

OTMC TRIP REPORTS

2000

Sourced from the 2000 OTMC Bulletins



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A LONG WAY FOR A DAY TRIP

Date not recorded

Author: David Barnes

Published in Bulletin 594, February 2000

The plan was simple. If the weather forecast was good, we'd go up to Brewster Biv and Mt Armstrong. If not, we'd go somewhere else.



Original Brewster Biv (PHOTO Doug Forrester / OTMC Archives)

The forecast was great.

Woke up at Fantail Falls to a bit of drizzly cloud. Just morning stuff - it'll bum off, or we'll climb out of it.

Bushline, and we're inside a cloud. Visibility 50m. It'll lift. We'll probably pop out of it at the hut. It's better this way - not too hot while we're carting packs.

Arrive at the hut and we're still inside the cloud. There's no track beyond the hut, and while going up may have been possible, an accurate descent would have been tricky. Hang around and try tomorrow? It would be a long wait. So we went home.

Got under the cloud at bushline.

Took a wee walk up the Blue to fill in the afternoon and then hit the road.

We came,

We didn't see,

We didn't conquer,

We'll be back.

David Barnes for Brian Anderson.



GEORGE SOUND

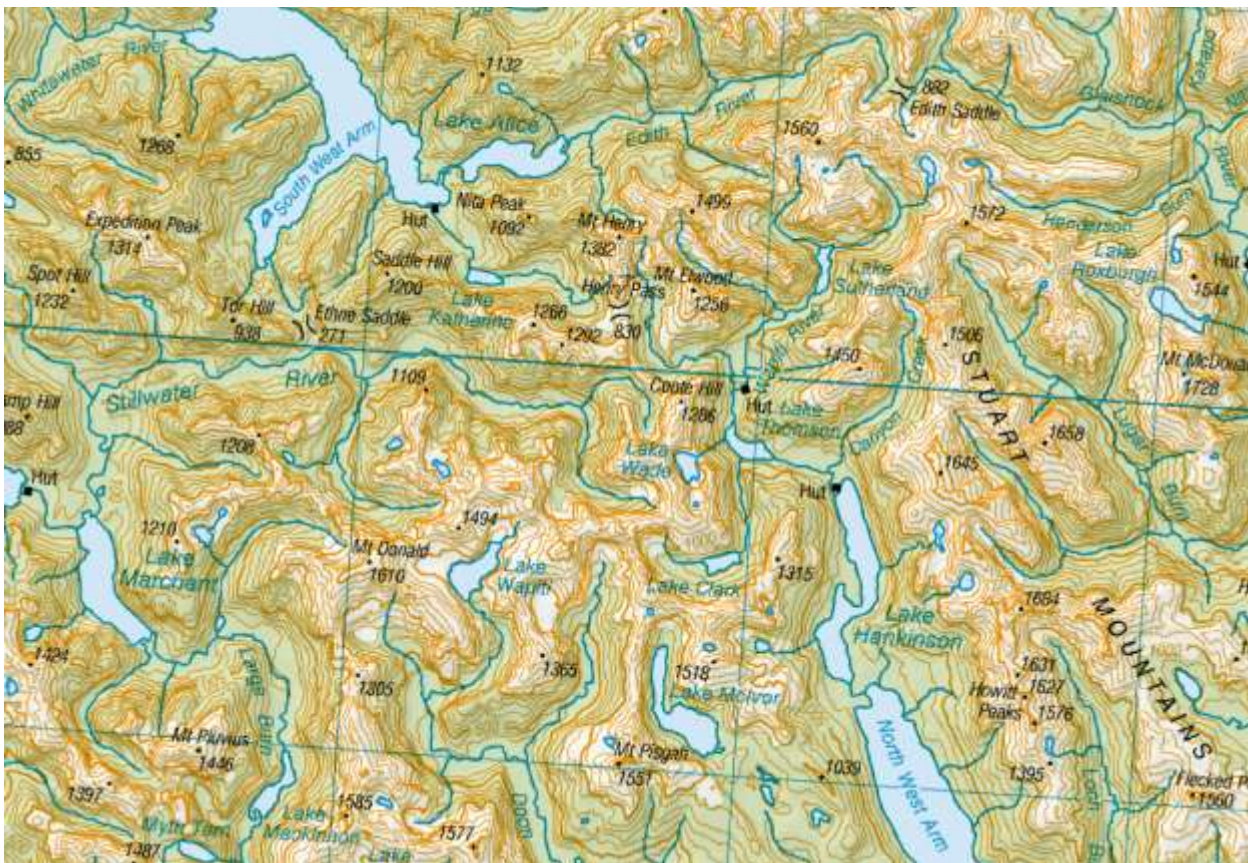
December 4-10, 1999

Author: Phil Dowsett

Published in Bulletin 595, March 1999

"Where's that?" was the usual reaction, but we explained it in relation to Milford and Doubtful Sounds. T'was on the Saturday morning we travelled to Te Anau in Alan's van.

Vem Thomson, no relation, met the party at DoC and transported us to Te Anau Downs and his boat. The route across the lake was in need of some maintenance. There were far too many potholes and corrugations for it all to be blamed on the westerly flow. At the end of Middle Arm a short walk took us to Vem's other craft, a dinghy just large enough for six with its attached tender for the packs. The outboard pushed up Lake Hankinson and Vem pointed out the damage to the bush and the enormous slip resulting from the last major storm and snowfall just two weeks prior. At the mouth of the Wapiti River, trout scattered as Vem navigated up to a beach opposite the Hankinson Hut to arrive late afternoon.



There had been no advice from DoC that there would be another party of seven on the track. The guys from Invercargill, Riverton and Auckland had been to George Sound. One of their number was fishing in the rain as they waited to fly out at 6 p.m. The floatplane did not arrive so we sought information on their behalf when we made our scheduled call on the mountain

radio at 8 p.m. It transpired the weather had kept the plane away, but it would leave Te Anau at 6 am next morning. In fact, it was 5.45 am on a sunny morning when we heard the plane buzz the hut. It would take two trips to get all seven to Te Anau, so our party went down to the lake to photograph and see off the second group.

After breakfast we headed off to Thomson Hut and soon crossed the first three-wire bridge. For two of us it was a first and some apprehension was evident, but by the end of the trip the same bridge was crossed with much confidence by all. As expected, the track was affected by fallen trees resulting from the recent storm and heavy snowfall. It took 41/2 hours, including a stop for lunch, to get to Thomson Hut. We decided to rest and concentrate on carbo. loading rather than undertake a side trip that afternoon.



At 5 am next morning, before it was light, Peter woke us and by 6.45 we were on our way to George Sound. Plenty of mud, but some years ago split logs were laid over the worst patches. Deadwood Lagoon is not stained with tannin as might be expected. A clear stream running over granite gravel feeds the lagoon, which was formed a long time ago by a large slip. The trees

were drowned and eventually rotted. The stumps are now plant colonies and provide an interesting visual study, especially when in flower.

After Deadwood Lagoon we climbed up to Henry Pass for lunch. There had been some doubt as to our speed, so we gave ourselves the target of 1 p.m. on Henry Pass. Any later and we would turn back, but we arrived on the pass a little before midday and felt confident of getting to George Sound well before nightfall. Wonderful views on the way up of Mount Elwood and the valley we had negotiated. Even more wonderful views looking west down the Katherine Valley to the lake and over to the Marguerite Peaks on the south.

The track to George Sound is classified as a route and this was nowhere more evident than on the section between Henry Pass and the Katherine Valley. No rock climbing was necessary, but we came close on a couple of occasions. Doesn't the water in those mountain streams taste wonderful when you are on a hard tramp! The route eased as we walked down the Katherine Stream until we hit the big slip we saw from Henry Pass. At one time the slip had dammed the Katherine Stream and drowned an area of bush. The trees now stand dead in the surrounding green.

We continued and soon realised we were walking alongside Lake Katherine. The really interesting bit came close to the end of Lake Katherine when we had to sidle along a bluff using fixed ropes. One of the ropes seemed to be tied to a rather suspect tree stump which wiggled! Still, it was not too far to fall into the lake below and just a short swim to a point where one could be rescued. Our concerns were, of course, groundless as DoC had fixed one of their orange number tags to show that the rope was recorded in their asset inventory. By the end of the lake we were all pretty tired so we rested before walking the last leg to George Sound Hut, which took about an hour.

Gervin and Nicolette from Dronten in Holland had flown into George Sound and started walking out the following day. Therefore, we had the hut to ourselves for our rest day. Resting involved dodging the voracious sandflies, a little shore fishing (no trout to be seen in the river), photography, feeding the hut's weka, and a lot of reading. The weather was sunny and our washing soon dried. There are possible side trips to Lake Alice and up various ridges, but we judged our time was better spent preparing for the return journey.

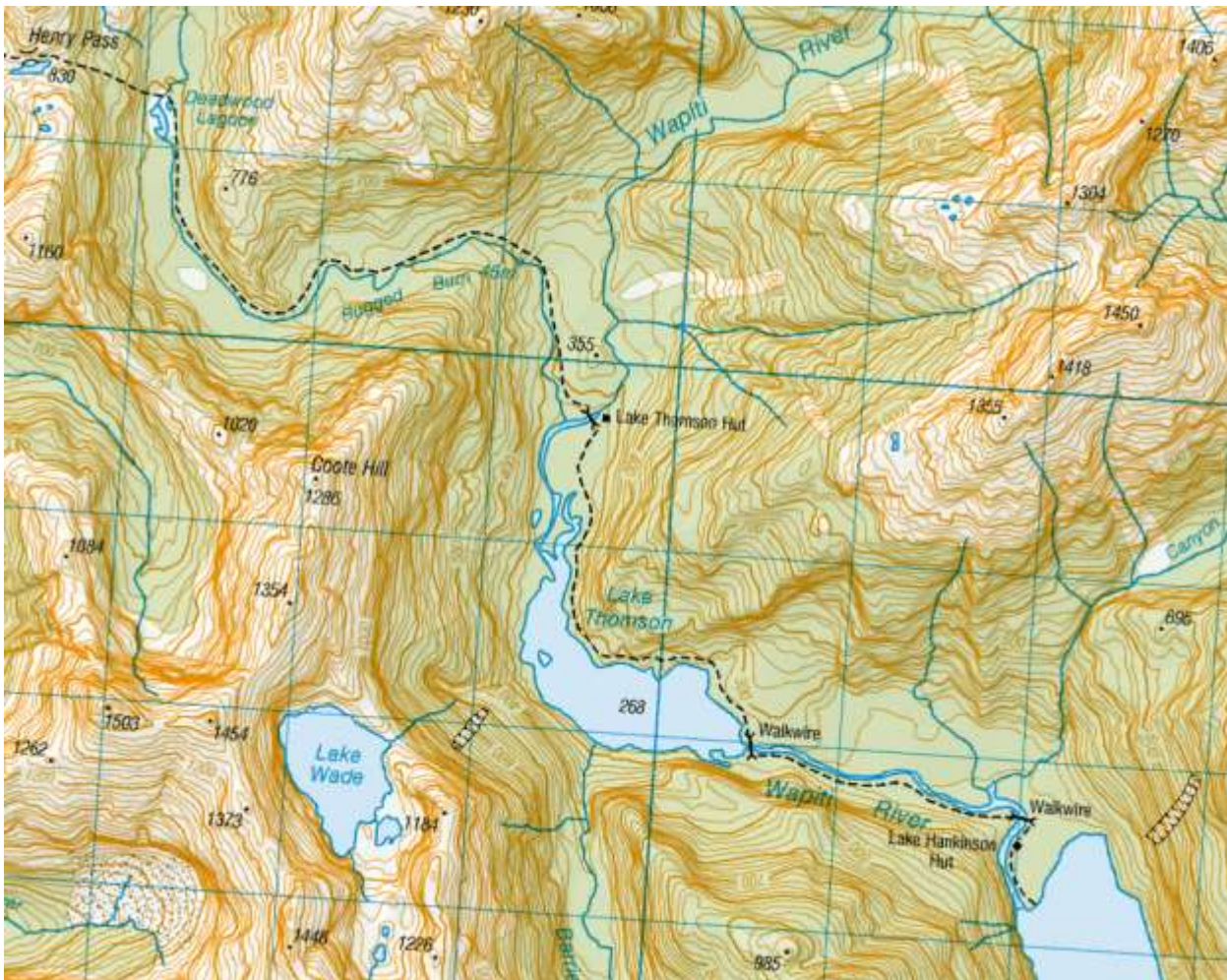
Peter acted as alarm clock again and we were all having breakfast by 5.30 am. The return journey was undertaken in good weather. The highlight was our communicating with three kaka that came close and were very taken with Peter's use of the dog whistle. We saw kea above the bush line but generally not a lot of bird life. The return journey to Thomson Hut took the same time as the outward journey, 13 1/2 hours.

Another rest day for tired bodies but we did venture up Mount Thomson at the rear of Thomson Hut for a better view. The cloud was down so we didn't go to the top, but we had good views of Lakes Hankinson and Te Anau, also the mountains across the valley that hid Lakes Wade and Clark. The mice in the hut provided an entertaining interlude, and we wondered about the man who had drowned in Lake Thomson over 100 years ago and whose grave marker was fixed to a tree outside the hut.

The final day we tramped under the treat of rain and arrived at Hankinson Hut in plenty of time. A group of hunters and fisherman arrived and they took photographs of our whole group for our record. Vem duly collected us and transported us out of the rain back to Te Anau. We had tea in Gore and arrived back in Dunedin without incident.

We agreed we all had an excellent trip with great people and a trip we would always remember, but with so many other places to visit we would probably not repeat this tramp. The route is very well marked, but the indicated times proved to be too optimistic for our party. The average age of the group was 58, with Peter having celebrated his 70th birthday earlier in the year.

Phil Dowsett for Alan Thomson (leader), Yvonne Greer, Zena Roderique and Peter Vollweiler



GREEN LAKE - BORLAND

March 4-5, 2000

Author: Ron Minnema

Published in Bulletin 595, March 2000

Day 1: Friday 3 March

Friday, 6 pm arrived and 12 souls gathered at the clubrooms for the long-awaited trip to Green Lake. At 6.05, surprise, surprise, Robyn Bell arrived and off we went in high spirits, driven by the gazelle (Paul van Kampen, for those of you who did not know).

Good time was made, and tea comprised of burgers etc. in Gore. We then set off to Borland Lodge via SH94 the long way (Ron missed the short cuts) and arrived 30 minutes after Fee, Vanessa and Robyn! However, we arrive safe and sound and we duly erected our tents in fine weather in an area where we couldn't disturb anyone. Rule No. 1: Keep the noise down when you go to bed!



Green Lake (background) from the slopes below Mt Burns (PHOTO Antony Pettinger)

Day 2: Saturday 4 March.

7.10 am we were all up and a hive of activity. Andrew and Vanessa dropped the van off at the end of the track, saving us walking a couple of km between the end of the track and the lodge. We didn't realise at the time how much this would be appreciated later.

At 9 am sharp, off we went for a 3 hour walk up the road with beautiful fine weather, a gentle grade - what more could one ask for? Well, a road a little shorter! 3 hours stretched to 4, and then 5, but who cares??? We had great views to the northeast with examples of limestone cliffs and power lines going towards Manapouri. Even the odd vehicle, which would not give us a lift.

Margarita (Bushcraft 2000) had to undertake some fine tuning to her feet, Vanessa walked in sandals. Liz tried to knock herself out by stumbling on a culvert and nearly ending up in the stream. We patched her up. Lunch was around 1.30 pm near the road saddle. A well-earned rest!

The rain arrived just as we hit the pass. A few photos and poses then down the steep zigzag to the Borland shelter. At the shelter we regrouped and headed cross-country. Up, down and across some beautiful tussock. We had been tramping for 6 - 7 hours at this stage and Fee's quotes of "I'm going tramping this weekend.... yeeah", supplemented by, "We could be on the wrong track", and "Are you being served?" impersonations were wearing thin.

We were about to hit the wall going up what seemed like another steep incline (walking speed had dropped to such an extent that if we had gone any faster we would have gone backwards). When things couldn't get any worse a mirage appeared (according to Jacquie) comprising a hut and a lake. Thank God! By this time, it was around 6 pm and we were shattered (well, not quite everyone).



Green Lake in front of the original A-Frame Hut (PHOTO Antony Pettinger)

Billies were fired up and a good hot brew brought us back to life. Liz was helpful with her handy hints and seemed to have everything but the kitchen sink. Paul was very useful - he got

his torch "in case it gets dark!" Then came the rain. It put a damper on things but some of us were so tired it was a good excuse to hit the sack.

Unfortunately Vanessa's tent fly had suffered a tear, so she and Fee were relocated under some trees. I am not sure whether it was so we could get some sleep or keep them dry! Biceps seemed to hold their interest, and quotes such as "Zips go up and then down." Needless to say their endless laughter helped us all drift off to sleep. Must have been a good night because when Fee woke up her eyes were still half closed (or is it open?).

Day 3: Judgement Day

We woke to fine weather and hung around to get some photos of the sun rising over the mountains and lake. Green Lake is surrounded by bush and mountains and very picturesque - it would have been an ideal place to stay for a day, blobbing out, then returning the way we came. Alas, it was not to be. The sign said 6 ½ hours to Lake Monowai Road and was not too far off the mark. We scrambled around the side of the lake up a reasonably gentle track. Once again the group spread out.

Hilda was with the "C" Team (Ron, Jonette, Jacquie and Margarita). The pace was too slow so Hilda politely excused herself and was not seen until the next stop. Did Jacquie see the cliff the path traversed around? We, the "C" team, arrived at Borland Saddle (980 m) around 12.30, More photos, food again. Sarah rang Jeff.... she was really after a helicopter.... so she isn't invincible. Paul had energy to burn and wanted to climb a nearby peak. Just as well he didn't - even he got a blister! Then down to our lunch stop. Andrew was a little concerned about how long Jacquie and Liz were taking so he back tracked a bit, but needn't have worried, they were not too far behind. Off we went. Fiona tripped over yet again. Makes me wonder what is she like on a bike?!!!

The 6 ½ hours seemed to drag on forever! Jacquie saw a sign saying 1 hour, ate something special, and almost burst into a run without waiting for anyone! By now most of us were suffering blisters, but even Jonette's Lekis were put aside as we all took off for the end. We all finally arrived at Lake Monowai Road around 5pm to a scene of tranquility. Sarah and Paul had been for a swim, Andrew had the van. What else could go wrong? Did you know that a van can travel about 70 km on the reserve tank? We travelled to Mossburn and then to Lumsden - were we going to run out of gas???. NO!!!! \$62.50 filled the tank to the brim, then we farewelled Vanessa who had dutifully followed us in case we came to a spluttering halt in the middle of nowhere and put our faith in Robyn. She drove us home in good time, arriving round 10.15pm.



Green Lake from saddle on track that leads back to Lake Monowai (PHOTO Antony Pettinger)

Thanks, Andrew, for an interesting weekend, and for the good company. When do we get our certificate?!! All in all score 8 out of 10. We can look back and feel that 35 km in two days is pretty good in anyone's book. Something however I do not wish to repeat in a hurry! Greenstone/ Caples Track here we come!

Ron for (in no particular order) Paul, Andrew, Jacquie, Sarah, Fee, Vanessa, Hilda, Liz, Margarita, Jonette and Robyn.

BUSHCRAFT 2000 – DIRECTORS REPORT

February – March 2000

Author: Antony Pettinger

Published in Bulletin 596, April 2000

This year's course attracted 25 participants, although numbers dropped for varying reasons during the course. Planning course started in August 1999, with thought given to the budget and an application being made to the Otago Community Trust for funding assistance. We were granted \$1000, which is very much appreciated by the OTMC.

The course was held at similar times to the 1998 course, being late February through to late March. I feel that this is probably the best time to run the course in the future. People have more time after the Christmas break to get organised and it gives us more time to promote the course. Advertising started in December 1999, and included several window displays in George Street and Moray Place. My thanks to' Debbie Pettinger, Ann Burton and Alan Thomson for arranging these. Looking through the course evaluations shows that our best form of course promotion is word of mouth through OTMC club members or past participants. It was also encouraging to see several club members participating in the course.

The format was similar to previous years, with the main instruction taking place at Tirohanga Camp, and the tramping weekend being held in the Silver Peaks.

The introductory evening had talks on boots, footwear and clothing, and concluded with some of Andrew MacKay's magnificent slides to Whet the appetite.

Friday night at Tirohanga started with the food talk from Teresa and Ian, followed by map instruction. Saturday commenced with the theory side of compass followed by a series of Bushcraft skills: compass, tents and flies, stoves and river safety skills (rivercrossing). In between this Trevor Deaker took a look at weather, then first aid and tramping gear rounded out the day.

Sunday took us into the hills behind the camp for a longer map and compass course. As usual, the weather was just perfect. My thanks to John Sime for 'negotiating access across the two properties. Tramping etiquette finished the day before we were 'pushed' out of the camp by a huge school party who arrived early. All in all, a successful weekend,

Silver Peaks followed two weeks after Tirohanga, a formula used since 1998, and I am now convinced that this is better than consecutive weekends. The participants had a planning evening prior to the trip! 24 people travelled to the Silver Peaks by bus, and all headed via two routes to camp in the Cave Stream catchment upstream of Jubilee Hut. The temperature on Saturday was reported as being as high as 32 degrees that afternoon in the vicinity of the Staircase and ABC Cave. Some participants were heard to be upset at the state of the Devils Staircase - no stairs or railing, they now know how it got its name!

The rain started to fall about 10 am on Sunday as everyone headed out. The trip leader (who shall remain nameless) thought he would be smart and call the bus up to arrive an hour early,

so people wouldn't have to wait around in the rain. Imagine his dismay when, 25 minutes before the agreed time, he saw the bus heading along Mountain Road, past our pick up point! The driver, being unfamiliar with the location, was looking for trampers on the road and went on until he thought he must have gone too far and attempted to turn round. But he got stuck in the process, and 24 wet trampers ended up standing in the rain getting cold. Eventually all was well, and everyone was safely on board by the original arranged time. Last time I try and change my own arrangements!!! On the bright side, it rained heaps more on Sunday night, making me very glad I wasn't still in the Silver Peaks.



Northern end of the Silver Peaks near ABC Cave – Bushcraft 2000 (PHOTO Antony Pettinger)

A half day spent practising river crossing skills on the Taieri River was OK, although the river was still high after the rain from the previous weekend. This made a complete crossing of the river unachievable, but the basic techniques were practised. One participant 'insisted' on trying the pack flotation method, with great success.

The final evening introduced the participants to DoC, Mountain Safety, FMC, SAR, and of course, OTMC.

Now, with Bushcraft 2000 complete, it is time to look back and what we achieved. The course was a success - it is now up to all of us to encourage the participants to continue tramping, be it with us, or privately.

All the leaders and instructors have my thanks for the time and commitment they gave during the course. I really appreciated the continuity of instructors from the first night through to the last night. Introducing people to the outdoors is most satisfying and we can all take credit for doing this successfully. I would also like to pass on the participants appreciation to Teresa and

her team for the most wonderful food during Tirohanga - a highlight of the weekend. My thanks also go to the participants - we all enjoyed sharing our love of the hills with you.

Finally, I would like to acknowledge the great contribution Debbie made to the success of the course. There is so much 'behind the scenes' work which Debbie has done for me which was a great help - she deserves an OTMC round of applause!

Antony Pettinger

BUSHCRAFT 2000 – CAPLES VALLEY

March 25-26, 2000

Author: Leslie Turner & Su White

Published in Bulletin 596, April 2000

The trip to the Caples Upper Hut was definitely a new experience for these two new Bushcrafters. Putting up a tent at 1 am under torch light and getting up at 6.30 am so we could be ready for an 8 am start and finding the tent HAD been on rather a slope and there WERE rocks underneath!!

We had the experience of Chris as our leader and enjoyed the 6 hours up to the hut (couldn't even con him into having lunch on the way!), then a wonderful restful afternoon, which included some very cold river water. The evening meal was fun with us novices learning the ways the trampers look at each other's food and compare, and also look at each other's gadgets to see what else needs to be bought. There was a definite winner in the food competition - Bess' group won hands down.

Luckily our group leader wanted some extra walking, so he was up early on Sunday, and we had a leisurely walk down the track. Had a wonderful lunch break at the side of the river, where we had watched these women cross the river using a method we hadn't been taught on our Bushcraft course. (The mind boggles!!! - Ed)



Caples Valley from near the Greenstone confluence (PHOTO Antony Pettinger)

Later this man came towards us “up” the track taking a leisurely Sunday afternoon stroll, to try and find yet another pack to carry, and informs us there is a steep uphill still to come. What a delight - just when I was sure the rest was downhill! We were able to hand this information on to other happy trampers, who looked very pleased to receive it. But on we trudged and managed to puff our way up the hill with our “tour” leader in front, then behind, and then running to get back to the van by 3 pm as he instructed us all. We were so looking forward to the water for a wash and flushing toilets for whatever necessary - so the disappointment was enormous (as well as smelly!). Some brave souls went off for a dip in the river, others of us couldn't be bothered walking all that way.



Bridge across the Caples River (PHOTO Antony Pettinger)

We managed to leave the carpark by 4 pm and had a beautiful trip back with amazing views of lakes and mountains. The van trips are stories of their own and I am sure the official scribe will let you know about them. But thanks to the two drivers in our van, Ron and Su, who drove us very safely there and back.

Thanks also to OTMC for an enjoyable weekend. You are all very caring of each other and have taught us both heaps over this Bushcraft experience. Maybe we will see you again in some hut you have taken over or on some track as we pass each other by.

Leslie and Su.

CAMARADIRIE IN THE CAPLES (BUSHCRAFT 2000)

March 25-26, 2000

Author: Graham Brown

Published in Bulletin 596, April 2000

A fantastic weekend was had by a large group of 20 enthusiastic trampers in the Caples Valley. The friendship created over 3 days was illustrated by the comradeship which had developed by Sunday evening. All participants had thoroughly enjoyed the superb late summer weather and tranquility provided by the Caples Valley.



Caples River, between Mid-Caples and Upper Caples Huts (PHOTO Antony Pettinger)

This popular trip was capably led by charismatic leader Ron Minnema. Ron divided the party into five groups of experienced and members new to the OTMC experience such as me. At 6 pm on Friday evening two vans departed Dunedin with a positive weekend weather forecast. After 6 1/4 hours of non-incident travel, we were relieved to finally arrive at the shelter at the start of the Caples and Greenstone Tracks, the last 2 hours from Queenstown being made more challenging by the uncompleted flood repairs to the Glenorchy Road. The majority of the party sought refuge on the concrete floor of the well-equipped shelter. First lesson of the OTMC was that members do not like to sleep in on Saturday mornings!! By 8 am most groups were on the track whereas Nic Schofield and myself were still dismantling our tent after a prolonged sleep. This meant that our group of five, led by experienced tramper Fiona, was last to leave the shelter. All parties were destined for rendezvous at the 20 bunk Upper Caples Hut, approximately 16 km upstream from the Shelter. Tents were carried by some in order to lighten

the demand for bunk space at the hut. The Caples track can be described as a comfortable tramp on generally easygoing terrain. Early morning cloud cover had dissipated by the time we reached Mid Caples Hut for morning tea and the warm weather was to continue for the remainder of the weekend. The valley features three species of beech - red, mountain and silver. Hilda highlighted the smaller leafed red beech to our group as we progressed up the valley.

An extended lunch break was had at the sun-soaked Upper Caples Hut, which allowed time for 'recharging of the batteries' and blood donations to the local sand fly community. Afternoon activities included various independent explorations of the Caples Valley and surrounds. Alan set off in the direction of Kay Stream while our group was joined by Bess, Peter and Ron for a challenging tramp up the Steele Creek Route. Packs were lightened, and in some cases discarded, for the climb up to the bushline at 1200 metres.

This route was more difficult to follow and all found the climb challenging. We marvelled how Jonette Service of OTMC had set off individually on this alpine crossing with a fully laden pack earlier that morning. After 2 1/2 hours of 'blood sweat and tears' we were rewarded with glorious views of the Humboldt mountains, Death Valley and Fraser River to the north and the broad Caples Valley and Lake Wakatipu to the east. An interesting observation from this vantage point was the fully forested south facing slopes of the valley in contrast to the burnt off north facing side of the valley. The rapidly setting afternoon sun and equally rapidly falling energy levels meant an assault of the summit 300 metres above was left until next time!!

Meanwhile back at the hut, Bess's group of Sue, Rachel and Judy were setting exceptional OTMC culinary standards for their evening meal, which included "fresh salmon and lightly sauteed fresh vegetables", I was astounded at the quality of meals prepared and the lashings of whipped cream available in the slightly crowded hut that evening. I believe the secret to Bess's group's success can be attributed to a pre-trip meeting.

Sunday morning and the weather was again fine and frosty. Jenny and Chris set off (in a more depleted party than was indicated on Saturday evening) at 6 am to the McKellar Saddle. The remainder of the groups tramped at their own pace to meet at 3 pm at the shelter. Several parties reported 'running the gauntlet' past a rather upset Hereford Bull "with large horns" prior to the Mid Caples Hut. All parties arrived on time and some members, in true OTMC fashion, enjoyed a very refreshing swim in a superb back eddy located by David. Thanks to Alan for acting as a packhorse on Sunday afternoon - and also to Su for providing the vaseline for our squeaky trailer. Special thanks to Ron Minnema for organising such great weather for this trip and making an excellent job with Fiona of cleaning the hut. A potential future trip in this area could involve a crossing of McKellar Saddle by two parties, with van keys swapped at the Upper Caples Hut.

Graham Brown for Ron Minnema, Vivienne Brennsell, Peter Sanderson, Allan Perry; Jenny Lowe, Greg Powell, Richard Powell, Jenny McIntosh; Fiona McPhee, Hilda Firth, Graham Brown, Nick Schofield, David Jackson; Bess Taylor, Sue Galloway, Rachel Boon, Judy Wilson; Chris Wells, Leslie Turner, and Su White

A FAMILY TRIP (ROUTEburn)

Date not recorded

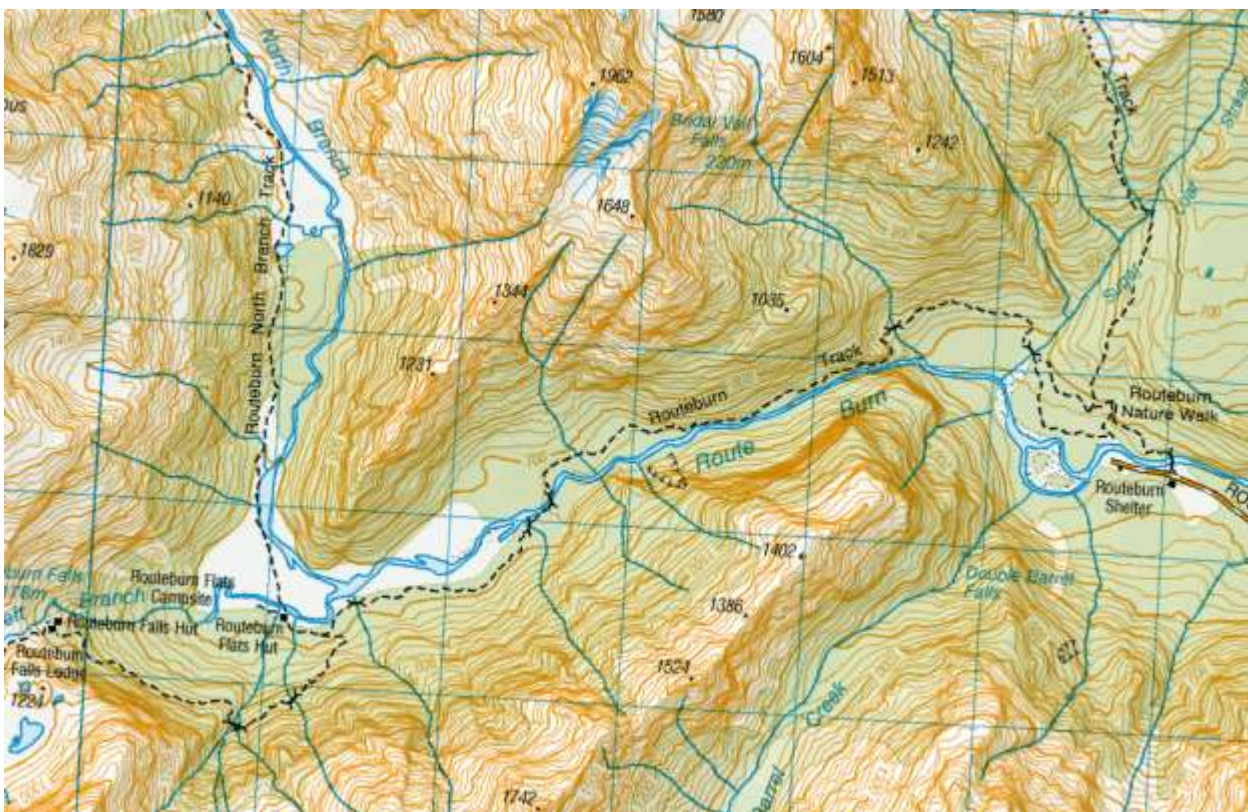
Author: Siobhan Barnes

Published in Bulletin 597, May 2000

My family went tramping. On the way we went to a restaurant for tea. When we got to the road end, we got torches and went for a walk in the dark. We went to sleep in the hut after that. Mum and Dad didn't, though. The next morning, we had breakfast. Then we went for a walk on the Routeburn Track. We took some lollies, three chocolate bars, Wiggly Worms, and liquorice. There were three big bridges and lots of little ones. Sometimes when we were on the bridges fantails were flying around us.

The trees were dripping down on us. By one of the bridges there was a big waterfall. The water looked cool when it was going down the big rocks. We went up one last hill and then it was time to go back. It was easier coming back. We didn't go all the way on the Routeburn Track – just for a walk. When we got back it was too early for lunch, so we went back to Queenstown.

By Siobhan Barnes (age 7)



SILVER PEAKS BUSHCRAFT I

March 11-12, 2000

Author: Jenni Wright

Published in Bulletin 597, May 2000

From the outset able-leaders Ann and Bess must have suspected we were a difficult lot, as they combined groups art I for our tramp in the Silver Peaks. Deciding the route at the pre-planning session determined that our overnight destination would be at the base of the Devil's Staircase. Our map reading skills did not alert us to the fact that the "staircase" was so steep for the young and (not so young) unsuspecting. However, Libby, Su, Leslie, Keryn and Jenni, were dropped off with our leaders at Semple Road. It soon become apparent that Su was the master guider amongst our group and has amazing co-ordination of distance and time required to get to the next spot.



The tops of the Silver Peaks Scenic Reserve (PHOTO Antony Pettinger)

We gloried in the beautiful scenery of a particularly clear day, took photos, munched our munchies, laughed and tramped on until Green Hut (which is, of course, non-existent) where we devoured our lunch. Pulpit Rock was pretty awesome, as was the Painted Forest and views every-which-way. The sun beat down, sunscreen was poured on parched skin, but our spirits were high as we headed for the staircase! Watching our descent couldn't have been a pretty sight as some chose to use their bums, others went down backwards on all fours etc., while a

young couple unrelated to our group fairly flew down with the advice of “just trust your feet”. We all had a few words to say about them out of earshot, but they were probably right! However, our leaders had instilled into us the notion that safety was the number one priority. There were many goals set as our descent progressed, and eventually we reached our destination.

The stream was absolutely divine as the sun continued to drench us. The tents were pitched, and we soon become very familiar with heads buried in packs looking for gear that was, of course, right at the very bottom. (Deliberate pun? Ed) I wonder how we would have got on setting up camp if it were pouring down, as we had stuff strewn everywhere! We had visitors from Yellow Hut who, after inspecting our amenities, strutted off into the sunset. Our four course (nibbles, soup, mains and dessert) candlelit dinner was fabulous, and our leaders revelled in being waited upon. There was a fair amount of wine to add extra flavour to the stir-fried chicken, but at the back of our minds was the forthcoming ascent back up that bloody staircase! Darkness fell very quickly, and Keryn had us clapping and playing silly games. The jokes only got worse. As we prepared for bed a light rain was falling, and thoughts of ascending that slippery staircase went through our minds. However, some of us got some sleep and were up bright and early next day. We were on a mission! After heeding the advice from Tirohonga, we filled our tummies with French bread, muesli, little two/three fruit packs, etc. and packed again.

You wouldn't believe it - we were like women possessed and scurried up the staircase before the rain returned. We were really proud of ourselves and relished the achievement Libby was an admirable leader as she has a rock-climbing background. The rain started falling and out came the jackets, gloves etc. It was great that we all had the right sort of gear, and this is definitely a reflection of how much we had taken on board at Tirohonga.

We shared lunch again at Green Hut with two other parties, and then hightailed it back to the supposedly waiting bus, which unbeknown to us was stuck in mud. However, the tired troupe gathered together like drenched rats for a final photo and proceeded to freeze while the driver unstuck his bus. The interesting thing is that most of us (except our leaders) admitted that that was one of the scariest experiences of our lives. You can call us sheltered if you like, but it definitely took us out of our comfort zones, and I guess those experiences in life are the ones you really remember.

Thanks to all you guys for organising Bushcraft 2000, It is a real credit to the Club to be able to offer such an experience.

Jenni on behalf of Libby, Su, Leslie and Keryn, and fabulous leaders Ann and Bess

SILVER PEAKS BUSHCRAFT II

March 11-12, 2000

Author: Greg Powell

Published in Bulletin 597, May 2000

Planning for this trip started at Tirohanga when the Bushcraft Group were split into six (I think) parties for the Silver Peaks trip. My party included Alan Thompson (leader) Steve Orton (a great pom), Nick Jones and myself. At a Tuesday evening meeting we decided on a route, agreed on food requirements, and ensured everyone had sufficient gear. Unfortunately, due to work commitments Nick couldn't make it at the last moment so when we boarded the bus there were only three.

We started tramping about 10.15 am after being dropped off by bus from Semple Road. The weather was glorious and remained so for the rest of day one. Near Hightop the track forked left and right. I was keen to turn right which would have taken us back to Semple Road (or Mountain Track) but fortunately I was persuaded otherwise, and we continued on to the old site of Green Hut at a sedate but steady pace. Here we caught up on the group in front, otherwise known as "Andrew and his girls" who had stopped for a rest. Here Steve produced a large bag of chocolates which he had acquired from a mate who works at Cadburys. I'll tramp with Steve anytime! We never saw Andrew and his girls again that day until we reached the final destination. In terms of speed, they were the Porsche while we were the Vauxhall Viva.



Valley below ABC Cave, looking south, Silver Peaks Scenic Reserve (PHOTO Antony Pettinger)

Reached Pulpit Rock in time for lunch and dined amongst the tussocks admiring the wonderful views. It was superb. After lunch it was onwards and upwards, at least until Devils Staircase, and I don't recall much about this part of the trip except that it was hot and Devils Staircase is BL#&**@%Y steep!

Arrived at our proposed campsite about 4 pm (if I remember correctly). Andrew and his girls had already arrived and were well settled in by this time. We located a good camp site beside the creek and erected our accommodation, then took a short stroll up to Jubilee hut to check it out. Some scrub cutting is needed on this section of the track. By this time Antony's party had arrived (together with an ample supply of port) and erected their fly adjacent to ours. They proved to be great company. A magnificent repast was prepared, and our menu included chicken and mushroom soup (with fresh mushrooms), cherrios/potatoes/mixed veges, and for dessert, rice pudding with whipped cream and apricots. Better than any restaurant meal I have had.

Slept like a log (despite the snoring ???) and awoke at 6.30 am for an 8.00am start. Tried Ian Sime's recommended breakfast of bacon and eggs. Great!!! Started walking at 8.05 am, with the first stop being the loo at Jubilee Hut. Alan was obviously feeling the effects of Saturday nights superb culinary effort

The weather had started to close in by the time we reached ABC Cave so we took a rest stop, had a snack and added a layer or two of clothing. Next stop was The Gap, and by this time it had started to rain steadily so we carried on quickly to Yellow Hut. Here we again met Andrew and his girls, who had boiled the billy for a nice hot coffee and lunch. On leaving Yellow Hut it had really started to rain so we donned our parkas and carefully wound our way down through the bush to the south branch of the Waikouaiti River. In wet weather this track is particularly treacherous with the exposed tree roots becoming very slippery. After crossing the river, the rest of the tramp is up a very steep 4WD track and onto Mountain Road where we were to meet the bus. Unfortunately, the bus had managed to get stuck, and we ended up having to wait half an hour in the rain.

Congratulations to the club for organising a great weekend for a great bunch of people. It will be one birthday I won't forget.

Greg Powell

SILVER PEAKS DAY TRIP

April 30, 2000

Author: David Barnes

Published in Bulletin 597, May 2000

As the bulk of the party had started walking while Dick and I shuttled cars, my trip started with me almost running to keep up with Dick as he charged in to Green Hut. The day was really warming up as we headed up to Pulpit Rock to be met by the intrusion of a group of motorcyclists on the track. (I will be talking to DOC about this). There wasn't a cloud in the sky or a breath of wind, so the walk along Rocky Ridge was really quite spectacular. We lunched at the high point just beyond the Hermit's Cave turnoff, and then continued on to Yellow Ridge. Vitoly & Dick shot up to The Gap, while the rest of us continued down to Yellow Hut. After a short break, we had the sharp descent to and ascent from the Waikouaiti River. A good day out.

David Barnes for Peter Barnes, Alan Perry, Dick Brasier, John Cox, Vitoly and Vadim Pyatov



On the northern end of Rocky Ridge, with The Gap in the distance (PHOTO Antony Pettinger)

MILFORD TRACK

May 1-4, 2000

Author: Les Murcott

Published in Bulletin 597, May 2000

After I retired in 1986 I tramped the usual tracks - Rees-Dart, Kepler, Greenstone- Caples etc., but dodged the Milford because of the very commercial aspect and the crowds, and expected I would finish my tramping days without doing it. This was a little disappointing after reading and hearing so much about it, so I was interested when Jim Sime invited me to join a group travelling the track. But I was just on 72 and hadn't carried a full pack for about 8 years. A. H. Reed was 89 when he walked it and folk say it's a piece of cake, so I jumped at the chance. I met a fellow WEA club member (Ivan McLauchlan) who said that he was also tramping it with the same group.



Clinton Hut, Milford Track (PHOTO Antony Pettinger)

At a preparation meeting at Jim's place, Ian showed us a video of a previous trip and we formed into food groups. I ended up with Ivan and two nice young ladies, Claire Currie and Olive Neilson. I knew they would look after us and we arranged the food etc. We travelled in my campervan to Te Anau, and went into the DoC office to check conditions and purchase hut tickets. The DoC officer did her best to discourage us, because of the forecast, and suggested the Kepler. "Bridges could be lifted out by now," she said. Jim's reaction when we told him was "that I've never turned back yet!" and that was that. We headed off in a bus towing the boat

and on we went from Te Anau Downs, thumping our way up rough water to Glade Wharf and sandflies.

Our group was predominantly farmers, and 24 folk bedded down in Clinton Hut that night. I was worrying about 24 people and only one toilet next morning! The next day started with a group photo, then Ivan (also over 70) and I were away at 8.30 am. Heavy rain during the night had raised and muddied the Clinton River, and we passed the DoC warden gravelling the track with a 3-wheeler motorbike and trailer. We continued along, side by side on a well-formed wide bush track. Morning tea at "Hirere" Shelter, lunch at "Bus Stop" and we grunted up to Mintaro Hut. There we had a very convivial evening with our farmer friends, three lovely Japanese ladies, a Scot, a Korean and a few others. Claire massaged our shoulders. Next morning we were on to the zig-zag up to the MacKinnon Pass, but why did I put so much in my pack? I was grateful to Claire for relieving me of two gas canisters, although I didn't like adding to her load. I had heard how cold and wet it could be and was prepared, but I had been hot all the way and conditions were good for tramping with cloud and fog about and no extremes.



Clinton River and Valley, Milford Track (PHOTO Antony Pettinger)

Day three was Robert Withers 50th birthday. He and Joanne were early each day on the track. A group photo was taken in front of a foggy MacKinnon Cairn. We left the cairn, disappointed to miss the views but in no time the clouds rolled back, the sun shone and there were those views with wisps of cloud to enhance them. Cameras got busy and it wasn't long before fog rolled in again. At the shelter on top we had a snack and on down we went. The track up and down the pass was an unexpectedly rocky, pick-your-way surface - not a track for the less adroit! There were clever wooden structures of stairs and viewing platforms beside exciting

tumbling waterfalls. We were relieved to finish the three-hour descent and get onto well-formed bush track again. What elaborate facilities at Quinton for guided tourists!

After lunch at Quinton, Ivan and I decided to carry on to Dumpling Hut. A view of the Sutherland Falls cleared for us not far down the track. Olive's dessert at Dumpling was brandy snaps, fruit and whipped cream - gosh! Then there was an entertaining birthday party for Robert with a cake and candle carried in by Jim. A hornpipe dance from 11-year-old Janet Fraser from Tuatapere was accompanied by a tin whistle played by Ruru the Scot. "The Egg" was sung by Jim, and we had a few stories.

Ivan and I were in bed promptly for an early start to day four. Even though we were away next day at 8.15 am, we were soon passed by Robert and Joanne and our Japanese friends. At Arthur River we saw a large fish leap right out of the water. The surprise! The Japanese ladies gave Ivan and me a traditional Japanese welcome. I was so impressed that I asked them to repeat it so that I could photograph them. A shoal of large spawning trout and two eels at the next bridge also gave us quite a thrill. Ivan wished he had his fishing gear! We didn't manage to ring 'Bell Rock' and found this walk quite arduous in places, but interesting. Lunch at Giant Gate Falls shelter and off for the final stretch, hopefully to be in time for the kayaks. And that wasn't a joke! On arrival at Sandfly Point we were loaded into kayaks (I hadn't been in one before), and after instruction and equipping with life jackets, away we went. It was difficult to steer, synchronise my paddling with Ivan's in front, watch where I was going, and take in Ivan's instructions from the front cockpit all at once. But we were the first to land our kayaks on the other side by the fishing boat wharf.



Mt Hart and Staircase Creek from McKinnon Pass, Milford Track (PHOTO Antony Pettinger)

We were happy that we had both managed to walk the Milford Track. We think next time Russell Anderson should arrange not to carry his sleeping bag and clothes in his hand, and we hope Jim will see fit to buy a less spectacularly noisy stove. We appreciated the support from our 'minders' Olive and Claire and for the delightful companionship on the way. Thanks to Ian for overall organisation and to Jim for leading us in such a relaxed and good-natured way. I was very glad to have a mate of similar age and capacity, thanks Ivan and 'good on you'.

Thermoses of hot water from the camp, diesel, fish and chips, and on we went homewards. The trip was uneventful, apart from railway crossing lights at Henley that wouldn't go off. After delivering my companions, I eventually crawled into bed at 3 am Friday morning.

Les Murcott

MT SOMERS WALKWAY

May 13-14, 2000

Author: Andrew McKay

Published in Bulletin 598, June 2000

Well after 6 weeks of no tramping, it was time to get out into the hills again. Jeff ("it's not a problem") Brown had organised a trip to The Mt Somers area in South Canterbury which looked very interesting. There were two options - "Medium", which involved traversing the walkway from Woolshed Creek carpark to the Sharplin Falls carpark, and staying Saturday night at Pinnacles Hut, or the "Fit" (read as "Silly") trip, which would go up the walkway to Mt Somers Hut continue up Woolshed Creek onto the Winterslow Range, then drop down to Pinnacles Hut for the night and out via Mt Somers summit. I was using this trip as a test for lugging my new tripod, and because I value my sanity, decided that the medium trip was more for me.



Woolshed Creek area from Trig R (PHOTO Antony Pettinger)

And so on Friday night we all met at the clubrooms for another eventful trip into the hills. Travelling north from Dunedin is much faster than heading to Central Otago, so we made very good time to our dinner stop in Oamaru. Robyn recommends the Gourmet Burger shop, whereas us blokes stuck with the good old standby of greasies. From there on the trip was uneventful and we reached the Woolshed Creek carpark at around 10 pm.

Bright and misty the next morning, the Fit team was up and heading off on their mission, while Chris and Greg from our party shuttled a vehicle to the Sharplin Falls carpark. Shortly after 9

am we started up the track, passing the remnants of coal mining activities in the vicinity. Light drizzle had settled in by this stage, so the views promised on the DoC sign were a little lacking. The track climbs steadily from the carpark to Trig R, from whence you descend into the Woolshed Creek catchment. About halfway down from here the track takes a sharp left at a large rock outcrop and clambering up onto it showed the reason for the turn! Through the mist a 300m drop into the Woolshed Creek gorge appears and I can honestly say I was thoroughly gobsmacked. From here it is just a short stroll to the hut for lunch.



Looking north from the saddle between Woolshed Creek and Pinnacles Hut, with the Winterslow Range in the background (PHOTO Antony Pettinger)

The Fit (and Slightly Mad) team appeared over the crest of hill just as we were finishing lunch, with Paul (aka. Gazelle) bounding down a tallus slope to enthusiastically inform us of a must-do side trip. This loop via Trifalls and Hydroslide Streams is very much worth the effort - access is interesting as you clamber up fixed ladders and along smoothly eroded creek beds. As a photographer I was in my element and very glad I had lugged 3.5 kilos of tripod with me!

At this stage we were getting a little pushed for daylight, so at 3.30 pm we made a start for the Saddle and Pinnacles Hut 3 hours from Woolshed Creek. On the way up we met a party who had just been to the saddle and we informed that there was LOTS of snow there and we would need ice axes, crampons and a rope to cross! I was a little concerned, but as this was a group of new trampers from the Canterbury tramping club, I felt that they might be exaggerating just a little. Ken ("I can dance") provided us with a little excitement soon after as he slipped in a very steep slope, completing a perfect pirouette in midair, tossing Leki poles to the four winds and landing on his back. We were ready to turn back at this point but Ken assured us that a

little fall wasn't going to stop him, and like the trooper he is began plodding uphill to the saddle.

Even with Ken's fall and a lot of grumbling about bloody hills we made the saddle in only a hour from the hut, and were pleased to see that there was only 3-4 inches of snow, not the feet we had envisioned. Supposedly there are very good views to be had, but sadly due to the mist the visibility was only 10 metres and not terribly inspiring. The route to Pinnacles is fairly straight forward, although in the mist and rapidly fading daylight it is very easy to miss some of the markers. Chris and I reached the hut first and while I set about getting the billy on, he dropped his pack and shot back up the track to see if he could help the others. It was fully dark at this stage and I was very pleased to see the rest of the party arrive soon after.

In the traditions of the OTMC the meal that night was superb, with Robyn's caramel slice and custard dessert a wonder to behold. A young couple from Christchurch were sharing the hut with us and joined in with the party atmosphere that prevailed. We, of course, were wondering what had become of the Fit {and just stupid} team, but conceded that, as they were very experienced and well equipped, they would be fine. So after toasting them on their absence we all hit the sack.

The next morning dawned bright, clear and very frosty. With a clear sky it was possible to see the massive cliffs behind the hut, which consist of slowly cooled rhyolite that has formed columns similar to Dunedin's Organ Pipes but on a very much larger scale. This area is a mecca for rock climbers as there are numerous multi pitch routes up through these impressive formations.

I wanted to get going and spend a little time photographing the area as I walked down the track, and so as not to hold people up too much I headed off about 30 minutes before the rest on the party. The track from Pinnacles sidles down the gorge above Bowyers Stream, providing the keen photographer with numerous opportunities for firing off a lot of film. Bowyers Stream itself is quite a good size and from the flattened rushes at the sides is capable of rising at least 1.5 metres from its normal flow. This could prove interesting as the track follows the streambed in several places and crosses it once. The rest of the group caught up with me just prior to where the track leaves Bowyers Stream and heads very steeply up through the bush, again with much cursing of fitness levels and track makers we reached the top of Duke's Knob. Here we also managed to get no views as the mist had come down again. But all was not lost and by a very mutual consent a lunch stop was called.

From Duke's Knob to Sharplin Falls the track plummets seven hundred odd metres to Bowyers Stream, crossing a DOC-strength catwalk above the Goldsmith Rapids and bringing us out to Sharplin Falls. Yet again I have to say I didn't bring enough film! Sharplin Falls crashes down across a fault step strewn with house-sized boulders. The argillite rich rocks are deep red in colour and glisten with water and contrasting these are the greens of the native bush, all providing a stunning sight for us to enjoy.

The track back has two options, back up the hill and to the car park, or along the river and very steeply back up the hill to the carpark. Once there, clothes were changed, the billy boiled, and Chris's mighty banana cake consumed as we waited for the Fit team to arrive.

By 4 pm the vehicles had been picked up from the Woolshed end of the track and stories of bush bashing down gorges exchanged. We then headed off to the Stavley Dairy to pay hut fees and admire this classic country store. Then onwards to Temuka for a great feed and more relating of tales at the Jolly Potter, and back to Dunedin and home for some well-earned rest. All in all a damned good weekend.



Sharplin Falls, Mt Somers (PHOTO Antony Pettinger)

Andrew Mac for Robyn Bell, Chris Burton, Greg Powell and Ken Powell (the "Not Quite Mad" group)

BACK TO NATURE

Date not recorded

Author: Teresa Wasilewska

Published in Bulletins 598 & 599, June & July 2000

Several months ago, a friend asked me to help her celebrate her 40th birthday by walking the Heaphy Track, accompanied by special friends, most of whom had never tramped before. But the Heaphy is not a good first track, it logistically presents problems of access and return, and would mean leaving families for at least five days. But would she consider the Routeburn, I asked?

We planned and connived and set about training. Then negotiated with partners and friends to have childcare for the 10 children involved, persuaded others to do pick up at the Divide, and finally we were ready to go! But was I ready for this, two children and five years since I had done any really decent tramping?



The current Routeburn Falls Hut (PHOTO Antony Pettinger)

Antony had arranged for us to rent a Rhodes van under the auspices of the Club and allowed us to use the trailer for this private trip. We left at 9am and got to the Routeburn Shelter just before 3 pm, with brief stops enroute for "last decent coffee", "last flush toilet" and DOC sign-in enroute. Concerned about reaching Falls Hut before dark, we all got moving fairly promptly, heading off into the mist and haze.

The path to the flats area is pretty straightforward and apart from a new bridge since my last visit, not changed much. We set ourselves in low gear and plodded/grunted/strode/ puffed up to Falls Hut. Arriving at dark, we found the hut warm and welcoming, with the "new" set up much cosier in the living area but dark and dingey in the sleeping side. Conversations with the other inhabitants and the warden (staying on after the end of the season) reminded me of the hidden pleasures of tramping - people you meet, conversations you have, re-living of tramping trips when recommending areas to others, not to mention enjoyment through others of our unique NZ outdoors.



Mt Xenicus (formerly known as 6274ft) above Lake Harris (PHOTO Antony Pettinger)

Saturday broke misty, with a heavy rain forecast and high winds from the south. One of the party was feeling rather the worse for wear, and most apprehensive about the long day and poor forecast. Lightening her pack and making mental plans in case we had to turn back, I did a final sweep of the hut before heading out into the weather to join everyone at the Harris Saddle Shelter.

The wind was gusty along the waterfall but virtually nonexistent in the top basin, and the rain was gentle on my cheek - not really raindrops but "soft" weather, as they say in Ireland. I could see the other party members at various stages along the track, stopping to admire the celmisia and gentians, or perhaps looking at a stream or view. The peaks vanished and reappeared from the clouds, while the raucous call of kea came down to us through the mist. My pack felt good - heavy, but not unbearable, and I had the right layers of clothing under my parka. My new headband (7 identical polarfleece bands, made by one of our party, embroidered with the

letters of the birthday girl's name) was magic - why had I never before found this solution to the fact that I hate wearing a hat, but need something on my head?

We were blown into the shelter by the winds that howled over the saddle - not a day for Conical Hill (fancy new track up there since my last visit) but everyone was keen to proceed. After a brew and lunch, everyone was getting cold and keen to move on. Happily placed as "tail-end-Charlie", I stayed a bit longer with Ramona before we headed along the Hollyford face. The flowers, the bush, the views, the tussock, the waterfalls - how on earth did the two runners manage to enjoy these as they dashed past? Did they stop at the overlooking of McKenzie Hut to admire what lay below, or even remember the first time they had been that way? (I have photos taken in 1978 from there, my first ever tramp in NZ, and I was wearing denim shorts and carrying a mountain mule pack with far too much in it!)

McKenzie was getting crowded, with 26 people representing 10 nationalities that night, although we did wonder how many were paying hut fees. Conversation flowed, and as much entertainment was to be gained from watching each other (and discussing menus) as anything else! And nobody snored, (well, not for long!)



Harris Saddle with the Darran Mountains beyond (PHOTO Antony Pettinger)

Sunday was raining again - more steadily now - and we set off through the dripping "Hobbit inspiring" bush, hoping for some views, following what seemed to be little streams rather than a track, Earland Falls thundered as we approached, and looking upwards we saw the power of water falling over the edge, and fresh snow on the tussock above. The temperature dropped and some of the party began to feel the cold. Crossing the falls at the usual spot was a mistake

- quite possible, but the sheer force of the cold-water stinging cheeks and blowing up parkas made everyone fairly cold on the last leg down to Howden.

Another brew (both cooks going in a feeble attempt to provide a bit of warmth!) and lunch. No one wanted to change out of wet clothes, although we had a hour to wait before heading out to meet up with transport at the Divide. Thoughts of Key Summit and beautiful views were put on hold until the next visit, and our tramping priest celebrated Mass (in bush shirt and priestly regalia!) at the table while we admired God's work through the mist and rain outside. The van and warm dry clothes (and another bladder of wine!) awaited us, and we were soon on our way. We reached Te Anau at about 6 pm, hungry for some greasies, only to be greeted by closed signs all round town. Dejected, we started moving away from the lakeside cafe, only to see the proprietor running to the door, reversing the sign, and beckoning us in! He explained that he had recognised the logo on the trailer as his son had been an OTMC member. Relieved that he had not opened his doors just because of the legendary ability of trampers to eat up big, we flocked in, ate up big, and shared our wine with Greg Wood's father, before he offered us free range of all the day's left-over sandwiches (which made packed lunch for 10 children and 6 adults very much easier on Monday!)

We sang from Te Anau to Balclutha (without repeating a single song!) The novice trampers were delighted that they had not only survived but enjoyed it, and I felt invigorated by being out there again. The weather could have been worse - but not much! - but it had failed to dampen the spirits of the group, individually or collectively. As someone said, all the more reason to do the track again when we can see it! Our ages spanned 40 to 50 + - we have plenty of years to go!

Teresa Wasilewska for Ramona Clark, Tony, Rosemary, Nicholas, Deborah (birthday girl) and Mary.

MT SOMERS FOR MASOCHISTS

May 13-14, 2000

Author: Terry Duffield

Published in Bulletin 598, June 2000

Lowering myself into steep gorges on handsful of bush lawyer was not really on my mind when I signed on for this trip, but then when you put your name on the fit list it's a bit of a lottery

The trip started innocently enough with three carloads of keen trampers heading off to Methven on the Friday night with short stops at Oamaru and Winchester and arriving at Coalminers Flat shortly after ten. We pitched the tents and had a brew or a beer before crawling into our sleeping bags to be lulled to sleep by the sound of the nearby stream.

Our group consisted of Jeff Brown (Trip Leader), Richard Pettinger, Tony Malcolm, Paul Van Kampen, Brian Craig and myself. The forecast rain had so far failed to materialise as we set off for Woolshed Creek Hut around 8 am, favouring the ridge route rather than the longer wetter gorge. Part way up there was a mining reconstruction which would not have looked out of place in a Disneyland theme park, and coal strata could be seen sandwiched among the hillsides, but otherwise it was a fairly pedestrian uphill walk to the hut.

The area around Woolshed Creek is a real gem. We had a snack and then set off on a loop walk of about an hour passing splendid mini-gorges, waterfalls, the Emerald Pool and even a natural hydro slide, all linked by some very new looking aluminum ladders. This is definitely a place I will visit again, but in warm summer conditions perhaps. We arrived back at the hut a few minutes after the medium group arrived, had a quick lunch, and set off on the serious part of the tramp up the ridges to the Winterslow Range, across to Mount Winterslow summit and down to the Pinnacles Hut via Pony Knob (which looked doable on the map and which, our trip leader cheerfully informed us, we could easily negotiate in the dark with torches if need be).

Brian quickly decided that the slope was too much for him and the prospect of another five hours of the same (or worse!) definitely did not appeal. He set off for Pinnacles Hut along the Mount Somers track over the saddle and both Paul and myself were tempted to go along with him. Instead, our party, now five strong, started on the long uphill plod, arriving within a few hours at the high point (1440 m) and turning east along the range. It took us a further two hours or so to reach the next high point of 1625 m, by which time we had long given up on reaching the peak and instead were looking at descending the most convenient ridge and then following a stream out to the river and (hopefully) the hut. We made good going down the ridge and dropped into the stream bed a short while before dusk.

Still our cheerful leader was confident we would be sipping soup in the hut by eight.

Negotiating the creek, however, was not so straightforward and we soon encountered a waterfall, which we had to sidle around. I managed to slip down the far side of this and do a twelve-foot somersault onto a ledge (what a clod!) The twenty foot drop off the ledge to the rocky stream bed didn't bear thinking about. There followed a two-hour stretch of night walking with treacherous footing followed by a drop into a steep gorge. The going became easier for a

short time before we were again faced with difficulties and had to turn back. We found the nearest piece of open ground and began to clear a campsite.



Climbing from Morgan Stream in the direction of the Winterslow Range (PHOTO Antony Pettinger)

Incredibly, Jeff was now suggesting that we now climb back out of the gorge and continue our search for the hut. This was taking optimism to a fanatical extreme (or fanatamism, as suggested by Robyn Bell) and it was decided by a majority of four to call it a day. Some hot food and, despite the uneven sloping ground, we slept like logs. If there were any snorers in our group we were too far gone to notice. Jeff made a nest out of his pack liner at the bottom of an overhanging cliff with cave crickets above for company, so was sure to sleep with his mouth dosed!

Bright and early next morning we were woken by the effervescent Jeff Brown. (Honestly, this guy is so cheerful it's like going tramping with Kermit the Frog!) By daylight it was easy to find a route out of the gorge and we quickly followed the ridge up into open tussock, following fresh deer tracks. We caught sight of the deer as we approached the top of the ridge, but they didn't hang around too long. The sun striking the Pinnacles afforded us a magnificent view as well as a clear indication of the hut's location (we wouldn't have seen much at night though!) There was also a great view of Pony Knob shrouded in bluffs and I was grateful we hadn't had to descend that at night! Several ridges and valleys later we met the track and hustled down to Pinnacles Hut. The other group had already left, so we sat around in the glorious sunshine, chatted, ate lunch, desserts and coffee. Well most of us did - Tony and Paul had a bit of a run up the mountain without packs, then followed on later.



OTMC party on Pt 1625, with Mt Somers in the background (PHOTO Antony Pettinger)

Less than three hours later we were at the road end drinking coffee while the vehicles were shuttled from Coalminers Flat. All things considered, it was a marvelous trip and certainly memorable. At no time did we lose our humour or positive outlook, although we were lucky that it didn't rain! Jeff is a very capable leader, though an incurable optimist.

Terry Duffield.

~~HOMER HUT~~ CANCELLED

May 20-21, 2000

Author: Andrew McKay

Published in Bulletin 599, July 2000

Although the trip had been cancelled due to the terrible weather forecast, some of us were still keen to tramp, so we met at the club rooms at 6 pm to decide our destination. Several other options were put forward, but I was still keen on going to Fiordland as we were staying in huts, all of which were close to the road, so even if the weather was foul it was not necessary to spend too much time out in it.

Just south of Balclutha, Paul excitedly pointed out a rainbow in the sky ahead. As you can imagine, this caused a little amazement, as no one in the vehicle had ever heard of rainbows at night!

Saturday dawned overcast with showers. Not to be discouraged the group donned their wet weather gear and started up the Gertrude Valley with intentions of reaching the snowline. Just up from the hut the Gertrude Stream tumbles through a series of rocky areas. The solid rocks, fast flowing water and mountains peeking through the mist provided some rather nice images for me to record on film. The drizzle had turned to a steady rain and the stream was beginning to rise rather quickly, so we decided to flag and head back to the vehicles.

As a few of us had never been to this area. Alan suggested that we drive through the tunnel and have a look at the Chasm. So up and through the hill we went with me gawping out the windows at the scenery. The Chasm is a sight to behold - I rattled off a couple of shots, but as it was now raining hard I really didn't want to get my camera wet. Back at the vehicles we decided that the best option was to head for The Divide shelter for lunch and then on to Howden Hut for the rest of the afternoon.

Howden Hut is one of the least frequently used of the Great Walk huts and therefore still retains some character. We arrived at the empty hut carrying large amounts fuel for the potbelly, and plenty of food for our bellies (soon to also be "pot"?! Ed). While Chris and Susan headed off for a short trip to McKellar Hut, Liz, our chief fire starter, set about cranking up the potbelly. After a little repair work with some #8 wire to hold the door in place she soon had the living area of the hut warmed up.

As we settled in an Irish chap arrived, followed shortly by the arrival of a gentleman from Ethiopia (now resident in the USA), giving our little party an international flavour. We discovered a new soup flavour (any Maggi vegetable soup we could find all thrown into the same pot), revelled in stir-fried chicken and vegetables, with caramel and custard for afters. It was about then that three lads from Dunedin turned up and joined right in, though I must admit that carrying in a large bottle of spirits is taking things just a little to far! While they partied on into the night the rest of us hit the sack about 10 p.m. I was woken by a bright flash of light, then stunned by a huge clap of thunder that shook the hut. The lads let out a huge

whoop and yelled "Bring it on!" as the rest of our heart rates dropped to a more restful level and we drifted back to sleep,



Lake Howden, Routeburn Track (PHOTO Antony Pettinger)

While it was still overcast outside, the day held promise of clearing and I was keen to use up some of the film I had bought along. After breakfast and the necessary coffee fix, it was out and about looking for some nice ethereal shots of Lake Howden. As I headed back to the hut there was a loud cry from along the track to Lake McKellar. "Oh Hell!" I thought, "what now...?" I looked around and saw Chris D running at full speed towards the sound and, thinking the worst, I started running as well, thoughts of first aid courses and getting choppers into the hut filling my head. As it turned out there wasn't a problem - Margareta had thought that the Irish chap had taken off with her gloves by mistake and was calling out to him. Well it sounded like "HELP!!!!" to me. As it turned out Susan had picked them up with some of her stuff, so apart from a little adrenaline hit on my part it all ended well.

Paul, Susan and Chris had decided that on the way back to the vehicles they would head up to Key Summit and then explore along the ridge tops and invited me to join them. Dumping our packs at the turn off we headed up the track to Key Summit. The going was easy with a well-formed trail heading slightly uphill past the scrub and tarns and onto the tussock covered ridge. Once you have gained the ridge there are magnificent views into three valleys - the Greenstone, Hollyford and Eglington.

The ridge itself has numerous large tarns and large obelisk like rocks. Geologically this area is more than fascinating, running along the center of the ridge is a series of large cracks which

are the surface expressions of gravity-induced slumping. All the valleys in this area were glaciated, and when you take the supports away (e.g., the glacier) something has got to give, so some time in the future the ridge will collapse into the valley, (Hmmm, remind me not to spend too much time in McKellar Hut!). Time was starting to catch up with us as we had promised the others we would meet them at the Divide at 12.30 p.m. It was now just on noon and very much time to head back. These "Great Walks" tracks are wonderful if you are in a hurry, Key Summit turnoff to the Divide shelter in less than 20 minutes. After lunch, we headed down the Hollyford Valley to where the track to Lake Marian starts. The first portion of the track is very well graded and board walked so that the tourists can get to view the Marian Stream rapids without getting their designer shoes muddy, whereas the rest of the track basically follows a small stream course as it sidles up the valley. Unlike most tourist areas, believe the DoC sign when it says 1.5 hours to the lake, because even at a good clip that's what it takes. Lake Marian itself was a real disappointment for me. I had seen Paul v K's photos taken in the summer with lovely blue skies and lots of light, while we were presented with heavy overcast which flattened the colours. Still, I had finally got to another of those places I hadn't been.



Mt Christina and the Darran Mountains from Key Summit (PHOTO Antony Pettinger)

Time was again getting on and it was starting to chill down, so Alan and I started plodding slowly back to the vehicles, admiring the bush and bird calls. Quite a nice way to wind down a weekend that had turned out to be much better than we all expected.

Andrew' MacKay for Chris Dyson, Alan Thomson, Liz Clark, Susan Shannon, Margarita Wilding, Ann Burton and Paul van Kampen.

GOVERNMENT TRACK

June 18, 2000

Author: Greg Powell

Published in Bulletin 599, July 2000

Our proposed route started at the "car park" (near Berwick) and climbed steadily up the hill to emerge at the power pylons in the Wenita Forestry area and then downhill to the Waipori Falls parking / picnic area.

The day started windy but with clear blue skies, however when we reached the turnoff to Berwick from the flood-free the start of the first predicted front could be seen steadily advancing towards us. By the time we reached the start of the track it had started to rain quite heavily. We drove to Waipori Falls as we had to leave a car there for the return trip. By this time, it was fair pelting down and the question was raised as to whether or not we should continue, however being a hardy group, we decided not to let a little rain put us off.

This proved to be a good decision because by the time we arrived back at the lower end of the track the rain had abated considerably and remained relatively dry for the next 2-3 hours. It's a nice gentle climb uphill all the way to the power pylons and is a very pleasant bush walk with the track in good order.

As we came out of the bush the weather started to pack up with persistent rain and cold winds. We had intended walking a further 2-3 km to a lunch shelter, but the track was well overgrown, and we decided instead to find an un-pruned pine tree to shelter under to eat lunch. Once we found a suitable tree and got comfy the rain stopped and it was quite pleasant eating lunch sheltered from the biting wind.

Lunch over, we headed down a four-wheel drive track towards the Waipori Falls parking / picnic area, a short uneventful walk but very steep, and with good views of the falls and the old Waipori village. Despite the fickle weather, a good day, and a good chance to test the winter clothing.

Greg Powell for Doug Forrester, Jenni Wright, Trevor Blogg and Jacob Feenstra.

MID-WINTER WINE & DINE – KEPLER TRACK

June 24-25, 2000

Author: Susan Shannon

Published in Bulletin 600, August 2000

On Friday night at 7 pm on the dot, I was collected at my Balclutha residence by a vanload of 8 enthusiastic weekend trampers, with Ann Burton, Camp Leader, at the wheel. We stopped at Gore for a high calorie feed-up, justified by the anticipated hard walking ahead.

It was about 10.30 pm when we arrived at Rainbow Reach, and as it was a fine night, we got ourselves organised, and walked into Moturau Hut. Tramping by headlight was a new experience for me, with the surrounding beech forest appearing adorned with fairy lights as the stars twinkled through - Cool!!!! Close to the hut, I heard something rather large crashing through the undergrowth, which got me moving a little faster. Maybe it was a pig - luckily not the ferocious butt-eating South American variety that Paul van Kampen told us stories of the next day. We arrived at the hut around midnight - flushing loos. Awesome!!! I was feeling pretty tired after a hectic working week, however when I asked Ann whether it was time for a port, I got the reply, "Is the Pope a Catholic?". Needless to say, I crashed and never heard the all-night revellers go to bed, let alone whether anyone snored or talked in their sleep.



Moturau Hut, Kepler Track (PHOTO Antony Pettinger)

Saturday morning we were up by 8.30 am, and got to appreciate the serene setting of Moturau Hut on the sandy shore of Manapouri, looking out over the water to bush and snow covered mountains. We left the hut around 9.30 am, the track was wide and very easy going, climbing gently through beech forest up the Irisburn. The impressive big slip of 1984 was a welcome change of scene, although a misty rain had begun to fall, and concealed the surrounding mountains. Paul, Shirley, and I arrived at Irisburn Hut just after 2 pm and began hatching plans of going on further to the first alpine lookout. The others, who were apparently having a lot more fun (Greg walking into trees that leapt out in front of him, and as a result, developing extra lumps where they shouldn't be, for an example!!) arrived around 3 pm, just after we left.

The three of us set off up the zig-zag. It was great to get above the bushline. Most of the mist had lifted from around the mountains, so we were awarded great alpine views and got to throw a little bit of snow around. We didn't loiter long at the top as it was starting to rain and we were conscious of diminishing light. We got back down in two thirds of the time, aided by gravity and a longing for dinner.

Well, what a feast! The dessert competition was very interesting. Ann's team produced an alcoholic's dream - gingernuts dissolved (I don't think that was quite what the recipe called for) in sherry and mixed with cream. Unfortunately, it failed to reignite the fire - surprisingly!! Greg's creation - a tribute to the All Blacks who were playing Scotland that weekend in Dunedin - won the prize. Very creative. Andrew produced a wonderful chocolate birthday cake, complete with candles, to celebrate Jacqui's birthday, which we all did with party hats and party whistles and presents all round. We all had a good laugh, mostly at Greg's expense, before calling it a night.

Sunday morning was dark and wet, but we arose to the pleasant aroma of Jacqui's hot pancakes for breakfast - we had all overindulged the night before, so decided to save this dessert for breakfast. Before retracing our steps back to Rainbow Reach, we went to investigate the waterfall about 15 minutes behind the hut. With all the rain we'd had overnight, it was quite spectacular. The track out was very wet, so we all decided to push on to Moturau Hut before stopping for lunch around 2 pm. After recharging the batteries and warming ourselves with hot drinks and soups, we set off again. Fortunately, the rain had stopped by the time we reached the car park so we could change into nice dry clothes before heading home. We'll have to go back and complete the track over a summer's weekend.

A weekend tramping review from Susan Shannon - who thoroughly enjoyed the company of Ann, Jenny, Bess, Greg, Paul, Shirley, Andrew, and Jacqui.

FMC ALPINE INSTRUCTORS COURSE

Date not recorded

Author: Jenny Lowe

Published in Bulletin 600. August 2000

Chris and I participated in the recent FMC Alpine Instructor's Course at Temple Basin, Arthur's Pass. It was a wonderful course and both of us gained considerably from it. Not only did we get the opportunity to brush up our own skills under the instruction of professional teachers, but we learnt the requirements of successful teaching. Often this aspect is overlooked as we are often pupils receiving the information rather than teachers disseminating it.

The course began on Friday evening with a beautiful walk in the fresh air under the stars up to the ski lodge. We mingled with course participants and instructors (a total of around 30) on Friday night, with people coming from as far as Auckland to Dunedin, having a large range in experience.

Saturday was a sunny blue-sky day and we were introduced to four others of similar experience and Steve, our instructor. The day gave us the opportunity to teach group sessions. Topics covered included crampon walking, step cutting, front-pointing, self-arresting, route finding and placing of anchors. As 'pupils' we had plenty of time to practise our skills, although being 4.5 months pregnant I was careful when it came to throwing myself off the mountain!! The end of the day was eventful with our instructor doing a backwards flip down a steep gully that we had been descending and putting a crampon spike deep into his leg in the process. That was the end of his weekend!

Sunday brought us Billy (Kimberley) as replacement instructor. We reinforced our teaching skills and learnt some other styles from Billy. Rope work was also introduced.

All in all, a fantastic learning opportunity for both Chris and myself. We are sure this will help us in running the Snowcraft Courses this year. As well as increasing our enthusiasm it has increased our awareness of safety in the mountains.

Thanks to the OTMC for sponsoring us to attend this course.

Jenny Lowe and Chris Wells.

WINTER ROUTEBURN PART 1

July 15-16, 2000

Author: Greg Powell

Published in Bulletin 600, August 2000

Before getting into the nitty gritty of the trip report I think it is appropriate to say a special thanks to Wolfgang for organising this weekend. Having 45 attendees says it all for the popularity of this event and the task of organising this number of people is not insignificant (and he managed not to lose anyone). Well done, Wolfgang!!!

Chris and Ann Burton and I travelled to Wakatipu by car and reached the Routeburn shelter at 8 pm on Friday evening. It was a beautiful clear evening with a full moon providing plenty of light for our walk into the Falls Hut and was particularly pleasant walking in the open at Routeburn Flats. We arrived at Falls Hut at 11.15 pm to be warmly welcomed by three very merry gentlemen whom it appears consumed their entire weekends supply of whiskey (as well as Wolfgang's) in one sitting.



A frozen Lake Harris, Routeburn Track (PHOTO Antony Pettinger)

Next morning, we set off up the hill to Harris Saddle. Again, the weather was perfect, and I was pleased the forecaster got it wrong. The trip up was pretty uneventful with very little snow and ice. Unfortunately, there was also very little ice on Lake Harris and the hoped-for ice skating was not an option. At the emergency shelter we three teamed up with Alan Thomson and

decided to climb to the top of Conical Hill. The usual track up was snow and ice bound so we had to find an alternative route which we did without too much trouble. The effort of the climb was rewarded with magnificent views and the clear day provided some great photo opportunities. I am looking forward to the club's "Show and Tell" evening to see some of the shots taken.



Routeburn Track, in the basin below Lake Harris (PHOTO Antony Pettinger)

Back to Falls Hut for Saturday night. Great company, a couple of ports, heaps of laughs and a delicious four course meal were topped off with Wolfgang's famous quiz, which again proved very popular. A few of us were starting to feel a bit jaded by the time the quiz ended and were grateful to climb into the sleeping bags, tired but happy.

A well-deserved lie in on Sunday morning and up at 8 am for a leisurely breakfast. Shirley Croot joined our walking group at this stage as we had decided to walk up to Sugarloaf Pass for a late lunch. Unfortunately, time was against us (Shirley had to meet the bus by 4 pm) but we made it past the bushline and enjoyed the awesome views of the upper end of Lake Wakatipu while we ate our lunch. A fast trip down and Shirley managed to catch the bus with minutes to spare.

Another successful OTMC trip with the highlights for me being the magnificent scenery, the great camaraderie, and not being in the team that scored lowest in the quiz.

Greg Powell

WINTER ROUTEBURN PART 2

July 15-16, 2000

Author: Wolfgang Gerber

Published in Bulletin 600, August 2000

Week after week the names kept mounting up and by the time the list closed there were 45 names. To be honest, a little bit of panic set in as my last trip had only 18, but Antony quickly calmed me down. I was really surprised at the interest shown for this trip, so it must have been either the area, the timing, the full moon, or was it people just wanted to go tramping with the famous Chris Wells?? Anyway, 45 people left in 3 cars and a bus. "A bus!", I hear you cry. The last time a bus was used was back in '94!



Descending Conical Hill with Lake Harris and the Routeburn Track below (PHOTO Antony Pettinger)

I had received a lot of help and encouragement from club members and the 8 committee members who went on this trip. Everything went so well that we left the clubrooms on time. In the back seats, Bruce and Ron ended up annihilating everyone at euchre - mind you, the "marked" cards belonged to the dentist! On we drove to Milton to pick up Susan, and soon we were having tea at Alexandra. We finally arrived at the Routeburn Shelter at 12.30 am. Some of us wanted to walk to the Flats Hut, so off into the moonlight (how romantic!) we walked, and ended up in bed at 2.45 am. I have since been told that glow-worms were seen along the way,

Saturday morning was a late start for some at the Flats Hut, and a little bit too early for some at the Shelter (alarm clocks will be banned next year, eh?!). Up we went to the Falls Hut to drop off our gear, and various groups pushed on to their different destinations. Six of us made it up to Conical Hill, where there were magnificent views of the Darren's, Lake McKerrow, Martins Bay, the Tasman Sea, Lake Harris and it's basin, Key Summit, Lake Gunn, and finally the trio of Ngatimamoe, Flat Top and Pyramid Mountains. As you can imagine, a lot of photos were taken! We made our way back down over some frozen ice field, which turned out to be quite challenging, and as we neared the hut the sun sank behind our beautiful mountains.

The club's culinary delights were up to the usual high standards, with lots of yummy entrees, mains, desserts, etc. But the highlight of the evening, the quiz night, went well with expected controversy about some of the answers (I've got to learn to harden up!) and in the end it was a three-way tie for first place. A "sudden death" play off was employed and it was Brenda and Robin F coming in third; with David B, Susan S and Mark E coming second; while the Routeburn 2000 Champs were Bruce N, Paul v K and Dale H. The Wooden Spoon title was hotly contested, and it was Chris W, Margarita W, and Richard E who came in a strong last. The Dorky Answer prize was given out to the presidential group of Alan T, Shirley C and Liana M, while the Poker Hand was won by Sue W who ended up with 5 aces. Other hands consisted of 5 x 10's, 5 x B's (oh boy!), etc. There was also a devious seven card flush???!!!! This year Ann Burton was my lovely assistant, and a big thanks goes out to her.

Also I would like to thank Alan T, Ron M, Ann B (again), Rachel B, Bruce N, Fiona W, Fiona McP, Greg P and Chris W for leading food groups.

All in all it was a fun weekend, with most people achieving what they set out to do. It was pleasing to see some new faces, and some of our new bushcrafters came along as well. Next year we'll do it all again in early July, but at McKenzie Hut and with a different format. See you there for some more winter tramping, fun and quizzing.

Wolfgang Gerber (trip leader),

ROSELLA RIDGE

July 9, 2000

Author: Jacob Feenstra

Published in Bulletin 601, September 2000

After shuttling cars, Trevor, Ken, Wilbert and his daughter Nanette, Angelika, Shirley and yours truly set out for Rosella Ridge in the Silver Peaks, starting from the Green Ridge end. The weather was overcast and cool, so we developed a steady pace from the beginning to keep ourselves warm.



Rosella Ridge from high point between Pulpit Rock and 777m (PHOTO Antony Pettinger)

We had morning tea at the Green Hut site, but only briefly since the chill was very pervasive! By the time the turn off onto Rosella Ridge was in sight the clouds and fog had disappeared. Just what we asked for in our brief but effective prayers to the Gods of the Silver Peaks (Pulpit and Jubilee), Now, with clear skies, we had magnificent views all around. The route, here much drier underfoot, lead us over undulating terrain covered in tussock, scrub and regenerating manuka to the last part (approx. 1/3) of the ridge, which is covered in real bush, with many natives like manuka, broadleaf, lancewood, beech, etc. Here fantail and bellbird accompanied us (so where are the rosellas?!).

Waikouaiti River, which marks the end of the ridge, can seldom be crossed without getting wet feet, as was the case today despite the water level being very low. Never mind though. The tough, steep uphill bit of this tramp towards Walkers Rd (and the car) caused quick evaporation of all superfluous moisture in the shoes. An excellent trip of around five hours.

Jacob Feenstra.

MT DOMETT – DANSEYS PASS

August 5-6, 2000

Author: Greg Powell

Published in Bulletin 601, September 2000

Because of the short travelling distance from Dunedin, it was agreed that we would leave Dunedin at 8 am on Saturday as opposed to the usual Friday evening departure, and so on a bright and sunny morning we managed to leave the clubrooms by 8.15 am in two private vehicles. We had a relaxing drive up to the Kyeburn turnoff via the Pigroot and stopped at Danseys Pass Hotel for a leg stretch and a cup o' tea before continuing upwards into Danseys Pass. Once over the top we continued for 5-10 minutes and took the first turn right down towards a set of sheep yards. The gate at the bottom appeared locked so we parked the vehicles here and continued on foot. However, when Wilbert tried the padlock, the chain simply came off, but unfortunately this was after the rest of us had struggled to climb over the gate with our packs on! A good lesson to remember.



Mt Domett (left and Little Mt Domett (right) (PHOTO Antony Pettinger)

Our first objective was to follow the Otekaieke River towards Mt Domett to reach Chinaman's Hut for a lunch break. We all took spare gym shoes or light boots for this part of the trip as we needed to cross the river several times, and despite our best efforts we couldn't avoid getting wet feet. (Call us softies but we wanted dry boots for the snow the next day.) Otekaieke River is really more of a stream but judging from the debris it can become a fearsome torrent in

periods of high rainfall, and difficult if not impossible to negotiate. Apart from domesticated cattle the only other animals we saw were a small number of wild pigs. RCD seems to have decimated the rabbits, but there were plenty of hare droppings at higher altitudes.

It took us 1 1/2 hours to reach the hut at a leisurely pace. The hut cannot be seen from the river but if you keep an eye out for two stone cairns on the left you can't miss it. The hut is delightful, being constructed of stacked schist stone with a rusty iron roof and surrounded by a stone fence and an adjacent iron loo (with paper supplied). The interior is very cosy with two bunk platforms (which can sleep 8 comfortably), a cooking bench, and adequate seating. Heating is by way of an open fire or cast-iron firebox, and you need to cart your own coal in. We had to share the hut with some nocturnal visitors, either rat or mouse, however Alan had carried in some poison tablets which should solve the problem for the next visitors.



Looking from near Mt Domett across to Little Mt Domett (PHOTO Antony Pettinger)

Saturday afternoon we went for a tiki tour in the hills behind the hut. I think the intention was to climb a smaller hill called the Dome, however time was against us, and we turned back in order to return to the hut before dark. On the way back Paul and I decided to descend via a ridge while the remainder of the group chose what looked like an easy gully. As it turned out, the gully was full of Matagouri and steep drops, so the going was quite tough. The rest of the party were not pleased to get down to the river to find Paul and I happily playing cards while we waited for them. (Sorry guys - had to mention this!)

From the hut you can see a saddle between Mt David and Mt Domett, and this was our first objective for Sunday morning. (I mean very early Sunday morning - thanks for the wakeup call

Liz!) We walked up the riverbed for about 1/2 hour before coming to a small waterfall, and at this point we turned uphill towards the saddle, reaching it 2 hours later. From the saddle you reach a 4WD track and have the choice of two ridges to ascend to the top of Mt Domett. We chose the right-hand ridge as it had less bluffs and seemed easier than the other. On crossing to the chosen ridge Liz had the chance to put her ice axe arresting skills to good use when she slipped while crossing an iced-over patch of snow. Once up on the ridge the snow disappeared, and our biggest problem was the strong gusty winds which made the going really tough. We had set ourselves a time limit for turning back and this, coupled with the strong winds, meant we did not reach the top. I guesstimate we stopped at 1800m (top is 1983m) and the views of North Otago were superb. (I can't wait to develop my photos).

The trip down was much easier and we had lunch on the saddle out of the wind. (Paul lost his cap on the way down, so if anyone in Canterbury is reading this please keep an eye out for it please!) We chose a different route down from the saddle, mainly through tussock with snow interspersed between them and heaps of speargrass. Paul and I crossed a small ridge ahead of the rest of the party and ambushed them with snowballs as they passed us. I suggest the club includes snowball training for Bess, Ann and Liz as part of the next snowcraft course! (Alan's video at a recent club night was proof of their devious plan - Ed)

We stopped at the hut on the way out to collect our big packs and have a well-earned cup o' tea, and after a total of 9 ¾ hours tramping arrived back at the vehicles at about 6.15 pm, then on to the Danseys Pass Hotel for tea and home for a hot shower and bed.

Greg Powell for Alan Thomson, Liz Clark, Ann Burton, Paul Van Kampen, Bess Taylor, and Wilbert Stokman.

REMARKABLES SNOWCRAFT (PART 1)

August 26-27, 2000

Author: Michelle Watson

Published in Bulletin 601, September 2000

We arrived in Queenstown to really comfortable accommodation and woke up on Saturday to find cloud settled in on the mountains and drizzle in town. It was well and truly snowing and very windy at the Remarkables Ski field car park. We put on as many clothes as possible and started out in three groups of five or six up to Lake Alta. The snow and wind never let up, which was good in that we had very soft snow to practise our immediate self-arrests and self-arresting without ice axes. But when we tried to seek shelter next to a very large rock for lunch the wind seemed to blast in from every direction. With full tummies we headed back to the car park with just a small detour to find steep ground to self-arrest on. Conversation, showers, and a few wines later we headed into Kelly's Bar in Frankton for superb meals and atmosphere.

Sunday morning dawned clear and calm and on arriving at the ski field car park we found no wind and just a harmless cloud which continued to ebb and flow in the basin all day. Crampons first this morning. Thanks to all the recent snow it was difficult to find any hard and icy snow. We then moved on to self-arresting with a bit of speed from different positions. Lunch today was a real pleasure, in the sun watching the skiers/snow boarders enjoying themselves in the powder. After lunch a group of six went for a walk up to a high point above Lake Alta. Too hot in my winter polyprop today, it was fairly heavy going in the soft snow till we found the PE students steps to follow. Fantastic visibility from the top. Had a faster trip back down again sliding on pack liners, although we did make time to have a couple of goes at the really fun slides. The lovely people at the camping ground even let us shower before heading back to Dunedin.

Many thanks to Jenny, Chris, Shelley, Rodney, and the other two speakers on Tuesday night, for your organisation. I now have more confidence for next time that I encounter snow when tramping, which will hopefully be sooner rather than later.

Michelle Watson

REMARKABLES SNOWCRAFT (PART 2)

August 26-27, 2000

Author: Margarita Wilding

Published in Bulletin 601, September 2000

Friday had finally arrived with a mass exodus of the Snowcraft Course participants from Dunedin. We left the clubrooms in good time to arrive at Kawarau Falls Lakeside Holiday Park. All we could hear was the roar of the river and see the lights of some other chalets. Ours was nice and warm and, even better, had heated loos! Saturday morning was peaky, with a grey sky. Our instructors - Chris, Jenny and Shelley, sorted us into teams and we took a good look at the satellite weather maps which Jenny had brought along. We set off to the ski fields, encountering fog and strong winds by the time we reached our goal. Hastily putting on balaclavas, hats, and hoods, we had our first instructions on how to carry ice axes. Our crampons had already been secured (fangs protected) to our packs, then with everyone ready, we headed up the slopes to Lake Alta. All the time the snow was coming down horizontally and swirling so we had the best possible conditions for testing our stamina, gear and equipment.



OTMC Snowcraft Course (PHOTO Matt Corbett)

I had never been in so much snow, nor such windy conditions, and at first thought it was great fun. But by the time we had reached the second ridge I had changed my ideas! It is exhausting ploughing through such deep snow, sinking up to knees and thighs with almost every step. My glasses froze up inside so I could barely see the footprints left by the other team members, and no matter how short a step they took, mine seemed shorter. After falling flat on my face several times, I decided that I was crazy to have ever thought of coming on such an exercise!

Still, we all got practice at using the ice axes correctly, and the instructions on how to dig in toes and anchor ourselves when zigzagging up gullies came in handy. The other teams were taking slightly varied routes to the same pass, and once over, it was as if the "civilized" ski slopes never existed.

The snow was falling as fast as ever and only the rocks on the ridge edge indicated the separation between ridge and sky. Chris demonstrated cutting snow steps, then we all had a go. This was fun and if the snow had been firmer, we could have made seats and a mini amphitheater (fanciful I know, but the mind does flit around so!) Our teams were scattered around the valley with no trace of anyone else. We practised self-arresting, then headed to the valley floor for lunch in the lee of a large set of rocks. We were all huddled together trying to eat food and not snowflakes! Snow fell into my soup before I could take a sip, and Ann had to sit perfectly still to prevent her lunchbox slipping into a snowdrift. Chris' fingers went white at the tips with cold, but Jenny felt fine - after this weekend it will not surprise me if Snowy George has instinctive mountain survival skills!

We found the work done that morning useful and tiring, but some of us were beginning to feel chilled and the weather was closing in. So, although more exercises were planned for the afternoon, we decided to head along the valley floor to ice caves set up by the School of Physical Education. They looked chilly to say the least, and the one with the loo could easily have been missed. No wonder we were told to have your ice axe with you at all times - they would need it to hack their way back to their sleeping quarters! We finished that afternoon by sliding down the slopes on our pack liners. The dinner at Kelly's in Frankton was ideal for stocking up on the necessary calories for Day Two.

Sunday was bright and clear. Woolly hats off and sunblock on. As we were not going anywhere near falling rocks or other overhead hazards we were able to leave our helmets in the van. Tuesday night's practice of adjusting and fitting crampons paid off and we didn't have to waste time getting those lethal teeth onto our boots. After the instructors had demonstrated a new way of walking, the rest of us followed, doing fair imitations of splay-footed penguins! On the nearby slopes we learnt new variations of self-arresting, such as going on our back's feet first. The instructors were most thorough in making sure we were adept at both right and left-handed- packaxe-arm-flinging. This brought us nicely to lunch, when we were glad of a breather and able to take off the tucked-in jackets and cool down.

Then Chris, Shelley and some of the more energetic participants headed for the slopes behind the Remarkables Café. The remaining group took a breather before resuming self-arresting practice. By now the slide had become glazed and it was ideal for whizzing down headfirst on your back. Jenny gave us additional encouragement and when we had had enough, we made for the café to watch other people enjoying themselves. Once there we realised that maybe we had been as much an object of interest to other people as they were now to us.

The afternoon ended with the successful descent of the intrepid climbers and a brief stop at the chalet to pack gear before heading for Dunedin. I would like to thank Chris and Jenny (including Snowy George) for organising the trip, Shelley for also instructing, and the drivers for

getting us safely there and back. A great learning experience and two days of totally different weather to show us what it can be like in the mountains.

Margarita for Ann, Bess, Chris, Dale, Dean, Hayden, Jenny, Liz, Mark, Michelle, Nick, Rodney, Sarah, Shelley and Shirley.

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THE EASY MAKARORA TRIP

September 2-3, 2000

Author: Peter Stevenson

Published in Bulletin 601, September 2000

Two parties set off for Makarora on Friday night. The adventurous party was destined for the Fish Valley and beyond, the other five of us set for the less arduous tramp up the Makarora Valley to the Makarora Hut. Car trouble on Friday night meant a late start after Ann had to shuttle Jeff, Wilbert and Rob (fit party) from Hawea to the Gates of Haast.



Makarora Valley under snow (PHOTO Antony Pettinger)

The sign at the start of the track stated "Makarora Hut 7 hours." Even with a late start we were confident of reaching the hut before dark. The first part of the track comprised a steep ascent from the picturesque Stewart Falls, then across the divide between Stewart Creek and the Makarora River. By lunch it was evident that we were making slow time due to the rough and steep nature of the terrain. At about 3:30 pm we met a young couple walking out from the hut. They advised us that the hut was a further four hours away even at a good pace. We decided the best option was to continue on to where the track descended to the river flats and find a suitable place to camp since it was unlikely, we would be able to reach the hut before dark. Fortunately, we had brought Ann's three-person tent with us, but it looked like a night under the stars for Ken and me.

A suitable site was found a further hour and a half up the track. We set about clearing a place for the tent and erecting a makeshift shelter using a groundsheet strung between two trees, just in time before it started to rain. The forest did offer some degree of shelter from the light

rain. A pleasant meal, accompanied by port and ginger wine was enjoyed under the shelter of the trees. Fortunately, the rain stopped by the time we adjourned for the night and the shelter's waterproofness wasn't tested.



Checking out the ice in the Makarora Valley (PHOTO Antony Pettinger)

The next day we made the return trip back to the highway quite a lot quicker than the day before, giving Ann heaps of time to drop us back to Hawea before making the return journey to the Gates of Haast to pick up the other party. Takeaways were purchased from the Hawea Hotel and eaten on the grass reserve overlooking the lake as the sun went down. A pleasant end to a less than successful trip.

Pete Stevenson for Ann Burton, Shirley Croot, Bess Taylor, and Ken Powell.

A SHORT REPORT OF A LONGISH TRIP

September 24, 2000

Author: David Barnes

Published in Bulletin 602, October 2000

And a longer report on a shorter meeting...

With DCC talking about marking some of the tracks in the Silverstream catchment, I decided to re-familiarise myself with the area before attending the public meeting. Dad and I left the old Whare Flat school at 9.15 am and headed along the water race to McRaes Weir. Water races, like old railways and tramways, have the one advantage for trampers - hardly any significant hills, although in this case there's a wee one over the tunnel. From the weir, we grunted up to bushline at Trig Q (505m), just off the Swampy Road. Murphy's Law dictated that a brief hail shower would arrive at the moment that we got out of the bush.



Trig Q and the junction of the Steve Aimes and Little Coal Creek tracks (PHOTO Antony Pettinger)

The next bit was new territory for me - a route called North Coal Creek. There's a good lookout not far from the trig, before the track plunges down a fairly rough, steep route to rejoin the race. We followed the race up to the intake weir, and then it was another grunt up Raingauge Spur. After getting the steep bit out of the way, it was time for a quick lunch stop, then onwards and upwards. Eventually we were out in the open again and watching a squall cross Maungatua (where I'd planned to be on the club trip before hatching this plan) and Chalkies and head into the Silver Peaks. It looked like it would miss us, and we contemplated ringing my

brother, who was four-wheel driving at Mt Allan, and pointing out that we had better weather than he did.

Fortunately, we didn't, as soon we were in the snow too, but not for long. A quick stroll down the road brought us back to the Steve Amies Track and Trig Q, and then it was another rough steep descent, this time down the Little Coal Creek route. Back on the race again, but heading downstream, we contemplated dropping down to the Silverstream to join up with the Powder Ridge track, but decided it was late enough in the day to be contemplating extensions. So, we headed down the race, back past McRaes Weir, and arrived back at the car at 5.15 pm.

At the meeting, I approached the issue from a Recreational Opportunity Spectrum perspective i.e., there needs to be opportunities for all sorts of recreationalists - Sunday drivers, mountain bikers, trampers etc. Likewise, there needs to be a range of opportunities for different levels of ability and expectation within one type of recreation. Thus the city has walks from "take-your-Grandma" stuff like Ross Creek, through the Pineapple Track to the Peninsula tracks and ultimately up to the less developed parts of the Silver Peaks. The proposals to mark and signpost the Silverstream tracks fits this concept.

The plan is for significant signposting at the entrances. (Silverstream pumphouse, Swampy Road and, I think, opposite the old Whare Flat school). There will also be signs at track junctions, orange triangle markers on trees, and posts above bushline.

The tracks to be marked are:

Racemans Track from the pumphouse to the weir.

The water race from Whare Flat to join Racemans Track.

The return loop from the water race to Silverstream via the bottom of Powder

Three tracks from Swampy Rd and Trig Q to the water race - Steve Amies Track to McRaes Weir, North Coal Creek and Little Coal Creek.

These will be joined up in a series of identifiable loops and signed accordingly. The intention is that the signs and pamphlets will spell out the nature of the terrain and the need for better equipment and more bush sense than the Pineapple Track would require. I have doubts about the appropriateness of including the Coal Creek tracks in the project, as I suspect anyone who will be enticed into the area by pamphlets and signs may find those routes unpleasant. However, I have been assured that the potential problems will be spelt out.

The meeting also discussed some Silver Peaks issues. The non-DOC signs and markers are about to be removed from Rosella Ridge. A sign on the ridge, about 100m off the Pulpit Rock track, will spell out that Rosella Ridge is an unmarked route only. The structure built out of the Green Hut remains will be removed once DOC's lawyer has confirmed that there are no obstacles to doing so.

(There were DOC workers on the ridge five days later, so the sign is there, and I assume the non-DOC markers and signs are gone).

David Barnes

MAKARORA – FIT OPTION

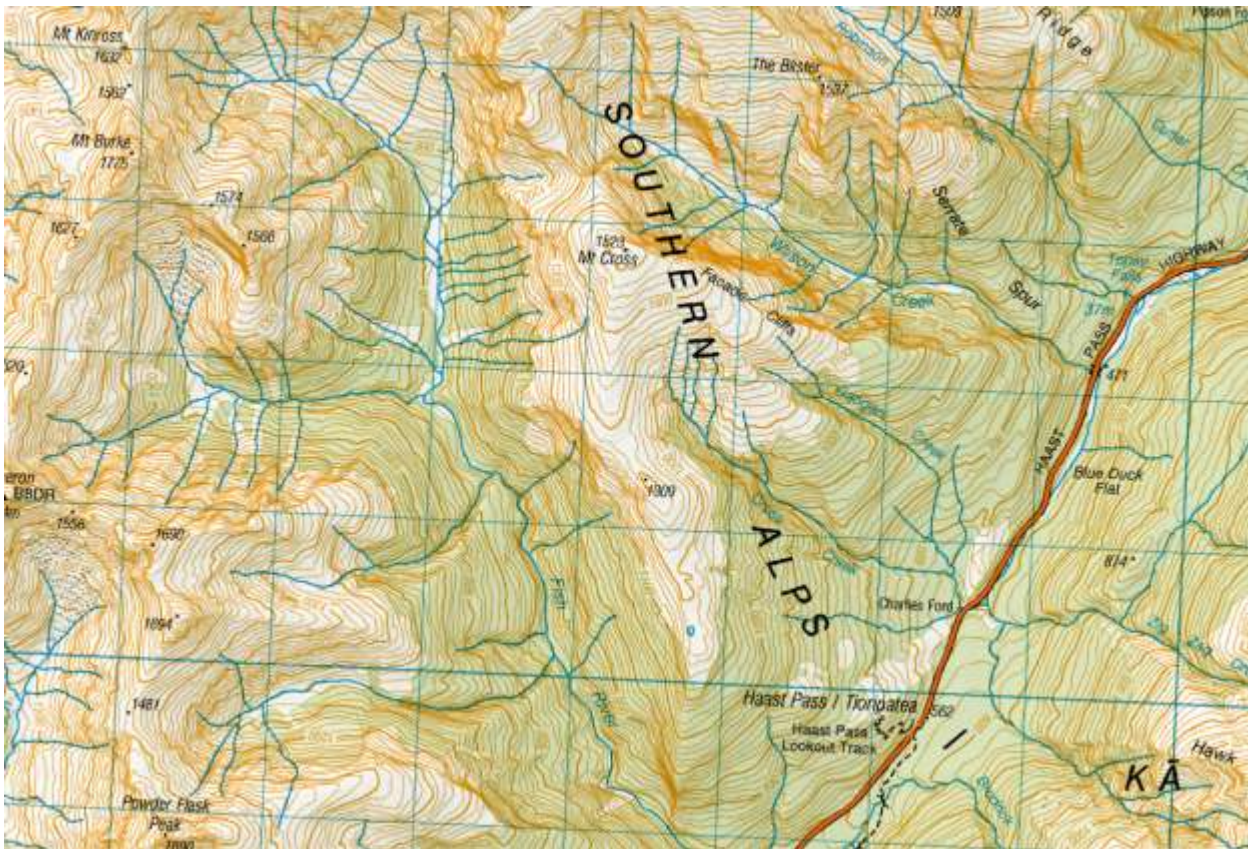
September 2-3, 2000

Author: Rob Porteous

Published in Bulletin 602, October 2000

Only three in the car - should I take the baby seat out? As it turned out there was a vague crossing of wires, and it was four in the car with enough equipment to outfit Peter Hillary's next expedition! Still, not to worry, with the odd bump of exhaust on road we were away to sunny Makarora. The usual food stop in Alex was followed by a back-roads trip to Hawea.

Just outside the Hawea pub I got out to check the new rattly sound from outside the car, accompanied by a cloud of smoke from under the bonnet! "Not good", thinks me. It turned out that the power steering pump bearing had died and was ejecting shattered bearings and oil out of the front of the pump. A phone call to the State Roadside Assistance man. This is where I explained that Wanaka was one lake over from Queenstown. And Hawea was only fifty clicks from there - "yes, in the South Island." He was able to contact someone to help. Yup! - turns out it was Ann Burton from OTMC. Mainly because the Hawea garage owner had had far too many bad cheques from people stranded outside the Hawea pub. We transferred Doug's gear and person into Ann's vehicle and arranged to do another ferry load in the morning. Meanwhile the Fit Trip crew found a cosy little spot overlooking the lake to camp for the night.



Next morning, we were told by the garage owner that he could get a pump over from Queenstown to fix the car for when we come out of the bush on Sunday afternoon. Yippee! Ann arrived and it is off for a walk.

From the Haast Pass itself we headed straight into the bush following Jeff's unerring compass readings.... STRAIGHT UPHILL! Nearly at the top we started to encounter serious scrub which tried it's hardest to remove my shiny new crampons from the back of my pack. It was with some relief that we reached the top for a food and drink stop by an icy tarn. Then back on with the packs for the snowbound stretch up the ridge to where we were supposed to drop down a spur into Fish Valley itself. It was decided to give Mt. Cross a miss as it was fairly clagged in and wouldn't offer much in the way of views. Dropping back into the bush proved to be more literal than we intended, with more heavy bush bashing to get back to the valley floor.

A bit of quick exploring soon netted us the discovery that the so called bivy rock is not much in the way of shelter. So Jeff and Wilbert put the tent up while I organised a likely spot under a large rock next to the creek. Hoping we don't get too much heavy rain overnight. After a good long lunch break, we headed up the valley to see what there was to see. Sub-alpine scrub as it turned out. What a surprise!

The next morning dawned a bit clearer, and we set out, having decided the night before to take a different route back up the hill. The going, whilst steep, was nowhere near as scrubby and we made very good time to the bush line. This was only to discover we had come out fifty metres or so from where we went in the day before! A quick jaunt over some good hard snow to the top of Mt. Cross was followed by a lunch break, then we headed down the hill, anticipating a battle with the scrub again. As it turned out we were able to link a whole series of clearings that we didn't see the previous day and made it most of the way down in much quicker time than expected. We soon encountered a series of bluffs which needed to be negotiated with some degree of care. (Jeff's attempt at making Moss Angels not necessarily coming under this category!) We made it out to the Haast Pass car park in plenty of time for a cup of coffee before heading down the road in search of more water for coffee and a rendezvous with Ann in the OTMC taxi. From there it was a drama free trip home (until I got the final bill for repairs anyway).

Many thanks to the understanding team of Jeff, Wilbert and Doug, and special thanks to Ann for carting us all around.

Rob Porteous.

MAUNGATUA DAY TRIP

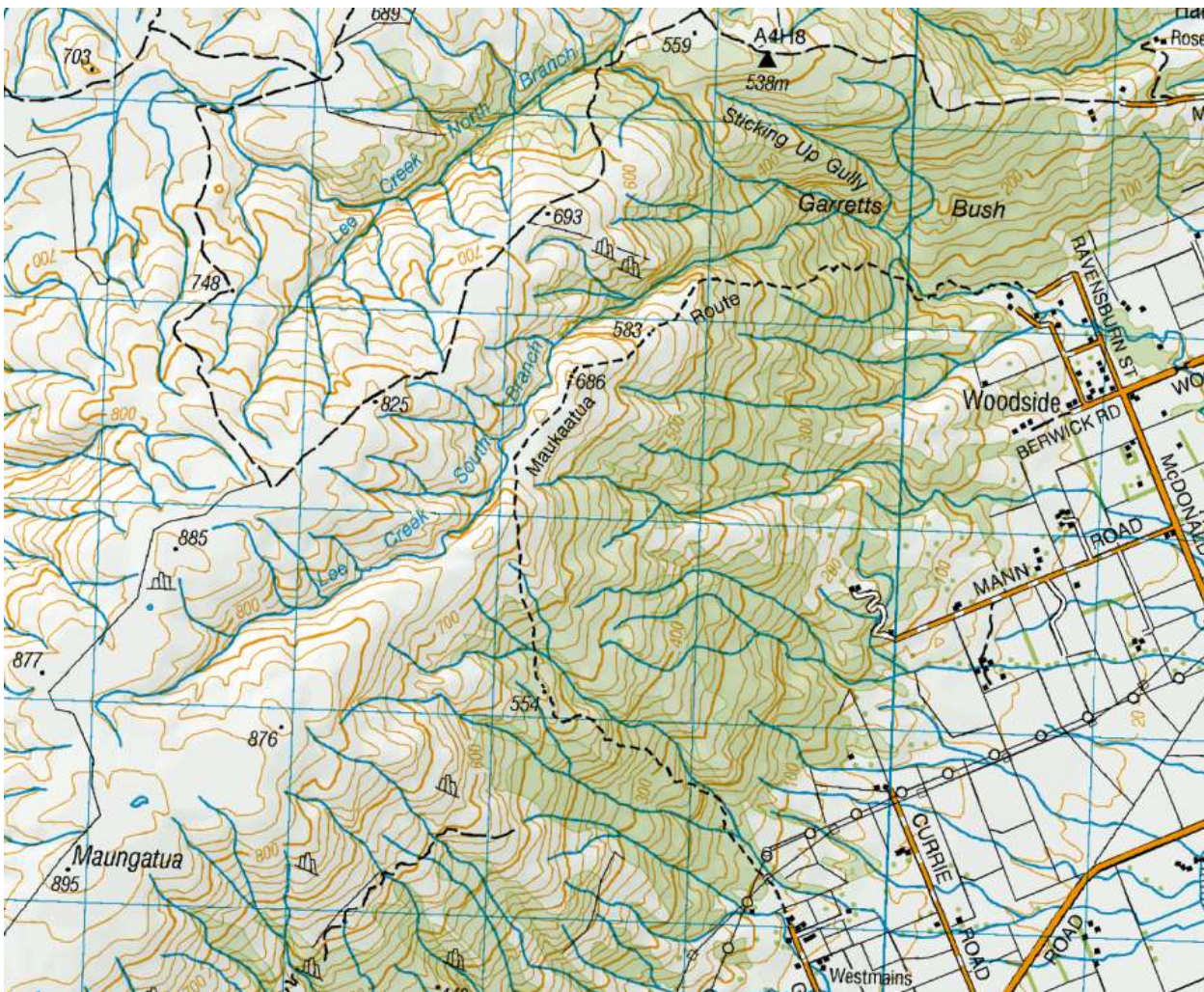
September 24, 2000

Author: Ron Minnema

Published in Bulletin 602, October 2000

On a rather threatening day (weather wise) seven hardy souls met at the clubrooms for the long-awaited trip to Maungatua via Woodside Glen.

I was a little nervous as we were unsure how steep the track would be. Not to worry, after one hour of steadily following a track marked with edge marker posts courtesy of the DCC we were through the bush. A short stop and then we were off again through the scrub etc. that had been cleared by some kind soul, Allan was out the front navigating, ably assisted by Kathryn and Bronwen, with Jonette, Greg, Bridgette and Ron bringing up the rear. (Ron was a little behind???? Ed.) We were rewarded by fabulous views looking north over the Taieri. Some photos were taken before the weather packed in. The rain came, followed by sleet and snow, giving us a good opportunity to try out the wet weather gear. Alas, it was only a passing shower, so we boxed on.



At around noon we stopped for lunch in the shelter of a large rock, only halfway to the summit, and admired all the snow showers etc. moving across the Taieri. None of us thought to look behind us. When we were ready to go the weather looked as if it was really going to pack it in! No one relished spending the rest of Sunday battling the wind and snow showers, so we returned down to Woodside Glen. The weather, of course, improved. It was not easy organising a day of bad weather for the tramp when the day before and after was sunny! Needless to say, we have some unfinished business, and a Maungatua Traverse is on the cards for the summer. All in all, a short but enjoyable day, and we were home by 2.30 pm. I fully recommend this trip for those who have not viewed the Taieri from this perspective.

Ron Minnema for Allan Perry, Bronwen Strang (new member), Kathryn (a potential member), Bridgette Doig, Jonette Service, and Greg Powell.

ARROWSMITHS

October 7-8, 2000

Author: Jonette Service

Published in Bulletin 603, November 2000

The Arrowsmiths are in Canterbury at the head of the Cameron Valley, fairly near the Main Divide. A van of us, under the guidance of Ron Minnema, set off north from Dunedin on Friday night to meet trip leader Paul Bingham and the people from Christchurch at our campsite near Lake Heron. We drove up Highway 1 and turned inland at Winchester for Mt Somers township, then up the Ashburton Gorge Road to Hakatere where we left behind the sealed roads to take a gravelled road to Lake Heron.

"Turn off at the track along the fence at a gate by the gravel pit halfway along Lake Heron".

We found a gravel pit. We went right into it in the dark and we even found our way out again, but we couldn't find a track. So, we continued up the road by the lake, disturbing a few hares, until we came to some buildings at "Upper Lake Heron". We turned back and saw Paul's lights coming to our rescue along the track. It was right where he had said, just a faint 4WD track in the grass. We met Paul, Fiona, Tim and Colin (from Christchurch) and camped on the grass among some rocks about a kilometre up towards the Cameron Valley, a nice spot but no water.



Arrowsmith Mountains (PHOTO Antony Pettinger)

On Saturday morning we walked up the valley by the Cameron River, keeping on the west side (true right) the whole way to Cameron Hut. The route goes along gravel by the river and through tussock, with some sheep and cattle tracks for easier walking, and is mostly unmarked.

The river was full of snow melt and was attractively bustling among boulders. We passed a musterers hut called "Highland Home", but it was on the other side of the river and could be too hard to reach for emergency shelter if the river was up.



Cameron Valley (PHOTO Antony Pettinger)

Nearing Cameron Hut, the recommended route is to keep well on the west of the valley and climb gradually on a low tussock spur with a few pines on it, then go around the back of the moraine to find the hut. A few cairns mark the track. We followed this and suddenly found ourselves at Cameron Hut, a nice neat little hut amid rocks, snow and low alpine plants, with a few unexpected trees nearby. We were on a valley floor amid mountains but there was cloud and we couldn't see the tops at first. Gradually the cloud rose and we saw more and more, real rugged mountains with rocky, snowy tops, then the sun came right out. Some of us walked up the valley, where Ron and I both found you can get seriously stuck in soft snow. Several people saw their first avalanches, one of which was a good long impressive one.

Cameron Hut belongs to Canterbury Mountain Club. It is in good condition, has nine bunks and two mattresses, a bench, solar powered electric light, and a mountain radio, but no stove or fire (there's no source of wood). It is well tied down to the ground. We found out why when a strong wind came up during the night. Some of those using tents had to get up and add rocks to help the tent pegs, but inside the hut all was fine.

On Sunday we went back down the valley the same way and enjoyed being able to see the landscape in daylight on the drive home.

Jonette for Paul, Fiona, Tim, Colin, Zena, Ron, Allan, Vivienne, Peter, Susan, Terry, Sarah, Nick and Dale.

PORT CRAIG

October 21-23, 2000

Author: Fiona (surname not recorded)

Published in Bulletin 603, November 2000

We left pretty much on time and so far all seemed to be going to plan. We stopped in Gore for fish and chips and watched the local wildlife. On the way to Tuatapere we all heard a loud bang but assumed it was a rock. It wasn't till our driver Jim pulled into the side of the road a little while later and informed us we only had 5th gear that we realised there was a problem. Not for long though. Transit NZ kindly supplied us with signs that used the same size bolt as had fallen out of our van. Mackayver had us fixed up again in a jiffy. We arrived at the start of the track in the dark and camped there overnight.

Next morning, we started out along the track and very quickly met mud - lots of mud. We decided it would be easier walking along the shingle beach, which wasn't as easy as it sounds. We stopped for lunch in a lovely wee spot where the shingle gave way to sand, the sun shone and the sandflies came out to welcome us. Unfortunately, the tides were not right for us to walk to Port Craig via the beach. Still the bush track wasn't hard going (though it was pretty muddy in places) and generally it was a pleasant walk to the schoolhouse hut at Port Craig, where some hardy souls went swimming. The dolphins were very close to us but stayed just out of reach. There were lots of old relics from sawmilling days - some large pieces of machinery and the remains of a pier.

The next day people did what they wanted to. Some relaxed near the hut and others went walking. Jim, Graeme, Chris, Andrew and myself walked through to the viaducts. An entry in the hut log says you can halve the time if you swim - the track certainly was very wet! The viaducts were pretty impressive - apparently the largest in the world. There are four and Percy is the largest. We decided to walk to the Waitutu River, which in hindsight was a silly idea. It was further than we thought and not particularly nice when we got there. The track got wetter and wetter. My boots had been struggling to stay together and there was less sole attached at every step, with the mud proving an even greater challenge. I was using my laces to hold the sole in place, though this still didn't do much to keep the mud out,

Monday was yet another lovely day. We headed out the way we came in as the tides were still not right. We had to walk part of the way over some round rocks which moved when you stood on them (which I didn't remember on the way in) that made walking very slow. We did manage to walk on the beach for part of the trip though, and it was certainly much faster walking on the sand.

Thanks to Andrew for organising it and to everyone on it for making it such a good weekend.

Fiona for Jim, Andrew, Graeme, Chris, Jen and the rest.

BEN RUDD'S PICNIC AND DAY TRIP

November 5, 2000

Author: Richard Pettinger

Published in Bulletin 603, November 2000

Since the Silver Peaks for Masochists trip didn't happen (something to do with a drop or two of rain - huh!, ya big softies!), I expected a huge softie turnout for the picnic day trip on Flagstaff. But, a few folk said they wouldn't go as they needed to do something a bit more ambitious. Jonette, for example, must be getting fit for something (is the Marathon something to be watched?), but it seemed nearly everybody in the Club was doing something more ambitious too. Two newcomers turned up, Hans (from the Netherlands) and Jenn (from Indiana), who were on their first OTMC day trips. I didn't think it was fair, therefore, to change the trip at that stage to a masochists' one. There were others at the Clubrooms that morning: Greg Panting, and a couple of women who didn't want to go SAR exercising or anything else on Flagstaff, as they'd been up there the previous day. None of those three could be inspired to go picnicking, but if we arranged to get lost, they might come up later??



Dunedin City from Spiers Road (now walking track) (PHOTO Antony Pettinger)

Anyway, Hans, Jenn and I wandered up Spiers Road, picnicked with the Ben Rudd's Trust/Friends and OTMCers in the hot sun at the shelter, went down to the rhodos (not many in flower, but the clematis looked good) with Vincent P, and then, with Ian Sime, went back

down Spiers Road We had only a single car, which is why we couldn't descend a different way.
It was a very enjoyable day, if a bit hot, and was totally, beautifully, too slack!

Richard Pettinger, for Jenn Wright and Hans Rosloot

PORT CRAIG

October 21-23, 2000

Author: Stuart Powell

Published in Bulletin 604, December 2000

At 6 o'clock on Friday evening I was greeted by a large group of enthusiastic trampers outside the OTMC club rooms. Without much delay we were hussled into the 10-seater van and made steady progress towards the south coast near Tuatapere, from which the tramp to Port Craig would begin. All seemed to be going well until rumours of a broken gear stick from the driver were substantiated just short of Nightcaps a couple of hours into our trip. A combination of mechanically minded experts and some quick lateral thinking left a local Transit New Zealand road sign swinging in the breeze for an essential 'nut required to fix the van's problems.

We arrived at the coast shortly before 11 pm. The other four people in my group strapped on their packs and headlamps for a couple of hours walk along the beach, while others bunked down for the night at the road end. We were on a mission to find Greg who had left earlier in the day and was apparently camped a couple of hours up ahead. About 1.30 am, unable to locate Greg, we pitched our tents in a small flat clearing next to a four-wheel drive track and called it quits for the night.



Saturday morning dawned bright and sunny and so after a quick breakfast we headed off only to find Greg some 200 m further up the track, feeling a tad worse for wear after a night on the rum with some newly made friends. The track enters Fiordland National Park here, and to Port Craig was well defined and reasonably easy going with only short hilly stretches followed by straights along scenic desolate beaches.

We made Port Craig for lunch and decided then to press on to see the huge wooden viaducts, a highlight of the trip. These were constructed as part of a logging operation from the area during the 1920's. Two hours easy but muddy walk along the old railway line from Port Craig brings the first of these awesome structures into sight, the largest being 125 m long and 35 m high. That night we also spent under canvas not far from the viaducts at Sandy Point, a short backtrack towards Port Craig, where we were amused well after dark by Greg's cooking and a never-ending barrage of sandflies.

Sunday dawned clear and warm again and I was beginning to wonder whether in fact this really was the notorious South Coast of the South Island, famous for its howling westerlies and horizontal rain. With blisters on the make we were ready for a shorter day, so after the walk back to Port Craig the afternoon was spent exploring the beach in front of Port Craig Hut and the remains of relics, from which photos revealed a once thriving port.

Monday left us with the walk back to the van, a cloudy day but still no sign of rain. There are two route options to Port Craig, one stays largely in the bush, the other follows the beach, however to do the latter the tides must be low. Some boulder hopping to avoid waves was our only impediment to progress on the way back.

In the end it was a fantastic weekend with scenery and weather to match, and to the people in my group, Pete, Anne, Shirley, and Greg, thanks. I hope we get to laugh that hard again sometime.

Stuart Powell

NORTH HUXLEY

November 11-12, 2000

Author: Dave Chambers

Published in Bulletin 604, December 2000

Sunny Friday afternoon, Alan picked me up at 5.20 pm as planned. Then on to pick up Paul outside his work and found Robyn and Fiona waiting at the top of the motorway. That only left Jacob, who was at the Shell garage at Waitati. We cruised into Oamaru for a fuel top up and had tea at the Gourmet Burger. Some decided they would change into their walking gear in the main street (poor locals!) The drive to Lake Ohau was very pleasant, with plenty of chatter about previous trips done and some yet to do. In the background was Alan's one and only country and western tape humming away.



**L-R Jacob Feenstra, Dave Chambers, Fiona Webster, Alan Thomson, Paul Van Kampen & Robyn Bell
(PHOTO Alan Thomson)**

We arrived at Huxley Lodge about 10.30 pm where Robyn and Fiona left their car and piled themselves and their gear into what had been a comfortable Toyota Surf. (And you had a proper seat! Ed) We passed through a gateway that had a sign reading, "Road Closed", and onto a rough 4WD track, and folks, it was dark too! Someone asked Alan how often he had been out 4WD driving? "First time", came the reply! Not to worry, Alan had enough advice to where the track was and where he should be going! We arrived at the end of the track to park the truck, and there was another 4WD! Oh no, that could mean sleeping outside! With the full moon out, we donned our gear and set out to find Monument Hut. To our surprise it was only about 20 minutes from the truck, and we were glad to find the hut empty as the other folk had gone on.

The next morning I was woken by squadrons of sandflies around my head and they were starting to find their breakfast! By 9 am I was on my first OTMC tramp - so far so good! We walked up the Hopkins River flats, taking the bush option, then after half an hour out into glorious sunshine. A short break to take a look at the fenced off section of native bush. What a difference when the deer can't get at it! We walked up and over the hill to meet the Huxley River, across a swing bridge and up a hill to find a sign reading "Huxley Forks 2 1/2 hours". It was estimated we would make the hut by midday. A quick snack and off we go down the hill, a short rock hop over a stream. No wet feet yet! Then a nice flat walk up the dry river bed.



Huxley Valley, looking towards the Hopkins (PHOTO Antony Pettinger)

We made the Huxley Forks Hut at midday as estimated. How did they know??? A nice, packed lunch, a bit of a look around and a game of rock bowls. Alan asked whether we should carry on to Brodrick Hut or stay there and take a look at South Huxley. Robyn wanted to stay there, the rest of us said "on to Brodrick". About 200 metres from the hut we started to climb and didn't stop until we got to Brodrick. Why didn't we listen to Robyn?

We had made it and there was a great feast to be had, plus ginger wine, mulled wine, and the offer of a whiskey. This was tramping first class! A good night's sleep and hot soup for breakfast, then it was time to return to Huxley Forks for lunch. I must admit the return journey was more enjoyable - someone had kept moving the hut on the way up!!!

After lunch we started back, bypassing the bush and taking the Hopkins River flats all the way back to the truck. A quick freshen up and back along the 4WD track that looked a lot different in the daylight. We still managed to take the wrong turn twice! We travelled back in convoy,

stopping for fish and chips and Kurow, which was rather nice. Back to Oamaru for petrol, and home by 10 pm.

Dave Chambers with thanks to Alan Thomson, Jacob Feenstra, Robyn Bell, Fiona Webster and Paul van Kampen for a perfect weekend.

OTMC COMMITTEE (2000-2001)

President – Alan Thomson

Vice President – Bruce Newton

Secretary – Jacqui Cornelissen

Treasurer – Ann Burton

Chief Guide / Transport – Antony Pettinger

Bulletin Editor – Robyn Bell

Membership Secretary – Ian Sime

Social Convenor – Fiona Webster

Day Trip Convener – Jeff Brown

Gear Hire – Mike Brettell

Library – Andrew McKay

Publicity – Andrew McKay

Funding – Greg Powell

SAR – Greg Panting

Website – Antony Pettinger

Outdoors Magazine – Ian Sime

Weektime Trips – Ian Sime

Committee – Ron Minnema

Property & Maintenance – Peter Mason

Bushcraft 2001 – Antony Pettinger

Immediate Past President – Robyn Bridges

Hon. Solicitor – Antony Hamel

OTMC TRIP PROGRAMME 2000

Month	Date(s)	Specific Trip	Leader
January	23	Trotters Gorge	Alan Thomson
January	30	Oamaru - History - Coastal Walk (plus penguins)	Jeff Brown
February	6	Puketapu - Shag Point - Moeraki Peninsula	Paul Van Kampen
February	12-13	Takitimu Mountains	Robyn Bridges
February	13	Best Bits Of The Rail Trail (tramping)	David Barnes
February	19	OTMC Silver Peaks Marathon	Committee
February	20	OTMC Picnic - Long Beach (with cycle option)	Bruce Newton
February	26-27	Bushcraft 2000 (Tirohanga Weekend)	Antony Pettinger
February	27	Cycling Day Trip	Mike Brettell
March	4-5	South Coast - Port Craig Area	Andrew MacKay
March	5	Victory - Pyramids	Jacqui Cornelissen
March	11-12	Bushcraft 2000 (Silver Peaks Weekend)	Antony Pettinger
March	12	Another Cycling Trip With Mike!	Mike Brettell
March	19	Bushcraft 2000 (River Safety Day)	Antony Pettinger
March	25-26	Bushcraft 2000 (Greenstone - Caples Optional Weekend)	Ron Minnema
March	26	Heyward Point - Aramoana (plus Salt March Boardwalk)	Andrew MacKay
April	2	Powder Ridge - Long Ridge	Wolfgang Gerber
April	8-9	Lake Manapouri / Hope Arm (Tramp or Kayak)	Bruce Newton
April	9	Rock and Pillar Range	Ian Sime
April	15	Pre-Easter-Social	
April	16	Caffeine & Recovery Trip	Fiona Baker
April	21-25	George Sound and Environs	Mike Brettell
April	30	Hightop - Rocky Ridge - Tunnels Track	David Barnes
May	7	Devils Staircase Area	Doug Forrester
May	13-14	Mt Somers Area	Jeff Brown
May	14	The Crater - Mt Watkins	Robyn Bridges
May	20-21	Homer Huts - Gertrude Saddle	Alan Thomson
May	21	Track Clearing Workparty	Committee
May	28	Jubilee Hut	Bruce Newton
June	3-5	Ohau (Huxley - Hopkins)	Antony Pettinger
June	11	Pulpit Rock via Mountain Bike	Jeff Brown
June	18	Government Track	Greg Powell
June	24-25	OTMC Mid-Winter Wine & Dine (Luxmore Hut)	Ann Burton and Donna Short
June	25	Workparty	Alan Thomson
July	2	Sandymount	Robyn MacKay
July	9	Rosella Ridge	Jacob Feenstra
July	15-16	Winter Routeburn (Falls Side)	Wolfgang Gerber
July	16	To Be Advised	Paul Van Kampen

July	23	Catlins River Track	Ian Sime
July	30	Heyward Point - Aramoana (Cycle)	Bruce Newton
August	5-6	Danseys Pass - Mt Domett	Alan Thomson
August	6	Berwick Forest (Cycle Trip)	Mike Brettell
August	13	Mt Charles	Jeff Brown
August	19-20	Rock and Pillar Range (Leaning Lodge)	Andrew MacKay
August	20	Organ Pipes - Mt Cargill	Jacqui Cornelissen
August	26-27	Snowcraft One	
August	27	Swampy - Burns Track	Alan Thomson
September	2-3	Makarora Area	Jeff Brown
September	3	Great Dinosaur Hunt	Andrew MacKay
September	9	OTMC Annual Dinner	Robyn MacKay
September	10	Rongomai - Honeycomb Track	David Barnes
September	17	Ben Rudd Property - Tree Planting (Silver Beech)	Peter Mason
September	23-24	Snowcraft Two	
September	24	Maungatua	Ron Minnema
October	1	Sandfly Bay & Boulder Beach	Olive Neilson
October	7-8	Arrowsmiths	Paul Bingham
October	7-8	SAREX (Search & Rescue Exercise)	Greg Panting
October	8	Powder Ridge	Ken Powell
October	15	Silver Peaks For Masochists IV	Richard Pettinger
October	21-23	Port Craig (Waitutu / Hump Range)	Andrew MacKay
October	29	Leith Valley - Swampy Sour (Combined Cycle - Walk)	Paul Van Kampen
November	5	Ben Rudd's Picnic / Walk	Richard Pettinger
November	5	SAREX (Search & Rescue Exercise)	Greg Panting
November	11-12	Huxley Valley / North Huxley	Alan Thomson
November	12	Ross Creek - Pineapple Track	Bess Taylor
November	19	The Chalkies	Andrew MacKay
November	25-26	Leaning Lodge - Rock & Pillars	
November	26	NZs Tallest Tree / Mopanui / Doctors Point	Jacob Feenstra
December	2-3	Remarkables - Lake Hope - Wye Creek	Jeff Brown
December	3	Racemans Track - Leishman Falls	Ken Powell
December	9-10	Silver Peaks Tramp and Train	Ron Minnema
December	10	Orbell's Cave	Alan Thomson
December	17	Blackhead - Waldronville - Brighton Beach Walk	Wilbert Stokman

OTMC BULLETIN COVERS (FEBRUARY TO MAY)

OTMC Bulletin
Bulletin Number 594, February 2000

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.

President's Profile

A new millennium - a new century? Or is that next year? What does it matter!!! I spent the last night of last century in the Otago with my family, then went with the crowd to Puttaraugh Drive to watch the fireworks, and then on to St Clair beach to see the sunrise. I know there were some people on Swampy and a group on the Rock and Pillars who both enjoyed their New Year's Eve in the mist and the fog. When I last wrote I was getting ready to walk the George Sound track which is also the upcoming Easter weekend club trip. We were lucky with the weather and it was a good trip to end the century on. I was surprised at the number of people that turned up at the clubhouse on the 27th Jan to hear about our trip (standing room only) however good crowds seem to be the norm so far this year - Am hope it keeps up. I started this year by staying a few nights at Titira Lodge (the old Mount Aspiring homestead) with the Otago Youth Adventure Trust and explored a little of the east and west branches of the Mataikohi River, an area that I hadn't visited before. Whilst there I met up with a past club member by the name of Brian Freeman, son of the man after which the

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Committee	Andrew MacKay	476 1648
SAR Contact	Greg Peeling	488 2283

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OTMC Bulletin
Bulletin Number 595, March 2000

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.

Editor's Blurb

Hi, and welcome to another issue of the Bulletin, full of contributions sent in by you, "the club"! This is your newsletter, and a chance to have your say on anything of interest to other club members - events, holidays, birthdays, reports, etc. So (if your name is in print, we'll do it. (If not, you know what to do!)

In this issue not only, with deep sadness, the untimely death of Toby van der Mark, there are some letters to the editor, and some personal words. The two trip reports maintain the high literary calibre to which we're accustomed to, and we have details on some great upcoming trips and daytrips. And don't forget to keep 15 April free for the humpback! There's something for everyone - sit back, read, and enjoy!

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OTMC Bulletin
Bulletin Number 596, April 2000

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.

President's Piece

Well, so far so good. The weekend trips and day trips so far this year have been well supported and the bushcraft course went very well. It's good to see. I've also been following up on the Big Hut issue, and while I find it interesting that very few club members have stayed in the hut recently, the general feeling is that the hut should be retained. And yes, this does mean maintenance. In response to my item on Big Hut in the February Bulletin, we now have a stainless steel water tank to install (thanks to Chris Wylie), and we have also recently received a donation from a non-member hut user which will cover a few maintenance materials, so things look promising. The intention is to have a maintenance party up there sometime next summer, so anyone who wishes to contribute ideas, materials or labour, let us know. Keep up the good work! Alan Thomson

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OTMC Bulletin
Bulletin Number 597, May 2000

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

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For the last few Thursday nights the clubhouse have fairly buzzed with enthusiasm - it's good to see! And to ensure that it continues and perhaps grows, a discussion group is being convened to address the issues that I raised in the March Bulletin, as well as any other concerns that may arise. It's hoped to produce a discussion paper before the AGM. And talking about the AGM, it's time that you started thinking about being on the committee! Being on the committee means that you get to meet once a month with a stimulating and intelligent group of club members to ensure that club continues to be run in accordance with the club's constitution, and also to ensure that the club is catering for the current needs of its members.

An advantage of being on the committee is that as well as having some input on the running of the club, you also have the opportunity to pick up skills such as reaching consensus decisions, delegating, reporting and running a meeting, and all in a congenial and forgiving environment. And it can be fun!

It's good to see the level of support that club trips have enjoyed so far this year and with some very good trips coming up I'm sure it will continue. Alan Thomson

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OTMC BULLETIN COVERS (JUNE TO SEPTEMBER)

OTMC Bulletin

Bulletin Number 598, June 2000

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.

President's Piece

Some of you may be wondering whether I got any response to the letter I wrote in the March Bulletin listing a number of issues that the club should address. Well, indeed I have had a response in the form of some prodding by a couple of club-members who were seconded on the spot, as well as a phone call from Paul Colley (DCC Recreation Planning Dept), who offered to act as facilitator in the meeting and organising of the meetings. To date we have had a brief planning meeting, then a full-day meeting at the clubrooms on Sunday 18th. This produced a discussion document which we will present to the club on July 6th. This will be your opportunity to discuss and comment on the ideas that have been put forward. The goal is to put in place a revised document defining the future direction of the club for, say, the next five years. So put July 6th in your diary - it could be an interesting night! And congratulations to David Barnes, who is now the OTMC delegate to TMC. I'm sure he will represent us well!

Alan Thomson

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OTMC Bulletin

Bulletin Number 599, July 2000

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.

President's Piece

Thank you to all who turned up for the planning discussion on Thursday 6th July. It was humbling to see such a good turnout of members interested in their club's well-being and to hear their ideas and thoughts on the club's future direction. It was also great to receive the written comments from those who couldn't attend. Some of the ideas put forward will be added to the strategic plan, while others will be addressed as part of running the club. And talking about running the club, it's now time to consider the make-up of the next Committee!! If you feel that you would like to be part of this then fill out the nomination form enclosed with this Bulletin, or if you feel that there is someone in the club who should be on the Committee then approach them and voice their aim (not too hard!) and put their name on the form. This is your chance to have some influence on the general direction and management of the club and also gain experience in the running of meetings. At present, committee meetings take up approximately two hours once a month, and the enthusiasm within the committee is contagious and enjoyable. So give it some thought, or even better - give it a go!

Alan Thomson

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OTMC Bulletin

Bulletin Number 600, August 2000

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

P.O. Box 1120, Dunedin.

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

A VERY IMPORTANT CLUB EVENT

Otago Tramping Club
Annual General Meeting

24/8/00
Starting at 8 pm sharp

OTMC Clubrooms
3 Young Street

A joint effort to keep our club running smoothly, and get us out tramping in those hills! (and other fun social events.)

SEE YOU THERE!

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OTMC Bulletin

Bulletin Number 601, September 2000

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

P.O. Box 1120, Dunedin.

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

The Pres Sez

It was on the 1992 Bushcraft course that I learnt, amongst other things, to survive a night sleeping on a sheet of plastic thrown over some uncomfortable tree roots under a tent fly. Since then I have also learnt that you can sleep under a tent fly attached to a large rock on top of a foggy mountain, walk for 13 1/2 hours in a day, survive a Tiemland downpour, cross rivers on bridges made out of three wires, and most of all that you can view some spectacular scenery and see some magic places with some very enjoyable and interesting people.

When I look back I have been very lucky to have taken part in some great adventures since joining the OTMC, with more to look forward to. I have also

(Continued on page 2)

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OTMC BULLETIN COVERS (OCTOBER TO DECEMBER)

OTMC Bulletin
Bulletin Number 602, October 2000

Newsletter of the Otago Tramping and Mountaineering Club (Inc.)
P.O. Box 1120, Dunedin.

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

President's Piece

Do you want to help create a more active and healthy nation? I recently attended a meeting with members of the Sport, Fitness and Leisure Taskforce, and there is an opportunity for OTMC members to participate in writing a submission on defining a vision for sports, fitness and leisure for the next twenty five years. I also said in the OTMC annual report that we might introduce a little more organisation into the Club's methods of putting in these submissions. With that in mind I am inviting all interested club members to a special meeting in our clubhouse at 7.30 pm, 17 November. The agenda will include an outline of past submissions the club has made, and explore improvements to our methods for preparing future submissions. This area of the club's activities is vitally important in ensuring that our national heritage, i.e. landscapes, forests, and wildlife, have some form of advocacy. Bring along your thoughts and ideas.

Alan Thomson

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SAR Contact	Greg Pendergast	488 2283
Competition	Ron Minnema	453 0829
Social Convener	Perna Webster	487 8176

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OTMC Bulletin
Bulletin Number 603, November 2000

Newsletter of the Otago Tramping and Mountaineering Club (Inc.)
P.O. Box 1120, Dunedin.

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

Editor's Murk

Finally, some good news to start this issue of the Bulletin. Bruce Ryder has offered to be our Bushcraft Director for 2001. He runs the Sahara Motors and Gunhouse (so knows all about organising!), and has had many years of experience as an active outdoors man. He is our first non-member to direct Bushcraft, and we welcome him onto the team.

You can read Jay Figgitt's latest exploits, Ron Minnema's confessions, and reports of some very enjoyable trips in the last few months. Then Anthony gives us details of the last two trips of the year, one fairly challenging, the other utilising a train (!!!) for a change.

And to top it all off, we have some items for sale, a bit of pictorial humour (and just wait for next month, Alan!), a timely pre-holiday reminder, and our social programme until the end of the year, culminating in the annual BBQ at Woodhaugh Gardens. Enjoy!

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OTMC Bulletin
Bulletin Number 604, December 2000

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MERRY CHRISTMAS
and
a HAPPY NEW YEAR

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