

OTMC TRIP REPORTS

1997

Sourced from the 1997 OTMC Bulletins



CONTENTS

West Matukituki.....	3
The Mighty Marathon	5
Mt. Titiroa Traverse	8
Matiri Plateau, Kahurangi National Park.....	10
Mt Watkin.....	13
Trotters Gorge.....	15
Arthurs Pass / Hawdon – Edwards Circuit.....	17
Darren Traverse	20
Emily Pass and Fraser Creek	23
Mind Over Marathon.....	27
Maungatua – A Breeze Of A Traverse.....	29
Catlins River Track.....	30
Stony Peak, Wairuna	32
Greenstone Bushcraft Weekend (Scott/Kay/Caples Circuit)	33
Routeburn / Rockburn	38
Clubrooms Workparty	39
Monowai – Green Lake	40
ANZAC Weekend - Rockburn.....	42
Mt Somers	47
SAREX (Search and Rescue Exercise)	49
Three Gents But No Keas, A Toast To The Queen	50
Silver Peaks For Masochists.....	53
Yellow Ridge – Rocky Ridge – Green Ridge.....	55
Wangaloa Area.....	56

Snow On 25 Mile Spur	57
Alford Forest (Mt Somers).....	59
Bethunes Gully / Grahams Bush	61
Winter Kepler.....	63
Destination Oamaru – Planet Earth.....	65
A SHort Account Of Where We Went (Otago Peninsula)	66
A Non-Trivial Day Trip On The Peninsula with David Barnes.....	68
Mountaincraft Instructors Course	70
Routeburn Climbing Weekend	72
Snowcraft 1997 – Snow Two	76
Snowcraft 1997 – Snow Three.....	78
Mistake Creek – Hut Creek.....	79
Oreti Bridge – Ashton Hut.....	82
Timaru Creek – Dingle Peak.....	84
The Hump – Port Craig	86
Maungatua Traverse.....	88
Macetown '97.....	89
Rock And Pillars Day Trip (1).....	92
Rock And Pillars Day Trip (2).....	94
OTMC Committee (1997-98).....	96
OTMC Trip Programme 1997.....	97
OTMC Bulletin Covers (February to May).....	99
OTMC Bulletin Covers (June to September)	100
OTMC Bulletin Covers (October to December)	101

Cover Photo: Trampers on the Winterslow Range, looking towards the Mt Somers Range
(PHOTO Antony Pettinger)

WEST MATUKITUKI

December 7-8, 1997

Author: Beverley McGowan

Published in Bulletin 562, February 1997

The planned trip of going over Cascade Saddle had to be changed due to the closure of the area because of snow and the fitness and experience of members in the party. We had an uneventful drive out to Wanaka and, after signing in at DoC, headed out to the Matukituki Valley. The other group doing the river crossing stopped to camp at a hay shed, while we continued on through many fords to the road end to camp there.



West Matukituki Valley from Liverpool Hut track (PHOTO Antony Pettinger)

We were up and away early, heading up the West Matukituki river valley and into a brilliant sunny day. It certainly is a very spectacular area with the steep-sided hills on either side, old snow still "hanging" ready to fall, and further up, Mt Aspiring. We had lunch on the park boundary near Aspiring Hut, amidst the sandflies, then continued on to camp at Pearl Flat. The other two had had enough by now, but I went up the track toward Liverpool Biv. for an hour and got the most fantastic views back down the valley. No wonder climbers are so fit, lugging all their gear up out of the valley into the alpine areas. With only a light pack on, I pushed it hard for the hour and still only got just beyond the bushline. The track is very steep and was probably more dangerous coming down over the big steps and loose and slippery rock.

We spent a pleasant evening relaxing, enjoying the clear mountain air, and the smoke from the fire helped keep the sandflies and mossies at bay. Sunday dawned clear and sunny also. We retraced our steps back down the valley, to lunch at the Rob Roy junction before going up Rob Roy stream. Peter was having problems with his knee and due to the time we only got as far as a viewpoint and seat. We sat for some time here, feeding a kea, and waiting for a huge avalanche to fall, but that never happened. Oh well, maybe next time. Then back to the car, sign out at DoC and home.



Rob Roy Glacier (PHOTO Antony Pettinger)

Many thanks to Wendy for driving us there and back in her car, and to her and Peter for coming so that I could at least get out tramping.

Beverley McGowan

THE MIGHTY MARATHON

February 2, 1997

Author: Wolfgang Gerber

Published in Bulletin 562, February 1997

I arrived at Booth Road to find a very dressed-up Peter Mason (bowler hat and tie) and Ian Sime who was recording the start of this, the 25th marathon, on video. We assembled under the Union Jack and off we went at 4.31 am.

Everyone soon went at their own speed up the Pineapple Track and five of us decided to go down Ben Rudd's track. On paper it looked shorter, but it took longer than we expected. Then down Whare Flat Road and there was another checkpoint manned by that dressed up gentleman, Peter, where we had Just Juice and bikkies. Up the Chalkies over Powder Hill, down Long Ridge Road and, as the Pyramids came into view, we headed down a bulldozed track which took us to the Big Stream intersection. Another climb and then to Poplar Hut where we had a little nibble and signed in. We took a deep breath and started the big climb up a road to Mount John. After about a quarter of an hour I had this brilliant idea of eating while we were walking uphill - to save time of course. It took me 20 minutes to eat my small sandwich and Nigel took about the same to eat an apple. Not a good idea after all, eh!



Christmas Creek, with Mt John (and Mt John Hut barely visible) (PHOTO Antony Pettinger)

As the road petered out and we left the forest behind visibility was getting bad again and yours truly nearly became "G E" (i.e. geographically embarrassed) in the vast open tussock area of

Mt. John, but for Nigel who reminded me diplomatically that we had left the bulldozed track - thanks Nigel. We were soon to be back on it. So, down we went to Mt. John Hut for an early lunch at 11.00 am and signed in.

At this stage we were one and a quarter hours behind the fast pack of Jay, Ross and Dick (who I believe won the first marathon), 1/2 hour behind Arthur and a quarter of an hour behind Mike. So down it was to Xmas Creek and yet another steady climb sidling above the creek then a descent to the creek. By this time we were joined by Robyn, Shelley, Isobel and Rowan. This was indeed a good move as Robyn and Rowan showed us the way to ABC Cave and guided us through the mist to The Gap checkpoint. What a lovely sight it was to see Doug, Jean and Scott. The hot drinks, cake, choc fish and other goodies were absolutely welcome. After 1/4 hour, we left for Rocky Ridge and as we left, Doug warned us about taking deceptive mini ridges leading off Rocky Ridge. And would you believe it, that's exactly what we did. To say that we were "GE" would be too harsh. We heard the voices through the mist of our guardian angels, farmer John, his mate, Doug and their mascot.



The Gap and the Silver Peaks Ridges from Swampy Summit (PHOTO Antony Pettinger)

From then on we all stuck together. Pulpit Rock came and went no doubt, but we couldn't see it. Then on to Green Hut Site where we were greeted by Ian and Jonette with hot drinks, snacks and encouragement. Then it was up and over Swampy down the Ridge Track and finally down that disgusting last kilometre which played havoc with my knees. I am certain I heard them scream. Finally, out at 9.00 pm, tired but elated. We were met by another banner and the smiling faces of Mark and Ross. Robyn and John were just behind us (or so we thought - but that's another story).

In conclusion, some of my thoughts and advice. As Doug has written, if it's a shitty day, stay in bed as it's a long way. Drink frequently. Wear good, light tramping boots with good socks. Carry lots of nibbles. Remember, it's not a race but an adventure. If in doubt of the terrain, stay in groups. Do cross training, e.g. jogging, aerobics classes and of course tramping including perhaps at least a 6-hour tramp a week before the big day to get your body used to the marathon. If you're M-F, you can do it perhaps in two days, whatever you like, remembering of course that with any type of endurance mental attitude also plays a big part.



**The final section of the OTMC Silver Peaks Marathon – the descent of the Pineapple Track
(PHOTO Antony Pettinger)**

Last but not least, an enormous thank you to the people who manned the checkpoints especially in the conditions that were present and also the club who supplies the refreshments at the checkpoints. Finally big thanks to the famous Doug who organised the whole marathon - thanks Doug!

Wolfgang Gerber for Rowan Meddings, Robyn Bridges, Isabelle Franklin, Shelley Coleman, Mick Barrett, Arthur Blondell, John Galloway, Doug Dagger, Spike the dog, Nigel Boydell, Dick Brasier, Jay Piggott and Ross Davies -yes a dog did it as well!

P.S. Peter Mason tells me that Zena Roderique and Trevor Blogg also completed the marathon course as a 2-day event

MT. TITIROA TRAVERSE

December 1996

Author: David Barnes

Published in Bulletin 562, February 1997

The plan was for a few days in the Borland area as a pre-Christmas wind-down. Paul Olsen (Coordinator of Bushcraft '83) had teed up a group of associates from his Gore days and promised to organise everything. So I turned up in Gore to find "organise everything" meant "try and get to the supermarket before it shuts". Eventually we were provisioned, established that our group had reduced to three and set off belatedly for Borland Lodge.

A late night meant a late start, but Paul and our third person, Ian Hilliard, had managed to find a couple of their ex-pupils with a Hilux to get us to the start of our trip. We headed up the west bank of the Waiau, glad to not have to walk up relatively mundane farmland. Dismounting at Trig A, more or less opposite Rediff Stream, we started off across a swamp towards the bush edge. Then it was upward until we found the spot where a stream emerges from a cave - very picturesque. There's a dry stream bed which obviously takes the overflow from the cave intake, so we followed it up to the intake. By grovelling up a bank we reached a slumped area that provided access to the cave without needing diving gear. Paul had an old rope stashed there from previous trips, which we used to gain access to the interior. The cave revealed an impressive array of stalagmite of such girth that I couldn't reach around them. Further down we came across a display of glowworms.

Lunch was had on our return to the surface, and then it was onwards and upwards. A couple of hours of solidly uphill bush-bashing saw us on top of a knob looking up towards our hanging valley destination. It still looked a wee way off. A compass bearing was taken on a key stream junction, and successfully followed. Once across the stream we followed up a series of sloping, boggy, clearings requiring a fair bit of thigh power. Although Ian and I were getting that "I'd like to stop soon" feeling. Paul was adamant that the hanging valley campsite was worth the effort, and the alternatives had a decidedly damp look. Eventually one last effort crossing a small moraine got us to the campsite. It certainly was a great spot, surrounded by impressive slabby cliffs.

Despite early indications to the contrary, the next day started with excellent weather prospects. Heading up through scrubby boulder fields, we eventually reached easier going in a series of basins. This area boasted a marvellous assortment of tarns, string bogs, waterfalls and cliffs. However, by mid-morning, the weather was showing distant signs of changing for the worse. By the final basin, it was parkas on and we were wondering if we'd get to the top. A bit of hard slog across softish snow brought us to a view of the top. A bit more work and we could see Lake Rokatu through gaps in the cloud, and then eventually we could see Lakes Manapouri and Te Anau. As we approached the summit of Titiroa, serious doubts were being raised about whether the combination of snow conditions and visibility would allow us to descend to the Borland. Although a return the way we had come had limited appeal, particularly without the Hilux, we concluded that there was no safe alternative, so we dumped our packs and dashed for the top. Five minutes on, there was a bit of a clearance and it became apparent that we'd

have no problem getting down, so we returned for our packs. Most trips that involve an element of peak-bagging, don't involve carrying a full pack to the summit, but this one did.



Mt Titiroa from near summit of Mt Burns (PHOTO Antony Pettinger)

The upper part of Titiroa is a fairly spectacular spot, with wind sculptured rock formations. The surrounding scree slopes are a brownish gravel with a fair bit of what looks like quartz. It is this that gives the hill the appearance of unseasonal snow when viewed from a distance. A large scree descent, with alternating snow showers and views of the lakes, brought us onto a saddle between tributaries of the north Borland and Garnock Burns. From there it was a short climb to a knob atop a long steep spur that led us down to North Borland Hut. The hut book here always makes good reading, as it dates from 1976. It brought back memories of two previous visits where weather prevented a look at Titiroa. (I have forgotten that Ross Cocker was a gigolo, while I was described as a bullfighter- although it was suggested that bullshitter could be more accurate). The small stream by the hut has changed course and now runs behind the hut. This does not bode well for the hut's long-term prospects.

I've always hated trip reports that allocate diminishing amounts of space to succeeding days and deal with the entire last day with "and then we went home". But yet another descent of the North Borland in pretty patchy weather doesn't warrant much space other than to mention the walk wires. The highly suspect crossing of the North Borland, which disappeared a couple of years ago, has been replaced. The new one meets all the criteria for a good walk wire - i.e., short and taut. The long walk wire across the South Borland had been removed. This crossing is used by zillions of school kids, many in gym shoes, camping at the rock bivvy while using Borland Lodge. If a new walk wire is needed anywhere it's here.

All in all, a good trip.

David Barnes

MATIRI PLATEAU, KAHURANGI NATIONAL PARK

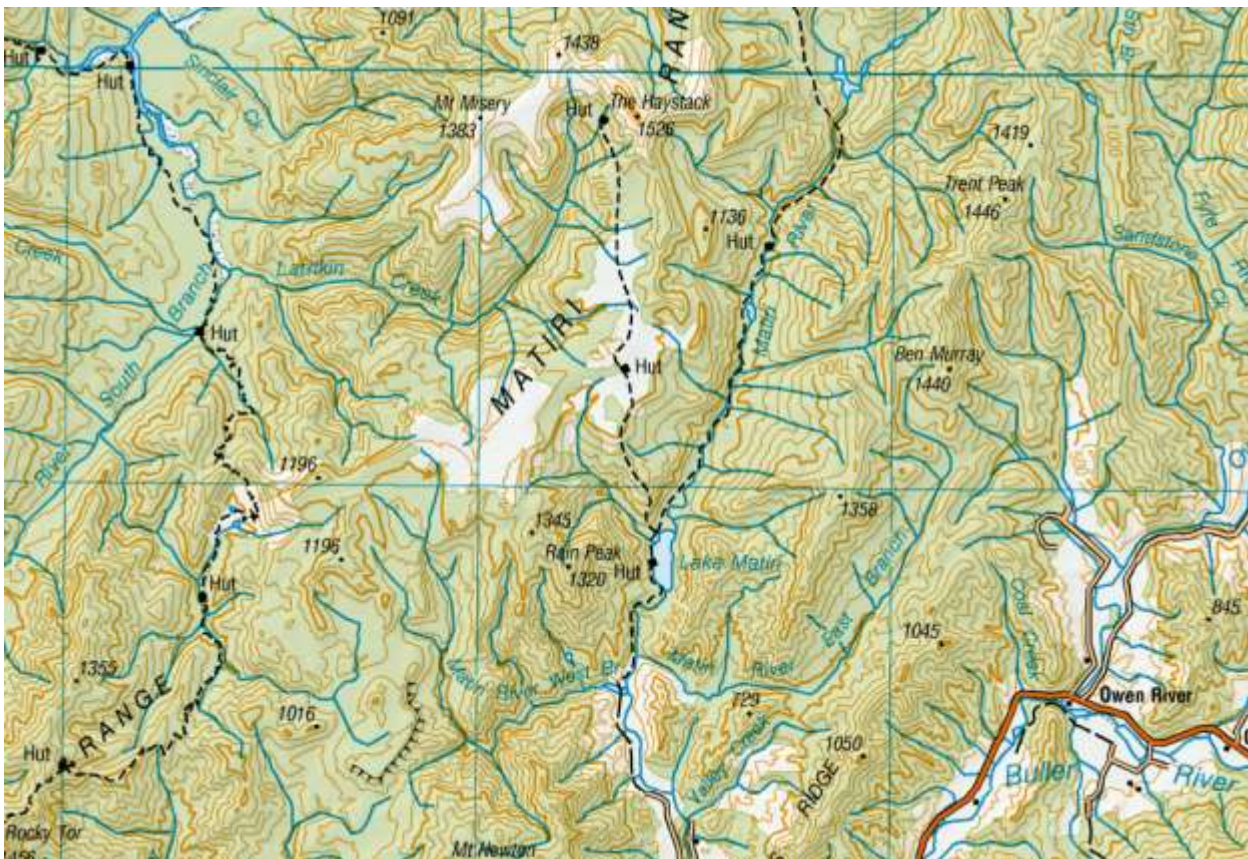
Date not published

Author: Rob Seeley

Published in Bulletin 562, February 1997

This trip was one of three Linda and I did this summer in the Nelson area from a cycle tour. With only a limited amount of gear cartable - shoes instead of boots, 1 1/2 packs, no gaiters- the trips were fairly small scale....

We got interested in this area after seeing an aerial view of the 100 Acre Plateau in New Zealand Geographic which was running an article about the new national park. Checking the maps showed this area to be fairly accessible - a 16 km road north of Murchison ("Murch") leads to the start of the track- and so it was placed tentatively on our itinerary.



So it was that seemingly much later we arrived in that town, Whitewater Mecca, at the head of four valleys, the weather was superb and would remain so - the trip was on. We biked up the gravel road which climbs slowly up the Matiri valley in the afternoon heat. Arriving at the carpark we found, as the DoC man in Murch had suggested, that much of the next two hours of walking was bikeable. So we quickly made our way through those cow pat littered river terraces, bits of broken bush and bracken that mark the start of so many tramps in the country. Hiding the bikes in some scrub and assembling the packs from stuff from bike panniers suddenly we were transformed into trampers.

In little under an hour we had crossed into the park, made our way up the natural dam that forms Lake Matiri (this is earthquake country) and descended through magnificent beech forest to a track above the lake and to a splendid 6-bunker. At this time of year Lake Matiri is populated by a vast number of paradise ducks which come here for their annual molt during which time they cannot fly. A nervy creature at the best of times this state of vulnerability makes them even more so and they spent the entire evening, moon-lit night and morning that we were there honking and quacking their two-tone heads off.

The next day was tough. From the top of the lake the plateau track climbs unrelentingly steeply up a 'root staircase' to gain the plateau. A slow business with most of our food intact, most of the day's water needing to be carried and to cap it off, a wasp sting on my leg. Actually, at length, the climb is broken by two sections of flat to give you a breather. Interestingly, on these flatter sections the makeup of the bush changed completely from dark beech to a lighter bush made up of Rata, New Zealand Cedar and the weird Mountain Neinei. With the Rata out in flower and Tui and fantails in abundance, all it would have taken would be (Sir) Howard Morrison singing "Welcome to My World" to complete the cliché. After about two hours of climb, large boulders mark the coming lip of the plateau. The plateau marks the southern extent of a band of limestone outcropping occurring most famously at Mt Owen, Mt Arthur and at Takaka Hill (The Marble Mountain). Here the rock manifests itself in two high flat slabs which sit like lost worlds above the surrounding forest and separated from it by sheer escarpments in reaching the lip of the plateau, we emerged from the forest to an amazing view of everything we'd come to see. Firstly, the warped tabletop of the thousand acre plateau which we were just going to cross a small section of. Further North the strange circus-tent shaped Mt. Haystack and to its left a small pointed mountain named - what else - The Needle. Further west again the white escarpments of the higher and more dramatic 100-Acre Plateau.

We wandered across the savanna-like scenery of the plateau and agreed that it was an exotic looking place almost like a parkland - small patches of bush dotted about a tussocky plain. It could have been a valley floor but it was 1000m high. Shortly we came to the aptly named Poor Pete's hut. Built in 1956 it seemed to have received no maintenance in its life save for a lick of violent orange paint. We had a long shade less walk ahead of us, it was one o'clock, so we decided to stay chez Pete until the sun was a little less savage. While we roasted in our metal box we perused the literature which apart from the intentions book consisted only of a bible 'placed' by the Gideons. We were dismayed to see large sections of the Old Testament were missing - clearly this had gone to light some long-ago fire. However, a second possibility then occurred to us - but no, that couldn't be, surely not that.

At about 3 we set out across the baking table lands for that day's goal. The track gently undulated with the terrain passing knolls of trees, peaty tarns and dropping down into streams running in smooth, rocky slots. As the bulk of the Haystack neared, we re-entered forest to emerge again almost beneath its sheer and bare peak to find our home for the night, Larrikins Hut. Despite the very late sun it gets in the morning even in summer (in winter it has earned the name Larrikins Fridge), there can be few huts so beautifully located as this, in its hebe meadow fringed with beech We spent a blissful evening watching the sun sink in the valley unbothered by sandflies. We discovered (when Linda sneezed) that, with so much vertical rock

around, some tremendous echoes occur just outside the hut. This kept us amused for some time.

The next day we set off to explore the high plateau and the Haystack. The Haystack is easily reached by climbing up to the col between it and the Needle and then doubling back up the ridge to the summit. A great chunk of Nelson province is on view from the top. Near at hand the tilted table tops of the plateaux, to the East, the Matiri river valley with its far slopes still badly scarred from the great 1929 earthquake. Beyond this the limestone towers of Mt Owen. Still further afield the snowy peaks of the Nelson Lakes Park and to the West the deep valley carved by Larrikins steam on its way to the Mokihinui.

After ridge walking to the second peak of Haystack and having lunch in sparse shade, we retraced the route along the ridge and, sidling beneath the Needle, made our way onto the Hundred acre plateau. So intact are the encircling escarpments that this 'drawbridge' may be the only way onto this great castle of rock. We found ourselves on a strange world of peaty tarns and frequent sinkholes, their entrances littered with alpine flowers. Some of the holes look really promising from a caving perspective. I later asked in Murch what caves there are here. It seems no one's really looked - cavers have their hands full exploring Mt Owen alone. We wandered across the great grassy expanse towards the highest point on the escarpment. This is Mount Lunar, though no climb at all from the plateau it falls away greatly towards the Mokihinui and must look like a mountain from the West. Looking West we could see where the North and South Branches of this river converge and have bordered a narrow gorge to the West Coast. We started a long thirsty walk back along the Southern escarpment, limestone being the great thief of surface running water that it is. I was struck by the regularity of the cliffs, completely sheer, always about 50m high.

We spent another peaceful evening at the hut and on the following day and a half made a leisurely walk out retracing our steps. There is the possibility of gaining the Matiri valley directly via the Haystack and doing a round trip but ...nah. I really recommend exploring this fascinating area for to anyone going to the Buller region

Rob Seeley

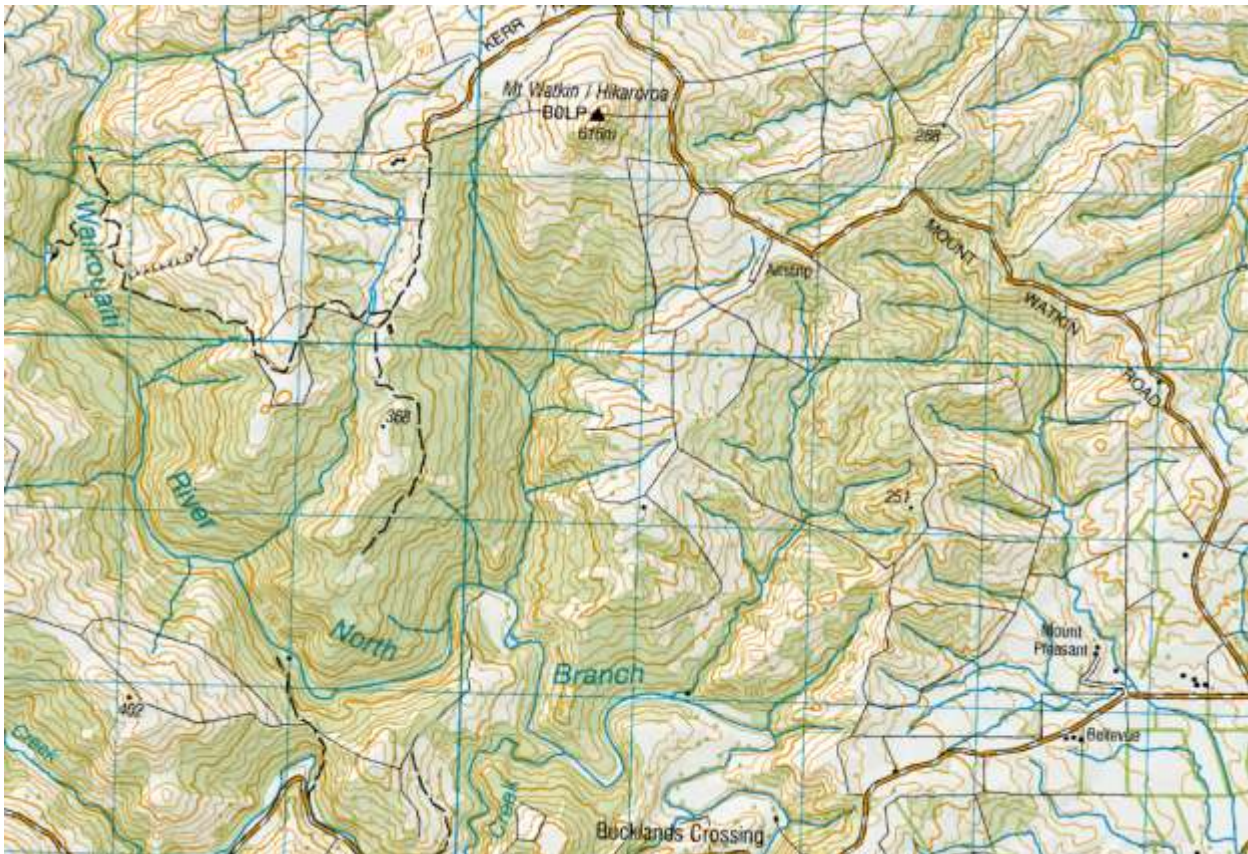
MT WATKIN

February 23, 1997

Author: Rob Seeley

Published in Bulletin 563, March 1997

This trip was a classic case of the importance of not worrying over-much about weather forecasts. The forecast on Saturday was grim indeed and I had in mind cancelling the trip. However, we went ahead and in fact we had a great trip and didn't get rained on at all.



Quite an impressive turnout of eleven people considering the dire climatic outlook, many new to the club made it on Sunday morning. Conveyed to Buckland Crossing in three cars we started up the winding Waikouaiti River (North Branch). We followed the second left-hand bend, which is probably the only way of getting through the gorse to the river. This done, we forded this gently flowing, peaty river and started the climb up the far side. This involved sidling through mature kanuka woodland to gain a ridge on the skyline. There is a beautiful view of the upper river winding in a deep valley between good stands of native bush. This is somewhere I'd like to explore in the future. The bell-shaped dome of Mt Watkin is also fully revealed at this point, and route finding is simple. An easy stroll up the ridge followed disturbing some rather neurotic cows. Nearer the mountain the terrain steepens considerably until at the first of the 'rock glaciers' the going becomes a full-on scramble to the top. Before this, some wild mushrooming had broken out and some of us broke for lunch before tackling the peak.

The top of Mt Watkin shows its volcanic origin - scree slopes of hexagonal basalt boulders occur in several places. These are quite stable and provide the best climbing. Within these 'glaciers' a good many unusual plants were growing most notably a very fine-leaved Spaniard. Eventually we were all at the top together around the trig (has anyone noticed what a dying species these are?) having a good gander at the view. This takes in a mix of Silver Peaks, Kakanuis and the Karitane Coastline. It was also a good place to identify the other surrounding volcanic outcrops. The return journey, after a scramble down the Spaniard-infested northern slope, was very easy, although conducted in increasingly gothic gloomy weather. We walked down the road a little until reaching the next more easterly ridge leading back down to the river. Ken took 'a' group photo of us all at this point with the mountain in the background with his new state-of-the-art camera with remote control. However the thing was so silent that he took three thinking it wasn't working. From here a 4WD track follows a most gentle of gradients along the top before departing on a sidetrack to the valley floor. Then it was a short walk to where we'd crossed the river before to gain the route back to Bucklands. Ken and I retraced our outgoing journey a little to gather some watercress we'd seen earlier. On the way home several of us availed ourselves of the abundant servings of Deep South ice-cream to be had at the Evansdale service station.

Rob Seeley for Ken Powell, Robyn Bridges, Linda Miles, Trevor Blogg, Gareth White, Fiona, Lynda, Robyn, Tony and Mary (sorry, guys, about the surnames - lost the trip list)

TROTTERS GORGE

March 2, 1997

Author: Trevor Blogg

Published in Bulletin 563, March 1997

Trotters Gorge is an 11 km drive north from Palmerston. The apparent 'limestone' of the area is revealed in the DOC pamphlet to be a Greywacke-brecia conglomerate. We parked at the conservation area entrance, choosing not to ford in Jonette's car, and after a short walk, found the side-track (about SW heading) just past the toilets. We followed this and soon saw what I took to be a solitary fernbird perched in a tree above us, though I really didn't get a close look. Soon afterwards we came to an interesting cave - a chance to see the conglomerate nature of the rock up close, and to explore with electric torches. We found Weta of up to about 2 cm body-length on the roof.



Overlooking Trotters Gorge (PHOTO Antony Pettinger)

Continuing on our way we came to where the track became indistinct and pushed up a ridge to our right - a fairly stiff climb, and fortunate that no-one in the party was just at the E-M skill level (who changed my trip rating in the Bulletin, anyway?)

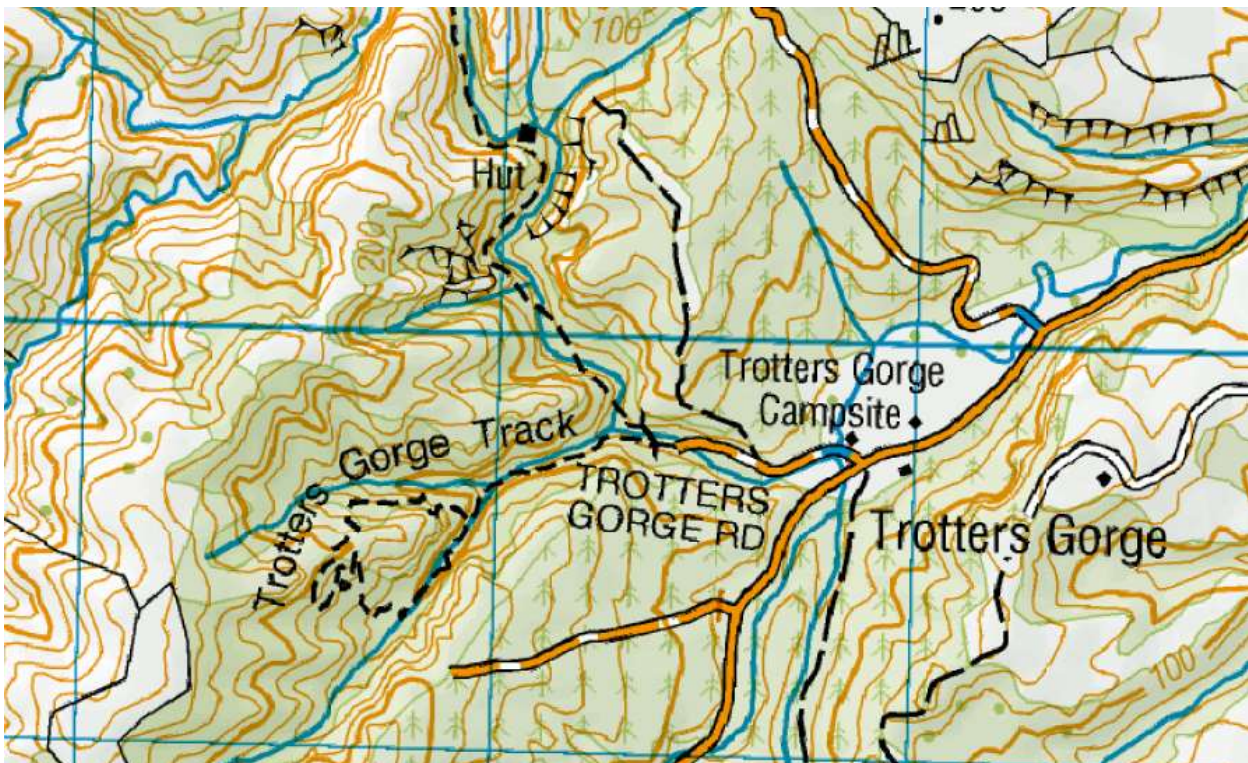
After some route-finding we emerged onto a high rock platform which offered good views for a morning tea break - a red DOC arrow sanctioned this as part of the official 'route' (the platform, not the tea break!). I pulled out my 'Stewart Island Plants' book to identify a shrub, which turned out to be a dwarf heath '*Cyathodes empetrifolia*' (sorry, no common name) - very pretty

with small clusters of red berries. We pressed on up the ridge and after some bush-bashing emerged on tussock-tops, where our struggle was rewarded with great views of the gorge, the coast from Moeraki down to Shag Point, and a rare rear-view of the Kakanuis including the lime-quarry at Dunback.

We stopped in the shelter of a generous gorse-bush for a leisurely lunch, then continued on our route - no good track or markers - just pig tracks. We had to make several navigational decisions - not really easy without a topo map, but experience goes a long way, and we found a descent route to the University Hut, involving a steep drop through Himalayan Honeysuckle but without meeting any steep bluffs, which any degree of mis-navigation would have sent our way. (The route probably corresponded pretty well with that intended by DOC, who show the route line wiggling down to the Univ. Hut area).

Some time was spent on another tea-break as we investigated the hut (all locked up, but with a generous veranda). Overall, we spent about 4.5 hours on the round trip, and with the bush bashing and unusual views, plus lots of bird-life and botanical interest we all concluded that the day had been a great success. This trip was an opportunity for Jonette to show off her recovery to M-F tramper form, and she certainly did that. A few spots of rain started to fall just as we reached the car and an ice cream stop in Palmerston relaxed us for the drive back to Dunedin.

Trevor Blogg for Jonette Service, Zena Roderique, Ken Powell.



ARTHURS PASS / HAWDON – EDWARDS CIRCUIT

October 26-28, 1996

Author: Grant Burnard

Published in Bulletin 563, March 1997

At last, we got underway at 6.30 pm and sped our way out of the city and on towards an area rarely visited by the OTMC, Arthurs Pass. I'd waited two years to get there after previous scheduled visits had been either cancelled or postponed for various reasons. Having successfully negotiated the traditional stop for greasies in Oamaru, plus two roadblocks, one in Oamaru and another in Ashburton, we arrived in Arthurs Pass township at 12:30 am and bedded down in the DOC shelter opposite the DOC office.

We awoke to a fine day and made our way to the Mount White Bridge and the access road to the Hawdon Valley. We said farewell to Ann and set off up the valley in the general direction (we hoped) of Walker Pass. After about ten minutes the first crossing of the Hawdon River had to be made. Not a very wide river, it nevertheless provided a moment of high drama when Rowan slipped on a large boulder in the swiftly flowing river and received a dunking up to his neck. Fortunately, we were linked and the four of us made it to the opposite bank, half towing Rowan who had difficulty in regaining his footing. The next couple of hours was spent wandering along the pleasant beech flanked valley, with only a few minor crossings of the Hawdon and side streams slowing us up. First stop was the Hawdon Hut, a comfortable structure which sleeps 12. The only residents were a couple of soldiers. Lunch was consumed outside in the sun, while we pored over the map, trying to convince ourselves that the imminent climb over the pass would not be all that steep.

Shortly after leaving the hut we encountered a smallish side stream which Philip, Rowan and I simply strolled through. When we looked round to see what had happened to Mike he was taking off his plastic climbing boots. Then followed a slow painful search to find a dry passage over the water. None existed, so a semi wet one was chosen and his leather boots made a rapid reappearance. Soon enough, the track headed up the hill and the hard work began. Unfortunately, Mike soon discovered that he had agitated an old knee wound, and for him much of the rest of the day's travel was slow and quite painful. The track was of good standard on the climb though and it didn't take too long to scale the 300 or so metres to the top of the pass. Continuing, we traversed some thankfully flat countryside on our way to the upper reaches of the Otehake River. After an hour or so we ran out of track and had to pick our way through thick scrub, past a large tarn. The end of our day's endeavours was in sight as we dropped down to the river and, using Mike's local knowledge, continued for a short distance till we found the only suitable campsite in the area.

With the shadows lengthening it was prudent to get the tent up without delay and that was when our luck ran out. Philip was asked for the tent poles, and they were slow in coming. Much frantic searching through his pack failed to produce the goods so it appeared the poles must have fallen from the outside of his pack, where they had been tucked, a wee bit unwisely, inside his karrimat. We decided to backtrack and make a search for the small green pouch

along the way we had come, in what light was left. Rowan and I retraced our steps as best we could for about half an hour, but the poles were nowhere to be seen. After asking a gold prospector and his wife if they would keep a look out for the poles on their trip back over the Pass the following day, we went back to our campsite.



Edwards Hut (PHOTO Antony Pettinger)

Once there we rigged a makeshift fly between a couple of trees. This served the purpose pretty well, but I wouldn't have wanted to test it out in a downpour. Luckily the night was calm and not too cold, so, after our meal, Rowan turned in early, Mike, Phil and I sat round a roaring fire enjoying the night air.

Next day dawned fine so we got on our way reasonably early and started with the climb up to Tarn Col. It was steep in places, like a sort of extended gut. Mike had to take it easy because of his leg, but we made steady progress and got the worst of it over in about two hours. Then on reaching the top we stood and took in the view of the surrounding snow-covered peaks. Pretty soon the area became congested with people, and we passed a party of about twenty schoolgirls and their teachers going in the opposite direction. At the Col itself we paused to take in the spectacular view. About 200m down, in the valley floor there was what looked a bit like a moonscape, with rocks and boulders spread over a wide area. This was the result of a severe earthquake in the 1920s, when a giant chunk of a mountain fell out of an adjacent peak, subsequently named Falling Mountain. The forces of nature are truly awesome. The descent to the boulder field had to be made by way of a huge scree slope, affording a bit of a rollercoaster ride if you had the guts to let yourself go. After a long traverse over the rocks under a hot sun we came to a pretty tarn in the upper Edwards where lunch provided a welcome respite. After

lunch it was a reasonably straightforward walk down the valley, along a marked track to Edwards Hut, which is situated in a pleasant spot near the river, right on the edge of the bush.



Edwards Valley (PHOTO Antony Pettinger)

That night while the rain fell outside, we lived it up by downing the remainder of our alcoholic beverages, including an entire bottle of port and half a dozen stubbies of Speights, courtesy of Phil. Funny what habits you pick up in the army, isn't it Phil? The next day was a doddle through the bush in the rain, down to the track's end where the Edwards feeds into the Mingha. It was necessary to ford three rivers to reach the main road: the Edwards, Mingha and the Bealey, but all were reasonably low and the crossings were made safely and in comfort.

All that was left was to wait for Ann, who had the keys to Rowan's car, get changed and make a brief detour to the Bealey Hotel. We were unable to report any moa sighting to publican Paddy, but I'm sure there'll be more OTMC parties visiting this wonderful area in the near future to maybe have another look for those elusive feathered creatures.

Grant Bernard for Mike Gillies, Rowan Meddings and Phil Green

DARREN TRAVERSE

February 15-16, 1997

Author: Lynda Jaket

Published in Bulletin 563, March 1997

We had seven keen members for this great trip. The first portion of the trip was along the Moraine Creek bush track - flattish at first, but then of course, going uphill. The track led onto a large flat domain type area and then into the bush again. Further up, once the track had ended, we followed a stream directly upwards. If anyone else has any photos of the presumably wonderful views from up here, we'd all love to see them as we didn't see a thing because of thick mist. So what better thing to do, when you can't tell exactly where you are or where you are meant to go next than to stop and have some lunch.



Morraine Creek, Lake Adelaide & the Darren Mountains from Mt Erebus (PHOTO Antony Pettinger)

As it turned out, we'd gone a little bit higher than necessary. With most of the "up" portion done, the next part consisted of a bit of boulder hopping, followed by a traverse around a steep rock face to the west of Lake Adelaide. Looking at the map before we actually got there, I'd have thought that there'd be no way that I'd be walking around the west side of the lake when the east side looked flat - however it wasn't as bad as it looked on the map (even so the contour lines were so close you couldn't even count them easily without a magnifying glass!!). We then had a bit of vegetation hopping/sinking/scrambling and eventually ended up at a wonderful rock bivouac - 9.5 hours after we had left the road - everyone was quite knackered. We were greeted by three English tourists who had come from the Milford side and were to go

back the way we were going. The lake was beautiful (yes!, we had a view) and some of us were visited by a friendly (non thief) Kea. An early night was had by all.



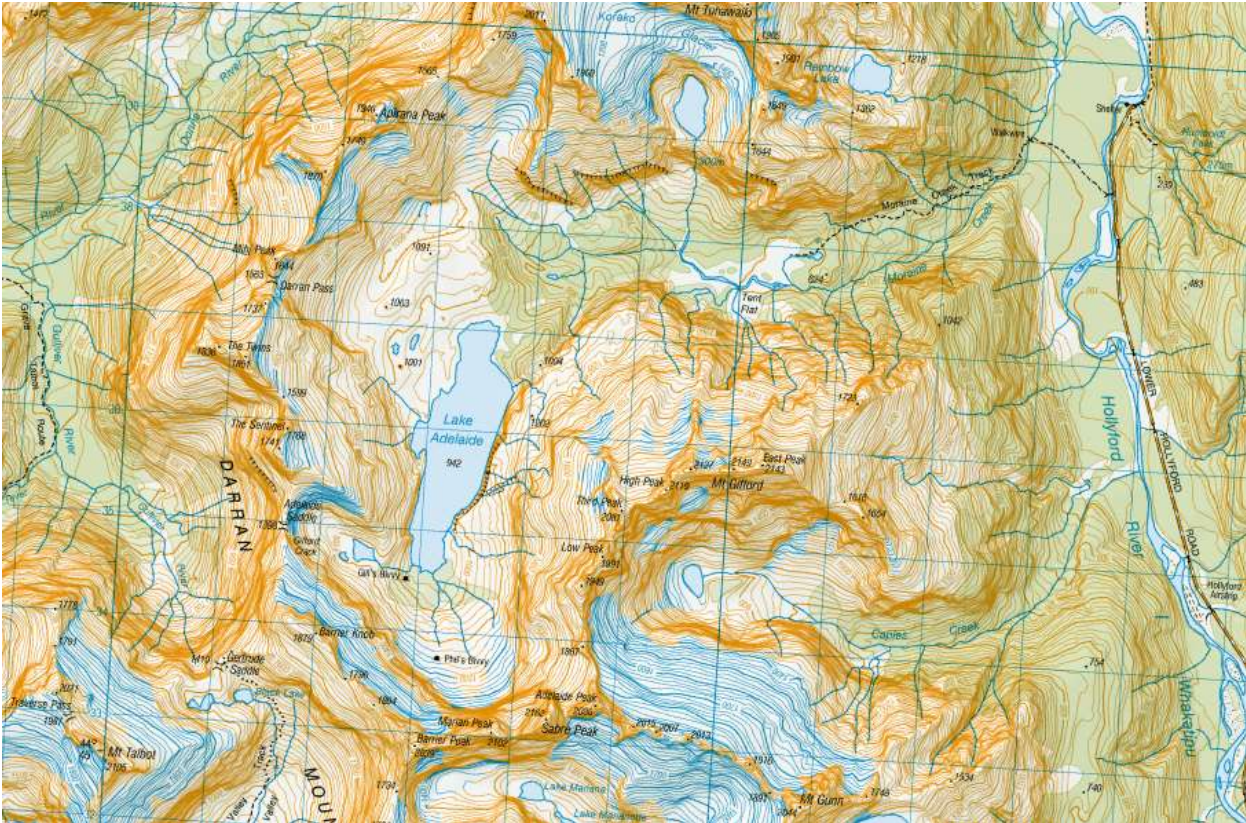
Lake Adelaide from Barrier Knob (PHOTO Antony Pettinger)

The next day we had to backtrack a little bit and then rock climb up Gifford's Crack - a little bit hair-raising at times, but we were rewarded from the Adelaide Saddle at the top, by a wonderful view of Milford Sound (yes!, we had a view - get out those cameras real quick, 'cause the fog was on its way rolling in yet again). Our next mission was to climb to Barrier Knob and then down to Gertrude Saddle, however that theory was replaced when we all decided that the traverse around the side looked OK. The map of this area would make your heart stop as contour lines join together to form a solid orange block!!!! EEEkkkk! Well, we were higher than the vertical face/drop - but we were still quite exposed had we made any errors - so the going was quite slow and sure - not a trip for anyone who suffers from vertigo! We followed cairns until we just could not see any more of them and could not see a suitable way to go (we figured someone had made a cairn when they had gone the wrong way too). Perfect timing as the English group caught up with us, and with their knowledge of yesterday's trip, combined with Aaron's excellent leadership skills, we managed to backtrack and find a new route. I wouldn't have liked this to be left any later, as by this stage, the rock was getting wet

from the thick mist. Lunch at Gerty Saddle sounded good, followed by a brisk walk out to Homer hut on the Milford Road.

Thank you to Aaron for a great trip, no thanks to the mist, but hey we were on the West Coast, and it didn't rain for 40 solid hours - so I think we were lucky.

Lynda Jake for Aaron Whitehead, Toby Van der Mark, Gareth White, Paul Devlin, Rob Seeley and Rob Porteous.



EMILY PASS AND FRASER CREEK

February 5-9, 1997

Author: Eric Lord

Published in Bulletin 563, March 1997

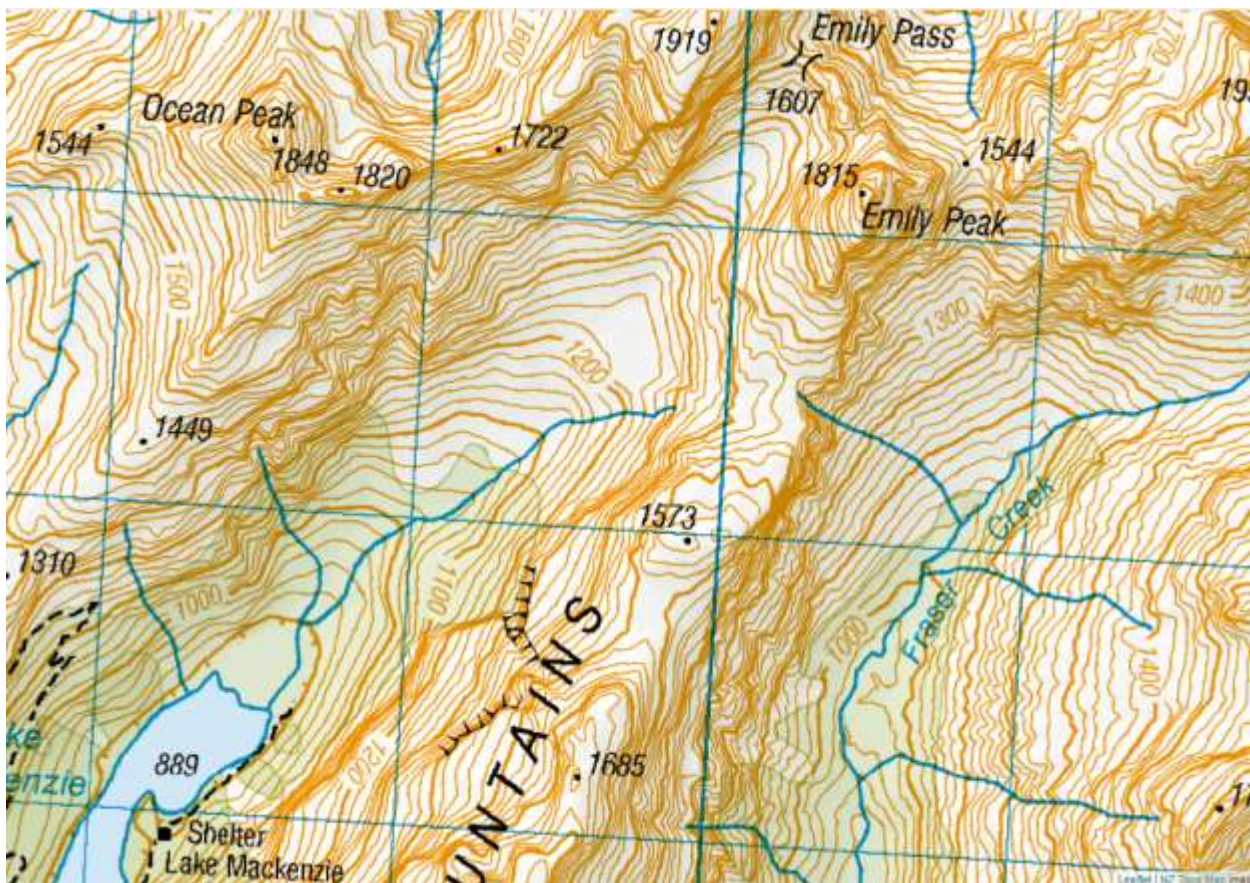
What seems a lifetime ago when we were crossing over to Steele Creek from the Caples River, David and I looked across to Fraser Creek and Emily Peak and planned an Emily Pass tramp. We attempted it on a Club trip during ANZAC weekend 1994, but heavy snow the day before kept us in the Greenstone and Caples Valleys. House renovations and a growing family meant that it would be nearly three years before I had a tramping pack on my back. With Waitangi Day being on a Thursday this year a four-day weekend was marked on the calendar. A February trip also meant a minimum amount of snow and ice on the passes. I roped in Robyn and Robert to make a party of four and we set off to the Divide on Wednesday night to the sounds of Split Enz and John Cleese (yes we were travelling in David's car).



Emily Pass (centre) with Emily Peak on the right of the pass (PHOTO Antony Pettinger)

Waitangi Day morning on the Routeburn Track to Lake Mackenzie was a leisurely stroll in the brilliant sun, allowing us to soak in the bush and mountain atmosphere. Why had I taken so long to come back here? Lunch at Lake Mackenzie was equally leisurely as we contemplated the climb to Emily Pass. At 1pm we decided to wander alongside the lake, which was easy as the water level was low. In fact we had to fill our water bottles as there was no water at all in the creek coming down from Emily Pass. The slope up to the Pass didn't seem to bother me much as cycling to and from work most days must keep the legs in shape for tramping over mountain passes. However David was struggling a bit - I bet it was that dozen of Speights he

was carrying. At least it gave the rest of us a chance to stop and take photos of all the flowering plants. Robyn, Robert and I reached Emily Pass around 4pm and I was wondering if there was going to be enough daylight left for David to reach the Pass. Actually he didn't take that long to catch up with us. I was glad to have brought my spare film as the pictures were flowing. It was truly inspirational looking down the valleys and across the mountains. The view down on to the Routeburn Valley reminded me that I had been here before during a Club Snowcraft course in 1984. Coming down the other side was steeper and a little more tricky. We followed a small canyon between the cliffs. David slipped on a small patch of wet snowgrass and slid past me quick as a flash. "Be careful of those Speights cans" I was thinking just as David came to a skidding halt in the loose scree. Robert and Robyn went ahead to find a camp site way down in the Emily Creek basin while I kept David company, stopping to take more photos of the wild flowers. It had been a 10 hour day by the time we reached the camp site, not a bad re-introduction to tramping.



No rest for the wicked as I had to prepare dinner that night. One thing that I had forgotten after not tramping for so long was how much it took to feed four hungry tramping mouths - a bit short on the catering front that night. Not even scraps for the flock of keas we saw. Water was scarce and we had to walk 10 minutes to get some, but what about those Speights cans David? In reality it was the Speights belt around his waist that was holding him back. However Robert, being true to his Scottish heritage, pulled out a bottle of whisky and poured a nip or two into our coffees to soothe us off to sleep.

I woke the next morning stiff and sore from the worst night's sleep I'd had for ages. A hebe bush is not comfortable to sleep on. The sunny morning showed the full glory of the cliff faces

up towards Emily Pass. Somewhere through there is the route to the Pass. After breakfast it was a quick one hour climb to the saddle into Fraser Creek. I came across a perfectly good Swiss Army pocket knife, with S J Winter engraved on it, lying in the tussock.

The view over the other side showed the full length of Fraser Creek down to the Caples Valley. A small patch of snow meant it was worthwhile carrying ice axes. After the snow it was a steep descent down the loose rock. This was where Robert slipped while avoiding a falling rock and grazed his arm. Avalanches from Emily Peak had scoured out a large ravine, but once across that we were on short tussock which allowed some of us to run down to the fresh waters of Fraser Creek for another long lunch lying in the sun.



Upper Caples Hut (PHOTO Antony Pettinger)

Grudgingly we put our packs back on for the boulder hop and bush bash down the creek. We soon came across a young man from the Czech Republic called Ivan. His first words to us were "How far to the hut? I have a bus to catch at the Divide at 4." Our first thoughts were "this guy is seriously lost". Ivan had spent six hours coming up Fraser Creek and was a long way from the last track marker which amazed us. He had somehow crossed the bridge over the Caples River instead of staying on the track towards McKellar Saddle. He had no food as he was expecting to be out that afternoon. We told him to stick with us knowing full well that he was extremely lucky to have met us, and out of earshot we called him Ivan the Terrible Navigator!

On the other hand Ivan helped us to find the track markers when we got down into the bush. Not only did the track cross Fraser Creek many times, but was also obviously devastated by the January 1994 floods, being washed out in many places. At 4pm and feeling rather tired we came across a strong and fit German, wearing gym shoes and carrying an enormous pack. Unlike Ivan, he knew where he was going and was carrying climbing gear. We found out from

other people the next day that this German had spent forty days tramping and mountaineering in the Fiordland area, picking up food dumps along the way. Incredible! The bad news was he said he was three hours from Upper Caples Hut which meant we were not going to be camping near the hut that night.

We went on for another hour when we found a lovely campsite right by the creek. Robert cooked a gourmet meal which Ivan shared and I also gave Ivan a pasta snack packet to keep him happy. Robert's whisky again soothed me off to sleep and it was a much more comfortable sleep this time. Probably because Robert decided to sleep in his bivvy bag and I had no-one to roll into.

We packed Ivan off early the next morning with another pasta snack, hoping we didn't see him again (in the nicest sense). It was with some satisfaction, knowing we had probably saved his life. We had morning tea at the Upper Caples hut soaking up the last rays of sunshine we'd see on the trip and totally satisfied at having achieved the main objective of this trip in such glorious weather. We slogged it over McKellar Saddle with the weather closing in and raced down to McKellar Hut for a warm and dry bunk. The early finish for the day had the pack of cards and the OTMC song book at the bottom of my pack out for an airing.

There were 16 people in the hut that night, but we were the only NZers. There were interesting stories and comments from two Englishmen who tried fishing in the Greenstone, a former Caltex executive from Dallas and an English woman who sang along with Robyn. After Robyn's gourmet dinner (I really have lost touch with the latest tramping menus) and another dose of whisky, it was down to a serious game of cards. Robert and me against David and Robyn. I don't know whether tiredness got the better of me or Robert was deliberately irking me, but I got rather irritated and lost my cool. Much to my, and I'm sure everyone else's relief, the rain and low cloud were still present in the morning. Therefore, our final day's excursion up on to the Livingstone Mountains and down to Key Summit had to be cancelled. Instead, it was a leisurely stroll out to the Divide for lunch, an ice cream in the sun at Te Anau and home with the family at dinner time. This was a great trip with excellent company, and I recommend it to anyone wishing to do a long weekend tramp.

Eric Lord for David Barnes, Robyn Bridges and Robert McLaren.

MIND OVER MARATHON

February 2, 1997

Author: Robyn Bridges

Published in Bulletin 563, March 1997

I get a buzz out of looking at my 25th Marathon certificate. To think I actually walked the 60 or so kilometres, 3000m up and 3000m down and some extra as well, though this was really not part of the plan!

Over the few years that I have been a member of the OTMC I had always thought of the Marathon as 'big time stuff. Like going into the Red Hills, or the Olivine Ice Plateau. And it is 'big time' stuff. This is the stuff of the 'fitness plus' which I had a hazy fantasy about - but it was a fantasy that somehow did not include me. After doing a few tramping trips with the Club and sitting in the Clubrooms on Thursday evenings drooling over slides of places wild and exciting I started to think about myself in the fantasy. And the more I thought about it the more the idea of 'moi' being fit came into focus. Of course, resistance always accompanies change - well it does for me - and my plans for regular exercise always seemed to activate the part of my brain which informed me that such ideas were for other people and not for me. I was too old (we all know that you can't teach old dogs new tricks), too busy, too 'naturally' lazy, too disorganized, I didn't have enough self-discipline, I had the 'wrong genes' and on and on it went.



Northern end of the Marathon Route, head of Christmas Creek below ABC Cave (PHOTO Antony Pettinger)

Now measuring this state of affairs (with true scientific precision) with what I saw was the reality on the outside, the picture did not really match. In every photo I had seen of myself out tramping it showed me grinning from ear to ear and looking like a body who loved every minute of it. And I did. At this point the strategy of doing what makes you happy seemed like a very attractive idea and there was a thought in my head that maybe if I got fitter I might find that I enjoyed tramping even more and who knows maybe I could find myself in some of those wild and exciting places??

It's funny how things fall into place because it was not long after these internal machinations occurred that a copy of the book called "Fitness over 40" came into my hands. Amongst other good information it had a chapter about heart rate and fitness and how to increase endurance. Well the rest is history, and the person with the wrong genes, no discipline etc. etc., you know how it goes, "It won't happen overnight, but it will happen!". And it did. So when the Marathon was mentioned I found myself easily caught up in the enthusiasm and so I set my sights. Getting fit for this would get me more fit for tramping. Setting a goal and making plans to achieve it is a good exercise in itself. And the more exercise I did the easier it became, well the less onerous, and I knew when I got to the stage that I missed it if I didn't manage to get out for a good walk, that I was well on my way to getting fit. Looking back, I trained hard. I walked most of the route and spent a lot of time steaming uphill at pretty regular intervals during the immediate weeks before the Marathon.

The day itself? Well disappointing to have so much fog. Disorientating to have so much fog and if there is that much fog when I do it again, I'll stay in bed!! On the plus side it added an extra dimension to the wonderful 'serviced' check points. It was wonderful to see through the fog and see Doug, Jean, Mark and Scott flying the flag at the Gap, and Ian and Jonette at Green Hut site. Oranges, hot drinks, homemade muffins, carrot cake, encouragement and lots of laughs were on the menu.

I'd recommend the Marathon. Missing the last right hand turn off Swampy stretched the endurance, but I handled that O.K. - and this of course has nothing to do with my next idea. Don't you think that the winner should be the person/s who tramped the longest??? I reckon John and I at 18 hours with an extra kilometre or 4 would be ideal candidates. My thanks to Doug Forrester for organizing a great day and to all my fellow Marathoners.

Robyn Bridges

MAUNGATUA – A BREEZE OF A TRAVERSE

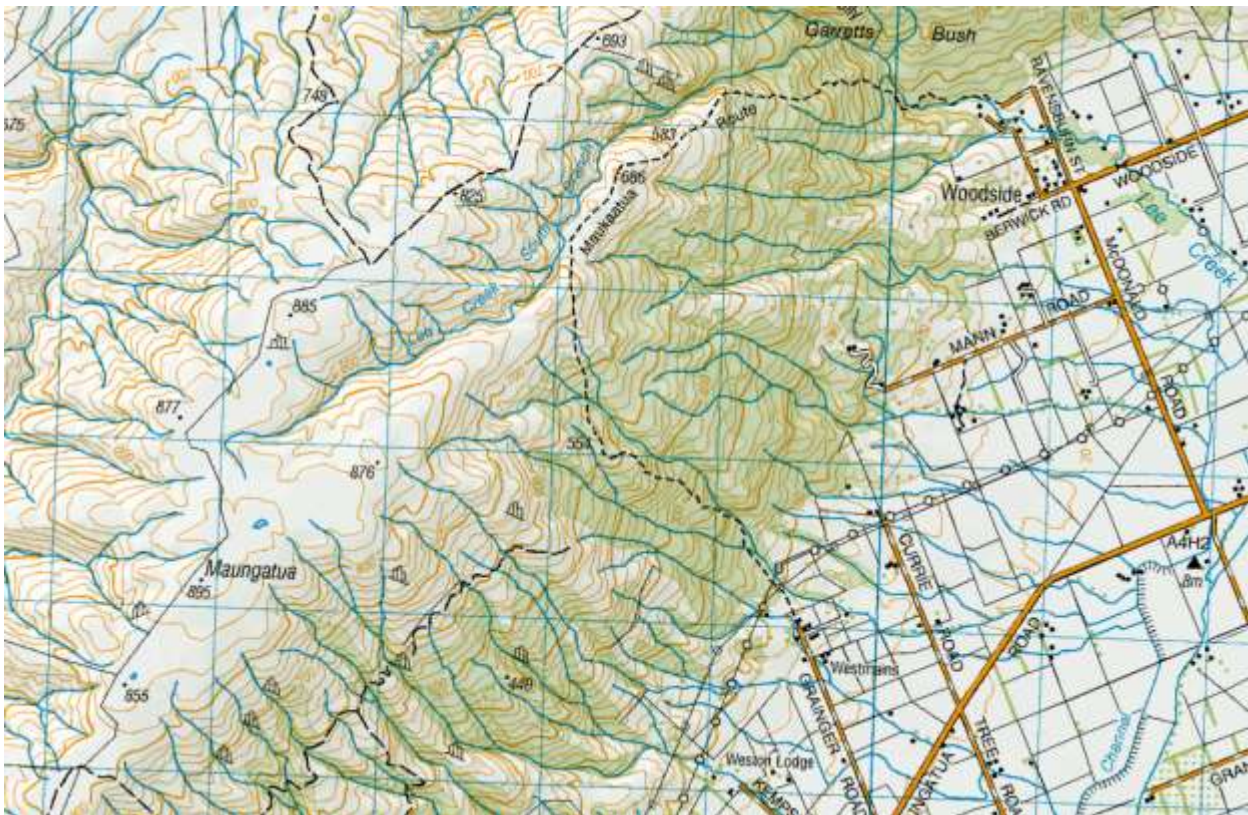
March 16, 1997

Author: Robyn Bridges

Published in Bulletin 564, April 1997

As it turned out we made the 'right' decision setting off from the Wesleydale end of Maungatua. The 'big hill by the airport' is one of my favourite Sunday tramps - a walk it is definitely not! I like it for a number of reasons. The views you get from the top are spectacular. From the front you can see Saddle Hill, the whole of the Taieri Plains and the end of the Silver Peaks, and then from the rear Berwick Forest, the Rock and Pillars, and the country round Lake Mahinerangi. The variety of plant life is appealing as well. Sedges, cushion plants, orchids, sundews (the insect eating plants), pygmy pines and lots of *Celmisias*. The appearance of which varies of course depending on the season. And lastly the feeling of having done a good day's tramp. And believe me, mostly a Maungatua traverse is a good day's tramp. People vary as to which end they think is the best end to start traversing the 'hill' but on this day, with a howling westerly blowing there was really no debate. Climbing up past the Three Kings the wind was so strong that just placing one foot down within stepping distance of the other was a challenge. The same breeze behind us on the top, though, meant we were up and over in five and half hours!

Robyn Bridges for Trevor Blogg, Mike Bowie, Terry Duffield, and Rowan Meddings.



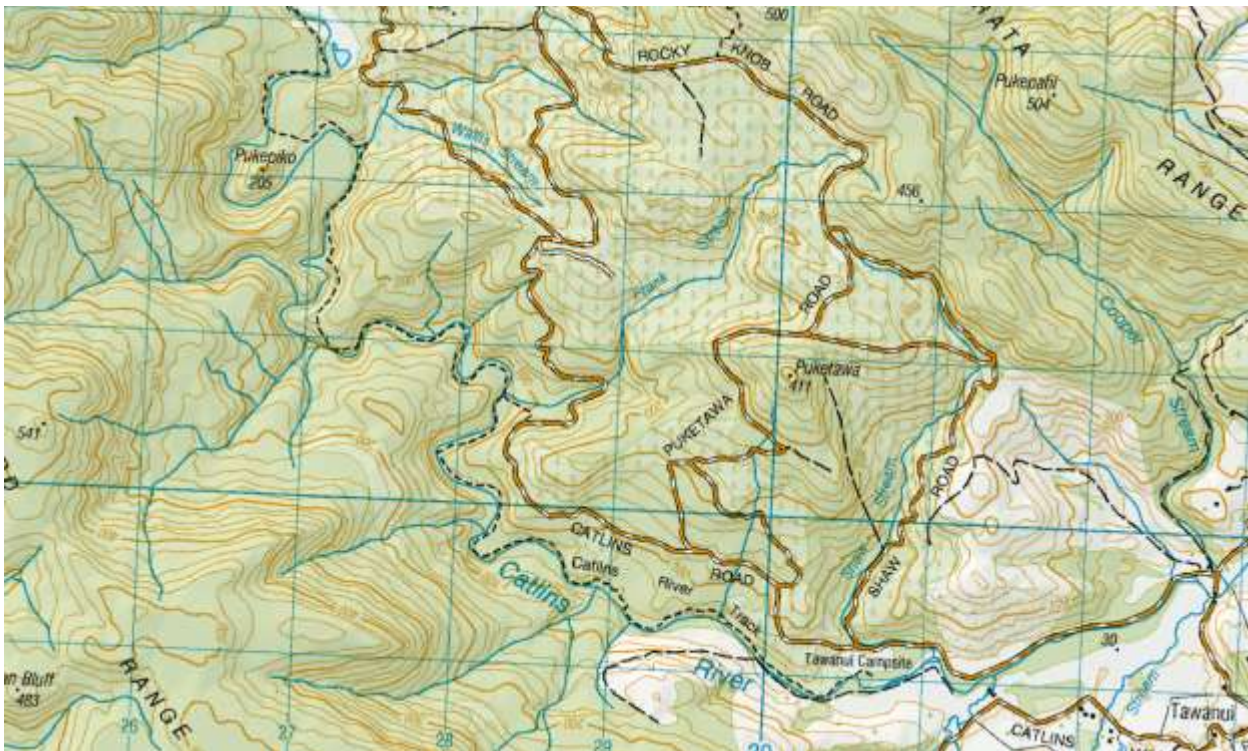
CATLINS RIVER TRACK

April 6, 1997

Author: Not recorded

Published in Bulletin 564, April 1997

It rained heavily on Saturday evening and overnight, but the forecast was for a fine Sunday. We woke to a cloudless sky and 11 people arrived for the 9am start. Four cars took us to Owaka for morning tea, then over the Morris Saddle Road to the Tawanui Camping Ground where we left one car at the end of the tramp. On the forestry roads up the river, Ian took us down two dead end roads before we reached the Wisp Recreational Area where the track starts. Although it was then midday, we walked the first hour down to Wallis Stream, before lunching in the sun in the only open space on the whole track. The river was high and dirty from the previous night's rain, but pleasant to walk beside on a good track. There are two bridges on this section. Just as we were finishing lunch at a picnic table, a van came down the access road to within 100m of us. Ian went to investigate and met Fergus Sutherland of Catlins Wildlife Trackers with one senior woman client. They were opening a couple of hampers for lunch as we left. That's how the other half explore the Catlins!



Another hour and two more bridges saw us at Franks Stream where an access track leads up to the road. The last stage to Tawanui took two hours including a 15 minute stop for a snack at a small stream. There were lots of windfalls across the track, but only a few recent ones had not been cleared with a chainsaw.

While the drivers were driven back to the Wisp to get their cars, the other seven walked up the road a bit to meet them. Then we rearranged passengers so that two cars could return directly to Dunedin, while the other two went up the Owaka Valley to Purekireki, round by Awatea to

Lochindorb Run, and over their farm road to Kaihiku Gorge, and so out by Jacks Hill Road to the Main South Road at Carterhope.

It had been a great day's tramp for a group of people ranging in age from early 20s to late 70s. The last car arrived home at 9pm, after an extended stop at the North Balclutha Dairy for pies, ice creams, milk shakes and fruit juice.

Trevor Blogg, Kerry Burke, Arch Burn, Peter Davidson, Chris Dyson, Vanessa Johnson, Ian & Nancy Sime, Sarah Smellie, Jim Smith, Jean Tremlett.

STONY PEAK, WAIRUNA

April 13, 1997

Author: Ian Sime

Published in Bulletin 564, April 1997

Again it rained on Saturday, and was still raining on Sunday morning which accounted for at least some people deciding not to go. But when I rang Mona Taylor at 9.05am from the Dairy by the Clubrooms to tell her four of us were coming, it had stopped raining at Wairuna. For us the rain stopped about Henley, and the sky to the south was clearing. At the farm we were greeted by Mona, husband Haddon (who had been a year ahead of Ian at the Gore High School Hostel in the 40's) and several dogs.

Haddon had to go to an 80th Birthday Party in Gore for an ex-neighbour, so accompanied us only across a couple of paddocks, pointing out trees and shrubs killed by the long-lying frozen snow last winter, and explaining that a little higher up the slopes all trees survived. Mona led us up tracks and across slopes to lunch near the ridge top, then on to Stony Peak (1642ft) where she used a specially marked map to show us visible features, and to indicate the directions of the more distant ones hidden by cloud. Some light rain and a couple of heavy showers caught us from the SW as we dropped down over a couple of ridges back to the farmhouse. There Mona treated us to plates of thick vegetable soup, and biscuits with drinks.

We travelled over back roads to Clydevale, Hillend and Lovells Flat before joining the main road. Thanks to Mona, one of our few out-of-town Full Members, for inviting and guiding us on a trip we all enjoyed. (Mona has been a member since joining as an OGHS pupil in the late 40s.)

Hugh Dickson, Chris Dyson, Vanessa Johnson, Ian Sime.



GREENSTONE BUSHCRAFT WEEKEND (SCOTT/KAY/CAPLES CIRCUIT)

March 1-2, 1997

Author: Fiona Mains

Published in Bulletin 564, April 1997

Since arriving in New Zealand after my travels, I've noticed two main character traits about New Zealanders. Firstly, they love the outdoors. Secondly, they have a tendency to downplay the weather, cyclones, bungy jump accidents and sharp bends on unsealed roads which have a speed sign which states slow down to 95 km/h. The bushcraft Greenstone weekend, with the Otago Tramping & Mountaineering Club, only confirmed the aforementioned to me. Our party consisted of our weekend organizer, Nigel and group leader Antony with bushcraft virgins; Angelio, Serena, Anna and Fiona.



Dart River and Routeburn Road with Earnslaw on skyline, from Scott Creek (PHOTO Antony Pettinger)

Late Friday evening we arrived in the dark to Kinloch road end via the skating dexterity of Antony's rally traverse drive around the newly coated and unsealed road from Queenstown. This is where I witnessed first hand that the Kiwi male not only enjoys the cold by wearing shorts when it's minus Celsius but also enjoys sleeping 'al fresco' with nothing covering them but a fly sheet. A dismayed Scot whined that she only had a one season sleeping bag and after a tent re-shuffle everyone was nested for the evening.

The following morning, dawn arrived in glorious colours which Angelio dutifully rose to snap on film. It also transpired that we were not the only ones who wanted to get away from it all, as the varsity club, who we had seen signs of munching fish and chips in Alexandra, had also chosen the same camping spot. Stumbling over 40 or so scarfies in deep slumber, sprawled around in their fly sheets and bivvy sacks made an interesting obstacle course to reach the W.C. Everyone had risen and began to cook breakfast with 40 differing varieties of how to eat museli with yogurt, cold milk, hot milk, with crunchy bits, with fruit or just on its own. Non muesli lovers beware!



Mt Earnslaw from pass between Scott and Kay Creek (PHOTO Antony Pettinger)

After a short drive the uninitiated were dropped off at the beginning of Scott Creek. Nigel led with Antony herding the sacrificial lambs in the rear. It was a steep but well tramped trail through the undergrowth with an occasional white striped metal post to show that man had been there before. The weather was glorious and the ascent steady. We each took turns in leading the trail but the trail decided to test us and petered out. This then left the challenge of spot the trail. This was the first stage of the bush bash, an unforgettable one for those who were not wearing gaiters. I noticed that the best way to bush bash was to 'swim above the undergrowth' by moving your arms as in doing the breast stroke and taking large John Cleese like steps. However, take note, this technique is not to be repeated on any of the very public Great Walks or the DOC warden will probably have you committed. Occasionally one of us would be taken victim by the 'ha gotcha!' bush hole monster. It can be quite disconcerting when following someone breaking the trail, to find out whether or not they have orange Vibram sole stickers on the soles of their boots.

I digress, and so did we in Scott Creek. The well-defined trail, which Antony remembered whizzing down in time for tea when he was just a slip-of-a-lad, did not show itself to us. We finally did find the little red tag to signify the track. Unfortunately, it was still attached to the tree which lay at the bottom of a massive land/tree slide. We descended down and then climbed back up and over many tree trunks to reach the trail again, this was to be repeated several times on the trail. The scenery became very different and unique as we neared the private hut at the top of Scott Creek. Rocks were all hues of green, blue, purple and yellow. The trees became ghostly with the silver lichen wrapped around the trunks. This is when a 'ha gotcha!' rock monster decided to rear up and take a victim who displayed both of her Vibram orange sticker soles to the group. She walked away bashed and wary and sported the biggest bruise for the trip.



View down Kay Creek and through to Steele Creek crossing (PHOTO Antony Pettinger)

As we ascended more, the landscape became open and the weather closed in as we entered the Scott basin. The surroundings became more exposed with the rocky outcrops creating an alpine arena with Mt. Aspiring mountains in the far distance. The views were awe-inspiring not unlike the European Alps, rugged mountains in the islands of Scotland or any other high place that you happen upon. It's times like these that you find yourself a contentment and a calm aloofness of not thinking about the world below. As we reached the pass or belauagh (prn. 'belack') at the top of Kay Creek, the weather began to break and the group was becoming tired after the trail breaking. We picked our way down a steep scree slope then boulder hopped down to the DOC grade 3 hut at the bottom of Death Valley. Exhausted, we arrived at the hut which looked more like a bush man's or hermit's hideaway constructed with tree trunks and corrugated tin. It became a haven as the rain began to belt down on the tin roof. Inside the hut

were crudely made hessian sack bunks (which looked like stretchers) and an open fire with wood.

This is when you find out whether you are in a good food group. One member stunned the group as he chopped and then dropped a stir-fry vegetable meal with envious then sympathetic glances from the other food group who were still spitting out their dehydrated chicken pieces out of their rice dish. It is strange how food that you never think of becomes special and wonderful at times like those, such as chicken super noodles. Relaxed and snug in our sleeping bags, we watched the flame dance of the fire and the sound effects of the storm brewing outside. Things became more interesting as the evening progressed. The wind whipped up and blew the smoke back into the hut and caused some exhilaration when it blew in up against the roof. I had a dream about trampers being found smoked and roofless at the bottom of Death Valley, how did it get its name I wondered.



Interior of Kay Creek Hut (PHOTO Antony Pettinger)

Morning arrived and we had all survived the night including our camper. The rain was drizzling down outside. We packed up and made haste down Kay creek as we had a long walk ahead of us. As we descended down the creek the weather opened up as we walked out of the shadows of Death Valley. Looking back I could see that it was aptly named. The creek monster this time decided to take a victim. He was the only remaining one of the party who still had dry feet. He survived and drip dried his way down the rest of the creek with a waterlogged camera as a reminder.

We reached the Upper Caples hut in good time. This is where we rested and dried off for a few minutes. Two members of the party volunteered to run ahead and reach the minibus in time. The rest took a languid stroll out of the track, stopping off at the Mid Caples hut for lunch. The

weather was uncharacteristically good with clear blue skies and chocolate box cover views of surrounding mountains. Eventually and only too quickly we arrived at the car park where the minibus was parked.

All too soon we were back in Dunedin via chips in Cromwell. I arrived home weary but happy that the bush had bashed some of the nonsense out of me for the time being. I eagerly looked at the OTMC trip card for a future trip which was to George Sound, it sounded good to me.

Fiona Mains (Bushcraft Virgin)

ROUTEburn / ROCKburn

April 25-27, 1997

Author: Robyn Bridges

Published in Bulletin 565, May 1997

Chapter 1: How Hard Decisions are faced.

Was this trip to be or not to be? The question became more urgent during the week leading up to ANZAC weekend as each daily forecast was published. Having to 'can' a trip is not something one does lightly and it wasn't that long ago that some of us spent a doleful Friday afternoon after having pulled the plug on a trip to Ball Pass because of extreme weather conditions. So what was I to do? I could identify every published isobar within cooey of New Zealand that week and some slightly further afield! The Internet had provided me with a sheath of forecasts. You name it I had it. The Dunedin forecast, the projected forecast for the next two days, the 24 hour- prognosis, the 3 day prognosis, the mountain forecast! I became a weather sleuth that week. Tracking lows as they banked up and raised their threatening fronts from the deep south hoping that they would self-destruct; willing all the highs hovering over Australia to just please come down to us, just a wee bit!! But it was not looking good. Not on the screen, out of my lab window, or in the newspaper where horrors of horrors they were publishing wild weather warnings.

What was I going to do? Disappoint a dozen people? Would they be grateful I was saving them from spending three days in freezing conditions? Agh the joys of leadership I thought as I and the others packed knowing that I had one last card to play in trying to decide what to do. On Thursday morning I would ring DoC at Glenorchy AND then make a.....!

Chapter 2: How Hard decisions are made.

The phone conversation went like this: "How much snow is there on Sugarloaf Pass?" "Well actually there isn't any" NONE? Stunned silence at my end. "Are you sure?" (Fancy actually questioning someone about what they were looking at from their window!) "What about the Humboldts?" The answer was the same. My silence was broken with the helpful suggestion that they fax me their Met forecast. Oh God, more paper! I gratefully accepted and went down to the tea room to wait and have a coffee and get my mind back to its normal rational state. True to their word the DoC fax arrived. It said that it would rain on Thursday night, Friday morning and then clear later. Saturday would be cloudy with rain developing. Sunday the rain easing to showers and then fine. Maybe we were in with a chance? In the light of such a forecast I could not cancel out.

Much later that day as we drove up the road to Glenorchy I could see in the moonlight the rain round the Routeburn and I wondered just how true to the weather forecast for the weekend's weather would be. Well we would just have to take whatever Huey threw at us and adapt our plans on the hoof. How we made effective decisions while traveling can be read about later, that is after my stress therapy sessions have finished!!!

Cheers Robyn

CLUBROOMS WORKPARTY

April 20, 1997

Author: Alan Thomson

Published in Bulletin 565, May 1997

The weather on Saturday didn't look too promising for a day of sanding, scraping and painting, but Sunday cleared fine and cool. Very soon the clubrooms were surrounded by ladders and trestles as an enthusiastic bunch got to work on tidying up the exterior.

This was the first major work on the outside of the clubrooms since we purchased them in 1990, and we are fortunate to catch some of the problems now before they get too much worse. The exterior blockwork and roughcast were painted a pale green, and the window frames and bargeboards scraped and sanded ready for top coating. One corner of the barge needs replacing, and we need a new back door - anyone have a spare lying around? We also did some rust proofing on the roof however we still need to finish off the roof, paint the window frames and barges/trim, and possibly the boundary fences.



As promised, all refreshments were supplied, with a delicious lunch provided courtesy of Teresa and Robyn.

The footpaths around the rooms have been cleaned up and will shortly have the holes patched up, and the weeds will be sprayed. Finally - the front door. A 'tentative' top colour has been painted on the front doors. This created quite a stir amongst some of the painters, who think the beige colour of the door clashes violently with the pale green roughcast. If members are passing by could they please check it out. Alan Thomson looks forward to feedback on this very important aspect of the clubrooms.

MONOWAI – GREEN LAKE

April 12-13, 1997

Author: Robyn Bridges

Published in Bulletin 566, June 1997

Layered views is the memory I had several days after my return from this trip. The sombre brooding waters of Lake Monowai lie south of Te Anau between thickly bush clad ridges which from a distance look like folds in a thick green shag pile carpet. Mist hung over the lake and the surrounding area as we set off on Saturday morning making it difficult to work out what the day's weather was going to bring. But it wasn't blowing, and it was quite pleasant walking along in the misty silence. Three of us, Trevor, Nigel and myself planned to walk to the saddle just above Green Lake and then head upwards to the ridge that runs behind Green Lake. There we hoped to find a campsite and the next day follow the ridge along, climb Mt. Burns (a moderate peak) and then make our way down to the Borland Saddle where we would meet up with the others. After about an hour of following the meandering track watery shafts of sunlight appeared which everybody took as a good omen. The track is a good one, well formed and for the most part follows gently uphill with just a few steepish bits to burn the calories off. As it got higher glimpses could be seen through the bush of the surrounding countryside. The Takitimus in the distance and more of those carpet clad ridges. It was all very lush.



Green Lake from the slopes en-route to Mt Burns (PHOTO Antony Pettinger)

The bush opened to tussock at the saddle and before setting off upwards towards the ridge a kip in the sun was in order notwithstanding taking in some wonderful views. This was the first of many 'layered' views that weekend. In this case level one, a glimpse of Island Lake, level two Green Lake and level three and four the peaks and hanging U shaped valleys of the background Fiordland mountains. Add to this the ever-present thick green carpet of bush, the

remains of an early dumping of snow and you had quite a picture. And one that could be viewed all the way as we followed the ridge upwards. Tarns were plentiful and made for interesting tramping. Still reflecting waters with a variety of water loving plants. With height some of the tarns had sculptured ice formations and there were deep snow covered holes waiting to catch an unwary tramper! Over the ridge level campsites were obviously scarce. With just enough daylight left a small snow-bare site was found and tents pitched in time for dinner.

What wind was lacking during the day was made up for that Saturday night when at times I found it difficult not to picture the tents blowing off or being washed off the campsite into the steep valley below. But they didn't and as luck would have it the rain (and wind) stopped long enough the next morning for us to pack up.



Campsite above Green Lake, with Mt Cuthbert beyond (PHOTO Antony Pettinger)

Such luck set the tone for the rest of the day as the weather cleared, misted and cleared in just the right order and at just the right times for the trip to take place as planned. The rain that night had washed away quite a bit of the snow which quickened the pace and again there was a steady stream of tantalising views. I think the dramatic nature of this area is the result of heavy glaciation. Mist halted us just below the actual peak of Mt. Burns but the views, though brief, are well worth a second visit Oh and my comment in a previous trip report about old adages not being the same. You see we had had dinner on Saturday evening accompanied by a beautiful red sunset. Of course, it came to all of our minds that 'red sky at night is...' Well not always it seems!

Thanks to Vivienne Bresnell for organising the trip.

Robyn Bridges for Nigel Boydell and Trevor Blogg

ANZAC WEEKEND - ROCKBURN

April 25-27, 1997

Author: Fiona Mains

Published in Bulletin 566, June 1997

We departed from the OTMC clubrooms sharp on time picking up two hitch-hiking members en-route. We journeyed in silence until we had our first fix of fish and chips at Alexandra. There, we bumped into other members of the OTMC mulling around the thoroughfare. Also mulling around and showing off their tolerance of sub zero weather conditions by wearing shorts and flexing their tattoos, were the local youth. We became aware of one particular group, as their vamped up Capri with lowered suspension cruised up behind the mini bus. Their cool cruising machine throbbed with the dud, dud, dud, of their sound system. Our curious stares were acknowledged with a Speights salute and a "good on ye" cry. They obviously thought that we were a weird bunch going off into the mountains on such a cold evening.



Looking up the Rockburn Valley from Sugarloaf Pass (PHOTO Antony Pettinger)

Fish and chips proved to be good brain food as our party, now fed, began to chatter and show signs of excitement as our trip leader pulled out an array of weather forecasts. They all varied in their predictions but illustrated that there was a cluster of mean looking southerly isobars ganging together to either blow over the Southern Ocean or creep in towards the mainland and dump on the higher regions with hail and snow. Apparently, the previous night, a local weather observer was contacted and informed the club of the view from their living room window that the Sugarloaf Mountain was just iced with a sprinkling of snow. With this reassurance, we headed west to the mountains.

We travelled through a quiet Queenstown and then onto the unsealed/sealed road to Glenorchy. Progress has been made over the last two months with the road works. This time there were less noticeable road slides. We arrived at the Routeburn shelter late that evening in the rain. All disembarked to doss down in the shelter with one member, who forgot her Karrimat, settling down in the minibus to catch some condensation for the evening.



Rockburn Hut, no longer in existence (PHOTO Antony Pettinger)

The next morning arrived as foretold with the wet southerlies. A disarray of trampers swaggered around the shelter, organising their breakfast, personal hygiene and what socks to wear over the next few days. All were dressed in the tramping trend of stripey thermal trouser underneath shorts. My first impression of this attire was that there was a select following of the superman look of wearing shorts over tights/thermos. I latterly found that this was a Kiwi trampers dress code. One member of the group took this trend further by introducing a new blue mini skirt look. Who said that you could not look sexy on the slopes! This fashion statement had a more practical basis of being made from a plastic bin liner and not leather and it was to allow the rain to drain off without wetting her undergarments. Fashion parade complete, we headed north up the Routeburn track. The more adventurous party forged onwards to the northern pass to pick the way up their route with ice-axes and crampons.

The other group took a sharp and steep right up an unmarked track leading over the Sugarloaf Pass. Our group was the latter and consisted of Malcolm, Kirsty, Chris and Fiona. The ascent up the Sugarloaf Pass was arduous with an exciting moment traversing along a slippery tree trunk over a river in spate. We used the well known tramping technique of bumping along on your bottom. This resulted in a soaking wet and very cold behind for the rest of the ascent. One particularly lanky member of the group merely bounded over the aforementioned obstacle. He

then flew up the hill and down again to see what was keeping the others who were fighting for air on the slippery slope. We later found the secret of his excess energy by being reared on Milo and Weetbix. We decided to call him the “Kiwi Kid”.

Eventually, we reached the top of Sugarloaf Pass which was covered in ankle deep snow. The views over the other snow covered mountains were impressive when they quickly appeared out of the clouds. This is where we played spot the mountain with our cameras. We hastily moved on and followed the iron rusted poles towards the well defined shelter stone and then steeply down towards the Rockburn track.



Dart Valley, upstream of the Rockburn confluence (PHOTO Antony Pettinger)

We decided to take the right turn down towards the Rockburn hut instead of Theatre Flat. The hut seemed more appealing compared to camping 4 in a 3-man tent in the cold and wet. We met 11 other trampers on the track tramping their way towards Theatre Flat. We were relieved not to add to the overcrowding of this scenic spot. It also satisfied our comfort zones, especially mine after the Scott Creek/Greenstone weekend. The Kiwi Kid appeared disappointed, we decided as a group to let him bound on in search of the hut. A few hours later we arrived at the DoC grade 3 Rockburn hut. It was situated not far from the banks of the Dart River.

The hut was well equipped with bunks, benches, wood, a lamp and pots. It was obviously well used by hunters. This is where we burst into domestic activity of chopping wood, fire making and gourmet meal cooking. A comfortable time was had by all with a warm fire, good food, wine, whisky and scary Scottish ghost stories (all true) to pass the evening through. The evening ended in high jinks for one member of the group who had to pole vault onto the top bunk. It was amusing to watch his legs dangle over the side as he attempted to mantle shelve onto the mattress.

We settled down for the night, lulled to sleep with the sound of rain on the tin roof and the hut mouse smacking its lips over the gourmet leftovers. Snores filled the air as we contented trampers drifted off to peaceful dreams. All except one, who from the top bunk cried for help and then leaped off the bunk and was found cowering on the floor holding onto a sandal for dear life. Was it a scary ghost story too many or a dream about a six foot mouse eating his weetbix? We never did find out from this sleep walking, bunk bungying Milo addict.



Lake Sylvan (PHOTO Antony Pettinger)

The next day arrived with clear blue skies. It was amazing to sit on the riverbank eating breakfast whilst watching the sun slowly creep over the ridge of Mt Earnslaw. Personal grooming appeared to be the next priority of the morning with washing of hair and cleaning of teeth. The males of the group appeared to be particularly hygiene conscious. One had brought some Lynx 'Java' deodorant. The females, less groomed, shamed by this effort of personal hygiene from the boys, asked to borrow the deodorant so as not to feel too grubby and left out. Smelling sweet or less sweaty, we decided to move on and have a shorter but more adventurous day. Wearing lighter sacks, we decided to follow an animal track through the bush along the Dart River towards Lake Unknown. We took the bridge over an impressive gorge and then followed a deer track into the bush. This was full of fauna and bird life with Kereru cooing and cheeky waxeyes playing tag with us along the track. We reached the bottom of the hill where Lake Unknown was situated. We looked up at the overhanging cliffs and decided to rename it Lake Impossible.

We cut out of the bush and practiced some river crossing by following the river back to the hut. One party member had little experience of doing so and was getting into the swing of it when two Shotover speed boats blasted up the river. One passed by with passive passengers peering

curiously at this water nymph. The other jet boat roared to an abrupt halt putting her off her stride and then off their momentum. Confidence building stuff, usually you warn people of fast rivers, not to go above your knees but not playing "chicken" with raging speed boats would be one to remember.

A warm fire greeted us back at the Rockburn hut with some new company for the evening. The owner of the Glenorchy Cafe and her son were settling in for the evening. Another pleasant evening progressed with more gourmet meals, wine, whisky and more scary ghost stories. This proved too much for our Milo addict who had another disturbed dream and unplanned bunk bungle. I decided that in future I would refrain from telling scary Scottish ghost stories. However, I personally think that he should cut down on the Milo.

Our walk out the next day was leisurely and involved a sunbathe en route on the banks of Lake Sylvan. A particularly bold bush Robin decided to come out and eat some leftover apricots. We passed by the road end of Kinloch and up to the Routeburn shelter for some more basking in the sunshine. We watched the other group tirelessly troop towards the shelter. It appeared that a good time was had by all. Our travel back to Dunedin was scenic to say the least. We had a civilised coffee stop in quiet Queenstown then onto an uneventful fish and chip stop in Alexandra. Arriving back in Dunedin more refreshed than how I left. A look at the trip card and Queen's birthday, seems worth celebrating.

By Fiona Mains, Ghost Story Expert

MT SOMERS

May 17-18, 1997

Author: Ken Powell

Published in Bulletin 566, June 1997

Following the call for somewhere new to tramp the search was on for recreation for all. Hard tramps, easy tramps, climbing with good shelter and suitable campsites for tent-flies near safe water. A vague memory of standing on Trig R in the snow looking out to mid-Canterbury, into the Ashburton Gorge and onto the Arrowsmith Range triggered further investigation resulting in the trip to Mt. Somers Subalpine Walkway, as the DoC pamphlet states, with a choice of dropping off trampers in the Peel Forest area for climbs of Mt Peel or tramps of a lesser degree.

Mt. Somers Holiday Park would accommodate us at \$10 each on Friday night (no frozen boots for us!) and would run a shuttle to Woolshed Creek, the starting point and pick us up at Sharplin Falls car park on Sunday. And as it turned out - 'enough greasy chips to feed a horse' from the proprietor's roadside sideline, for the trip home.



Woolshed Creek, Mt Somers (PHOTO Antony Pettinger)

Chris and Steve opted for the walkway route via the ridge and coal mine with relics such as a sluice gun, tram tracks, a gravity jig line, derelict wagons and explosive boxes. The other 7 chose the canyon route (not suitable for family tripping) with plans to rendezvous at Trig R.

The canyon is a great example of glacial action along with volcanic disturbance, with Woolshed Creek scratching a notch for itself until it clears the gorge and joins the Ashburton River. Beech trees were predominant, complete with honey dew glistening on the bark and thankfully no

wasps. A side trip of about one hour saw us climb the canyon wall to above the bushline to visit an abandoned mine on the ridge and meet up with Chris and Steve.

The temperature must have been 5 to 10 degrees warmer on the ridges and much enjoyed by all. Down to the floor again with boulder hopping for the agile and plodding on for the others up over bluffs, across the stream, around other bluffs and upstream again, then repeated in a different order. The fast pack of Zena and Jean went on to meet up with the ridge walkers, then to the Pinnacle with the others soldiering on eventually reaching the track up the canyon wall to the bushline and Trig R. Too late to go to Pinnacle Hut where climbers tell lies about crevasses, chimney's and three pitch climbs. So we dawdle along with Mt. Somers hut ready to merge into the increasing shade in the valley below, while we soak up the sun on the tops. Surprise! DoC supply wood via an adjacent 4WD track and from the abundant wood pile of pine, selected pieces were consumed in the firebox to warm the hut and heat the water to warm the inner person ('inner man' not acceptable when you are outnumbered 4-1!). The log cabin sauna 200 metres upstream was occupied by our neighbours so our visit was just to view in the morning before venturing up Hydroslide Creek. Aptly named, the creek bed is smooth volcanic lava covered with water and moss making creek bed navigation treacherous.

An afternoon walk out back to the carpark where a patient Steve had the vehicle waiting for the journey home.

A different weekend to be repeated and completed at a later date but the call of the tropics is louder just now,

Ken Powell for the gang of Chris, Steve, Zena, Jean, Jonette, Shelia, Shirley and Jacqui.

SAREX (SEARCH AND RESCUE EXERCISE)

May 4, 1997

Author: Elspeth Gold

Published in Bulletin 566, June 1997

The exercise started with search theory at the clubrooms. David Barnes introduced us to probabilities of area and detection while Elspeth Gold outlined search methods and lost person behaviour. John Cox then taught some track and clue theory, while David and Elspeth disappeared to the Bullring to lay some tracks.

The searchers arrived to find David and Elspeth sitting on the roadside and their task began. The huge clue was a car as a start point. By looking around the car and some detective work as to dust patterns on the car it was decided 2 people got out of the car.

After about 15 minutes of fossicking around and a hint or two a clear trail was found which led to the pack of one of the lost persons. Mission accomplished; the searchers headed home.

The SAR list has a couple of new volunteers out of the exercise and some of the established list members learnt some new skills so all in all it was a successful day. Thank you to David and John for instructing and to those who made the effort to attend the exercise.

Elspeth Gold

THREE GENTS BUT NO KEAS, A TOAST TO THE QUEEN

May 31 – June 2, 1997

Author: Richard Pettinger

Published in Bulletin 567, July 1997

(Ross' subtitle might be "Earnslaw without commitment"]

Friday night of Queens Birthday weekend saw our party not meeting at the clubrooms. And not at 6 o'clock. We were self-contained in Brian's new 4WD. So we were away quite early, with Jonette hitching a ride. We got to Glenorchy, and the weather looked fine enough -well, it wasn't raining. It had already snowed a bit that day, with snow lowering to bushline (well below the summit of Earnslaw], thus also lowering our ambition. We would leave our crampons behind. More room for the beer. Because of the nice night, we went on to Muddy Creek and got under the tent fly. BC crawled into the back of his 4WD. On a mattress. 'Tramping like this is just fine," he said, "bloody luxury." All-right for him. It rained, you see, and Ross & Richard, in the fly, were directly under unsealed seams. Seam sealer on flies perishes after a few decades in storage...



Rees Valley. Kea Basin to the left, Hunter Valley straight ahead (PHOTO Antony Pettinger)

This trip, as it happens, was Ross' second tramping trip since 1985. He was showing signs of perishing as well from inappropriate storage. Muddy Creek stopped the 4WD. So, it was packs on, and away. After twenty steps, and crossing Muddy, it turned out to look easily crossable in

the 4WD. So, we went back to get it. No worries. We helped to ferry packs up the valley till we were stopped by a slippery bank we didn't like the look of. Brian had said, "Let's make sure this is a gentile trip - conceding to our great age..." And so, it was. Richard even kept his feet dry crossing the Rees. And he was carrying TWO karrimats!

The walk up to Kea Basin Bivy was great. Nice gradient doesn't seem to have got steeper at all. Great vegetation. Clouds were threatening, and we got the occasional squall, but the weather stayed not too bad. The bivy hadn't been moved by DoC. Or declared dangerous. Nonetheless Ross proceeded to attack its structural integrity with his cranium. Thinning grey hairs are no protection against low ceilings, eh Ross? Other OTMCers spread out next door, but one of that party chose to be a bit of a recluse, deciding to stay in a tiny tent...! We sat and ate and watched snowfall, into the evening. Moonlight and fresh snow made a fantastic setting. Discussions that night and the next dwelt on sex, absent spouses, kids, politics and, of course, defaming common acquaintances: "whatever happened to so- and-so??" "How many club marriages are still intact?" After much thought, we decided intactness probability was about thirty to one, a bloody high average for this planet.



Above Kea Basin, with the Rees Valley below (PHOTO Antony Pettinger)

The bivy has fairly comfortable bedding, especially for those with two karrimats. But the drips off the roof were a bit of a pest later on, icicles on the roof began to grow... at least the drips then stopped. For both Sunday and Monday the weather was fine. A bit cool. But clear and still. Views were superb. Mt Aspiring standing proud over the ridge between Mt. Clarke and Rees Saddle. Sunday's trip was up towards the big E, in knee deep snow. The brave other OTMCers broke the trail, which we thought was very nice of them. A chamois (?) was busy breaking its own trail, and came quite close to us. Must have been lonely. Maybe it's spouse was overseas.

All summit attempts that day failed. No flags were to be seen on top. Just the banners of viciously blown snow. Strong wind continued all weekend; this veritable jet stream came down to just above the point we got to. A prominent shoulder made a blissful place for lunch in the still conditions. It was extremely quiet. The big question was "Where have all the kea gone?" We expected a whole basinful.



The Forbes Mountains from above Kea Basin (PHOTO Antony Pettinger)

Descending to the bivy (or should it be called icebox?) Ross and Richard looked into the upper bivy. Snow had been driven in and it was damp, but the view might just compensate for these exquisite little inconveniences. Much beer was produced from the depths of packs. Quite a nice touch. But we forgot to give any to our neighbours. Not even by way of thanks after they had broken the trail so well. Sorry, guys. We went home, again in a gentlemanly fashion. We took Jonette with us back to Dunedin, stopping in Queenstown at a quiet cafe for a snack, coffees and fresh juice. Very nice.

Richard Pettinger, for Brian Craig and Ross Davies (yes, we're still alive!)

SILVER PEAKS FOR MASOCHISTS

June 22, 1997

Author: Richard Pettinger

Published in Bulletin 567, July 1997

Day trip on 22 June, 1997: "Near enough to the Shortest day".

In the lead up to this trip, I didn't want to let on about the destination I'd planned for this trip. I didn't want to be the only one going. The less said the better, I thought. It'll be a surprise and people will get a chance to see some untouched Silver Peaks bush close up. Face to face in fact.

Now, I knew that most Dunedin Masochists would be at the beach at the polar plunge, and there was the alternative trip of Trevor's (a weekend of getting lost in the Catlins bush). So, there was plenty of masochism to choose from and delight you! Nevertheless 8 turned up for the Silver Peaks. That's a bit too many, really, for such intimate contact bush bashing... Among the numbers were some who had only just started out tramping. And, hey, what was the SAR contact doing coming on the trip??



From pt. 588 (Greengage Track) looking over the Silverstream towards Mosgiel (PHOTO Antony Pettinger)

The whole day was gloomy: Black clouds and strong winds. But not wet or especially cold. I felt strangely optimistic. The rest clearly looked committed. (Certainly they should have been...) Obviously quite deranged. But hey, this trip couldn't be worse than being tied up and lashed by a set of sharpened crampons, (or whatever trampers do these days for kicks). Could it?

We parked by the official start of the Walkways on Semple Road. Once underway, the leader (blush) promptly got off the track descending Hightop to Green Ridge. But, bashing through the scrub is good for masochists. So they didn't mind the slightly earlier-than- expected introduction to the day's ration of torture... "Who wants to walk on the Pineapple Track everyday, anyway?" said David.

About 5 minutes this side of the Green Hut site we turned left and plunged upwards (can you "plunge upwards"?) into the scrub. Over the top of the high point we went, then down onto the prominent ridge that leads to the upper fork in Silverstream. After about half an hour going down the ridge, we called a halt. We took time to think about our progress and the shortness of the day, over lunch. Should we turn around and go home? - and make it the shortest day trip ever (never mind being the shortest day)? Well, after due consideration, we piked. Turned tail. Fled. Rowan led us back to the high point in double quick time. We had hardly had a chance to sustain any decent injuries. But we weren't ready for home just yet "Let's go to Possum Hut. Get a different type of round trip out of it..." was suggested. So, we did.

Jonette led us from Green, past a thoroughly dry pond, down the lovely track to Possum. The stained glass windows on the hut are gone, and so are the bunks. But the hut is still there, with its wonderful stone chimney supporting a hanging garden. Not so long ago, John Cocks and Nicki Hodgson had gone down to look at the disgusting midden of old and recent rubbish that had been thrown down the bank. They found lots of beer bottles, and carted them up and stacked them by the hut, letting me know they were there. I managed to carry about a third of them out. I'll get the rest later. (Some might scrub up well enough to bottle beery beverages in.)

We followed the track up "Eucalypt Spur". But found recent track work had made it difficult to walk on. Neatly chopped snow-tussock marked the track. Drying grass blades lay IN the track. And, as you all know, this is slippery stuff. Furthermore, when it's several centimetres thick, it is treacherous. However, hidden cunningly among it, we found many lethal sharp pointed stumps of slashed scrub (mostly native shrubs] - up to 150 mm high. This would have been a disastrous combination for anyone coming down, slipping, and sitting on them. We broke some of the stumps off. But, be warned! We didn't get the lot. Masochists, of course, might like to rush headlong down the track and see how much pain they can enjoy.

Anyway, we decided that the round trip we had planned, into the headwaters of Silverstream, then onto Swampy, would have suited about four people better, and in summer. (For adequate daylight hours, you understand, not for some namby-pamby notion of pleasantness of weather). Choice of date should coincide with a period of incessant drizzle. As we got back to the vehicles, apologies were expressed to all for the lack of actual masochism. A poor show, with not a single death, not even a severed limb.

Richard Pettinger for David Barnes, Rowan Meddings, Chris Wells, Jonette Service, Stuart Hoskin, Tony Malcolm and Phil Dowsett Thanks to Anne-Marie Barnes for being a last minute ring-in for SAR contact, when David decided to come along after all.

YELLOW RIDGE – ROCKY RIDGE – GREEN RIDGE

May 18, 1997

Author: Beverley McGowan

Published in Bulletin 567, July 1997

Eight of us ventured out on this cool but clear morning to begin the loop ridge tramp from the Tunnels Track. After a short diversion to the Tunnels to see the wetas, the climb began to Yellow Hut. Robyn (President) led a trip some time ago to clear the track of gorse, and it is certainly an improvement since the last time I was up there. Much to my surprise, young, fit, lanky, energetic Bradley had a sore knee and was bringing up the rear. We didn't go to the Gap but stopped at the Yellow/Rocky Ridge junction for lunch. We could see a person bobbing up and down throwing stuff near the wire safety fence at the bluff on the Gap Track. Chris satisfied our curiosity by running over and finding out what he was doing. Apparently he was camped up there somewhere and was clearing gorse. Along Rocky Ridge we went, and another diversion up onto Silver Peak, before continuing down Green Ridge. The fog began to drift in at about 3pm, but by that time we were on the well-marked track, so it wasn't a problem.



Trampers on Yellow Ridge, with cloud over Blueskin Bay (PHOTO Antony Pettinger)

A good days tramp. Beverley McGowan for Trevor, Chris, Bradley, David, Rowan, Tony and Robyn (not the President)

WANGALOA AREA

June 29, 1997

Author: Elspeth Gold

Published in Bulletin 567, July 1997

9 people and Bidy (the wonder dog) headed down south to the little settlement called Measley Beach just south of Toko Mouth. The day was fine, the company great and the tide was on its way out. We headed south along the beach until some cliffs halted our progress. A slight detour up saw us over the cliffs and then down onto the beach on the other side. Lunch was had about an hour short of Wangaloa. Bidy did the 'I'm the hungriest dog in the world' scrounging and did quite well out of it.



After a break of about an hour the tide had gone out far enough for us to walk around the base of the cliffs. I was thrilled to see the fossils that I fondly remembered from my childhood were still there. (I was starting to think I'd imagined them). Everyone (even Bidy) went ooh and aah at the fossils and it was back to the cars for a trip home via Kaitangata and Lake Tuakitoto. All in all, a great place to fossick on the beach and hone up the beachcomber skills. Thanks to all who attended.

Elspeth Gold

SNOW ON 25 MILE SPUR

May 31 – June 2, 1997

Author: Trevor Blogg

Published in Bulletin 567, July 1997

The van and trailer made a fairly prompt departure from the clubrooms on Friday (30th May), The night was chilly when we made our meal stop at Alexandra, but there was no sign of some severe weather forecast for that night.

Our luck held out until some way after Queenstown, when the rain started gradually and became heavier, with some spectacular lightning as we entered Glenorchy. Enquiries at the backpackers' revealed that our other party had gone on to Muddy Creek, so we followed along hoping to spot an abandoned barn, etc. in which to pass a dry night. We finally settled on a bush area about 2 km short of Muddy Creek, and tents were pitched in the rain. I elected to sleep in the club trailer, which is very waterproof, if a little resonant.



Rees Valley, before 25 Mile Hut Site and Creek (PHOTO Antony Pettinger)

By morning the rain had stopped, and breakfast was soon being prepared. My group consisted of Robyn, Grant and myself, but Grant wasn't located until we got to Muddy Creek carpark, where he was just waking up. After he'd had breakfast and packed up his tent, we set off up the Rees valley in bright, sunny conditions. As one of the other groups' 4-wheel drive (which was to be driven to 25 Mile hut) approached, we wondered if they'd take our packs. They consented all too readily, and we soon realised that we'd not only given away our weight, but our water, food, sun-hats, maps etc. leaving us a not-very-well equipped walking party (moral -

don't try to be too smart). As things turned out, the 4-wheel drive only went about 2km, well short of 25 Mile hut, so we recovered our packs. The rest of the day was sociable, pleasant and uneventful, with a lunch stop just north of 25 Mile Creek at a potentially useful rock bivy shelter - big enough to cover a medium sized tent, or just to shelter under, if an emergency (such as waiting out high levels in 25 Mile Creek) ever arose. We pressed on to Shelter Rock hut and that evening it started to snow quite early. By Sunday morning there was decent covering of snow all around, and it was icy underfoot. Our group set off up the fairly steep and scrubby vegetation just a little beyond the hut with the aim of getting to 25 Mile Saddle, then either dropping into 25 Mile Creek or working our way down 25 Mile Spur to spend the night at 25 Mile hut (consistent naming of landmarks!).

The snow slowed us down somewhat, and as we got higher it got dryer and more powdery - mostly too soft to hold our weight. After a lunch stop we made the saddle and decided that the steep drop into 25 Mile Creek just wasn't on. We all had ice-axes, but the light powder snow, while acting as a good lubricant for sliding down over the very steep rocks and tussocks, would have offered no grip for self-arresting. The ridge (to be followed by negotiating the spur), however, looked promising and Robyn had been given good directions by a local resident. We climbed from the saddle at 1545m to the high point on the ridge at 1728m, but here it narrowed to about 1m wide or less - loose schist with its treacherous coating of powder snow. We judged it too dangerous to carry on, so dropped back and attempted a descent to bypass this feature - at first the descent was about 35°, but even at this gradient Grant had an involuntary slide. As it steepened to about 45°, and there was no safe run-out, I decided to call off that alternative and, discretion being the better part of valour, we climbed back up and retraced our day's steps back to Shelter Rock hut.

The day was by no means wasted as we'd had full sun all day, with barely a breath of wind, and magnificent views to the Earnslaw massif at the west and the Richardson Mountains to the east of the ridge. I took several good photos, including giant spear grasses in the fresh snow, and I'd been able to observe some interesting weather phenomena to help me in a forthcoming exam (which I'd have been at home studying for if I was a truly diligent student).

The walk out on Monday was pleasantly uneventful, with the sun continuing to shine most of the day.

Trevor Blogg

ALFORD FOREST (MT SOMERS)

May 17-18, 1997

Author: Jean Tremlett

Published in Bulletin 568, August 1997

I arrived with the van at the clubrooms in time for a cup of tea and a rest after my usual week at work. Even with the odd person forgetting their boots, we were on the road north by 6.15pm. Large Chinese meals in Oamaru and arrived at Mt. Somer Motor Camp by 11 pm. In bed and asleep by midnight. Only complaints - the beds were too soft!! We would all recommend the cabins. Ken had arranged for someone to drop us off at the Woolshed Creek car park on Saturday morning and pick us up at the other end of the track, Sharplin Falls car park at 3.30pm on Sunday.

Saturday turned out to be a lovely sunny day, cool if you stopped too long. There were 9 of us and the plan was to tramp together. There are two huts on this track. The first is Mt. Somers, which is two and a half hours from the Woolshed Creek car park. The next is Pinnacles Hut, another two and a half hours from the end of the road. The idea was to spend Saturday night at Pinnacles Hut, and have an easy day on Sunday. The track I refer to is actually called Mt. Somers Subalpine Walkway and is 17km long. Walkway is not really an accurate description, in the same way that the Silver Peaks walkway is hardly a walkway!



The previous Woolshed Creek Hut, Mt Somers (PHOTO Antony Pettinger)

The track/walkway starts off from Coal Miner's Flat along Woolshed Creek. As you may have guessed, in the past there has been coal-mining in the area, none of it very successful. Not all that far into the trip the track divides into the ridge route and the canyon route. The ridge

route takes an hour to get to Trig R and is interesting historically, while the canyon route follows the creek, is said to more scenic, and takes 2 hours to get to Trig R. After some indecision and conflicting reports on times and distances from a great variety of sources Chris and Steve decided to take the ridge route and the rest of us the canyon route. The Lonely Planet book on tramping in NZ was particularly keen on the canyon route. The plan was to meet at Trig R. At this point I shall point out that up to now we had been tramping through regenerating forest. As we got further along the canyon we got into black beech forest, which was new to me. As far as I understand, black beech gets its name from the black appearance of its bark, which is not caused by the tree but by a fungus living on the bark. As we passed through younger (shoulder high) trees I noticed that the bark was not yet black, but in the older trees it was always black. The black fungus has a spongy appearance and produces a dilute honey that drips off the trees. Unfortunately, I am not the only European who likes those trees, my friend the wasp does as well. Our next diversion was the Sidewinder Track that links the canyon and ridge tracks. We decided to leave our packs at the bottom of this track that climbs steeply through ancient bush to the Blackburn Mine on the ridge track. The bush is ancient as it is believed to be one of the few pieces of bush to have escaped pre- European fires. (You can't blame us for everything!)

Jean Tremlett.

To be continued next month, (yes, Jean, you do need to finish writing this report!)

(2021 Update – there never was a Part Two, so this report will always remain unfinished...)



Woolshed Creek Hut (PHOTO Antony Pettinger)

BETHUNES GULLY / GRAHAMS BUSH

July 20, 1997

Author: Jacqui Cornelissen

Published in Bulletin 568, August 1997

Seven people went on this trip, six meeting at the clubrooms and one at Bethunes Gully. We decided to take our cars to the Albert Arms and carpool from there. Kerry, John and I went in Sheila's car to Bethunes Gully where we met up with Katherine and Sheila, Colleen and Denise taking my car to Graham's Bush. The day was fine but cold, we soon got warm though, walking up the hill from Bethunes Gully to Mt. Cargill. At the top we got a wonderful view of the harbour, calm and glistening in the sunshine, and as we walked to Buttars Peak we could see all the way out to Waitati and the Silver Peaks. When I was up this way in May, I couldn't see anything because of all the fog, so it was nice to get a view this time. We met up with Sheila, Colleen and Denise at the Organ Pipes and swapped car keys. They had enjoyed a steady climb as far as Mt. Cargill Road but were puffing a bit climbing from there. The Organ Pipes aren't as impressive as they used to be, but one can still imagine what they were like when looking at the tall columns of rock still left standing at the top above all the rubble. From there it's all downhill through Graham's Bush with a very pretty waterfall amongst the bush towards the end of the track. It's a good track but a bit muddy in places, I wished I'd had my stick with me.



Mt Cargill Plane Table with cloud over the Otago Harbour and Peninsula (PHOTO Antony Pettinger)

I found my car where Sheila had left it at the end of Hall Road, so we all got in and I dropped Katherine off at her car at Bethunes Gully taking the shortcut through Stevensons Ave and North Road. We then went to the Albert Arms where some of us indulged in yummy toasted doorstep sandwiches for lunch. All in all a good day was had with pleasant company, fine weather and last but not least, good food!

Jacqui Cornelissen for Sheila Young, Colleen Tipene. Denise Teasdale, Kerry Burke, John Justice and Katherine Stopforth.



Buttar's Peak and Otago Harbour (PHOTO Antony Pettinger)

WINTER KEPLER

August 9-10, 1997

Author: Nigel Boydell

Published in Bulletin 569, September 1997

The van was slightly late because the oil light kept coming on, then just before leaving we noticed the headlight on one side wasn't going. Never mind - off we went, one van and one car - but we were soon separated. The carload thinking 'has the van got into more problems, should we wait, go back or go on?'. All packs were in the trailer behind the van, but where was that? The van cruising along thinking 'where is the car?'. All problems were instantly solved by a friendly van to car cellular connection, and we established our positions and meeting point.

Very soon after we had met at Manapouri we were at the bar. Some workers who were digging a new tunnel through from West Arm to the West Coast were playing some music on an acoustic guitar and polishing off several cold beers. Before long we were all singing along and Wolfie was playing the guitar.



Takitimu Mountains from Kepler Track (PHOTO Antony Pettinger)

At the edge of Lake Manapouri I erected my tent as Paul slipped into his bivy bag which he was breaking in for the first time. We woke to a foggy morning and headed off to the start of the Kepler Track. We arrived to see about 20 to 30 OUTC members emerging from tents. As we gained altitude we broke through the low mist to see hilltops poking through a white blanket below - Paul has a very good photo of this. The track became quite icy as we approached the snowline, so it was good to reach the deeper snow. After lunch at Luxmore Hut we plugged our

way to the top of Mt. Luxmore for some great views. Some had taken skis and others had their trusty ground sheets. Either way, we all made quick time as we descended the slopes, then had snow fights at the bottom.

We were met back at the hut by another group of OTMC members who had decided to come in their car at the last minute. The cooking began - there were billies everywhere. There must have been about 40 people in the hut that night and it was very entertaining as some OUTC members started rearranging the furniture for some indoor climbing and balancing skills. After all possibilities had been mastered it was back on with the gear and headlamps and off for a midnight, caving adventure. The rest of us decided to explore our sleeping bags and do the caves the next morning.



Kepler Track and Mountains (PHOTO Antony Pettinger)

The limestone caves were formed by a stream which we followed down through small gaps and into larger caverns you could do star jumps in. There's stalactites and other interesting rock formations to see. After we had climbed down for about an hour the stream disappears under a small slit in the rock and you can't go any further. There are several side caves to the main stream you can explore also.

After lunch we headed back towards society. Thanks to Greg for organising the trip and to everyone for the great company.

Nigel Boydell.

DESTINATION OAMARU – PLANET EARTH

August 9, 1997

Author: Chris Wells

Published in Bulletin 569, September 1997

Amid discussions about dangerous liaisons within OTMC and other trivia, we passed the one and half hours drive to Oamaru. Finding Orana Park, we set out along the Oamaru Walkway. After trudging through several backyards (or so it felt), we stopped to admire the distant snow-capped mountains. In her fervor to forge the trail, our fearless leader took a shortcut to the hospital (almost to Mount Everest, but not quite!). But with none of us suffering from exhaustion (yet!) we retraced our tracks back into the pine forest, then down the hill past close encounters of the goat kind and back into suburbia.

The ducks in the gardens enjoyed Tony's lunch, and the overgrown kids in the group tested the playground equipment for safety, fun, value and sturdiness. With the next photo competition in mind, cameras poised, lights flashing, Kodak's profits soaring, Jacqui's stomach churning (a spinning merry-go-round after lunch doesn't help!), the hooligans posed, then forged onwards and upwards and downwards through the culvert, avoiding spiders, puddles and mud, while the more cautious ones took the high road over the railway line.

Back to the rural scene and some serious tramping, before the highlight of the day - ICE-CREAM!!! And what ice-creams - the words Mount Everest come to mind yet again! Only in reverse colour - 4 scoops of white delight topped by luscious crackly chocolate topping - the men showed how to win a demolition derby. Ducking into a beckoning market, they also showed the women how to "Shop Till You Drop", seeking out colour coordinated walking sticks for their red or pink tramping attire. Which was the outstanding feature by which two female locals later reunited our inadvertently split party.

After pampering by her aunty, Elspeth joined us and the now complete group puddled through the rock pools of Bushy Beach, past the pongy shag shit, and onto the higher trails to the gun emplacements and "invisible" lighthouse. More reminiscing and gossip at the Oamaru Lookout before descending to the cars and heading homeward. The majority of the party entrusted their precious lives to the competent drivers and indulged in some well earn 40 winks on the way to Young Street.

Thanks Jean!!!!

Chris Wells, on behalf of Elspeth, Tony, Robyn, Jacqui, Jean and Kerry.

A SHORT ACCOUNT OF WHERE WE WENT (OTAGO PENINSULA)

August 31, 1997

Author: David Barnes

Published in Bulletin 569, September 1997

On August 31 eleven people turned up for the daytrip entitled "All Day On The Peninsula - M/F". Boots on and walking by 9.15am, we headed around Portobello Road to Company Bay and up McTaggart Street to reach the McTaggart Track, (track marked by OTMC), a day before it was closed for lambing. Down Camp Road, back onto Portobello Road and up Bacon Street brought us to our second track and first grunt. Highcliff Road meant a quick game of 'Spot Robyn's house' and an excuse for a breather before a wander up to the start of the Hoopers Inlet Route - 'suitable for fit and agile people'. We wondered whether we qualified but gave it a crack anyway. Up the stairs, past Harbour Cone, along the ridge to a view of Hoopers Inlet and mutterings about a morning tea break. Down a steep route (wire rope provided) and across a bog brought us to the Nyhon Track, (also marked by the OTMC) and another grunt. A lunch break was called at the top.



OTMC track work for the Otago Peninsula Track Project - 1993 (PHOTO Antony Pettinger)

Down onto Sandymount Road where Gerald and Ann opted for a semi-pike by following Ridge Road to Sandfly Bay. The rest of us ascended to the summit of Sandymount and then headed down through the dunes to Sandfly Bay. The old 'three steps up, two down trick' eventually got us up to Seal Point Road, which we followed to Braidwood Road. Arriving at Macrocarpa

Cottage (remember the Wildtrack TV series?) at Boulder Beach at 3.40pm meant decision time. Plan A was up to Highcliff, Karetai Road, Highcliff Road, District (Sunnybrae) Track and back to Macandrew Bay - likely to take three hours. Paradise Track - Greenacres Street was estimated at one and a half hours while Buskin Track - Greenacres Street would probably take two plus hours. Eventually Doug, Robyn the Prez, Rowan and Tracey went up Buskin and the rest went up Paradise. Arriving at Macandrew Bay at 5.00, I drove back up Greenacres Street to meet Doug and co. probably 15 minutes behind us.

An excellent, fairly full day (with 1180m of uphill) was had by: Doug Forrester, Rowan Meddings, Robyn Bridges, Robyn Bell, Tracey Whare. Mel Wilson, Rhonda Wilson, Gerald Paterson, Ann Paterson, Peter Davison and David Barnes.

A NON-TRIVIAL DAY TRIP ON THE PENINSULA WITH DAVID BARNES

August 31, 1997

Author: Robyn Bridges

Published in Bulletin 569, September 1997

And he wasn't kidding. But I should have known this from the letter David wrote to the Bulletin some time back about Day Trips NOT being Day Walks, (wash your mouth out please).



Last Sunday eleven of us did a Peninsula double coast to coast. We started out at Macandrew Bay, walked down the main road in the direction of the Albatross Colony, turned right (of

course) and headed up, passing a farmer who asked us to tread gently near his birthing ewes, through a gate, down a paddock, past a sign (in ground which David assured us was like concrete to dig), along a road, down to the main road again and past the Fletcher House, down into a Bay, another turn right, and up to the end, (Bacon Street extension?). Uphill towards Harbour Cone, well the road that runs across the face and then up some giant steps labelled 'For the fit and agile only" and onto the spur of Harbour Cone, phew morning tea, then down the other side 'please use the ropes if you need to', across a board walk (it was nice to see care is being taking of the environment), up another hill, through some manuka and out into the open for lunch views and a group photo.

Down again and up again to Sandymount right up to the trig, then down a bit and along a bit [for a bit there it was 'which way?' but Doug found it D.K, which means we will forgive him for forgetting the scones and cream) and into the sand dunes of Sandfly Bay where the OTMC Human Flying competition was held. Safely landing on the beach it was along the beach and, whoops please mind the seal, and up the sand dunes at the other end. A brief respite at the end of the road and off upwards, but no, not to the top. It was left to Boulder Beach though not quite. A little discretion was being enforced, it was penguin bonking time. A revision of the return route on account of the puff outside Macrocarpa Cottage, and just in case anyone felt like being extended, David showed us a return route with an extra loop in it!! We didn't and two groups set off, via just two routes, back to Macandrew Bay.

I often marvel at the resource our Club offers and none more so than this Day Trip! Thanks, David, for a whole day on the Peninsula. The trip was well planned as was the weather. The history regarding the role the OTMC played in helping to put these tracks together was enlightening.

Robyn Bridges and ten others.

MOUNTAINCRAFT INSTRUCTORS COURSE

May 31 – June 2, 1997

Author: Lynda Jaket

Published in Bulletin 570, October 1997

This was a three-day South Island course run by Federated Mountain Clubs of NZ [FMC]. It was a 'teach you how to teach' course, aimed at all levels, ensuring that by the end of the course everyone was competent and confident at teaching whatever skills they already had. The club subsidised two people to attend the course: - Jay Piggott and Lynda Jaket. The cost was \$150 each (already discounted 50% by FMC] of which the club paid \$75. This was in return for the participants to contribute to and run club alpine training in the future.

I found the course to be VERY BENEFICIAL and very well run, with the highest calibre of instructors. I think that the price (even at the full \$150) was very cheap. The ratio was approx. 4 participants to each instructor (5 instructors in total). The main benefit I obtained from the course would be the confidence in passing my knowledge onto others and in correcting people's techniques. We participated in a lot of pretend teacher/student situations and as a consequence I also picked up a lot of technical skills from other participants. As the quantity of snow outside was a bit pathetic, we covered a lot of discussion topics indoors including group management, teaching methods, navigation, and designing content for Snowcraft courses (i.e. what topics MUST be covered and at what stage they should be introduced - at Snowcraft 1,2 or 3 etc).

The instructors were always willing to help and even in "time-out" they were enthusiastic to discuss or demonstrate technical situations. At night, we set up a Z-pulley system inside (using table legs etc.) to demonstrate how to extract someone from a crevasse (unassisted hoist). We also used our spare time at night to cover other eventualities such as "escaping the system" (translation, getting out of the belay system to enable you to help the other person who may have got into difficulties). The practical work with transceivers was invaluable.

We stayed on site at the Christchurch Ski Hut on the field, and so the course was full on. If we were not practising our teaching, or participating in setting up Z-pulleys, or involved in organised group discussion, then we were bound to be discussing climbing trips and building up our enthusiasm (and our lists of where we must go and climb next). The food was excellent, the accommodation brilliant (hot showers), and it was great meeting other keen climbers of various experience levels. One night, people showed their favourite slides, which was truly inspiring.

I was absolutely thrilled to bits to be asked by the club to attend this course. I had never even thought about teaching my skills before, but this course certainly inspired me. I love getting into the Alpine environment and really do enjoy being able to share this with new enthusiasts, helping them out as they go. The only drawback about the course is that with the new technical skills and enthusiasm I've picked up, I've established that I NEED a whole lot more Alpine Toys - and they cost a lot of money - a huge amount more than the course itself!!!

Thank you to the club. I thoroughly support the idea of sending people to this course. Enthusiasm breeds enthusiasm, and you've got to be able to teach new people who are starting out, in order to maintain and increase the core of alpine climbers in the club. Let's put the M back in the OTMC, and let's keep it there... and we'll see you out there in those mountains.

Lynda Jaket

ROUTEBURN CLIMBING WEEKEND

August 30-31, 1997

Author: Stuart Hoskin

Published in Bulletin 570, October 1997

Friday, 8pm at the clubrooms, time for another weekend away. The Routeburn is our weekend destination, and hopefully the peak of Mt. Xenicus is our aim. A six-hour drive brings us to the start of the Routeburn Track, stopping only for food in Alexandra. Bed tonight is at Routeburn Falls hut, three hours away, as we tramp along through dense forest. It is a mild night, and it isn't long before warm clothes have been stripped off, and torch batteries start to die. The path steepens for the last hour, a hot cuppa is a reward for reaching the hut, and bed at 3.40am. Alarms rudely awaken us at 5.30am and by 7.00am at first light we head up above the waterfalls. We cross the narrow river almost immediately and stand at the base of Mount Xenicus. The summit at 1,910m stands 800m above us and is hidden in low clouds, as it would all day. Snow and strong winds further hampered our small and inexperienced group.



Mt Xenicus, from the Routeburn Track (PHOTO Antony Pettinger)

The slopes weren't too tough at the base but steepened after a couple of hundred metres, the soft snow slowing us down. A couple of steeper sections required a bit of scrambling and caution before we arrived on a slightly more level plateau about halfway up. The whole of the upper face stood before us. Tall cliffs directly below and to the left of the summit, so we headed right, towards a ridge that led up to the summit. In poor light and through snow it was difficult to clearly define slopes, and they weren't as easy as they first appeared. Beyond a

plateau, we climbed up a steep section to reach the ridge. The snow was very soft, and often wouldn't take my weight as I led up this slope. This section was very exhausting and frustrating as progress slowed. The ridge line was six feet wide and not too steep but then came to a knife-edge ridge, the top of which could be cupped by hand. Either side fell nearly vertically for 300 metres or more. Rob led the way across, the snow which was soft and ready to avalanche at any time. Certainly the scariest section of mountain I have ever climbed. A few voices, mine included, raised questions about continuing, especially as above the slopes increased and dangers to inexperienced eyes appeared worse. As a group we decided not to continue any further.

Lunch was taken here with Mt. Xenicus still in the cloud, but the lower cloud melted revealing good views over Lake Harris, Harris Saddle and Conical Hill. After a cautious descent on steeper slopes, we were able to glissade down some sections and enjoy a couple of snowball fights, with relief that the worst was behind us. We didn't conquer but we survived, so the decision to abort was the right one. The descent brought us down to Lake Harris at the head of the Routeburn Valley. The lake was frozen and covered in six inches of slushy snow. We walked around to the outlet, where we followed the tiny stream, taking us back to the hut, arriving at 2.30pm. On this section back, the cloud lifted just long enough to see the summit, our highest point, our lunch stop, and our route up.



Rockburn Valley from Sugarloaf Pass (PHOTO Antony Pettinger)

The next day brought another early start, again at 5.30am as we aimed to cross over Sugarloaf Pass to the Rockburn Hut, and then via Lake Sylvan to the Routeburn road. We headed back

down the Routeburn valley to the flats for a last look at Mt. Xenicus, now bathed in sunshine with clear blue skies above.

Back at the van, we dumped our excess gear in the trailer, then headed off towards Sugarloaf Pass, except for Chris and Vanessa who walked down to Lake Sylvan and around to the Rockburn Hut to meet us for lunch. The narrow and often unmarked track begins a couple of minutes back up the Routeburn Track. It's steep and through dense vegetation (one bend we named Green Valley after some nose clearing]. It was no surprise we lost the track. The track crossed the stream at some point, but we didn't, so we bush-bashed up, scrambling over fallen trees and thick vegetation. Climbing up, we hoped to re-discover the track, 4½ hours later we found it again!



Lower Dart, Glenorchy and Lake Wakatipu from Sugarloaf Pass (PHOTO Antony Pettinger)

Snow lay to just below the tree-line, and just before midday we reached Sugarloaf Pass. The scenery is incredible, looking back across the Routeburn and up the whole length of the Dart Valley, dominated by Earnslaw, a huge long wall of mountain, forested below and white above. Still no sign of the track back down, so we bush-bashed down, with the slopes much steeper on the Rockburn side. Though not lost, we were heading around the contours of the slope, so every step took us further away from the track.

The slopes soon eased, as did vegetation and we could descend easier. To our good fortune, we bumped into a hunter who pointed us in the right direction. We had to round a small lake and boggy ground. One harmless looking trickle entering the lake fooled Rob, who promptly disappeared up to his chest. Round the lake, over a tiny rise and eventually we stood on the track, much to everyone's relief. Rockburn Hut is reached 20 minutes later on the banks of the

Dart River. Chris and Vanessa had long gone, leaving a note to say they are off to meet up with Jay and his group at 4.00pm, the meet up time.

After a quick lunch it was a fast pace along a muddy meandering path, past Lake Sylvan and across the bridge over the Routeburn, ignoring bridge closed signs, arriving at the van just before 5.00pm. A weekend long to be remembered and one that will remain with me even when I am back home in London next year.

Stuart Hoskin for Nigel, Rob, Tony, Brad, Chris and Vanessa.

SNOWCRAFT 1997 – SNOW TWO

September 6-7, 1997

Author: Phil Dowsett

Published in Bulletin 570, October 1997

Following the very successful Snowcraft 1 course fifteen club members (including the five instructors) set off on Friday in eager anticipation of spending the weekend above the Remarkables ski field. The van and two cars made a rendezvous in Alexandra for greasy sustenance then pressed on to the Kawarau Falls Motor Camp. The cabins were the luxury accommodation with heaters and showers for us to savour prior to the night to be spent enveloped in ice at 1800 metres.

The next morning arrived with heavy frost and the promise of fine weather. The team got to the ski field before most of the skiers and set off up the slippery slopes to the base camp at Lake Alta. The warmup exercise certainly worked, Trevor. Suitable sites for snow caves were sighted then after scroggin and water had been consumed digging began. The snow cave from a previous expedition was cleared of windblown snow but as the roof had sunk it was abandoned and a new cave begun. The two other groups settled on digging snigloos and keeping warm in the ample sunshine was no problem. Work continued after lunch although time was found to develop the team's skills at sliding a snowy slope on pack liners. Instructor Jay considered it completely unnecessary and was captured on film.

We weren't alone up there. There was a group diving through a hole in the ice (400mm thick) in the middle of Lake Alta. Two other clubs were having snowcraft instruction and a group was training SAR dogs. The latter were keen that we left our snow caves intact so that they could use them in the dog training on Sunday. It is amazing who you meet in the mountains.

Snowy homes completed there was time to investigate the safe working loads of snow anchors. The snow people crossed Lake Alta to a suitable slope and found out what causes a snow stake to pull out. Somewhat cold and certainly hungry we trekked back to the snow caves and ate our dinner in the darkening evening. Some of us had a degree of trepidation as we prepared for our first night in a snow cave. We need not have worried because although the air temperature inside hovered around freezing we were toasty warm in our sleeping bags. In our snigloo a lantern suspended from a snow stake driven into the roof provided good lighting but in the morning plenty of light filtered through the snow and came in the entrance. There were no drippy roofs but neither did gear thaw out unless it was stashed in immediate proximity to the sleeping bag. It was probably something to do with the pressure of responsibility that caused at least two instructors to talk in their sleep. Others like Nigel omitted only muffled sounds implying he was well fed.

Next day the cloud was down covering the tops of the Remarkables. After a somewhat sluggish start by those enjoying the toasty warmth of their sleeping bag, most of the group set out for Double Cone. Aaron had his skies so went to explore Wye Creek. The ridge leading to Double Cone had a number of impressive cornices which gave the instructors the opportunity to ram

home previous lessons on the care that must be taken on snow covered ridges. Near the top we could now see the other party that was ahead on the route to the summit As we did not have enough gear for us all to climb to the top and we would have to wait for the others to descend we turned back and headed for frozen waterfalls in the Wye Creek Valley.

The ice climbers amongst us decided there was nothing suitable and after lunch we headed back. Aaron caught up with us and after knocking off a lesser peak overlooking the ski field we descended to camp and Mark who was waiting for us. We travelled through the ski field in various manners, but it was Mark that cadged a ride on the chair lift. Other's bum slid to the amusement of the skiers.

A safe journey home and more roadside feeds concluded the weekend. The course comes highly recommended by all participants, it was fun and highly instructive. Special thanks go to all the instructors who were excellent and generously gave up their weekend to share their skills.

Phil Dowsett

SNOWCRAFT 1997 – SNOW THREE

September 20-21, 1997

Author: Mike Brettell

Published in Bulletin 570, October 1997

The usual Friday night trip again. Only this time we were off to Fox Glacier. The only real upset for the night was the fact that DoC had pulled down the old concrete shelter on the west side of the Haast Pass and have replaced it with a covered picnic shelter. Many a happy night I have spent at this spot. Saturday morning we woke to overcast weather but were on the glacier by 8.32am. Trevor, Jay, Toby and Aaron were to be our instructors for the weekend. We split into groups and proceeded to learn the in and outs of glacier travel. In the course of the day we dropped into holes, hung off ice cliffs and practised the techniques required to extract each other from a crevasse situation. Not something that was entirely easy when you are carrying all of your gear and hanging onto someone who has gone over a large drop. You spend a lot of time organising the way in which you carry gear on the climbing harness. A great day was had by all and there was plenty to talk about at the pub that evening.

Sunday morning Jay and Toby had decided an early start was in order for those who were keen. A full van load awoke around 4.30am and headed toward the glacier. Some of us value our sleep. We all met up again later in the morning. Those who had left early were well conversed in the use of the Y-pulley system. Trevor was to announce that everybody would be dropping off into an actual crevasse and would have to extract themselves using prussics. Jay and Toby demonstrated while Trevor and Aaron explained the finer details. Everyone negotiated the crevasse with ease due to the excellent tuition we had received.

Thanks to Trevor and co. for using their knowledge to teach other members of the club. It was a most valuable weekend and I hope it continues to be supported

Mike Brettell.

MISTAKE CREEK – HUT CREEK

September 27-28, 1997

Author: Rowan Meddings

Published in Bulletin 570, October 1997

Friday evening ten trampers set out for Te Anau, with a tea stop in Gore. We reached our campsite at the Upper Eglinton Valley carpark at 11,30pm. Up early, we met Scott Tibbett at the entrance of the Mistake Creek track and we all set off at 8.30am. The day was overcast and apart from a few spots of rain here and there it stayed fine.



Three-wire bridge across the West Eglinton, near Mistake Creek (PHOTO Antony Pettinger)

The trek up Mistake Creek went without a hitch and we stopped for lunch at the head of the valley. Turning left and following the river up we came to the waterfall below the U Pass

plateau. Here was our first major hurdle - where and how to climb it? After viewing the options we decided to take the true left which proved to have it's scary moments but everybody came through with flying colours.

By now we were well into the snow line, which proved to be very soft and made the going very slow and difficult. Our original plan was to camp on the U Pass plateau, but the snow was too deep and too soft. It would have been a very cold and uncomfortable night. Since we had made reasonable time and arrived there at approximately 4pm we decided to carry on over U Pass and camp at the head of Hut Creek below the snow line.



U Pass, from Mistake Creek side (PHOTO Doug Forrester collection)

Travelling down the gut from U Pass, the snow was a lot firmer which made the going a lot easier and quicker.

We set up camp just on dark, approximately under Glade Pass. It was Tony Malcolm's 29th birthday, and members of the group decided to celebrate the occasion. You name it - they had it! Birthday cake, candles, marshmallows with cream, party hats, balloons, wine, and of course, a birthday song.

It rained all that night and the next day. Sunday, we boulder hopped half-way down Hut Creek until we picked up the marked track which led us down to the carpark at midday. Lunch in Te Anau, and home by 5.30pm.

Rowan Meddings on behalf of Robyn Bridges, Robyn Bell, Zena Roderique, Shelly Coleman, Vivienne Bresnell, Peter Sanderson, Nigel Boydell, Tony Malcolm, Chris Wells and Scott Tibbett

ORETI BRIDGE – ASHTON HUT

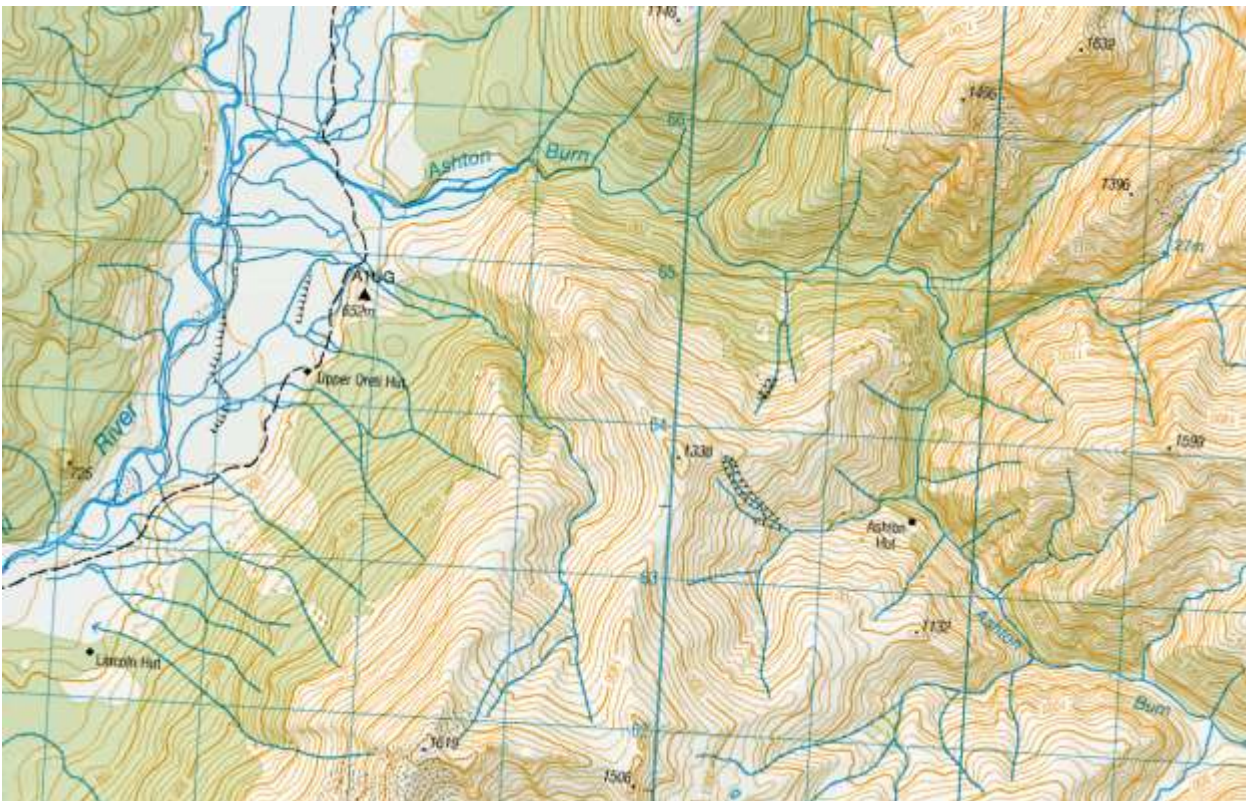
October 11-12, 1997

Author: Chris Dyson

Published in Bulletin 571, November 1997

We departed the club at 6.00pm on the dot, everyone itching to get on the road and begin another adventure. After a typical trip (with the usual greasy stop) we reached the southern Mavora Lake. We found a great camp spot next to the lake (not too close) and then settled down for the night.

We woke to a calm but overcast day, had breakfast, and then my group, which consisted of Trevor Blogg, Jonette Service, Sarah Smellie and myself, got organised and then we were dropped off over in the Oreti Valley by Lynda.



An easy stroll down the valley was a great start, but it felt funny walking down the valley at the start and not up. Trevor pointed out the ridge that we were to go up and he assured us that it wasn't as steep as it looked. We came to a mob of either very cautious sheep or very hungry sheep because they started to walk toward us, not away. After being entertained by the sheep we crossed the Ashton Burn and then started the climb. We slowly climbed our way up the tussocks. Trevor was right - it wasn't as steep as it appeared from a distance, but it was still pretty steep. We came to our first stop - after a few minutes of resting a member of our party decided that they wanted to go home - my pack! I noticed the pack rolling down the hill, but it took a couple of seconds to realise that it was my pack, so I thought I'd better stop resting and do something to stop it. I managed to grab a strap and carry it back up to the others.

We carried on around the ridge, avoiding the nasty mobs of Spaniards and gained some height for a nice, sheltered lunch spot. We had awesome panoramic views of the Oreti Valley, Jane and Smooth Peaks and the surrounding Eyre Mountains. After a well-deserved rest and a marvellous lunch courtesy of Jonette we carried on straight up the ridge and soon had an awesome view of the Ashton Burn gorge and its steep creeks flowing to the river. At this point we had two options - follow the ridge around and down to the hut or take the more direct route down one of the creeks. We decided to take the more direct route and then agreed that we were in no hurry to reach the hut, so we enjoyed the sun while it was out. Trevor walked down the ridge a bit and he spotted the small tin hut. We took off down via the creek, sliding on the tussocks and occasional patches of snow. We found this way hard going - at times we had to put our hands amongst the Spaniards and hold onto them, but it was more sheltered than the ridge as it was getting very windy. We finally came down to where we thought the hut was located, but no, one more ridge. Trevor looked around the corner to have a look at the hut. When he came back he told us that it was a little smaller than he remembered. After 8 hours of tramping with plenty of stops we finally reached the tin arrangement.

The hut was a lot nicer than it had looked from a distance. It was very windy now, but it was refreshing as we sat outside the hut and had a brew up. We went inside the hut - it had four bunks but only 3 mattresses, a great open fire, an eternal supply of Lea and Perrins Worcester sauce and a hut book which dated back to 1970, which I found very funny as I was born in 1979. After settling in we took off down through the beech forest to our water supply, the Ashton Burn, filled our bottles and returned to the hut. When we got back to the hut we had a great tea and pudding, thanks to Trevor. After tea I decided it was time to do some fishing (I thought I'd better seeing I'd carried my rod in). I fished for a while and decided that the only thing I was going to catch was a bit of beech tree (the river was surrounded by beech trees and steep banks) or a cold. I went back to the hut and we decided to have an early night. CREAK - CREAK - MOAN - GROAN. No, that's not my stomach, that's the hut. It was very windy. I was on the top bunk and it was moving - at times I thought the roof was going to come flying off, but we still managed to get a good night's sleep.

We woke to more wind and rain and we were soon out in it. We decided to go out around the ridge instead of the creek - this approach gave us more views of the Eyre Mountains, but we were soon amongst thick mist. After a couple of hours, we came to an unnamed peak which was to be our highest point for the weekend. We were in a bit of snow, good to have a change from the tussocks. After spending a while at the top we descended down, the mist started to clear and we had views back down to the hut and towards the Oreti Valley. After our slow descent through tussocks we were finally back on the valley floor, and we were greeted by some bloodthirsty sandflies. We now had to contend with a slightly swollen river, but in the end we made a very safe crossing. We then walked up the valley to the waiting van after our true wilderness weekend. Thanks to Lynda and Trevor for organising the trip.

Chris Dyson

TIMARU CREEK – DINGLE PEAK

October 18-19, 1997

Author: Michelle Longstreth

Published in Bulletin 571, November 1997

Friday evening, putting up a tent in the rain. Was this a sign for what was to come? We began with a brisk walk along the creek following in Arthur's large footsteps, but we were soon halted by the first of many river crossings. Timaru Creek was high and milky with snow run-off. The river was still too strong for us, even with linking together, so we backed off and out of the fast moving river. Finding a break in the river further downstream we managed to make our way across and after grovelling along the bank through Matagouri, up over rocks and scrub we came back to the river. Waist deep in the chilly water, we scraped through another section. Poor old Doug managed to find a deeper hole than Arthur and I.



Lower Timaru River from high-water access track (PHOTO Antony Pettinger)

In seeing the river to be more of a challenge than expected we decided to scramble up the true right of the river above the bush, where two and a half-hours after leaving the car we found ourselves still in sight of it. Above the bush the scenery opened out into beautiful tussock country. We made our way up a narrow ridge, crossing through Matagouri and scree that didn't seem to move, to a pass that overlooked Flats Hut. Dingle Peak came into view. We were surprised it was still covered in its thick winter coat. We knew our objective wasn't looking good, especially as it was lunch time and we still hadn't reached Flats Hut.

Bypassing the hut we sidled the true right of Deer Spur Creek, where it opened out into an amazing open tussock valley. It then became clear that to reach the unnamed saddle that leads over to Moonlight Hut we had to drop to the valley floor. Having sore toes, it was nice to travel up the creek bed on the upper true left creek of Deer Spur. It was getting late in the day and we were getting tired, which seemed to make life harder for ourselves as we left the creek at bushline, Sidling too high, we found ourselves up against the cliffs, hanging on by our fingernails to what little tussock there was. The pass was a welcome sight with excellent views all around. 5.45pm found us at Moonlight Hut, 10 hours after we had begun.

Sunday morning dawned another clear day. Unsure of Timaru Creek's water level we thought it best to leave Dingle Peak for another day, as we had no idea how long it may take us to get out. Little did we know how much of a breeze it would turn out to be as we took a high ridge sidle down from the hut back to Timaru Creek. Along to Flats Hut for lunch and an easy amble down Timaru Creek back to the car.



Head of Lake Hawea and the Hunter Valley from Dingle Peak (PHOTO Antony Pettinger)

What a difference in time when the water level is low. A note for trampers when leaving the vehicle - if you can't cross the first rivercrossing with some degree of safety, turn back and take the high graded road on the true right of the creek. The road does not go all the way - this route would be suitable for a moderate upward graded party.

Michelle Longstreth for my fun and adventurous friends, Doug Forrester and Arthur Blondell.

THE HUMP – PORT CRAIG

October 25-27, 1997

Author: Tony Malcolm

Published in Bulletin 571, November 1997

Eleven of us crammed into the van heading towards the Port Craig region. Rowan was the last pick-up so only part of his body sat on the seat! Tea stop was at Mataura - best value chips with plenty of salt, Stu's \$1.20 worth could have satisfied most of us. Thanks to Phil's brilliant navigation skills, combining different road surfaces and many lefts and rights we ended up at Bluecliffs. I thought camping on the beach was superb. It was wonderful to hear the waves roaring during the night. I woke up wondering why I had brought my dovetail drawers (strange dream), and where the hell I was - almost seasick there for a minute.

Alarms went off at 6am. Robyn gave commanding orders to pack up and leave before high tide (a good 2 hours of walking). Most of us, including Ken, hadn't eaten breakfast! Ken got his own back though, with his ritual fry-up later in the morning. The spur up to The Hump proved boggy in places. (Robyn, Ken, Phil and David separated and we arranged a time to meet up again on Monday). Apparently Phil discovered one mud hole knee deep. It was a real bonus not being first up to The Hump in this case. The views from The Hump were just spectacular with panoramic views of the coastline sweeping around and on the other side, Lake Hauroko and the Fiordland mountains. We were lucky with the weather - no rain but horrific side and tail winds that made heavy going, especially if you were in between strides. It felt like walking along a 30° slope, with some invisible person trying to push you over! Our group camped just below the tops in amongst the vegetation. While descending Vanessa and I found ourselves separated from the party, with Vanessa blowing her heart out on the whistle. Thankfully Stu came to the rescue and shortly we were reunited with the group.

Sunday morning was very cold. My tent was a good refuge from the cold winds, so I opted for breakfast inside my tent while the others ate theirs outside. Unfortunately it was time to go and I was getting the hurry up signs from most of the party. Coming down towards the Edwin Burn was a pleasant change - Fiordland bush which sheltered us from the windy conditions. Occasionally there was a clearing, which opened out to superb views. DoC would have been proud of us for re-ribboning the track. (A lot of the ribbons had come adrift). As a member of the OTMC I thought we did our bit to reestablish this track for future parties. It's probably the most well marked track in Fiordland.

Once down the Edwin Burn we dumped our gear in the bushes and stomped with the joy of no weight on our backs to an historical viaduct and return. A few of us crashed out sunbathing on or near the tables next to the oldest surviving wooden viaduct in the world. Made of Australian hardwood it is "125 metres long and 36 metres high. The track towards Port Craig (which seemed infinite) was, to say the least, a mud bath in places.

It was a beautiful evening and just as well, as the Port Craig Hut was full - several family groups and 3 members of the Fiordland Tramping Club. By the sounds of it the FTC members had taken it easy - day walks combined with sun bathing! They looked in horror as if we were

nutters, tramping 18 hours in two days to get to Port Craig, and still going strong! I guess we won't get any new members from Fiordland. Camping again, and just before darkness set in we had a close look at the relics surrounding Port Craig. Several carriages and remains of tracks all are corroding away. The Australian hardwood was surviving the elements better than the steel. Some of the equipment came from Priestman in Hull, England.

Stu, Vanessa and I decided to take a more leisurely pace back to the van. A cup of tea went down real well on the beach in the baking sun, with views of Stewart Island on the horizon! I thought it was a superb weekend - one to be remembered. I hope the OTMC will do this trip again. Thanks to the drivers - Phil, Robyn and Rowan for getting us there and back safely.

Tony Malcolm for Robyn Bridges, Ken Powell, Vanessa Johnson, Brad Wilson, Phil Dowsett, Pob Porteous, David Barnes, Rowan Meddings, Phil Keene and Stuart Hoskins.



MAUNGATUA TRAVERSE

October 19, 1997

Author: Rob English

Published in Bulletin 572, December 1997

Saturday afternoon, as I looked out at the pouring rain, I started to regret the idea of leading a walk over the Maungatua. Come Sunday morning things had much improved and on getting to the club rooms I found I was joined by 10 other hardy souls. The plan was to walk from Wesleydale camp to Woodside Glen and with any luck, keep the wind to our backs. Taking 4 cars allowed us to drop one off at the finish.

All cars arrived safely with no one getting lost. We donned our walking gear and were on our way by 10.15am. After a short walk through the campground and fields it was over a wire fence to find the start of the track proper. To find it you either have to be shown it or have a very good description as it is hidden behind bushes in the corner of a field and not shown on current maps! The track climbs up through bush which helped to keep the sun off us as we made our way up the steepest part of the climb for the day. Once out of the bush we had the satisfaction of looking out over the Taieri Plain and feeling as though we had made some progress. We followed the path up the fence line till we met a farm road that took us up almost to the ridge. Then we followed one of the many tracks up to the ridge and took a short rest to look at the view.

We continued to follow the fence line before crossing to reach the highest point by the overturned trig marker at 8 metres. We stopped for lunch - the weather coming from the south-west was threatening with the occasional drop of rain and a chill in the air, so sunbathing was out! We sat amongst the regenerating native plants out of the wind and watched a rather dark cloud cross the ridge further along our route while we sat in the sun. The view from here is quite impressive as it allows one to see Taieri Mouth Gorge, Waipori, Waiholo, Lake Mahinerangi, The Rock and Pillars, The Silver Peaks, and the Taieri Plain towards Mosgiel.

The afternoon walk was along the top till we met the marker stakes showing the way down through the bush to the car park at Woodside Glen. As we walked along the top, Ken pointed out a New Zealand Falcon keeping its eagle eye on us. The path down through the bush was a little difficult to follow due to damage done by pigs, I think we took a different path in places! We reached the car at 5.15pm. The walk took almost 7 hours in total. It was then time to sort out the cars and petrol money (guess the nationality of the person with no money!). I enjoyed the walk and getting out in the hills again after a long break. I think all those on the walk had a good time and I recommend this trip to anyone who missed out on this walk.

Rob English for Chris, Jonette, Zena, Ken, Alyth, Jenny, Nigel, Tony, Trevor and Eric.

MACETOWN '97

November 8-9, 1997

Author: Wolfgang Gerber

Published in Bulletin 572, December 1997

14 of us left the clubrooms in one van and one car and made good time to Alexandra where we joyfully had tea. Newcomer Jenny started her 'Staple' diet there. We left Alexandra to be met by rain, sleet, wind, and later on lightning. Reasonable accommodation in Arrowtown was found at the New Orleans Hotel in the bunkroom. Shortly afterwards we planned our options for the next day. The only stipulation was that we were all to camp in the same area.

On Saturday morning the heavy rain had stopped, and the parties left at different times so as to achieve their individual options. With snow predicted down to 600 metres it was no surprise when the snow flurries came, on the way up, between sunny periods. Lunch for us was at the old Mt. Soho site. Then the magnificent sight of Advance peak came into view with a beautiful coating of snow.



Macetown nestled under the Harris Mountains (PHOTO Antony Pettinger)

We set up camp at the southern end of Macetown and our first stop was at the Andersons Battery. We reached Sylvia Creek where the light snow flurries turned into snow. We passed by the remains of the United, then the All Nations Batteries, pushed past old Smithy, and finally we reached the plane crash site, with wreckage still visible. The snow was really getting heavy so we decided not to do the loop as planned but we doubled back out of Sylvia Creek to explore Sawyers Gully. I left at this stage so it was Dean, Chris, Tony, and that young buck

Nigel to cany on past the Homeward Batter)' and beyond where more relics and remnants are still to be found amongst the tussock. Eventually it was all back to the campsite for some (yes) sunbathing between snow showers.

The cuisine as usual came up to a high standard and the desserts even higher. The fire was lit and we stood around and warmed ourselves and started to mildly scandalise each other. An Irish joke was to be heard where the Irishman ended up the clever one??!! Of course PoD. told it. More jokes and comments (some R18, and some R20) soon followed which cracked some people up. Even a plastic cup cracked up. (How are you gonna explain that one to your flatmate Jenny?). Finally, after exchanging goodnights and a couple of cheap jokes or was it sheep jokes it was off to our tents for a good night's sleep.



Arrowtown, Lake Hayes and The Remarkables from the Big Hill Track (PHOTO Antony Pettinger)

We awoke to a nippy morning with some snow lying around. After a hearty breakfast, 14 group photos, we said goodbye to Macetown. 6 of the party chose the Big Hill track and the rest of us opted for the 4-wheel track. At the end of our tramp the attrition level was very high as at least 60% of us were limping with various ailments. I believe Chris discovered a new method of downhill walking (ask him for a demonstration next club night). After Alexandra the second front came through with more sleet, rain, wind and snow. We finally arrived back at home at 8.45 p.m.

I would like to thank everyone for making this, my first as trip leader, a successful trip. Also, thanks to Sarah and Greg for leading parties and finally Antony for his advice and extensive display at the clubrooms. I hope this trip has stimulated people to go back at some later time and spend perhaps 2-3 days in the area as a weekend trip only serves to whet your appetite of

what can be discovered beyond the ghost town. For more information about Macetown there is a booklet published by Lands and Survey, or the library has more literature



Main Street of Macetown, Arrow Valley (PHOTO Antony Pettinger)

Wolfgang Gerber for Tracy Offen, Jenny Lowe, Jonette Service, Robyn Bell, Sarah Smellie, Zena Roderique, Greg Panting, Peter O'Driscoll, Tony Malcolm, Dean Gillatt, Chris Wells, Peter Davidson and Nigel Boydell.

ROCK AND PILLARS DAY TRIP (1)

November 16, 1997

Author: Brenda McAlpine

Published in Bulletin 572, December 1997

The Rock and Pillars are pretty high
when you haven't been out for a while
But I'd always wanted to get up there
so, head down and begin the climb

The body is working rather hard
but I guess I'm keeping up
A stop, a snack and a look around
Boy, it still seems miles to the top

2 hours or more and we reach the scree
the cold wind chills the sweat
Across then down to Leaning Lodge
and a welcome stop to eat

A grunt of a climb behind the hut
but then it eases off
I'm stuffed again, but never mind
At last we're on the top

Moonscape, an awesome sight
Tiny cushions of various hues
With acres and acres of celmisia rosettes.
Silent apologies as they pass under my shoes

We climb atop a huge rock tor
Mt Aspiring gleams in the west
An amazing panorama all around
This view must be one of the best.

With reluctance I descend the rock
to continue on with the jaunt
A stop at Big Hut for a bit more food
[It was built as a skiers haunt]

Then down, down through the tussock we plod
The end just looks so far
The knees, the knees, I'd like new ones please,
But they get me to the car

Middlemarch for an ice-cream
and relaxing in the sun

The journey home through hills so green.
And so, the day was done.

Brenda McAlpine

Thanks to Ian Sime, our intrepid leader.

ROCK AND PILLARS DAY TRIP (2)

November 16, 1997

Author: Ian Sime

Published in Bulletin 572, December 1997

Fifteen of us made our way to Middlemarch and beyond on 16 November, a fine day with little wind, in contrast to much of the recent weather. We stopped at Neil Grant's Glencreag to leave one car and tell the family of our plans, then on to O'Connell's where DoC and the family have outlined part of a paddock up their drive as a carpark. No-one is home there. Across a paddock and up a zig-zag 4WD track for 2 hours to our 10 bunk Leaning Lodge with the delightful stream gurgling down close by. As we climbed, the views became more and more extensive: Saddle Hill was an early landmark. At the 90-minute mark we passed through a fence which told us we were entering DoC property, and 15 minutes later came to the old OU Botany Dept Hut, about which we had been told so that no-one was under the delusion that Leaning Lodge had appeared early.



Rock and Pillar Range vista (PHOTO Antony Pettinger)

It was pleasant lunching in the sun lounging around the hut, with a remnant snowfield nearby. From there it took a good half hour to reach one of the summit rocks which could be easily climbed for distant views. No decision was reached on whether a clear peak on the western rim of snow-covered mountains was Aspiring. Another half hour tending downhill took us to the well-named 40 bunk Big Hut for afternoon tea.

The initial track down from there is well poled, but later you just make your way through tussock before catching a farm track near the bottom. No DoC boundary here. Evidently negotiations with the Grants are not finalised. The drop took the slowest of us 2 hours. Folk had a choice of sun or shade to rest in while the drivers travelled to O'Connell's to recover the cars. The family were home preparing tea so we were able to outline our day's trip. Then back to Grant's to update them.

Because there has been a great increase in through traffic since the road to the Maniototo was completely sealed, the store in Middlemarch was still open after 6 o'clock. Our tongues were hanging out for the ice creams or milk shakes which saw us right till we got home. The trip from Strath Taieri through the rocky heights above Sutton, down and up from Deep Stream, and over the recently developed farmland round Clarks Junction and Lee Stream, is well worth it on its own. We'd had the bonus of views from 1400m.

Ian Sime for Mike Bourke, Dick and Wendy Brasier, Robyn Bridges, Hugh Dickson, Laurel Dunn, Chris Dyson, Richard Geary, Alyth Grant, Phil Keene, Alaine Kennedy, Tony Malcolm, Brenda McAlpine, Jonette Service

OTMC COMMITTEE (1997-98)

President – Robyn Bridges

Vice President – Antony Pettinger

Secretary – Jacqui Cornelissen

Treasurer – Trevor Blogg

Chief Guide / Transport – Antony Pettinger

Bulletin Editor – Antony Pettinger

Membership Secretary – Ian Sime

Social Convenor – Robyn Bell

Day Trip Convener – Trevor Blogg

Gear Hire – Greg Panting

SAR – Elspeth Gold

SAR – Teresa Wasilewska

Website – Antony Pettinger

Library – Greg Panting

Weektime Trips – Ian Sime

Committee – Jenny Lowe

Property & Maintenance – Alan Thomson

Bushcraft 1998 – Antony Pettinger

Immediate Past President – Robyn Bridges

Hon. Solicitor – Antony Hamel

OTMC TRIP PROGRAMME 1997

Month	Date(s)	Specific Trip	Leader
January	19	Victory Beach	Jean Tremmlet
January	25	Moonlight Silver Peaks	Robyn Bridges
January	26	Mt Charles (if moonlight trip on 25/1/97 cancelled)	Robyn Bridges
February	1-2	OTMC Silver Peaks Marathon	Doug Forrester
February	2	OTMC Silver Peaks Marathon	Doug Forrester
February	9	Silver Peaks	
February	15-16	Darrans - Eglinton	Aaron Whitehead
February	16	Hermit's Cave	Arthur Blondell
February	23	Mt Watkin	Rob Seeley
March	1-2	Caples - Greenstone - Fraser Col	Nigel Boydell
March	2	Peninsula	Josephine King
March	9	OTMC Picnic - Bethunes Gully	Elsbeth Gold
March	15-16	Takitimus	Ken Mason
March	16	Maungatua Traverse	Sharon St Clair-Newman
March	23	Clubrooms Maintenance	Alan Thomson
March	28-1	George Sound	Elsbeth Gold
March	28-31	Manapouri - Te Anau Area	Elsbeth Gold
April	6	The Catlins	Ian Sime
April	12-13	Monowai - Green Lake	Vivienne Bresnell
April	13	Wairuna	Ian Sime
April	20	The Pyramids	Olive Neilson
April	25-27	Routeburn / Rockburn Area	Robyn Bridges
May	4	SAREX (Search & Rescue Exercise - Flagstaff)	Elsbeth Gold
May	11	Government Track	Dave Levick
May	18	Yellow Ridge	Beverly McGowan
May	17-18	Alford Forest	Ken Powell
May	25	Silver Peaks	Rowan Meddings
May	31-2	Earnslaw Burn	Robyn Bridges
June	8	Orbell's Cave	Arthur Blondell
June	15	Powder Ridge - Long Ridge	Doug Forrester
June	22	Silver Peaks For Masochists	Richard Pettinger
June	21-22	Catlins	Trevor Blogg
June	29	Mitchell Rocks - Wangaloa - Lake Tuakitoto	Elsbeth Gold
July	6	Racemans - Swampy Circuit	Sharon St Clair-Newman
July	5-6	Cooking Competition	Elsbeth Gold
July	13	Berwick Forest	Greg Panting
July	20	Bethunes Gully	Jacqui Cornelissen
July	19-20	Basic Snowcraft (Iceaxes and Crampons)	Trevor Deaker
July	27	Oamaru Walkway	Jean Tremmlet
August	3	Silver Peaks	Dick Brasier

August	9-10	Winter Kepler	Greg Panting
August	10	Taieri Mouth Loop	Olive Neilson
August	17	Silver Peak	Michael Hamel
August	16-17	Snowcraft 2	Trevor Deaker
August	24	Mt Allan	Pam Phease
August	31	All Day On The Peninsula	David Barnes
August	30-31	Routeburn Climbing	Jay Piggott
September	6	Annual Dinner	Jacqui Cornelissen
September	7	Allans Beach / Mt Charles	Robyn Bridges
September	14	Mahinerangi	Alan Thomson
September	21	Akatore - Chrystalls Beach - Bull Creek	Nigel Boydell
September	20-21	Snowcraft 3	Trevor Deaker
September	28	Whare Flat - Powder Hill	Ken Powell
September	27-28	Mistake Creek - Hut Creek	Rowan Meddings
October	5	Spotted Shags - Shag River	Trevor Blogg
October	12	Silver Peaks	Wolfgang Gerber
October	11-12	Mavora Lakes	Lynda Jaket
October	19	Maungatua Traverse	Rob English
October	25-27	A Pass Or Two! (Port Craig / Hump)	Robyn Bridges
November	2	Pulpit Rock via Big Stream	Alan Thomson
November	9	Lawrence	Jonette Service
November	8-9	Macetown	Olive Neilson
November	16	Rock And Pillars	Ian Sime
November	23	Rustlers Ridge	Zena Webb
November	22-23	Outdoor First Aid	Teresa Blondell
November	30	Catlins	Mike Brettell
November	30-1	Skippers	Dick Brasier
December	7	Marathon Route-finding	
December	13	Moonlight Silver Peaks	Robyn Bridges
December	14	Daylight Silver Peaks (if Moonlight Trip Cancelled)	Robyn Bridges

OTMC BULLETIN COVERS (FEBRUARY TO MAY)

Newsletter of the Otago Tramping and Mountaineering Club Number 582 February 1997

Bulletin

The OTMC meets socially at 3 Young St. every Thursday – doors open 7.30.
programme begins at 8.00

Sez the Prez

It has been a good start to 97 with great attendance on Club night with members showing slides and photos of what they had been up to over the Christmas break. And up to describe it well. Trevor Aaron, Jay and Tilly had a brilliant story of Mt Aspiring and it is likely that Jay is the youngest person to have climbed it. It would be good to corroborate this. And then in a brief trip, Aaron climbed the Munroes. Their photos were stunning and their enthusiasm contagious. Bruce, went a glorious sunny time at sea in the Aotea Tamar National park area, sea kayaking. No doubt getting in some practice for his up and coming trip to Stewart Island. It was an eye-opening and inspiring start and here's to it continuing throughout the year.

The organising group (Mountain Safety Outdoors and OTMC) for Bushcraft 97 were disappointed in having to pull the plug on Bushcraft 97. Despite our advertising campaign which included an excellent photo display in a George Stower window, we did not get enough applicants. For those who had applied it was decided that we would make them on the Greenstone-Captain trip on the 1-2 March. In conjunction with this they have been asked to attend an informal training session at the Outdoors on Thursday 15 February where Elspeth will talk about Gear and Equipment and Teresa will show some slides. Many thanks to all those who sought so hard at organising the course and though the result is not what we would have wanted we have learnt a lot. We are toying with the idea of

holding the next Bushcraft Course at another time of the year.

Included in the Social Programme are two items concerning the Silver peaks. The first from Richard Petheridge about the importance of the area to us and the second a speaker from DOC presenting their Silverpeaks Recreation Plan. I would encourage everyone to attend these (and all our speakers for that matter). There are copies of DOC's Silverpeaks Recreation Plan in the Outdoors. Read it and come and have your say. Included for discussion is Jubilee Hut. Should we build it over to DOC, do we want to keep it and maintain it, or ???

There appears to be an going houses with the owners that people live from the Club. Will you make sure that you know how to use them by getting them going on the night that you live there. They have been checked over by McCaffrey's and are in working order. All gear should be laid out before going into the tent.

We send our condolences to Sandy and Mike Legge whose son Gordon died descending Mt Taranaki after a successful solo ascent. Gordon's farewell on the lakeside at Glenorchy Bay Wairaka below Mount Aspiring and at the Otago Tramping and Mountaineering Club in Dunedin, where his simple coffin was decorated by the friends with beautiful drawings, tributes and poems, will be long remembered by us.

Robin Bridges

Page 1

Newsletter of the Otago Tramping and Mountaineering Club Number 583 March 1997

Bulletin

The OTMC meets socially at 3 Young St. every Thursday – doors open 7.30.
programme begins at 8.00

Next Trip Card

If people want weekend trips over the next 6 months they'd better speak up real soon. Of the 100 or so red forms sent out only 16 have come back most volunteering for day trips. Currently I have 3 volunteers for a Macdowall Trip on Nov 8-9, two volunteers to different destinations for Labour weekend and eager volunteers for a snowmobile safari. 30 members should put their fingers out if they want a full valued weekend trip yet. I don't want to have to ring around all members yet again to get you to put your finger out. Robyn is insisting that I have a trip sent out with the next bulletin but with very few leaders I don't really see the point. How do members feel about that?

Yet another bitch I'm afraid. I'm really disappointed with the numbers going on trips on the current card. The only time we have had a rain since my taking over as Chief Guide was for the Caples Greenstone Trip. There were only two members who signed up for that trip because they wanted to go. The rest of the people were either from the Bushcraft Course or volunteered to go to introduce new members to the area. What's the story? A bit of feedback as to where I'm going wrong and just where you want to go tramping would be appreciated.

Elspeth Goss, Chief Guide

Do-it-yourself Editorial

Seeing this month's edition has gone ballistic, what with all the stuff people have put my way I haven't had the time or the inclination to do a proper intro to this 583rd Bulletin. So I'll give you the raw material and in a rare manifestation of democracy in action you can make one up yourself. For starters, prompted by a couple of incidents recently (Trevor Blogg musing wistfully as we looked out on some fine scenery on the Mt Aspiring trip "Farmers have it all sewn up", and later being refused permission to take up the Moutapea - you'll have to call on your own experience) for starters, then, some comment about improving land access. Call it Land and Freedom maybe - you could include issues of democracy and the right of access to put their feet on the land they are named for, improved fences and environmental awareness, how farmers' interests can be catered for, how all this works in Sweden where a right to roam anywhere is constitutional. Next you could mention - partly because the media won't - the destruction of ancient rimu forest by a government owned company on the West Coast. According to opinion you might say how sick this makes you, that the country is in the hands of people for whom private enterprise are just as much board feet of window frame. This is up to you of course. To end on a lighter note perhaps you could say that you've noticed how DOC now requires you only to enter the category of your age - Senior, Adult or Child - or intentions slips. Or no more revelations at signing in time. Well there you are. Tweak it out a bit and you've got yourself an editorial. How that wasn't so bad was it?

In the 582nd Bulletin (Can that be?) Do we have copies of them all somewhere? We must have the Tentative Navigator and Photo Book. We are invited to name bits of Dunedin and paint the clubrooms. We get another journey left and right and find out how the club tent prices got lost. All this and page thrown too. Thanks once more to all contributors for making another varied, interesting and informative newsletter.

Page 1

Newsletter of the Otago Tramping and Mountaineering Club Number 584 April 1997

Bulletin

The OTMC meets socially at 3 Young St. every Thursday – doors open 7.30.
programme begins at 8.00

President's Corner

A few words from the President - with love being the operative word, it is that that at the moment I'm not busy tramping. So what's been happening round the OTMC? Well for starters we have had a working dinner the Outdoors when the end building could hardly be seen for visitors and began that there with no doubt be more about this, regularly featured. By another so I will leave it. Watch this space for more. We have a new trip card and our thanks go to all those who sent in their questionnaires. It takes time to organise these so please form, support the trip by going on them. As well comes the new copy of Outdoors - thanks to Jan Stone for editing it and all of those to the members who took time out to be old long enough to put their collected thoughts on paper (for that's what I have to do).

This month's committee meeting was shrouded through the Club administration. The last person sent now has new text books. Please save some when you're left alone. It is not a good idea to carry them on the outside of your pack. We plan to hold a photographer competition and auction - who would like to be the Club auctioneer? Now, the next event, well I do. One year I ended up with a married pair of punters, and one woman. Makes out of sense in that at least one had money to stay dry! At some point you too could be the recipient of quality working bargains, or we can just continue to be the auctioneer.

And on this line is there anyone out there that will help with the Bulletin. Sorry for all this is handing off members. So if you have a spare pencil and - then don't hesitate. On June 5 we are going to have a discussion about trip reports, means, costs and fees. This is being held on a Thursday Club night as usual and needs your say. I know old members aren't into on this in my Munroes trip report - that is if I do all long enough. And some old say that things are only as good as the report they get. Perhaps

perhaps, Uncle Tom Cobble at some time in the meetings, days starting and here's to the new one. And weekend not being the day where that you are.

Cheers Robin.

Edspeak

So, friends, another bulletin, another opportunity. This will be the last as bulletin editor as I am off overseas with next month as I made good and they'll be the time when I lost the job. I regret not being able to complete the full term, it was a job I had come to enjoy. However most Outdoors and Outdoors magazines are again shipping in to the branch to bring you the bulletin for the rest of the year. Good to them.

Thanks to all the people who have contributed material for the Bulletin during my tenure as editor. Special thanks again to Jan Stone for doing so much of the steady work - checking, taking it to the printer, stuffing it in envelopes. Well, I'm going to miss the club and the wonderful people that make it up, although I will almost certainly be back before long - the landrangers of Central Otago alone guarantee that. Till then my best wishes go to the club and the people I have met in it.

In this edition, we have the outcome of our meeting with Anthony Hume, welcomed to Newcomer of Patti plus some interesting thoughts on the business of geographic nomenclature. Trip report-wise Jack Stone makes things into the West Coast - Patti's trip report makes things into the West Coast. The club have not always been a mystery to me and Patti's trip report - to the editors' knowledge out of their "great phase" on the Greenstone-Bushcraft weekend.

Rob Stealey

Page 1

Newsletter of the Otago Tramping and Mountaineering Club (Inc.)

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

OTMC Bulletin

Bulletin Number 585, May 1997

The 'New' Editor Speaks

Welcome to the May edition of the OTMC Bulletin. First up, I would like to record on the OTMC's behalf our thanks to Rob Stealey for editing the Bulletin since September last year. Your efforts have been well appreciated by the whole club - well done and happy travels.

Although I have assisted Debbie with the Bulletin in the past, this is my first one out on my own, so please let us know what you think about it. It is my intention to include a trip report from every OTMC trip. I believe that it is very important to record all our trips - the bulletin is the only record we have of some trips. Even day trips that seem fairly ordinary are worthy of inclusion, even if it is to only record where the trip went, what the weather was like, and who went on the trip. Please send your reports to the address at the bottom of the last page.

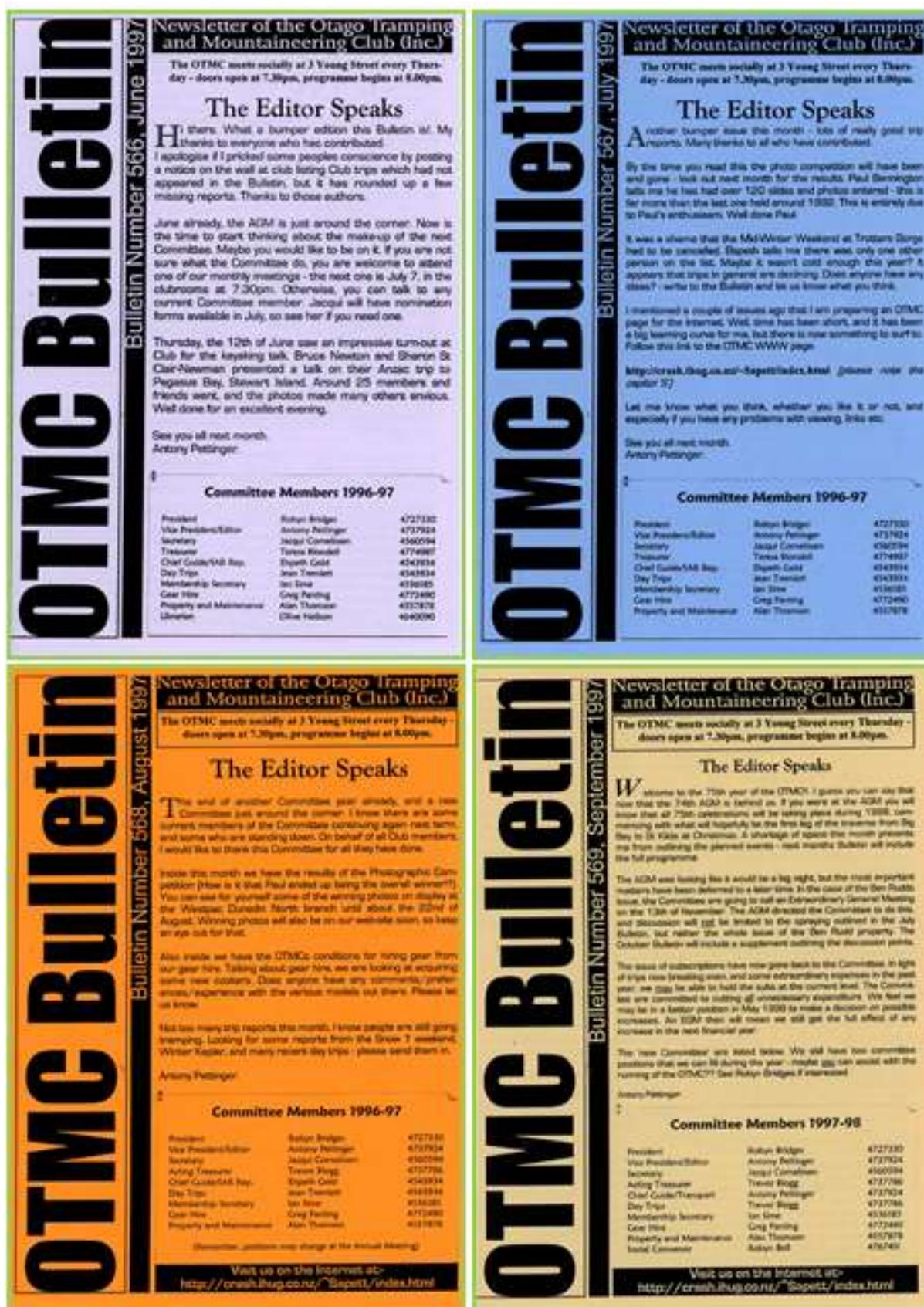
Rob asked a couple of months back if we kept all our bulletins. I know some members keep their own issues (I have over 12 years worth - they make good reading, memories of past trips and past tramping). The official record is kept at the Hocken Library. While the Hocken probably don't have a complete record back to the 1920's, they have the most comprehensive set of OTMC history including Outdoors, bulletins, committee and AGM minutes, and annual reports. You may wish to check them out some day.

Now, on with this month's Bulletin.

Committee Members 1996-97

President	Robin Bridges	4272330
Vice President/Editor	Anthony Hume	4727624
Secretary	Janal Condon	4560194
Treasurer	Teresa Blomfield	4778867
Chief Guide/Mt Asp	Elspeth Goss	4543834
Day Trip	Jan Tennant	4543634
Membership Secretary	Jan Stone	4536461
Gear Hire	Craig Paring	4772490
Property and Maintenance	Alan Thomson	4337678
Librarian	Olivia Hudson	4640090

OTMC BULLETIN COVERS (JUNE TO SEPTEMBER)



OTMC BULLETIN COVERS (OCTOBER TO DECEMBER)

