesting 'young' volcanic rocks when the cloud suddenly parted and revealed the spectacular conical form of Mt Ngauruhoe. I'm told it featured in one of Peter Jackson's movies. (Meet the Feebles?). This mountain was to be my companion for the whole trip, as the circuit goes around Mt Ngauruhoe, not Mt Tongariro.

From the head of the valley, where a crowd of tourists was queuing for the last loo for several hours, I climbed up a cirque-like head wall and into the



South Crater. If I'd wanted to climb Mt Ngauruhoe, this would be my turn-off point. But steepness, remnant snow, poor visibility and high winds were all off-putting. It can wait for a late summer trip when I'm not on my own. Instead, I crossed the bleak expanse of the crater and made the sharp climb to the Mt Tongariro turnoff. By now the wind had really got up. I put on lots more clothes and put some gear in a day pack. The summit didn't look far, and there was only a little over 100 metres height to gain. However, half way there, there was a steep slope covered in old icy snow overlayed with freshly fallen snow. It soon became apparent that the consequences of striking awk-

wardly-sloped icy snow under the soft stuff, particularly on the descent, were not worth the risk. A few people did continue. I figured they either had better skills, more courage or absolutely no understanding of the conditions – probably some were in each category.

Returning to the main track, I encountered the greatest feeling of crowding I've ever felt in the New Zealand outdoors. I'm sure that I was walking in amongst several busloads of day trippers. A short ascent took me to the

Crossing's high point above Red Crater, with spectacular views down the sharp descent to the sulphurous Emerald Lakes. This marked my departure from the crowds, as I descended from here into the desolate Oturere Valley. In an hour I was at Oturere Hut, eating lunch out of the wind and ruing the inflexible booking system that left me no choice but a long afternoon in the hut. As the afternoon went on, more trampers arrived from both directions and eventually the hut was full.

There were some early risers in the morning, so it made sense to get up and get moving. A party of one doesn't have the inertia that big groups have, so I found myself on the track shortly after 7am. I was walking into a sharp sou' westerly as I passed through the moonscape that defines the eastern side of the park. Ruapehu dominated the horizon. A couple of hours saw me passing the recently decommissioned Waihohonu hut and arriving at its over-the-top replacement. After a brief rest, I turned to the east, stopping briefly at the original Waihohonu hut, built in 1904 for tourists and considered to be New Zealand's oldest recreational hut.

I'd now left the desert environment and was passing through gentle red tussock slopes somewhat reminiscent of the Mararoa valley. After lunch at Lower Tama Lake, an old volcanic vent, I crossed a low saddle and headed towards Whakapapa village on a hard-surfaced tourist track. As I neared the village and



contemplated another early finish as well as the poor forecast for the next day, I decided to do tomorrow's short walk today. This involved an undulating track known locally as the Ditch which took me back to my car at the Mangatepopo valley and meant I'd had a 9 hour, 35km day.

This is a trip I'd recommend, despite the hordes on the crossing. The contrast to what we're used to in the south is amazing, and warrants the Great Walk status. It's a practical two day trip, and more even days can be achieved either with a night at Waihohonu if you start at Mangatepopo or a night at Oturere if you start at Whakapapa.

David Barnes

TripList

CHIEF GUIDE COMMENT

24-25 March

Blue Mountains & Dusky Forest [E-M]

Jane Cloete ph. 467 2328

Note that this trip will leave from the Clubrooms at 7.30am sharp on Saturday 24th. We'll drive to West Otago – about 1½-2 hours – to Black Gully. Depending on numbers/desires we could either have 2 groups walking the Blue Mountain Track in different directions, or we could all walk south-to-north. Some vehicle shuffling will be needed.

The track is quite good but you must be able to manage 7+ hours of tramping. If you want a less energetic day, you could just walk up to the tops from Black Gully and enjoy the views before returning down the way you came. Our night stop is in the Black Gully camping ground – Otago's best-kept secret – in cabins or tents. Sunday will see us exploring the Dusky Forest by kind permission of Earnslaw One Forests, hopefully getting up to the very top to admire the view. Fairly easy underfoot and we should be able to get back to Dunedin by about 5pm.

Cost \$15 to the driver of your vehicle, plus camping ground fees (Cabins \$10 per person, tent sites \$10 each)

Trip List closes March 15

April 6-9 (Easter 4 Day)

Ruataniwha Conservation Park (Ohau Valleys) (M-C)

Richard Forbes 453-1327

This trip offers trips from Freehold Creek right to the head of the Hopkins, in the Lake Ohau area. An option that is definitely a four-day option is to travel right to the head of the Hopkins below the Southern Alps. Terminating in the Richardson Glacier, the Hopkins is a big valley, although this 30km tramp ris-

es only 500m or so between the road-end and the Richardson biv. There are several small huts en-route, and at times either side of the Hopkins can be used (although this depends on river-flow).

If the Hopkins doesn't appeal, there are several other trips that can be undertaken, maybe a couple of two-day trips. Freehold Creek offers easy access to the Ohau Range and Lake Dumb Bell – the club did a three day trip here in 2010 – this could easily be extended to four days with two day trips from a Freehold Creek base camp. The Maitland Valley is rarely visited, can be used to link up with Freehold Creek (the Maitland requires land-owner permission). The Temple offers a classic round trip of the two branches via Gunsight Pass (a two day trip). A third day could be spent visiting the head of the Ahuriri from the South Temple. Another possible day trip from the South Temple would be towards Mt. Maitland (2249m).

The Huxley is popular, and offers great opportunities to base-camp and explore both the South Huxley, North Huxley and Broderick Pass.

Easter is often the dividing trip between the summer and winter programmes, come along and make the most of this time of year.

Maps: (NZ Topo50) BZ14 (Mount Barth), BY14 (Mount Ward), BY15 (Birch Hill – for head of Hopkins)

Trip list closes: March 29

Change to DoC Intentions System

DoC are currently in the process of removing the intention form / sign-in/out procedure from visitor centres, and are now advocating people heading for the outdoors use a newly created electronic system.

AdventureSmart is a relatively new organisation that has been developed by New Zealand's outdoor safety organisations, including the New Zealand Police, DoC, FMC & LandSAR. The organisation is managed by the Mountain Safety Council.

People heading away on trips can use the site to fill out all the relevant details, which are then emailed or sent to a 'trusted person'. This system is identical to the primary OTMC method of appointing a SAR contact for all trips, which we have used with success for many years.

We will retain the existing system for OTMC trips (i.e. a reliable person is appointed the SAR contact, and all members on the trip notified of this person). The trip leader can either get the SAR list to the contact themselves, or use the AdventureSmart website to relay the information. As always, it is important to notify your SAR contact / trusted person when you arrive home.

The OTMC encourage all members undertaking private trips to use the AdventureSmart site – there is also a lot of useful safety information available for many different outdoor activities.

Visit the site at: adventuresmart.org.nz

DAYTRIPS

4 March

Rustlers Ridge/Burns Track/Swampy Summit [M]

Wayne Hodgkinson ph. 473 0950

A moderate trip to follow the Open Weekend, and a good introduction to the wider area including the Silver Peaks. A mixture of bush, tussocks, and open tops. After meeting at the clubrooms we will head off to the top of the Northern Motorway. We start by following along the Pipeline that supplies water to Sullivans Dam (contouring around the hill), before we start to climb up Rustlers Ridge and onto Burns Saddle. From here we have a number of options, but will plan to continue along Burns Track to Swampy Ridge (the route from Swampy to Hightop) at the edge of the Silver Peaks. From here there is a steady climb onto Swampy for some brilliant views, where the going gets easier as we continue along the road past various navigation aids that can be seen from Dunedin. Then it's all down hill to the cars via Leith Saddle Track. Should be about 3 ½ to 4 hours.

Please bring \$5 for drivers

11 March

Mystery Destination [M]

This trip has had a change of leader, more details on destination and leader to will be advertised on the email list. To join the email list and the OTMC Facebook page just follow the links on the OTMC website 'www.otmc.co.nz'

18 March

Clutha River/Wangaloa [M]

Kathy Woodrow ph. 455 4673

After meeting at the clubroom we will head off to the Wangaloa Domain via Toko Mouth which will give you a chance to see the coast. there we will leave a car and continue down to a spot about 1km from the mouth where we will start the walk. We will head south along the coast to the north side of the Matau branch mouth. I believe that low tide is about mid morning so hopefully we will be able to see coal rocks in the surf, otherwise there will be coal pebbles on the beach. From the mouth we will head north to the Wangola Domain passing a couple of rocky places. You will need water and footwear suitable for a sandy beach with a couple of rocky parts. Keen people could walk a couple of extra kilometres to Washpool Creek while the car(s) are sorted out. If there is time on the way we could stop at a spot just short of Measly Beach where there are some fossils. We should be back sometime between 3 and 5 pm.

25 March
Flagstaff Navigation Day [M]
Antony Pettinger ph. 473 7924

As part of the OTMC 2012 Bushcraft course we are holding a practical navigation day on Flagstaff. The day will consist of a short warm-up 'find the marker' course using a map and compass, followed by the main course, where we will be using the full Topo50 map with compass to navigate around a pre-set course. Club members who wish to brush up on map and compass skills are welcome to join in—it would be a good idea to attend the theory session at the BC course on March 20 in the clubrooms from 7pm. Otherwise, meet at the Bullring (Whare Flat Rd, Pineapple Track at 9.30am)

25 March
Tunnel Beach/Secret Places [M]
Graham Loh ph. 487 6125

Tunnel Beach is an easy walk to an interesting beach and headland. Graham has a different view of Tunnel Beach and he will show the secret places where he has installed 'houses' for the Prions who nest in the sandstone cliffs surrounding the beach. Learn more about these birds, their habitat and how Graham installed these 'houses' in a place not often seen.

1 April
Orokonui Fence [E]
Alan Thomson ph. 455 7878

This is a walk around the fence surrounding the 307 hectare Orokonui Eco sanctuary. The fence was completed in 2007 and since then pests have been eradicated, a visitor centre has been built and birds and other at risk wildlife have been introduced.

We will leave our cars at the Visitor's centre, near the junction of Blueskin and Moponui Roads. There is one steep section at the northern end of the fence but in general the 3 to 4 hour walk is very easy as it follows the wide gravelled perimeter track. There is plenty to see: great views, many birds, plus fence posts named after benefactors. Since the walk ends at the visitor centre, good coffee is an option before heading for home.

Another option, provided we are ready to do it by 3.30pm, is freedom walking inside the fence (this will incur a small fee).

Trip cost is \$6.00

Thursday Night Programme

1 March

BYO—Bring your own photos. If you've recently been out in the hills, please bring along some photos to show, including day trips, weekend trips and private trips.

8 March

For those of you that missed it on TV come along and see the episode of I Shouldn't Be Alive "Blood on the Mountain"

Matthew Briggs (33) survived 8 days in the bush after injuring himself in a fall at the head of the Landsborough in the Southern Alps. After he realises that his SAR contact has let him down he drags himself through remote mountains, scrub and bush for two days with his dog to a hut where he was found by two hunters who raise the alarm.

15 March

Mary Wheeler, Galapagos of the Antarctic? A photographic account of a recent short visit to some of the Sub-Antarctic islands of New Zealand—the Snares, Enderby, Auckland and Campbell Islands, concentrating mainly on their unique biology.

22 March

Cascade Saddle trip presented by Richelle, Peter, Krzysztof (Chris) and Greg (all from Bushcraft 2011)

29 March

Up, Down and Across Southern Africa—Krzysztof and his wife Gemma will share their experience of traveling across Southern Africa in 2010 - from mountains of Western Cape, through dunes of Namibia and encounters with wildlife to Victoria Falls. Some great tracks were accomplished but most of the time was spend on the road in South Africa, Suazi, Botswana, Namibia and Zimbabwe.

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 to-nytimps@xtra.co.nz) or Ian Woodford (phone 455 5900) email ijwoody@clear.net.nz

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