

OTMC TRIP REPORTS

2003

Sourced from the 2003 OTMC Bulletins



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EARNSLAW BURN – LENNOX PASS

November 16-17, 2002

Author: Not recorded

Published in Bulletin 626, February 2003

Must admit that one of the most asked questions- on- this trip was 'Why are we doing this again?', but the spectacular scenery that we witnessed along the ridges was most probably the answer. Many discussions took place in our van on the ride from Dunedin, the most memorable however was the humane aspects of driving over the stray possums and rabbits that would dart in front of the vehicle. Speaking of humane, what about the unusual fertiliser on those unsuspecting cabbage trees at DOC?

It was a lovely mild and peaceful night at the Muddy Creek car park until Bruce SCREAMED (a manly scream). He thought he had stood in something dodgy; fortunately, it was just a lump on the ground. Lesson - just because there is a sign saying toilet, but you can't see the building in the dark, it doesn't mean people use the area under the sign for what it describes! We endeavoured to set up camp in very rugged surroundings near Muddy Creek. Whatever happened to those nice campgrounds we used to stay at on a Friday night?

To bed at 1am. 6am. THUMP. What was that? It's raining rocks. Oh, it's the others - they couldn't sleep so decided we shouldn't either and threw rocks at our tent. OK, now let's get some water, sounds easy enough. Yeah right, think it's called Muddy Creek for nothing!

Off we go into the Rees on a lovely morning at 8.45 am, trying to keep our boots dry for the first half hour, but several creeks later ruined that idea. Now that we have wet boots it was the direct approach so no need to skirt the small area of swampy land ahead. Rob led the way, and he could see the bottom, which looked about calf deep and only about 3 metres wide. Sounds easy enough. Calf deep and he's sinking, knee deep, waist deep, no way, chest deep. We like you Rob but thank goodness you didn't drown because we are not sure we would have wanted to go into the stinking mud to help. Shame about the hat in your hand Rob - it now looks like what Bruce thought he had stepped into last night.

Rob took a bath in the next creek but missed the slime sticking out of his gaiters and over the pack straps, looks like that will have to wait for the Rees crossing. We now have to climb beside Lennox Falls up to those bluffs, which from our viewpoint looks easy enough. In hot sun we clambered up waist deep scrub and bracken with a little bush lawyer thrown in for good measure, plus some boulders and logs under foot. What a relief to get into the bush. Wow, the lightning has been busy in here with many large charcoal stumps around.

Next up to cross Lennox Creek over the top of the waterfall. That wasn't going to happen for many reasons and no Rob I don't think a long jump over to a wet and slimy rock ledge is a good idea! It's either down again to the valley floor or scramble along into a canyon - canyon it is. We passed packs over and under rocks to reach a dead-end waterfall. Bugger! None of us thought to look up to; the cliffs above until Rob spotted a tree covered cliff route. We

scrambled up tenuous tree holds and bashed up to a sunny tussock covered slope above the bluffs. Brilliant, lets carry on. One small problem, we still had to bring up the packs - bugger! So, using slings, a tree attached to the cliff, and some rock hand holds, we pack hauled to the top of the bluff.



Rees Valley, looking towards Lennox Pass (PHOTO Antony Pettinger)

Let's have lunch, sounds easy enough and it was! Where to next, we asked, as we stood on top of a 100-metre cliff (estimated by rock throwing. stopwatch, and a velocity formula, thanks Rob)! Again, from this viewpoint, there seems to be an easy route along the cliff tops to avalanche snow and a crossing of Lennox Creek. Excellent!

Oh no, another creek coming down from Kea Basin and it has cliffs on both sides and a 20-metre waterfall Damn! Forced away from Lennox Pass we followed this creek into thick sapling beech forest and strapped packs to do the third detour of the day. Good news, Matt and Rob say there's a steep bushy route down to the creek between cliffs and a steeper route out between more cliffs. Down we went, our crampons, ice axes, bedrolls and walking poles catching on everything. Nicole decided to have a bath in the creek even though Rob was the one who needed it! And at that moment, Nicole single-handedly won the wet tee-shirt contest!

To get up and out on the steep other side, we had to pass packs along a line of people each secured on a tree. Now we have a short 200 metre bush bash - little did we know it would take half an hour! For the calculators in us this is 0.4 kmph. There was much bashed skin as we crawled under fallen trees. Arthur's GPS did a great job of letting us know how slow our progress was, how little height we were making, and how far away Lennox Pass was.

We reached the avalanche debris after sliding down snow tussock slopes and then continued to cross Lennox Creek as we looked across the Rees to see snow falling in the mountains.



Lennox Falls below Kea Basin, Rees Valley (PHOTO Antony Pettinger)

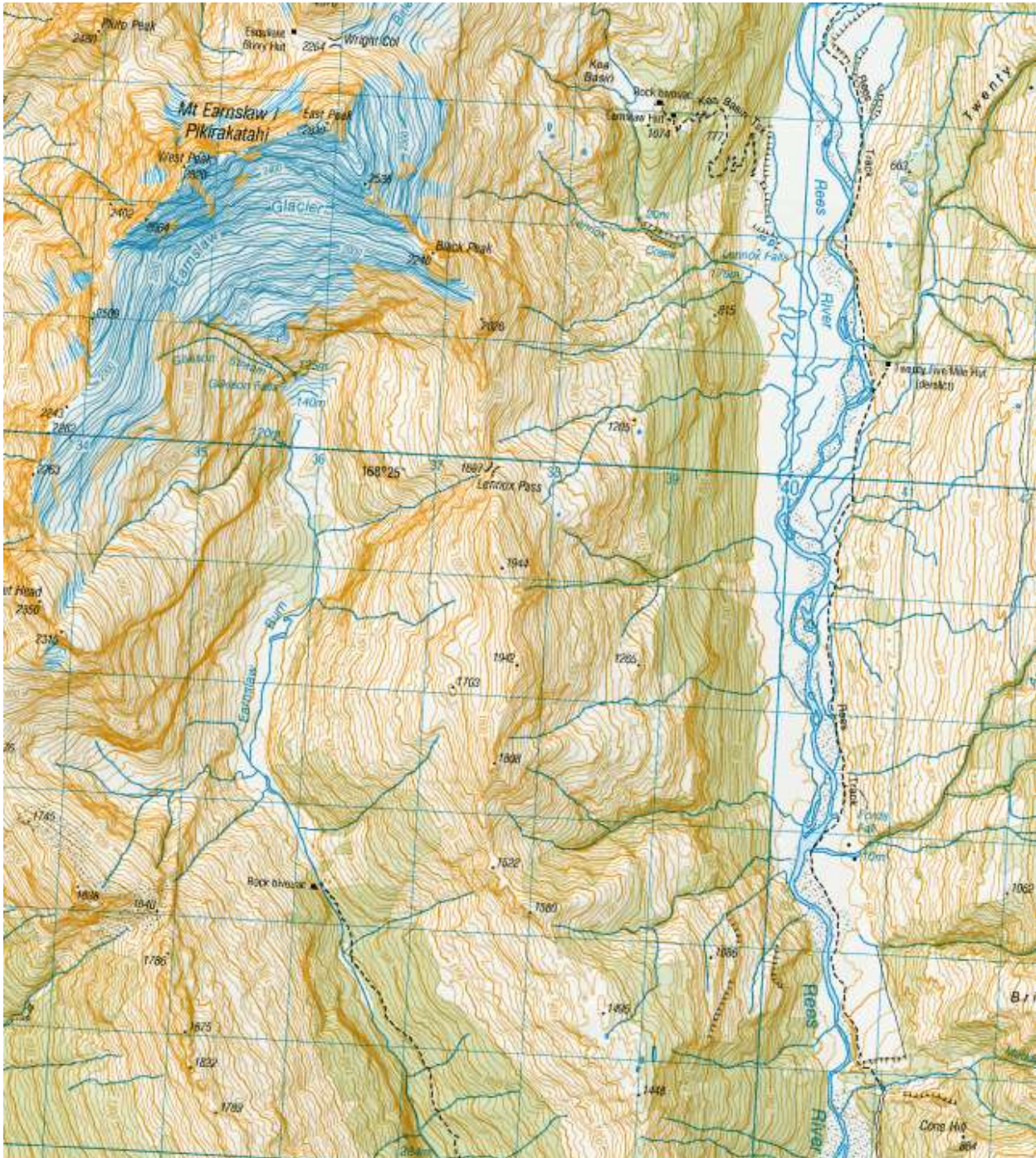
All we had to do now was to sidle up to Lennox Pass. Up we went, brilliantly picking a clear strip in the bush and along to a V shaped creek 50m deep. Bugger! Then down we went and crawled up the other side through scrub, tussock, and spear grass to be greeted by a snowstorm and a little later another 50m deep V shaped creek. Bugger again!

It was 4:30pm and we decided to seek the shelter of a small patch of bush up on the mountainside nearly within sight of Lennox Pass. It was difficult to find a flat spot, so we had to be inventive when pitching our tents.

We had tea in the wind and snow with little shelter from the trees. Even gathering water was difficult with a 50-metre descent to the creek and back. At 8pm, Bruce and Paul returned to the warm shelter of their tent to take in the million-dollar view of the valley below as the snow fell. We could hear the others chatting away upslope until nightfall, then all was quiet... the alcohol had run out! KEAAAAA! What the hell is that! Those Kea sure make one hell of an alarm clock. Meanwhile, up the slope, Rob was awakening from his worst night's sleep; Don't know why, but Rob picked the downhill side of the three-person tent. He was crushed as Andrew, Nicole, and Arthur layered on top of him with half of the tent unused.

We also learned a lesson in washing dishes while in the mountains. If you fill your dinner bowl with water before going to bed, it will freeze over night; thus removing the block of ice in the morning will also remove any remains of last night's tea.

Broke camp and got away by 9 am. After a gentle warm up, dropping down to the creek and crawling up the ramp to the other side, deep scrub and spear grass kept us honest. We followed easy tussock slopes up between bluffs covered in icicles, some of which we could hear crashing down from the mountains above. Finally, right on track, we came into a snowy basin and a snow ramp to the pass. On went our crampons and out came the ice axes, and we ascended 300 metres to the pass in 45 minutes ready for lunch.



There were lovely views around especially the Earnslaw Glacier, shame about the twin peaks being hidden in cloud. Decision time, do we drop to the Earnslaw Burn? Not when it took us

one and a half days to get here. Onward and upward to 1944 metres. The ridge was great, and we made ground quickly until we reached point 1808 metres. Matt stayed back with Nicole to help reset her crampons and Arthur led us ahead to select a route.

While Matt and Nicole caught up, the rest of us decided to try some ice climbing up the side of a cool scoop, what a blast!

We sidled below the ridge on the Earnslaw Burn side with one section steep enough for front pointing. Paul kicked in steps for tire others to follow. After a while the balls of our feet and ankles burned from sidling. We found a good route under point 1808 metres with the last scramble back to the ridge under cliffs.

All that's left is a straightforward ridge-romp to point 1256 metres and descend to the valley floor. Crampons off, and ice axes away and walking poles out. Andrew, Rob, Bruce and Paul agreed to push on ahead from here.

Five minutes later we struck a thin and steep ridge which needed ice axe and crampons, bugger, nothing is easy around here. We made do without crampons and got down ok only to have to go back up to point 1580 metres.

Snow had been falling lightly since point 1944 and we could now see a heavy snowstorm coming up Lake Wakatipu. Fortunately, it stayed over Glenorchy. We finally passed the campsite we were aiming for on Saturday night, and the time was now 4 p.m. on Sunday. This was also the pre-arranged time we planned to meet Gary and the others back at the vans. We decided to sidle before point 1296 metres above the bush edge as it looked like the ridge could be separated by bluffs and with our history...

We passed several brilliant camping spots and lovely rock formations, but they were without water. We picked up several tracks and sped up and finally the descent started. Our quads were burning as we dropped 900 metres to the valley floor being careful to miss 'Lovers Leap'.

On the way down we tried the cell phone, but no coverage, nor could we spot the van below. Still in good spirits, we hobbled gratefully onto the flat valley floor at 8:45 p.m.

Unable to spot the van, we decided to walk to the only house in the area. As we approached the farmer's house, we made our wish list - food, beer, a movie, maybe a place to sleep if we had to spend the night. We spoke to the elderly couple that lived there who didn't have any news from Gary but said that they would give us a lift to our van back at Muddy Creek. As we eyed the Mercedes parked in the garage, they handed us some cushions - we would be riding in the back of the Ute.

25 minutes later after a very cold ride on the back of a gravel filled Ute we arrived at our van.

We conveyed our most sincere thanks and gratitude to the couple who were so nice to give us a ride. We then located Malt, Nicole, and Arthur who had walked the last half-hour in the dark to reach the bridge.

A quick stop at midnight in Queenstown for a feed at "Subway" and a call to Antony to let him know we made it out okay. Arrived back in Dunedin at 3:30am after several of the group shared with the task of driving.

Paul Van Kampen, Bruce Bernasconi, Rob Lawrence, Malt Corbin, Andrew Fausch, Nicole Bowes, Arthur Blondell.

CANYON CREEK

January 25-26, 2003

Author: Not recorded

Published in Bulletin 627, March 2003

Oh no!" cried Bruce as we neared Oamaru. "I've forgotten my boots!" This followed Grant our trip leader having to forgo his attendance, a car waiting in Dunedin for a non-club member who didn't arrive and rain as we loaded the cars at the club rooms. Once on the road though, we were in golden evening sun heading directly under a vivid double rainbow. Jet black clouds hemmed us in from the north and south. Fresh snow highlighted the mountain tops. However, once at the hut in the Ahuriri valley, we were greeted by rain.

This was the premier outing for Paul's new Microlight tent, and he quickly grew an emotional attachment to it. Speaking of emotional attachments, Bruce bought a new surfboard earlier in the day at lunchtime, which he then had a dream about that night. Ah - back to the story eh, that night as the rain fell heavily from unseen skies, Paul hoped he had applied the seam sealer correctly 24 hours before and he couldn't help but remember the TV and a warm fire at the farmer's house as we passed earlier in the evening. Stalker!

Some of us awoke to a new world, clearing sky; little wind and fresh snow on the mountains that gave the air a crisp freshness. Meanwhile, Gary woke to a trail of scroggin and a chewed-up plastic bag that led from his sleeping bag towards the forest - someone had visitors during the night. Didn't your mum tell you Gary not to eat in bed?

By setting up the fly on a slight hill the night before, Bruce hadn't slept well and probably got a crick in his back. Over breakfast Bruce was struggling with back pain, but Susan being the fine vet she is, came armed with some really great and groovy drugs. Five minutes later, Bruce was good as gold and couldn't have felt better!

From the hut, we drove another 5 km to Canyon Creek over a gravel road with 4WD fords. Cars with low clearance called for walking occupants (except for the driver of course) whenever we were to cross a ford just like the night before. After a quick dis-embarkment from the vehicles, we headed up the canyon where a great view of the lower canyon wall greeted us. Later we got soaked in wet flowering snow tussock and saw some blue ducks.

Carefully we found the route up the true right of the second bigger canyon wall. David, Jacob and Roy obviously felt the route wasn't steep enough and entertained a direct route up a bluff! Lunch was on a spur overlooking the main canyon, lower valley and mountains with sun shining warmly above. How are those sneakers going Bruce? Lower back OK? Did you forget your gaiters as well? What, you feel fine, and your feet have dried out already - why do we wear these expensive boots? We sidled into the upper valley and the search was on for the Biv rock but all we found were tarns, alpine flowers, mini waterfalls, a mini canyon filled with roaring clear blue water and beautiful smooth ice and water carved rock. What a brilliant place - someone (who else but Paul) has already taken 24 photos!

Finally, we found the Biv rock in the upper basin along with the tramping gear of two climbers. Camp was set up at 2pm, two tents, two flys and people still to come. Rob, Bruce, Gary and Paul decided to find the lake on the mountainside leaving camp at 3:30pm. Paul tracked our progress every 15 mins as the camp below became insignificant, and unknown mountains burst out around us; gotta LOVE altitude! Easy climbing on grassy terraces and ramps between bluffs saw us up to the snow line in only one hour. This begged the question - do we sidle to the lake or go for the top? Summit fever ensued and another hour saw us reach huge pinnacle rocks on Mt Heim 2230m. Bruce found sneakers meant he HAD to follow in our footsteps up the glacier, another very good reason to wear sneakers! Some of us (Paul) love the feeling when you are nearing a new view over a ridge, pass or mountaintop, feels the need to count his steps. Unfortunately nearing the top Rob stopped Paul for a photo at step 226 on a continuous 333-step challenge he had set for himself. At the summit, an awesome view looked out to the Aspiring massif (in cloud), Mt Brewster, Mt Hooker and the upper Hunter valley. Mt Barth was close and tempting, but with limited time and no iceaxes for the steeper glacier slopes and crevasses, it will have to wait for another day. Besides the sneakers were probably at their maximum, eh Bruce. From our vantage point we could see two climbers sidling under Mt Bath avoiding crevasses.

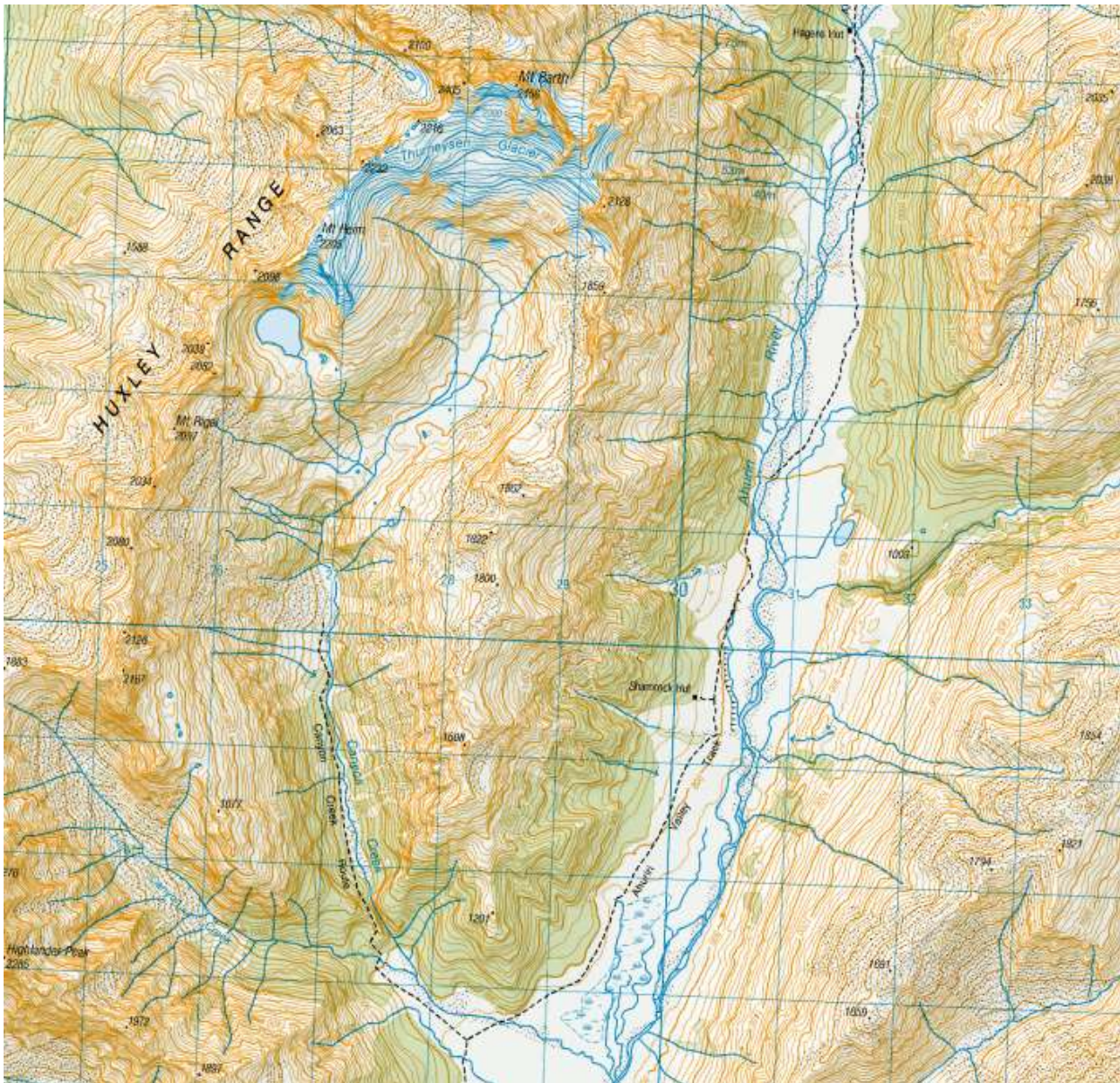
Unfortunately, the time came and we had to descend, so we had a go at bum sliding and glissading but the glacier wasn't quite steep enough. Oh well, running it is. Why is it that your legs can't keep up with your body at times like these! Two metre strides made it 11 minutes down to the snowline and a gold medal! Grassy slopes and bluffs demanded about the same one-hour they took to climb and we made it back to camp at 6:40pm. All up 3 hours to climb and descend 1000m. The two climbers returned at the same time and explained that they had been waiting out 4 days of bad weather and impassable bergschrunds had defeated their attempt on Mt Barth today.

We enjoyed good weather with no wind and lazed at camp while making tea. After tea, and as if no boots and a cricked back was not enough, Bruce then lost an expensive contact lens. Like looking for a needle in a haystack, and even with the assistance of several trampers, the search was not proving to be much of a success. Jacob walks up and within two seconds he shines his LED torch on the lens hidden deep in the tall grass! Bad luck to good luck, what could possibly happen to Bruce next?

Overnight, the stars moved, and the moon rose over the south face of Mt Barth while the sound of waterfalls from under the glacier filtered out across the basin. In the morning a brief tinge of pink alpine glow fell across the top of Mt Barth before east coast cloud intervened.

After breakfast and with full packs, we climbed the other side of the valley to a 1700m saddle. Rob, Paul and Bruce took the direct steeper route but were beaten by some of the others, maybe there is an optimum slope angle or maybe we simply talk too much! At the pass, Gary, Bruce, Rob and Paul quickly climbed to another peak (1860m) south of the saddle while the others played with 4 Keas and enjoyed brilliant views in wind-less, cloudless sunny weather.

Over the saddle we went, down steep snow tussock slopes mixed with alpine flowers to a spot above the bushline for lunch. Susan suggested that Paul run on ahead to get her 4WD, yeah right! Paul tried to closely follow Moir's guide but had to succumb to heavy scrub and followed Rob's better direct (as always) approach down to the bush (mental note - avoid at all costs shorts with sunburnt legs bashing through chest high shrubs - it really really hurts). There is a lovely ledge just below the bushline and we passed some beautiful unmarked tarns. Later we dropped steeply to the valley floor through spongy open beech forest avoiding the bluffs. CRASH a tree just missed Paul, and Rob almost got knocked off his feet as Bruce had slithered down in sneakers knocking down rotten trees (next time wear a helmet or follow behind Bruce!)



At the valley floor Paul initiated a water fight out of the slimy stream with cow and sheep shit beside it, the same stream that a few people so desperate for water drank out of. The water was running so its OK eh Gary? I hope Susan and Gary aren't reading this as they are 'running'

on or to the toilet! We covered the final distance down the Ahuriri in 1 1/2hrs. Unfortunately, somehow Rob, Bruce and Paul again went off track, and perhaps too much talking was again involved or maybe we should just blame Bruce. Rain started to fall as we changed into 'travelling' clothes at the cars.

As we drove out, we once again had to walk behind the vehicle as it crossed the fords. But wait, just like the Speights beer commercial, three "rugged" guys hitching a lift (Bruce, Jacob and Paul) suddenly see the "perfect woman" (Susan) driving her 4WD towards them and got a lift (it smelt very nice in the truck!)

Gary convinced us to stop at the pub for a beer (big surprise there - Good on ya mate). Rain fell as we drove home for domesticated lives. A great trip, nice to spend time with you all and thanks Grant, sorry you were unable to come along,

Paul Van Kampen, Bruce Bernasconi, Gary Dawe

UNEXPLORED SILVER PEAKS

January 26, 2003

Author: Richard Pettinger

Published in Bulletin 627, March 2003

I had the idea that we'd see who turned up at the clubrooms on the day, identify a location in the Silver Peaks none of them had ever been to, and go there. Because, let's face it, there's surely no place in New Zealand that actually 'unexplored' as such. But there's plenty of places nobody would bother going to...

We found one such place. It's a damp, steepish, slippery gully of tangled vegetation on the Painted Forest. Wayne and I wanted a drink and there was water there. Philip and his 14-year-old son, James, didn't mind being dragged all over the hills to find this little gully. For Philip it was his first OTMC trip in 18 years. He was inspired to come along after surfing the web and coming across the page Antony set up.



The Painted Forest, Silver Peaks Scenic Reserve (PHOTO Antony Pettinger)

First, Wayne's little Escort took us bravely towards Hightop, where it was stopped by a tank trap clearly constructed by the US army to stop Al Qaeda reaching Dunedin by that route. We retreated, parked up and launched off at a cracking pace to the Green Hut site. It was a nice day, but the scrub was a bit damp, and the track was a bit of a mess. A swathe of clay in places. Somebody has dug or filled in the famous historic groove on Green Ridge and filled it

with soil and clay. Sadly, the surface is where the clay has ended up, so it'll be a while before and groundcover is re-established. I hope gorse doesn't find it a good thing to grow in.

We kept up the pace past Pulpit Rock and on to Silver Peak itself, where we set off along the ridge south-west of the Devil's Staircase. The four-wheel drive track is now getting overgrown and silver beech trees are encroaching over the landscape all around there. There were also the occasional broom seedlings, some getting mature. We think we pulled out everyone on the track. It's possible vehicles and the open soil had been the reason they were there. It would be easy to miss them, but they were easy to pull out. Would thought DoC would never know how much we had thereby saved them.

We checked out the mysterious Dark Horse Hut and found it quite a neat little place. Somebody was obviously very keen. No sign of vandalism. However, the bits of Green Hut that have ended up here are a reminder that vandals are never far away.

The exploring began as we plunged into the Painted Forest and found several little streams that probably don't get very many visits and probably no return visits. The bush was interesting; no non-natives at all, big beech trees and a lot of seedlings but virtually no middle-aged beeches, an understory of toddler broad leaf and marble leaf, and not much sign of browsing. I'm sure beeches would come away fast wherever light got in. Silver beeches are spreading out from all the forest edges.

I notice a survey plan drawn in the 1870s that the Painted Forest has been virtually the same size and shape for over a hundred years, but now it's in sprawl mode.

We thought we'd descend through the forest and cross its principal stream, then get out of the valley onto the ridge track to Mt Allan, but we climbed up into the tongue of tussock clearing that extends down from the northwest edge, because we wanted to sit in the sun and have lunch. This was the only time it decided to rain. We were definitely no masochists, so we climbed out of there in the tussock and went back home the way we came.

We took out quite a few more broom bushes on our way home. It got very warm and sunny along the way, so the water holes were welcome.

Thanks to the following for a great trip: Wayne Hodgkinson and his Escort, Philip and James Somerville. Also, thanks to the web page Philip stumbled across, while exploring the unknown!

Richard Pettinger.

OTMC CLUB PICNIC – TROTTERS GORGE

February 2, 2003

Author: Richard Pettinger

Published in Bulletin 628, April 2003

After years of Annual Picnics at Long Beach, the Club committee made a brave decision, and held this year's one at Trotters Gorge. It was a perfect day, and the leafy glade with its pretty little stream was a lovely venue, especially for anyone just recovering from the full-on heat and torture of the Marathon the day before.

Three and a half families wasn't a huge turnout, but a sociable time we had, playing a little soccer and discussing trips (like the Marathon!) over a beer or two. You should have been there.

Richard Pettinger



An earlier OTMC Picnic at Trotters Gorge (PHOTO Antony Pettinger)

BIKE MARATHON

February 7, 2003

Author: Dave McLean

Published in Bulletin 628, April 2003

Date: Friday 7, February 2003

Venue: Broad Bay

Start time: 5.40am

Course: Ride Broad Bay to Leith Saddle, Portage / bush bash to Mountain Road via Burns track. Ride Mountain Road to bottom of Gap Ridge. Push bike to Gap. Ride – push - carry to Bendoran Station. Ride - carry down Orbell Creek to 3 O'clock Stream.

Ride - push up Fiddlers Gully to high point 624m. Free-wheel to 3 O'clock Road, cycle Mt Stoker Road to Sutton just south of Middlesmarch.

Good idea for a new race? I think not after checking out the course for myself firsthand, but I had a fantastic day out in the sun, taking in incredible views and basically just doing my thing!

It all started with an idea I had last year of doing a novel bike ride to Naseby via Middlesmarch, the Rail Trail and Waipiata. All went well until Bendoran, but I could not find the Orbell Creek track, so finished by riding through to Waikouaiti. Finishing what I started out to do stayed in the forefront of my mind all summer.

I started out at the crack of dawn and was on Leith saddle by 7am. The Burns Track section took 1.25 hours and surprisingly enough was rideable here and there. After a fast ride on Mountain Road and a hard hot haul up Gap Ridge, 4.5 hours after leaving Broad Bay I was met by a fantastic panorama and the most beautiful views. The Silver Peaks are quite a nice place on a fine day. Bendoran does not look very far away but each kilometre on the map is very hard won.

I had a bit of bother finding the track down into Orbell Creek, as the 4WD track has really reverted back to nature. A lot of the ride was in low gear dodging very mature tussocks and also one very large bull which had its eye on me. I'm not sure what it was thinking, but I was in no mind to find out! A short stop at Orbell Cave, and from there across country to 3 O'clock Stream and up Fiddlers Gully in the heat. I was exhausted at that point but had the most glorious downhill to 3 O'clock and Mt Stoker roads. That view of the Strath Taieri from point 624m was out of this world. From there a long hot ride to Sutton where my good wife Jenny picked me up.

Why did I do it? Because it was different, and I wanted to see if it could be done. My original time estimate of 7 hours was a bit out, it took me 9 hours 40 minutes.

Would I recommend this as an annual Tramping Club event? No way.

What are my plans for next year? Something a little closer to home.

THOUSAND ACRE PLATEAU

February 2003

Author: Jonathan Wood

Published in Bulletin 628, April 2003

A heavily overcast West Coast morning saw Neville Hore (Greymouth) and me (Mosgiel) driving up the Grey River towards Reefton, and thence to Murchison. At Murchison the Martin River flows from the north to join the Buller River and by the time we had reached the road end the sun was well and truly out, making a little oven of the valley.

After a stifling 3km walk along a farm road we were glad to reach bush at the confluence of the West Matiri River (wire cable upstream according to the sign). The route from here followed an old cattle track, well benched, to Lake Matiri where there is a tidy 6-bunk hut. Of interest on the way is an Olena bush growing under a waterfall, calcified at its branch tips but still alive at the base? The entire track for 20m or so has a solid calcium pavement, obviously deposited since the trail was benched across the hillside. Fifteen minutes after the Matiri Hut - and after three hours of gentle climb from the carpark - our branch of the track departed from the valley floor in an abrupt manner, climbing from 350m to 1100m in 2.8 km (including a flat section just over halfway up of 600m)! There is a beautiful viewpoint overlooking Lake Matiri just before this flat section, and a small creek (running when we were there) 50m off the track just after this section, the last running water available until late morning the next day.

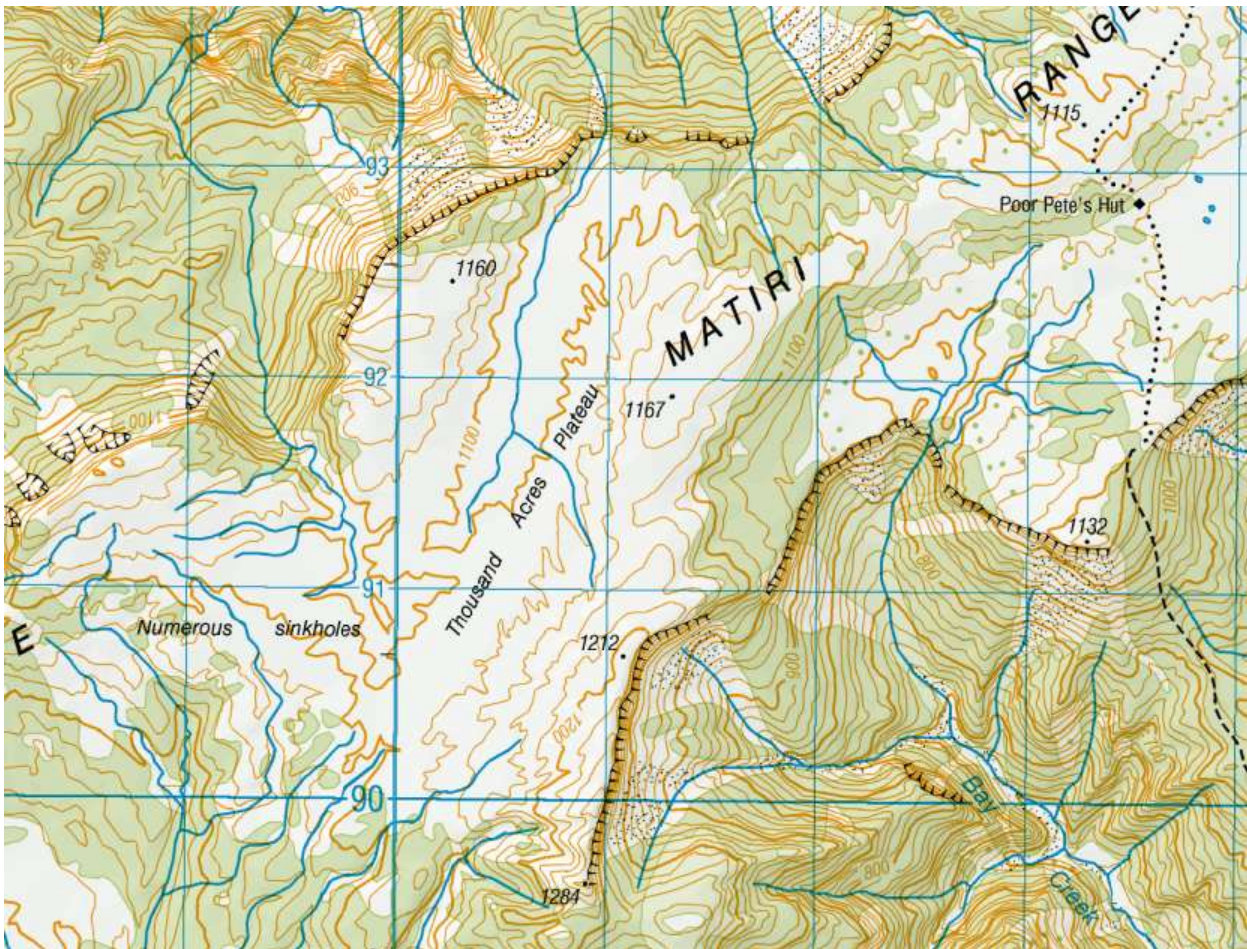
The end of the climb was just as dramatic - like climbing onto the edge of a table, with the bushline finishing shortly after. From the raised edge of Thousand Acre Plateau lay the view of tussock land, gentle undulations, and innumerable sinkholes, patches of scrub and bush, and mountains poking up from the distant parts of the perimeter. Our objective was to climb the Needle, just visible over the low hill, and lying next to the more prominent Haystack.

We intended to stay at Poor Pete's Hut (a rough but clean two bunk hut 1.8 km into the plateau) but it was full. There are about four tent sites in varying directions, and we pitched our fly with a brilliant view of sunset over tussocks, tarns, mountains across the valley, and later - stars unlimited. In early morning the fog came in and carpeted the fly causing a great deal of condensation and runoff on the inside!

The next day we travelled at least an hour with 200m visibility, which occasionally lifted to reveal a small peak or a forest marching past, which quietly disappeared into the fog again. In midmorning we travelled through colonies of sundew thriving in peat bogs to reach the first of the creeks that cross the track. This was not running but the pools of clear water were welcome. (Poor Pete's has a dubious looking barrel of water under the eaves and no streams nearby).

After another few creeks the track climbed gently into a tongue of bush which included some sturdy *Dracophyllum* trees, before dropping into a water sculpted streamline carved from the marly limestone. By the time we reached Larrikins Creek hut (1040m - same altitude as Poor

Pete's) the fog had lifted to give us a view of the mountains disappearing into low cloud. We had also passed two families and two others departing who had camped in or around this four-bunk hut! (Also clean and tidy, with running water nearby).



Having pondered the worth of climbing a cloud enclosed mountain - we set off after lunch missing the not too visible permolat marker and making a fairly energetic detour before reaching a small plateau just above the bushline. This has apparently slid 50 m down the hillside bending the adjacent strata until it snapped. This small plateau is directly below the cliff edge of Hundred Acre Plateau, and below the Needle and the Haystack.

As we climbed into the saddle and on to the Needle (1438m) through some healthy *Aciphylla*, the cloud rose enabling a 180° panorama over the plateaus, and valleys to the north. The cloud obscured any potential view towards the coast, but the distant edges of Thousand Acre Plateau were clearly visible.

Descending an invigorating scree slope, we returned to the track end and once again met the fog rolling in over the Plateau. With the luxury of Poor Pete's Hut to welcome us, I felt the need to remove two days sweat with a surprisingly warm dip in a peaty tarn. The next day we descended to the valley floor. Going down seemed even longer and hotter than going up!

Dropping our packs at the foot of the hill we went for a dip in the delta of a small stream. This drops off suddenly into deep water, sheer enjoyment on a sweltering day! The hike back to the

car was as hot as the trip in and some further stunning swimming holes in the river were noted for next time round. A great trip, do-able from Dunedin in a long four days and three nights, (The trip could be extended into a circular route taking in the head of the Matiri River, or a slightly circular route by returning to Poor Pete's via the Haystack ridge).

Jonathan Wood

WINE TASTING IN CENTRAL OTAGO

March 9, 2003

Author: Robert Greenhough

Published in Bulletin 628, April 2003

On Sunday 9 March, the weather in Dunedin was cloudy and threatening rain, but six women and three men still arrived at the clubrooms to leave by 8am. When we stopped at Ettrick to pick up some fruit, the sun was out for the day.

Just before Alexandra we turned into Conroy's Gully to Black Ridge Vineyards where we were able to taste five of their wines from Riesling to Pinot Noir. Along the west bank of the Clutha River, we stopped just before the Clyde bridge for lunch.

Then over the river and up past Cromwell to Bannock burn and the Mt Difficulty winery, a new one in Felton Rd. It overlooks Pipeclay Gully where a creek runs out to the Kawarau River.

Our third visit was to Olssen's Garden Vineyard just down Felton Rd. At 14 years, it is one of the older establishments in the area and provided us with food as well as drink. Our last visit was to Springvale Estate on Dunstan Rd beside the Rail Trail near Alexandra.

For variety of scenery, we came home via the Pigroot, stopping at the Omakau Commercial Hotel for a final feed, to complete a different but enjoyable day in Central Otago.

Robert Greenhough

ALL AT SEA – QUARANTINE ISLAND

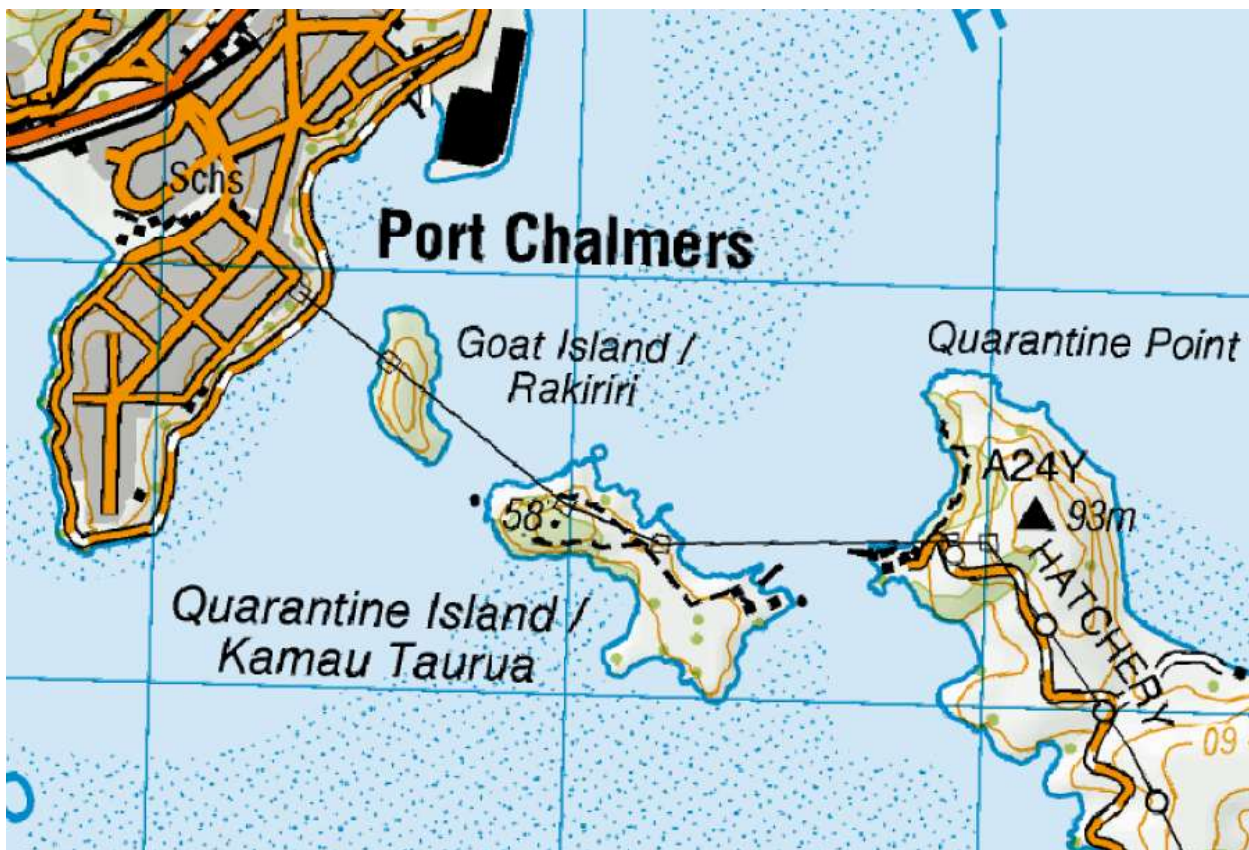
February 9, 2003

Author: Cathy McKersey

Published in Bulletin 628, April 2003

February 9th, and a group of 27 people leave Back Beach for Quarantine Island. A small sailboat provided the transport as the organised Sea Cadet boat had mechanical problems. Nine people at a time and the group were on the island by 11.30 am.

The resident caretaker gave us a most informative talk on the island's history. This included information on immigrants who suffered from smallpox and other contagious diseases and their confinement on the island. More than 70 people died, over half were children, most of whom are buried at the island's cemetery. Following the talk, it was off to explore.



After visiting the original accommodation complex, which has undergone major restoration, plus the chapel it was up over the hill for a short walk-through native forest. From here onto the small cemetery and its grim reminder of its role last century. A chimney is all that remains of the hospital, which was situated on the Portobello side of the Island. After lunch we met the other island's inhabitants, Daisy and Sundance, two friendly donkeys. Check with Andrew, as he will no doubt have some great shots of these two.

From here it was a back to the Wharf area, and the repaired original transport for a speedy return to the mainland.

Cathy McKersey

EAST MATUKITUKI CIRCUIT

February 6-9, 2003

Author: Antony Pettinger

Published in Bulletin 629, May 2003

A comfortable trip from Dunedin saw us spending a pleasant night at the road-end at the East Matukituki. There is good camping under trees available at the end of a side road marked 'Fireplace - 100m'. There is also a big DoC sign here, with the obvious East Matukituki options listed.

Our plan for the four-day trip was the classic circuit comprising the East Matukituki / Junction Flat / Aspiring Flat / Wilmot Saddle / Sisypheus Peak / Ruth Flat / Bledisloe Gorge and back out to the road. I've been writing over the last year of my desire for the OTMC to do more of these types of 'off-track' trips - it was great to see 10 people heading up the East Matukituki for this one.



East Matukituki River, February 6, 2003 (PHOTO Antony Pettinger)

Thursday morning dawned fine and clear - looks like a good day ahead of us. The first obstacle of the day was the not insignificant crossing of the West Matukituki. This is a major river, and it should never be underestimated. That said, we judged the river crossable (we travelled about 200m upstream from the carpark and got across with varying degrees of dryness (depending

on the length of your legs). In the event that the West branch is uncrossable, there is a footbridge across the river about 2.5km upstream from Cameron Flat at the OBHS lodge.

There is public access into the East Matukituki via Cameron Flat. The first hour or so is across grazed land, passing the old Homestead. The Glacier Burn is encountered just before entering the bush, and although deceptively small, again it should not be underestimated. There is a good bridge about 5 minutes upstream as the Glacier Burn exits the gorge. Continuing up the East Matukituki, the track enters the bush and leads to Junction Flat. The track through the bush is in reasonably good order, although the river has appeared to erode the track in one or two places. There are also some interesting climbs around trees to be tackled.



Aspiring Flats and the Turnbull Thomson Falls, February 6, 2003 (PHOTO Antony Pettinger)

A DoC sign beside the Kitchener River proclaims that Kitchener Flat is a further 1hr up the Kitchener. Huh? I thought we were heading for Aspiring Flats, as that is what all references to the flat below Turnbull Thomson Falls call it. Maybe DoC know something we don't. The track up to Aspiring Flats is on the true right of the Kitchener River and is in pretty good order. The views start to get impressive as the flat is reached. The Rock of Ages bivvy is located beside Aspiring Flats, though we didn't visit it. On previous trips I have found the bivvy rather grotty, despite its reputation. A better option is to camp on the edge of the bush.

Aspiring Flats is known to flood regularly, maybe that's why the crossing of the flat is quite boggy/quicksandy. Just don't linger in the middle, you may just disappear. We had lunch at the start of Rainbow Stream, the wise ones with their back to the wind blowing over from Aspiring. Bruce Bernasconi, Paul Van Kampen and Rob Lawrence joined us for lunch, and impressed us

with their projected itinerary - base themselves in Aspiring Flats and climb Sisyphus that afternoon (which they did), Duncan's Knob the next (which they didn't - we'll let them away with that one) and Dragonfly (which Bruce and Paul did on Friday).

We now were in the uncharted territory of no tracks, and we loved it. Up the Rainbow to a campsite was our objective, closely followed by the desire to get out of the gusty wind. Travel up the Rainbow is a relatively simple rock scramble, with the odd bit of avalanche debris to contend with. Cross the stream as required. We found a sheltered campsite just above the first forks in the stream and proceeded to relax as you should on a public holiday. After a while Bruce, Paul and Rob came by on the way up Sisyphus (leaving it a bit late, aren't they?). We also entertained ourselves by watching the progress of the other party inching their way up towards Wilmot Saddle in the shadow of the Main Divide. I don't think it was planned, but we never bothered to pitch the fly - we all had bivy bags, and the weather looked as if it would hold. The wind went down eventually, and the sandflies made their appearance. A pleasant evening turning into mild anxiety as we hadn't seen Bruce and co. return yet, and dusk was turning to dark. I think it was around 10pm that they passed below us. At least they are past the worst.



Rainbow Stream and Aspiring Flats, February 7, 2003 (PHOTO Antony Pettinger)

Friday dawned fine again, with the wind of yesterday now gone completely. Setting off from our camp (or do we call it a bivy?) was very pleasant in the shade of the early morning. Contrary to what Moir's suggests, we kept following the true left branch of the Rainbow. I had done this trip in '93 and sticking to the creek worked well for us then. Again, just boulder up

the creek, crossing as required towards the saddle. It wasn't too long until we were in the sun, and boy, it was going to be hot. A good view of Rainbow Col was soon had, and shortly after our first view of Mt. Aspiring above the col. The creek gets steeper as you go up, but it is still no problem to wander up. There is one or two guts that need to be crossed, but if you keep an eye out, these are crossed without too much trouble.

As we made our way around the bend in the Rainbow, Sisyphus Peak and Wilmot Saddle came into view. It's not really as far as it looks, just a grunt up over broken schist and the odd patch of snowgrass. There was still snow lying in some of the gullies. Matt and Barry decided to lunch in the basin, with Ann, Pete and myself choosing to have lunch on the top of Sisyphus. The view from Wilmot Saddle (1682m) is breathtaking. The Rainbow side of the saddle is relatively gentle compared with the sheer drop on the Ruth Flat side. There was a pool of water on the saddle, coming from some snow left from the last snowstorm, and Moir's mentions a spring nearby, which we didn't look for. It is advisable to keep an eye on the creek as you climb and fill your bottle before they dry up.



The climb from Wilmot Saddle to Sisyphus Peak, February 7, 2003 (PHOTO Antony Pettinger)

I'm not sure what Ann and Pete were thinking of the last climb to the top of Sisyphus, as it looks quite steep from saddle. It is actually not too difficult, just another grunt in the hot sun. Moir's describes the view from the top of Sisyphus as the best in the East Matukituki. This was an understatement on our trip. I would rate the view that day to be among the very best I have seen from anywhere. Words can't describe it, but it made for an awesome lunch spot. Aspiring even got rid of its usual cloud veil, giving us a clear view of entire summit.



Mt Aspiring / Tititea from Sisyphus Peak, February 7, 2003 (PHOTO Antony Pettinger)

After many summit photo's, it was time to head down to Ruth Flat - the heat drove us from the top. The descent down to Ruth Flat is the 'interesting' part of the trip. I knew very well from my previous trip that the route had to be carefully chosen to avoid the many bluffs. The current edition of Moir's includes a very clear route description, along with a good photo of the route you need to take. The start of the descent is down steep snowgrass ridges/ledges. The instability of the area is emphasised by huge slip on your right as you are going down. This has left only about a 10m wide section of ridge remaining - maybe this route will become even harder in years to come? When you are about 100m lower than Wilmot Saddle, head for the biggest rock outcrop overlooking the creek that drains the saddle. As you look down, you will see a rock creek bed starting about halfway down - you have to head for this. The first part is through scrub (and many spaniards), and then drops into a nice tussock basin. From this basin head for the creek, and boulder down. There is one section where you need to go into the bush on the true right to get around a big boulder. Not far from here you meet up with another creek coming down, and further down you meet the creek draining Wilmot Saddle. It is easy travel from here to Ruth Flat. If you follow this route, you shouldn't have any difficulty. It does

take time, so don't loiter on top too long. Equally, avoid the temptation to follow the ridge from Sisyphus too far down (especially avoid exiting in the Bledisloe Gorge).

Another night bivying out was very pleasant. The other party met up with us on Saturday morning - they had come out near the start of the Bledisloe Gorge and have the stories to prove it. The weather was now overcast, with mist hanging around the peaks. The temperature was pleasant to tramp in. After telling the party that the Bledisloe Gorge track is a nice, meandering track we headed off for the compulsory crossing of the nearest river. The track through the gorge is not the meandering track I remember (really!!), and after the odd bit of cursing we reached the bushline and a pleasant lunch spot. From here we could see all four named flats in the East Matukituki. The mist around the hills provided a surreal feel to the area. We lingered as long as we could above the bush, but reluctantly headed down to Junction Flat.



Fastness Peak above Wilmot Saddle, photo taken from descent to Ruth Flat, February 7, 2003 (PHOTO Antony Pettinger)

An improvement in the area since my last trip here is the two new 3-wire swing bridges at Junction Flat. One across the East Matukituki above the Hester Pinney junction (keep an eye on the dead/dying beech tree the bridge is tied too). The other is across the Kitchener. These rivers have been difficult and sometimes fatal to cross at times - the bridges are a good idea.

We again camped under the stars in Junction Flat. The East Matukituki is meant to be rarely visited, but we counted about 20 people camping in Junction Flat, and we knew of another dozen or so with a km or so. I hate to think how many were in the West Branch.

With only a 2-3 hour walk out on the last day, we decided to visit the Glacier Burn on our way out. This is a short valley, with an impressive cirque in its head. A good track climbs above the

gorge and descends back to the river, taking around one hour. You can travel further up towards the head - climbing into the bush provides good animal trails and level ground, with the odd slip to cross.

And so back the road end. Although there had been no rain, the West Matukituki was running a lot higher and faster than 4 days earlier, probably due to the snow melt and the time of day. We used mutual support to cross the river. Once across, the packs were promptly thrown off, and most jumped back into the river - very refreshing.



Junction Flat with Aspiring Flat beyond, February 8, 2003 (PHOTO Antony Pettinger)

An early arrival back in town completed a very successful trip.

My thanks to my party for a great trip - Ann Burton, Pete Stevenson, Barry Atkinson, and Matt Corbett.

Antony Pettinger

11 February, 2003

BUSHCRAFT 2003

February - March, 2003

Author: Antony Pettinger

Published in Bulletin 629, May 2003

Bushcraft 2003 finished up on April 1, again it has been a very successful course. 14 people enrolled on the course, and I found them all a wonderful bunch of people to work with. We followed a similar format to previous years, which works well for us. The course consisted of an introductory evening covering clothing, weather, and environmental care. The bulk of the Bushcraft skills were taught at the Tirohanga weekend.

A practical tramp to the challenging Silver Peaks allowed new skills to be 'put' into practice. A half-day was spent practising river safety in a low Taieri River.

A few of the participants joined some OTMC people on the trip to Fiordland, another fine trip.



Camp on the Livingstone Mountains, March 29, 2003 (PHOTO Antony Pettinger)

The success of the course is only possible with the help of the OTMC members who gave their time, freely towards Bushcraft 2003. I would like to pass on my appreciation to everyone who helped in some, way before' and during the course. The course is a club effort and judging from the evaluations the club has done well. I would like to particularly thank Heather Deason, Cathy McKersey, Jenni Wright and Ann Burton for their great work with the catering at Tirohanga - the food at Tirohanga was a highlight for many people - well done!

Antony Pettinger

BLUE MOUNTAIN TOPS

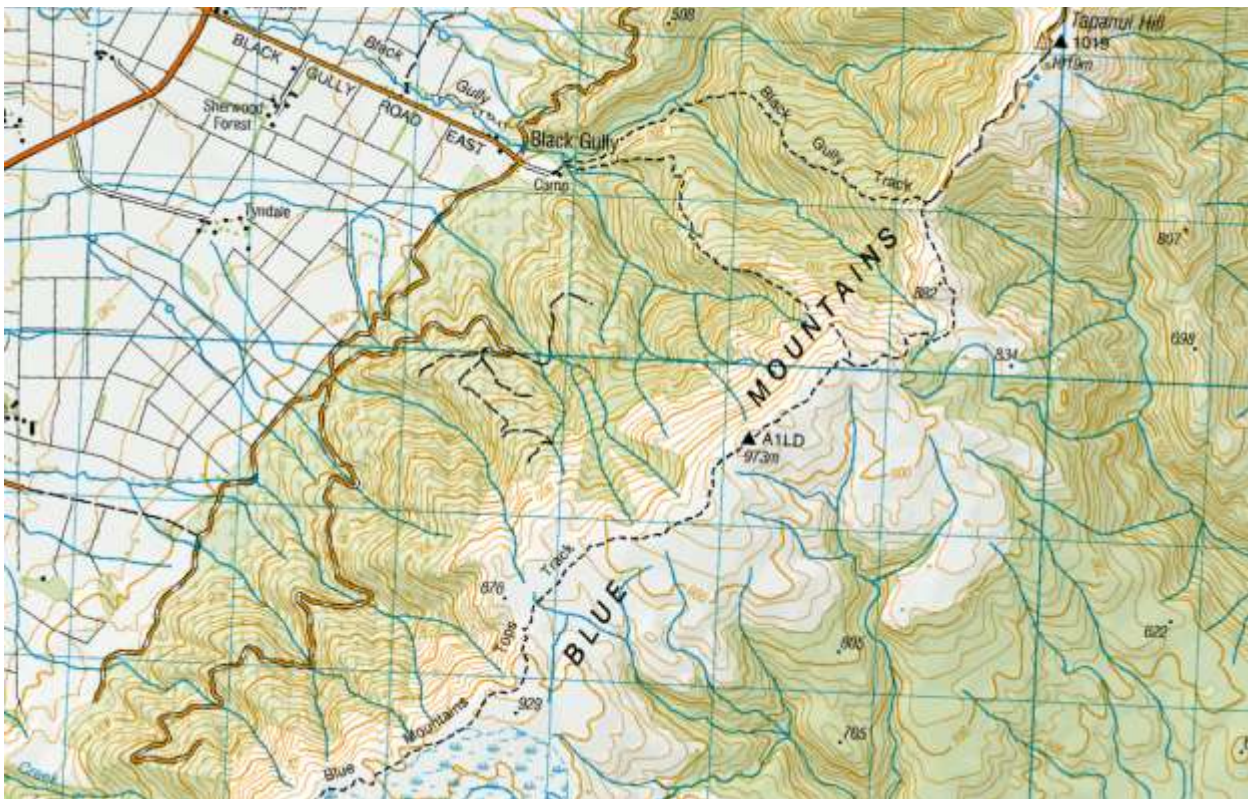
April 13, 2003

Author: Not recorded

Published in Bulletin 629, May 2003

It was a perfect day for views in all directions from the site of the TV translator on the first high point, and from the trig station on the highest point further south. And all this with the only effort needed, about 20 minutes climb up the metal road from the locked gate.

The main forestry road, Manuka Ridge Road, and Road 100 leading from it to the carpark and gate, were both in excellent order, and even the road past the gate to the translator had been recently graded, making for easy footing.



Distant ridges were visible over nearer ones, and small sections of even more distant mountains peeped over them. The only difficulty was to identify them.

Janet Barclay, Aad & Jenn Brugman, Laurel Dunn, Robert Greenhough, Bruce Johnston, Sarah Lloyd, Yvonne Mahy, John McBurney, Ian Sime, Roy Ward.

TE PAPANUI CONSERVATION PARK

March 29, 2003

Author: Robert Greenhough

Published in Bulletin 629, May 2003

Five of us travelled in President Alan's van to help open this new park which covers a large part of the tussock country on the Lammermoor and Lammerlaw Ranges, surrounding the headwaters of the Taieri River.

Saturday 29 March was not a good day in Dunedin, and the weather on the open tops was no better. It was important to be warmly clothed as we waited just off the Old Dunstan Road for Chris Carter, Minister of Conservation, who had been held up at Wellington airport.

The 4WD club provided transport for those who had travelled that far in cars; first to the park boundary where the official opening was performed by the Minister and Alan Mark who has been the main researcher of tussock in Otago; and then to a high point where a marquee had been set up for lunch. A plaque was uncovered on a nearby rock.

Robert Greenhough.



Te Papanui Conservation Park opening, March 29, 2003

L-R: Philip Trounson, Robert Greenhough, Alan Thomson, Marie McDonald, Ian Sime, Paul Van Kampen
(PHOTO Otago Daily Times from a purchased print supplied by Marie McDonald / OTMC Archives)

FOUR DAYS IN THE EAST MATUKITUKI

February 3-6, 2003

Author: Rob Lawrence, Bruce Bernasconi, Paul Van Kampen

Published in Bulletin 630, June 2003

After jamming the car boot with some of the most badly packed packs five ever seen, we hit the road to Central Otago. The usual greasy takeaway stop in Alex gave Bruce a chance to finally change out of his ridiculously hot jeans and enjoy some late evening sun. Next stop Wanaka to leave a note with our friends from DOC - only we seemed to end pulling out someone else's intentions. So, after a quick check of a) sex (ok - had to admit it's been a while) b) age and c) destination (just to make sure we shouldn't suddenly change our plans!) we said bye-bye to civilisation as we dropped off our fourth passenger Mark in town. Mark's a nice guy, though we thought he talked a bit much. We quickly sped towards the night's destination of Cameron Flat as the advantages of 4-wheel drives on gravel roads were duly demonstrated. The cloudless night was warm and windy & proved ideal for a spot of stargazing before we finally drifting off to sleep.



Cameron Flat and the East Matukituki Vallkey, February 6, 2003 (PHOTO Antony Pettinger)

Next morning over breakfast we heard how Paul had courageously fought off several daddy long leg spiders during the night. Our first task of the day was to link up and cross the icy Matukituki, which came dangerously close to causing some serious shrinkage! Flat farmland provided a good warm-up before hauling our super heavy packs up to Aspiring Flats and

trudging through muddy river flats to catch up with the other groups for some lunch. Next we made for the direction of the 'Rock of Ages' bivvy where we found an idyllic riverside spot to pitch our tents for the next three nights.

Not wanting to waste the beautiful blue-sky day, we quickly formulated a mission to tackle Syphilis (aka. Sisyphus) Peak. After setting out at a rather late 2:30pm we rock-hopped our way up Rainbow Creek, skirting around the edge of some seriously undermined avalanche debris. Passing Antony's group and some 'you must be crazy leaving at this time' looks, we carried on for the summit. As we gained altitude the breeze blowing down the valley became so strong that several waterfalls were being blown into thin air instead of hitting the ground. The source of the wind was discovered as we looked up at the imposing cliffs and a band of cloud revealed the flow of cold air spilling off the ice shelf above.



Head of Rainbow Stream, heading towards Wilmot Saddle (PHOTO Antony Pettinger)

Ignoring Moir's guide, we picked our way up through open scrub into the perfectly calm day above & looked back at the tip of Aspiring coming into view. Just ahead, David's group had found an ideal campsite on the sunny, tussock-covered hillside. The uphill grind continued through slopes of broken schist and across a few patches of snow, until we made the pass and 20 minutes later the summit was finally conquered. Not a breath of wind or cloud & panoramic views - pure magic!

Since it was now 7:00 pm we forced ourselves to leave the sun-drenched peak and begin descending to the shady valley below. Since we had gravity on our side, we decided to take the 'direct' route down. Straight down a spur, the vegetation getting taller and the slope steeper until we were plunging down 45 degrees through head high scrub. Mental note when dropping

down the steep bits: keep those legs together if you want to keep any chance of having children... And Bruce, better go shopping for some new gaiters soon aye!

Now it was just a matter of following our earlier route back down the valley. River crossings were much easier with a lower water level; however the light was starting to fail. Bruce came to the realisation that by taking off his sunnies, we would have an extra half-hour of daylight. Everything turned a surreal orange colour as the sun finally set, and then it was down the home straight through darkness to reach our campsite at 10:30. It felt as if we were playing war games as we followed the sound of Paul moving through the water ahead of us before reaching camp. What a day! 14 hours on the go. This had obviously taken its toll on Bruce's brain - he had to ask me to remind him what Paul's name was! We were very ready for a huge feed, and hardly noticed the sudden invasion of moths.

We woke to rain - no hang on, not rain but sandflies on our tents trying to get inside for some breakfast. Another glorious day whoops we seemed to have slept in till 9! The previous day's efforts had stirred up an old hip injury of mine, so I settled on a lazy day at Aspiring Flats. Meanwhile, Bruce & Paul decided to accept the challenge of Dragonfly Peak - here is their account:

Departing base camp, we quickly descended to Junction Flat. The sun shone on Mt Aspiring behind and Dragonfly Peak ahead, both being thousands of metres above. Even after the day before, we still powered up to the bush line on this already warm day, as sweat poured off us onto the plants. On the ridge above us, a helicopter interrupted the mountain silence as it landed on Albert Burn Pass. We were glad to see it leave, unfortunately it was before we could organise an evening lift back to Aspiring Flats.

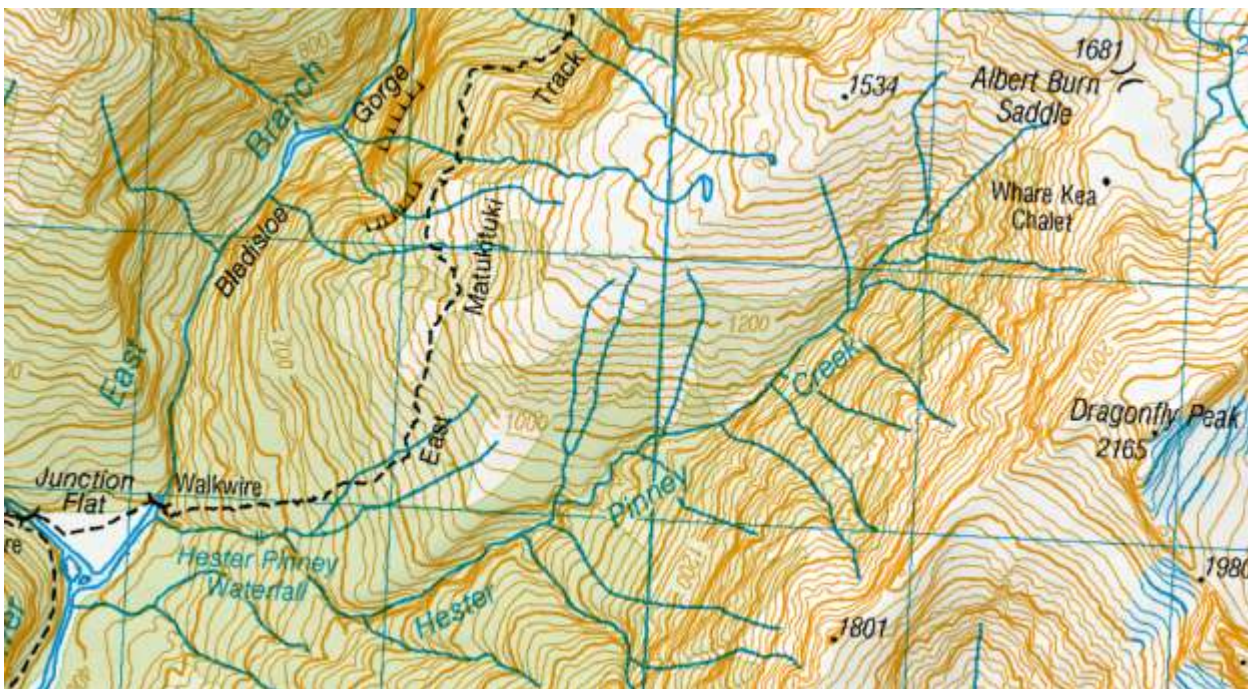
Upon reaching the pass we thirstily drank mountain water fresh from a snowdrift. We calculated we still had time to climb to the summit and be back to base camp to have tea with Rob, but more importantly to be back before dark. In windless, hot, sunny weather we climbed the steep shale scree ridge toward the summit

Just as Paul was reaching the summit of Dragonfly Peak and Bruce was walking along the large expanse of snow below, we first heard the very audible sound of the wind as a glider sped by just above our heads. As the glider banked, we waved our arms in an attempt to get the pilot's attention: he then proceeded to tip his wings to-wards us in return. After several manoeuvres just above us, he proceeded back across the valley towards Mt Aspiring to gain some altitude. Just when we thought he had gone on his way, he came back along with two other gliders, all flying in formation. Wow, what a sight! The speed that the gliders were able to obtain was incredible. The feeling from these three gliders giving us our own private air show atop Dragonfly was immense.

A glider then screamed past under the summit's southern cliffs in a 90-degree bank turn just metres away from the rocky summit and us. Then the skilled pilot flipped the glider skimming low over the NE ridge just beyond us. Immediately behind another glider passed close to us on the other side of the ridge, then a third glider (our first 'friend') low overhead. Mountain silence closed in and we again felt like the only people on earth.

Just then, Paul said to Bruce “Where is that noise coming from?” That instant we both saw a glider coming head on towards us. Quickly the glider went from a dot against the mountains below to one hell of a large straight winged dragonfly about to take our heads off. We both ducked as the glider skimmed over the summit along with die screaming crescendo of wind over its wings. Simply awesome! The ‘airshow’ carried on for 20 minutes leaving us wanting more.

The three gliders then completed two spirals in formation gaining 500m before heading NE toward Mt Brewster and Cook. Suddenly we were left alone, our new ‘friends’ had left and unfortunately we had to descend. Paul nearly had to drag Bruce off the summit as he just didn’t want to leave. As we descended, we felt a moment of sorrow having to leave after such an awesome experience. We starting to feel guilty about Rob having a late tea while we romped around the mountains.



The warm air felt quite tropical as we descended the mountain making our way back to base camp. The water level had risen quite substantially near base camp due to the warm daytime temperatures causing a rapid glacier melt. The last of the sun left camp (as did the sandflies) as we arrived at 9pm. After climbing a total of 2000m in an eleven-hour day, we enjoyed a hearty tea.

Our lives were starting to fall into a new routine. Every hour of the long summer days involved exploring, punctuated with evening summits, then tea late into the warm starry night as moths replaced sandflies and dragonflies replaced gliders.

Saturday morning - what to do today? Well yesterday, after a morning of minimal exertion, sandflies and boredom had finally got the better of me. I took a stroll up to the nearby waterfall. Today, the other two were also keen to have a look so I agreed to be tour guide. As we picked our way up the true left of some particularly loud rapids I commented that earplugs

would be handy (or was that to block out Paul & Bruce?!). Getting to the waterfall was easy enough - now we thought we had better go in for a close up. So jackets on & hoods up, we clambered up wet rocks into the intense horizontal blast and finally under the waterfall itself. Wow - that certainly blew out the cobwebs! There was so much water coming down that Bruce, just metres away, disappeared out of sight wearing his fluoro rain jacket.



Kitchener River and Turnbull Thomson Falls (PHOTO Antony Pettinger)

On our return we decided to tackle the true right with its slippery rocks and the odd small canyon. Back at base camp we opted for an afternoon of leisure - first it was a beer from the fridge (several strategically placed flat rocks in the stream). We made reservations for tea at the 'Rock of Ages' bivvy. There we read magazines, played cards, and finally enjoyed a three-course meal.

All that was required on our final day was the relatively short 4-hour wander back to the car. When we asked Bruce for sunscreen, we were given three options. Back in Wanaka our hunger for real food got the better of us and we decided to head in for a Turkish kebab. However, plans quickly changed as we were met by one of the grumpiest Turks you've ever seen - he practically refused to serve us! So instead, our time was spent sitting in the burning sun eating burgers and ice creams from the place next door.

By Rob Lawrence, Paul Van Kampen and Bruce Bernasconi.

WILKIN – SIBERIA – YOUNG VALLEYS

April 18-22, 2003

Author: Jan Piggott

Published in Bulletin 630, June 2003

First stop, after the Alex Pie Cart of course, was a great night at Boundary Creek DOC campsite, a good one to remember for excellent flat spaces and not far from the road. With our full party of 5 we caught the boat up the Wilkin to Kerin Forks - a exciting ride with the river levels as low as they were, just as well the driver had been doing that for years.

The walk up to the Siberia has been flattened out and now looks a bit like a newly developed highway, but no-one was complaining when the documented 4 hours to the Siberia hut got down to 2 & 1/2, so only another hour or so saw us setting up camp below the climb up to Gillespie Pass, another choice camp spot to remember. And of course, with Judy's comforting words about any cloud "lifting" for our walk we were all feeling pretty positive.



Siberia Stream & Valley (PHOTO Antony Pettinger)

Day 2 saw us up with the frost.... after a freezing night for those on the edge of the fly, we warmed up climbing the grunt up to Lake Crucible, and boy was that worth it! Took us 5 hours return, (OK so we weren't as fast as you fit ones!) but the weather was sparkling and so was the lake, absolute magic and we still managed to make campsite up the hill before dark. A couple of hours up towards the pass there are some great spots for camping on the flats below the tree line.

As the good word goes the cloud stayed "lifted" and we had terrific views next day from the pass. We thought going in this direction in good weather was great and should have ignored the unencouraging comments from passersby to the nervous types, about how scary it was going to be; going down the other side coz it wasn't. However, we were glad to reach the river for a cool wash and drink. There is no water after leaving the campsite until you get down to the Young. Took the luxurious option that night and chose the hut and a swim in the sun, as we'd been told there were no campsites before the Flats where the North and South branches of the Young meet and we would have been too late to make it there before dark.



Young River, at the Young Forks (PHOTO Antony Pettinger)

This, however, is not true, there were" plenty of places we could have camped on the way down river after about the first 3/4 hour, but we weren't complaining about our soft night, and we still got out in the sunshine on the 4th day. Great time had by all. The famous firstnitefreezmg, false teeth freeing, foglifting, freakingout five.

Jan Piggot for Judy Wilson, Fiona Webster, Jonette Service and Ken Powell

ROXBURGH ROGAINE (NZ CHAMPS)

March 15-16, 2003

Author: Judy Wilson

Published in Bulletin 630, June 2003

When we saw the 24 hour Rogaine advertised for Roxburgh in March three of us (the J's - Jan, Judy and Jennie) thought we would like to give it a go. Rogaine stands for Ron, Gail and Neil, three Australians who decided they were bored with short orienteering courses and would like something more challenging. Rogaine's can go over 12 or 24 hours. They have nothing to do with hair loss. The Roxburgh NZ Championship map covered 210 square kms in the Millers Flat, Lake Onslow area.

On Saturday morning we were given THE map 1:50,000 and 20m contours with 72 control sites marked. Each control had a different points value, and we were given 24 hours to get as many points as possible. We were given two hours to plan and so with string we measured out our planned course length carefully and what was feasible for us to achieve. Then we were OFF.

Our planned route took us over Mt Teviot, along farm roads and cross country. The scenery was beautiful with rolling tussock covered hills and Lake Onslow. One route we took had us going over ridges and down valleys when probably if we contoured around or followed the stream we would have been better off. Mist threatened to come down and disorientate us so we were careful to aim for line features such as fences or tracks. Our planning included a meal and a few hours sleep and an early start again next morning. Many, however, stayed up all night to get that extra control and use the full moon. But some competitors found no controls during the night and looked like death warmed up the next morning. There were 39 teams divided into several classes. The winning team, Keith Murray and Aiden Craig found 51 controls. The 3 J's found considerably fewer controls but followed the course that we planned. For our trouble we came third in the Women's Veteran Class. Try rogaining. You can be as adventurous or leisurely as you choose, and it is lots of fun.

Judy Wilson for Jan Piggott & Jennie Pantano

THE EVEREST ANNIVERSARY

May 29, 2003

Author: David Barnes

Published in Bulletin 631, July 2003

It didn't seem right - the only club in the country with a scheduled meeting on 29 May 2003, and we cancelled. And celebrating the ascent of Everest in front of the television felt wrong. But what to do? It had to be Flagstaff. By the time these thoughts crystallised into action, it was Thursday morning and raining. An email that probably arrived too late for most people did the rounds, and eight people met at the Bullring at 8pm. The weather had cleared, although cloud was trying to occlude the few stars that were visible, and the fading moon wasn't due up for hours.

Because it's so accessible, Flagstaff's a place that can (and should) be experienced in all climates and at all times of the day. It's a great spot on a misty day, or in the snow. On this occasion, it was so dark that the immediate surroundings weren't the highlight that they'd be on a moonlit night but the carpet of lights that defines the shape of the city and its hills was spread out below us.

Twenty minutes of uphill saw us at the top. Symbolic totara and rhododendron cuttings had been taken up by three of the "oldies" tramping clubs earlier in the day and were attached to the summit pipe. My email had flippantly said "BYO rahksi" (the Himalayan rice wine. Surprisingly, Richard actually had some - or at least the Balinese equivalent. We had a couple of toasts of that, coffee, and whisky (not together), followed by the obligatory photos, and then we retraced our steps, pleased that we had done something.

(And we even got a mention in Friday's ODT - thanks Phil)

David Barnes for Richard, Tracy, Vincent & Rosa Pettinger, Rob Porteous, Peter Barnes.

TRIPPED, TANGLED AND TURTLED ON THE DRY WEST COAST

Date not recorded

Author: Paul Van Kampen

Published in Bulletin 631, July 2003

CRASH the large log broke under my feet; SNAP the branch I held onto broke too, ohhhh Nooooo. Backwards I fell feeling some negative Gs. Fortunately, I landed on my pack deep into bushes. HA, he's Turtled himself exclaimed Rob. With my feet and hands facing skyward I could do little to get up, I couldn't even roll side to side. Finally, after some ribbing Bruce gave me a hand up, thanks for asking guys, no I didn't hurt myself! Lesson learnt, always hold onto something with leaves!

Everyone asked the same question, why do you want to climb up Mt Marks? The simple answer was that I could see signs of a premo campsite. Finally, I had timed a camping trip with a full moon. We watched the golden globe rise out of the ocean from Tony's house before we left Dunedin. By 11pm we had enjoyed moonlit views on our travel to Pleasant Flat. Before bedding down on the concrete floor of the shelter I breathed in the view of Mt Hooker on a frosty night. The moon like a spotlight shone on my face in spite of the power crisis as I slept.

The early morning sun broke up thin valley mist as we drove out to Haast. An icy wind blew cold mountain air down the Haast valley out over the ocean. We quickly donned packs following a 4wd track into the bush, which led to a rock quarry. Finally, after much deliberation we went bush but where are Matt and James? We've lost them already! After a surprise visit by a Morepork we went back out to find Matt and James chatting to a DOC contractor and his dog who was waiting for a helicopter. Earlier we spotted his 4wd parked beside a log puller and steel cables. He was employed to count pests with traps. Only the traps didn't trap they counted, there's a word for these non-traps, I know counters.

So, the ridge I had planned to ascend was a good route and had 'nice' bush but so also was the ridge behind the quarry. Back along the 4wd track saw us at the quarry. With so much river gravel and boulders I couldn't see the point of blowing up rocks! Anyway, we strolled back and forth trying to find a point of least resistance, for goodness' sake it's 10am already, let's get in there! SMACK I got lashed across my face by a supplejack vine following too close to Bruce. Man, I got clobbered so hard my eyes are watering, no, damn my glasses got knocked off. Tony assertively told me "DON'T MOVE!" Hell, is there a snake or something about to bite me? No, I was standing on a canopy of plants and my glasses were about to fall into the darkness below, never to be seen again, well from my eyes anyway! Thanks Tony. Immediately I found clothing, Bruce had left me a trail, how generous.

We quickly learnt to keep the person ahead (or is that shaking trees) in view so there was no possibility of separation. We regularly called out to each other mostly from the middle point of the group to maintain cohesion, or was it so no one got shot by inept hunters? Trev followed

deer trails which followed the true right of a gully. At the top of the gully there was still no ridge, yet we were now descending!? The gully was in fact a fault line cutting across the ridge.



A verbal profusion from Bruce suddenly penetrated the peaceful bush F.. K, F..K, F..K, F..K, Ohhhhhh (pause, I can't think of a stronger swearword),

F..K, F..K Then Rob started pulling down his shorts. Bush fever is affecting our group! Later we found out that a wasp hive had been disturbed, Bruce was stung three times and Rob twice.

Gradually we gained height, finally the forest opened up and the sun came in. We had lunch under some large Rata trees and threw sticks at Bruce to gain a reaction. We were already exhausted by bush, which grew down and outwards like a hand continually on your forehead stopping progress. Already we had referred more times to a map than I had over the last six months of tramping.

Putting lunch to work we climbed steeply moving into silver beech forest. The deer trails were good with plenty of 'sign' but fallen trees and saplings made life difficult. All of a sudden, we found snail shells, lots of them, we were at the bushline, four hours from the quarry at sea level. Lovely views down to Jackson's Bay and Open Bay islands were available as we slumped in a small clearing for twenty minutes. Well, this won't get us to the top exclaimed Rev, I mean Trev, (spoilsport!).

It looked easy going above from now on, BUT we had to first clear the scrub-line, I couldn't believe it, the scrub was so thick we decided the going was better in the bush, crazy stuff! After gaining a bit of height and a few hundred metres we built fortitude to meet the scrub head on, or was it that the bush ended and we had no choice.

To get to the scrub we had to climb over a room sized rock which had two trees backing onto its rock face. Trev and Matt got over fine. However, Bruce, Tony and Rob all tried at once, sledge style. Bruce went for rock scrambling holding onto a tree limb, Tony climbed the tree onto the limb Bruce clung to, as it wobbled so did Bruce, his feet moved faster than a road runner cartoon, as he spat moss off the rock face. Cracking noises came from the limb while Rob of Tony and its branches pushed onto Tony. Finally, all three slumped up onto the top of the rock! After this James and I went individually, I risked a tree limb, which the others had tried to destroy, cracking noises were heard as I looked to the ground three metres below. I pulled myself up over the remaining two metres of rock above. James used his iceaxe (the only time it got used all weekend) to hook branches and rock holds alike.

I battled the front line of the scrub. I tried walking on top, pushing forward and sideways even jumping up and over for some floundering. I got that sinking feeling and fell down through the scrub to the ground to gain a whole two metres. My childhood came to my aid as I started crawling; excellent progress was made until I came to a boulder. With seven of us combined we forced through slowly. Forty minutes later we were past the worst but not a lot higher.

I had hoped there would be snow to melt for camping but there was only occasional frost and ice. We climbed the remaining 300m in an hour to find a lovely site 80m below Mt Marks on the summit ridge. James, Bruce and Tony went down to the tarns for water while Trev, Rob, Matt and I set up tents. The tarns were covered by ice and the closest tarn, perhaps puddle, was picked and drained of 19 litres of water. The poor tarn didn't know what hit it here on the 'dry' West Coast.

With much sweating and only 1 1/2 litres for the day I was dehydrated and when the water came, I gulped down a litre, the water was so cold I was nearly sick. In windless conditions as the sun set in the sea, we enjoyed views from Cascade Point/Jackson's Bay and Haast to Mt Cook. A four-course meal ensued as we watched a satellite move north parallel to the West Coast, stars appeared, some low on the horizon flashed like red and orange lights and boat lights appeared out to sea.

I noticed a change of lighting on the mountains in the Okuru and Haast valleys either side of us. Shadows turned to light and highlights turned to shadow, it was the full moon rising behind Mt Marks taking over after sunset. Beams of moonlight shone down the Okuru and Haast

valleys out to sea, finally the moon lit up our campsite and torches were redundant I enjoyed watching shooting stars fall toward the sea lighting up like flares as they fell into a layer of high cloud toward Australia. Bedtime finally called and we snuggled into the nice dry hollows each of us had picked out. With a Minaret, two Microlights and three biv bags there was still enough tentage to fit three more people in an emergency.

I woke to a beautiful red sunrise over Mt Cook, high cloud now covered the whole sky and the moon was a hazy blob toward the sea. A NWEr had picked up and a layer of lower cloud lay parallel to the coast 20km offshore, fortunately the high held it at bay. Over the following 3 days W- NW rainstorms pounded the West Coast while the East Coast recorded record May temperatures! Rob was up already and brought up another 19 litres of water from the tarn, I mean puddle.

We decided to climb over Mt Marks and follow the ridge I had picked out on the true left of Greenstone Creek. We reached the summit ten minutes from camp after a late 9am start. The view to Staircase Creek became another trip in the planning and the main divide stretched along the eastern horizon. Trev took a group photo, but his camera had other ideas swinging around with the wind, we all ran to try and stay in the shot! A helicopter arrived below us to drop off the DOC contractor and took less than 5 minutes to fly down to Haast. Before going bush we lazed in the sun on soft dry tussock eating and taking in the magical surroundings.

With no scrub we plunged into the bush after playing with three Kea. Old leaves from ten-metre-tall *Dracophyllum* trees (I thought they only grew as shrubs) made the ground slippery but we all got to have a closer look at the snail shells.

The ridge was steep and initially well defined. Later bush pushed us true left toward a gully; we alternated true left then right of the ridge taking the path of least resistance. Lunch was nice with lots of bird life including a Kaka, oh, and we got to throw more sticks at Bruce.

After lunch the going was unexpectedly steep with areas of bluffs to avoid instead of the easy triangle shaped lower ridge that the map showed. Now the fun began in the 'nice' bush the DOC contractor had described. Bruce used sliding techniques, with only a yell as a warning. Tony got skittled just like 10- pin bowling, STRIKE! Bruce swept Tony's feet from under him as they both slid into the forest. Next Trev got taken out and then Tony again.

Later Trev and I broke trail (literally) crawling and sprawling horizontally over thick ferns above a steep section. I unfortunately fell through headfirst but managed to flip over and grab a well-rooted sapling, so I didn't slide down the steep ground under the ferns. Trev thanked me for making an idiot of myself so he didn't have to! Often, we slithered under tree trunks, hands, knees, chests, backs even horizontally under supplejack vines. Wire like roots and supplejack looped over feet, arms and packs. I spent a few minutes at one stage just to untangle myself vine by vine. Matt even nearly hung himself from a tree!

WASPS!!! yelled Matt, we all tried to hurry down through the forest, but supplejack held us back. Later, another wasp hive was opened, the third for the weekend. I distinctly remember running down a clear area between two fallen trees seeing wasps around my head and in front of me, all blurred by speed. Pungas later slowed my descent as I crashed through the forest

like a plane doing an emergency landing in bush. Only Tony and I escaped the weekend with no wasp stings, although I did get a single sandfly bite in the 4wd as we drove home, and it was a real nasty bite! Bruce came off worst with about 8 stings.

I used supplejack vines to repel steeper sections however NEVER use supplejack vines as foot holds when down climbing rock faces. Despite carefully standing at the stabilising midpoint of the vine I didn't allow for swing in the opposite direction. My foot went skyward, and I like Tarzan swung on vines until I found the ground. Tony, I believe had a similar experience after an altercation with, you guessed it, Bruce. James to his credit was ready to catch Tony had the vines not held! A kilometre of flat forest saw us receive the added bonus of mud and creeks as we coasted out to the main highway. We stepped out of the bush at 3:40pm a full twenty minutes before the usual 4pm deadline, excellent!

A special thanks to those who drove. Thanks also to Bruce who helped organise the trip to a place I've always wanted to go to, especially with such a great bunch of people.

Paul Van Kampen for Bruce Bernasconi, Tony Malcolm, Trevor Deaker, Rob Porteous, Matt Corbett and James Griffiths

MILFORD MISNOMER

April 24-27, 2003

Author: Graeme Donaldson

Published in Bulletin 631, July 2003

Mosquitoes, river crossings, wet weather no accommodation - these were a few of the obstacles that apparently lay ahead of us on the Milford Track.

Thursday morning dawned fine and clear as we boarded the bus to Milford Sound and the start of our Fiordland adventure. A short boat ride to Sandfly Point and the end for most people but beginning for us (Milford in reverse). First day highlights included discovering a date of construction carved by a prisoner in the rock face during the tracks construction, Bell Rock - clamber under and stand up inside a large rock, the McKay Falls and the meeting of an interesting party from Auckland with accommodation on their mind.



Mt Hart & Mt Mackenzie, with Staircase Creek in the right background, Milford Track (PHOTO Antony Pettinger)

We reached our first night's accommodation, Dumpling Hut, very well-appointed including lighting in the kitchen. After tea it was down the track to visit the glowworms. So, lying in my bed that night after a very appetising meal I counted my good fortune. Few mosquitoes, bridge crossings, no rain, and a comfortable bed for the night.

Day two, and again a beautiful day. It wasn't long before we reached the Sutherland Falls. It was most entertaining watching fellow club members venturing behind the falls, our only disappointment being the person in the red underpants who failed to complete the task.

Climbing up towards Mackinnon Pass a steady flow of traffic passed us from the opposite direction dressed in a myriad of clothing. This high-tech equipment included boat shoes, jeans, cotton tee shirts, sandals etc. "If only I had packed some applications for the next Bushcraft course". Lunch was taken following a near death situation when one of my party was knocked over by a gust of wind (or was it physical fatigue) in the sunshine within sight of the pass and surrounded by beautiful mountain scenery.

Once on top of the pass we enjoyed the near perfect conditions exploring both the shelter and inspecting the Mackinnon Memorial.



Clinton River, below Clinton Hut, Milford Track (PHOTO Antony Pettinger)

The zig zag descent down to Mintaro Hut was enjoyable after the steady morning climb however the accommodation provided an unwelcome surprise. It was if as Gold had been discovered in the area "Every man and his dog was there, so to speak". The brave OTMC members spent the night on the deck and in and around other out buildings while the three in our party found a small corner upstairs.

Needless to say, the Auckland party commandeered a section of the downstairs area for their overnight accommodation. No bunks for them that night.

After an unsettled night for me it was day three and on to Clinton Hut. Off to a frosty start the track following a stream for most of the way. From the track fish could be easily observed lazily swimming in the sunshine. Two hopeful club anglers try their luck, unfortunately it was one nil to the fish. Clinton Hut was reached around 2.30pm for my party, earlier for other club members. This gave everyone a chance to relax and enjoy the sunshine and explore the

surrounding area. A meeting was held regarding transport arrangements for Dore Pass. Clinton Hut was my pick architecturally designed, excellent layout, surroundings, facilities including a flush toilet. Most folk retired early for these who chose the Dore Pass option had an early start however several musical snores ensured that sleep didn't come easily.



Clinton Valley from Mackinnon Pass (PHOTO Antony Pettinger)

Day Four and it was a short walk to Glade Wharf and our transport back to Te Anau and the completion of the trip.

Once again thanks to Antony Pettinger for the preparation in planning this adventure.

Graeme Donaldson for Cathy Mckersey and Tim Jowett.

LEANING LODGE – ROCK & PILLAR RANGE

June 21-22, 2003

Author: Roy Ward & Tony Timperley

Published in Bulletin 632, August 2003

After some time spent trying to work out how to fit our gear into two cars, seven of us eventually got away from the clubhouse at 8.30pm.

Around 10pm, we set up camp in the DOC carpark at the base of the Rock and Pillar Range. The night was clear, but as we pitched our tents there was a cool wind - strong enough that Roy had to chase his tent across the paddock before he had got any of the pegs in. Ever the optimist, Mike chose to spend the night under a sun umbrella! The stars were really brilliant away from the city lights, giving an opportunity for some of us to join our bovine friends and ruminate on the meaning of the universe.



The way to Leaning Lodge, Rock and Pillar Range (PHOTO Antony Pettinger)

The next day dawned clear and sunny with not even a frost, and a view of a sprinkling of snow on the tops. We left at a fairly leisurely 9 am. As we were leaving, we were told by a local woman that there is a cottage 100m from the back of the carpark, with sleeping and toilet facilities - this might be worth noting for next time. Our tramp started warm, but as we set off up the zigzagging four-wheel drive track (some of us cutting corners), the wind got stronger and colder. As it was blowing straight down the Strath Taieri we had to bend forward at 45 degrees going up the zigs, then lean backwards 45 degrees when on the zags.

After a steady climb, we arrived at the hut where a long lunch break, including lots of hot drinks, was in order after battling the strange experience of a cold northwesterly.

After lunch we got kitted up in all our warm and windproof gear. Paul, Bruce, Mike and Roy set out for a walk along the top. Paul had had some idea of going to Stonehenge, but the windy conditions made for slow, so we gave up on going that far, and first went to Summit Rock, then along to Big Hut. We still can't work out how there was some snow inside one of the bunkrooms, with no obvious way for it to get in. After staying in there a while, lamenting the lack of ping-pong balls for the table in there, we dropped down to the southeastern side of the ridge to try and get out of the wind a little (which worked to some extent) and headed back.

On the way we found several patches of ice - at the first one, Roy misinterpreted Paul's gestures to not go that way, and ended up standing on a sheet of ice - not standing for long, however! Bruce found some more ice covered in snow (a frozen-over stream) and executed a stunning pirouette while sliding down the stream, and somehow managed to stay on his feet. So, finding that frozen streams made very good slides, we tried some more out before reaching the hut.



Rock tors on the Rock and Pillar Range (PHOTO Antony Pettinger)

Meanwhile Tony and Jonette went on a shorter trip to the Summit Rock, continuing up the four-wheeled track to the ridge. Expecting to crawl on hands and knees once we reached the top, we were surprised that the wind was not only lighter, but also warmer. So, we had a very pleasant walk over a lightly snow-covered landscape to Summit Rock (which was scaled) with: extensive views in all directions. On returning to the hut there was still some light left, so

several of us went with our pieces of plastic to the nearest stream, and spent a while sliding down, until we'd put rather too many holes in the ice to be able to slide far without getting wet!

Just as it was getting dark, a strange coincidence occurred: we'd just made some jokes about the possibility of other trampers choosing to spend the longest night of the year here and arriving to find the hut full, when there was a tentative knock on the door! Tony opened it, ice-axe at the ready, only to find an anxious looking group of three: Steve, Susan and Ruth, who were expecting to find the hut empty. Being the kind-hearted OTMC members that we are we rearranged things so they had room to cook and somewhere to sleep (that is, on the floor), and settled in for the evening.

After dinner, Steve, Susan and Ruth taught some of us 'Take, Two' - a novel game with scrabble pieces, and Bruce taught us a really strange card game. The coal range was so smoky that we kept having to open the door to let the smoke (and heat!) out. The stars looked even better from here (although it was too cold to stay outside long), and we saw either a dim aurora or a reflection of city lights to the south. The ground under the tents on Friday nights was definitely softer and less lumpy than the mattresses were on the Saturday.

On Sunday, Steve, Susan and Ruth showed up the OTMC contingent by leaving early to get to the summit to watch the dawn. To maintain some credibility Paul, Jonette and Roy also went varying distances to see the sunrise of the shortest day, a sight worth seeing. The others viewed this magnificent spectacle through the steamed-up windows of Leaning Lodge.

Sunday was another clear day, and, with much less wind, was quite warm. We had brought two ice axes, so after breakfast, Paul, Mike, Fiona, Jonette, Tony and Roy went to find a place to try them out whilst Bruce had a snooze in the hut. Uphill from the hut, we found a drift in a gully which had a run-out that was not too bad (some rocks rather than a precipice!) where Fiona, Roy and Tony were taught self-arresting with an ice-axe by Mike and Paul.

We then went for a bit more exploring, sliding down some more snow and ice slopes. Just as we arrived back at the hut, Jonette announced that she had lost one of her gloves, holding up a bare hand to emphasise her loss. We all looked at her sympathetically as she clambered back up the slopes for what we knew would be a vain search.

Later, an enjoyable lunch was interrupted by Jonette who returned and demanded to know why the rest of us had not noticed that she had been holding her 'lost glove' in her gloved hand all the time!

After lunch, we gradually ambled down the hill, arriving back at the carpark at about 3 pm. We stopped at Middlemarch for ice-cream and were then back in Dunedin at a rather earlier time than usual for a weekend trip.

Thanks to Paul Van Kampen for organising and leading the trip, Bruce for being the other driver, Fiona for organising coal to take up to the hut (there is plenty left for the next trip), and the whole group for making it a fun and not too strenuous trip.

Roy Ward and Tony Timperley, for Paul Van Kampen (trip leader), Jonette Service, Fiona Webster, Bruce Bernasconi and Mike Brettell

HOLLYFORD VALLEY

May 30 – June 2, 2003

Author: Terry Duffield

Published in Bulletin 632, August 2003

When the first day of the tramp dawned on persistent rain with more forecast for the following few days, the fixed wing option to Martins Bay soon proved to be a non-event, so I suggested the option of a helicopter. "Won't fly in this weather" and "Not licensed to land there" were the immediate responses, but I made a few calls and found neither to be true. Our best plan would be to fly from Milford at a cost of \$155 per person assuming all twelve took the option. This involved a bit of car shuffling and was only a tad more expensive than the plane (a very good deal in fact and cheaper than the regular standby fare!) However, only our party of four seemed keen (go figure!) "You need chains on the Milford road" and "We'd prefer to do the trip at another time when the weather is better" were the reasons despite that (a) Milford hadn't seen so much as a snowflake all year, (b) You can never guarantee good weather in Fiordland and should always be prepared for rain and (c) Everyone would have gone regardless if the plane was prepared to take them. Herding cats would have been easier than trying further to convince the other groups, but we gave it another shot and, after failing to get their help also in shuffling our car, we left them to their own devices and headed for Milford Airport.

It was pissing down! The revised cost for a group of four was \$177 per person but the other guys had never been in a helicopter before and after a roller-coaster ride up the Sound, a speedy traverse of the coast and a banked turn onto the airstrip they all agreed it was well the added expense! Another bonus – we had left the rain behind and didn't encounter it again until the final day (poetic irony)

One hour later we were getting settled in Martins Bay Hut, truly the best on the whole track (not including private huts and lodges.) It was a bit late to think about going to Big Bay, so we settled on a pre-dinner walk to the point. There was supposed to be a seal colony here, but none were in evidence from the track, so we worked our way in closer. Rob rounded a boulder and came face to face with a seal. Hard to say who was more surprised but the seal recovered first and gave him the charge which he avoided surprisingly on legs turned to jelly. Paul watched the seal lurch away and was peering nervously around the rocks ahead. Suddenly, "LOOK OUT PAUL, BEHIND YOU!" - a well-timed practical joke with the desired result (his head turned so quickly that he almost suffered whiplash and he discovered a novel use for his shirt tail.)

Soon however we found ourselves wandering amongst the colony more or less at ease, snapping the odd photograph and taking care they saw us coming to avoid further incidents. Seals are just like big smelly Labradors with attitude!

We lightened our packs by having a huge meal that night (Soup, Cheese & Crispbread, Rice with pesto sauce and a monster mango and pineapple Trifle.) The log burner was very efficient and soon had the hut at a comfortable temperature; in fact, it proved too warm for Paul who

had difficulty sleeping even with his window open. If you were to believe the entries in the hut book this place was alive with penguins in December/January almost to the point where you couldn't walk outside without tripping over one of the little buggers, but none were in evidence at this time of year.



The plan next morning was to walk to Big Bay Hut and back, have lunch and then troop down to Hokuri Hut. This proved to be too ambitious an undertaking and we covered less than two thirds of the distance in patchy sunshine before turning back and, after lunch, set off on the Hollyford proper. The easy track brought us to the shingle shoreline of Lake McKerrow with Hans sighting three deer on the way. We completed the walk wire crossing at dusk, and then managed to lose the last bit of the track (well part of the problem was uncleared tree falls), adding an extra hour to our walking time as we backtracked and did a bit of lake wading.

Next morning, we hit the Demon Trail. I had heard a lot about this stretch (none of it good) but was really pleasantly surprised. Sure, there was a lot of uphill and down but it was hardly arduous stuff and had enough three-wire bridges to keep it interesting. Again, the tree falls were by far the worst feature of the track, some of them many months old (perhaps DOC's chainsaw is away being sharpened.) I allowed myself the luxury of dropping back and enjoying the walk without the torment of Hans' tuneless whistling (the sort of stuff you might expect from a depressed autistic, but certainly not a cellist in the Southern Symphonia!)

Anyway, about four hours later we had lunch in the coldest spot we had encountered the whole weekend - Demon Trail Hut. I swear it was warmer outside and would not have been surprised to find coolant pipes out back. Continuing along the track we crossed three more wire bridges before the terrain eased to boggy flatland with sparse markers prior to joining the Pyke River where markers were less necessary but more prolific. Getting a bit tired now (or someone moved the bridge further upriver!), also the rain was beginning to put in an appearance. Fifteen minutes or so brought us to the hut (or perhaps sauna might be more accurate - Phew!) and our first encounter with other trampers.



Swing bridge across the Pyke River, just below Lake Alabaster (PHOTO Antony Pettinger)

Now the rain really set in. All night it drummed down and was accompanied by thunder and lightning the next morning, but if we were to have rain then the final day was the best time and we had been really lucky with the weather up until that point. The walk out was just a manicured pavement akin to stretches of the Milford and we were at the road end in a little over four and a half hours where we waited a further two and a half for Ken Powell and Grant Burnard to arrive and give us a lift to my Camry. Well, that was the plan, but Ken's car refused to start?? Luckily three tourists happened along to view the Humboldt Falls and offered me a ride to my vehicle at the junction with the Milford Road where the helicopter company had dropped it off. All six of us squeezed in for the drive to Te Anau where we arranged the rescue of Ken's Corona.

That done, it was time for a Moose Burger and a well-deserved beer before hitting the road for Dunedin. Trip completed as per the trip card instead of getting bogged down at Lake Alabaster doing day walks.

Terry Duffield,

For Paul van Kampen, Rob Lawrence and Hans Van Ditmarsch.

MOUNT SOMERS

May 10-11, 2003

Author: Greg Powell

Published in Bulletin 633, September 2003

This trip was originally intended to be the North - South Temple crossover via Gunsight Pass.

The vans left Dunedin on Friday night and the weather looked promising. Driving up the Waitaki Valley we were treated to spectacular displays of wildfire up towards the Pukaki — Tekapo area.

However, when we hit the gravel road that skirts around the back of Lake Ohau the sky just opened up with torrential rain, thunder, and lightning. Just opening the gates caused a body to get drenched (our parkas were in the packs). We spent Friday night at the carpark, some in tents, some in the woodshed and some in the shelter.



Old coal workings en route to Woolshed Creek Hut, May 10, 2003 (PHOTO Antony Pettinger)

By Saturday morning the torrential downpour hadn't let up and the river had come up sufficiently to make any crossing unsafe. I was more concerned that the ice axe strapped to the back of my pack could be a very good lightning rod and cause melting polyprop.

Anyway it was decided not to attempt the crossover and we spent an hour over breakfast discussing alternatives.

After great debate Mt Somers was chosen as an alternative and we took a back route up the Hakataramea Valley, over Myers Pass, back to SH1 and then on to Mt Somers.



The original Woolshed Creek Huts, May 11, 2003 (PHOTO Antony Pettinger)

We reached the carpark about 3pm and set off for Woolshed Creek Hut, taking time on the way to view the old coalmine and workings. Woolshed Creek Hut consists of a trampers' hut and a musterers' hut side by side. Because we were the last ones there, we got the musterers' hut which we shared with a Canadian couple. However, this ended up the better choice because it had an open fire and plenty of firewood and most of the party ended up with us for a bit of socialising before retiring to bed.

On Sunday the party split up into groups and each went their various ways to meet back in the carpark later that afternoon. My group chose to return via the Bus Stop route which is one of the variations I had not previously done so I did get to see a bit of new country.

VARIETY is the word, which to my mind best describes this walkway. From beech forest to high country tussock There are manmade features such as the Blackburn coalmine (now closed) and many natural features such as the Spa Pool, Hydroslide Stream, the Water Caves and the impressive Sharplin Falls. Huts are comfortable with Woolshed Creek also providing a sauna just up the creek. Views along the way are spectacular with the Mt Somers saddle (at 1170m) providing a view of the Taylor and Old Man Ranges and the closer Winterslow Range.

Greg Powell for Barry Atkinson, Ann Burton and Antony Pettinger

ROCK AND PILLAR RANGE

June 21-22, 2003

Author: Jonette Service

Published in Bulletin 633, September 2003

We were able to leave town on the Friday night at the civilized time of 8 p.m., saying goodbye to Sandra who couldn't come. We drove past Middlemarch for about 9 km to camp at the DOC car park. This is off the road up a farm drive just before Lug Creek. On Saturday morning we walked up the zigzag 4WD track for three hours or so to Leaning Lodge, one of the club's huts. After the cold wind coming up it was good to find that the ones who arrived first had the billies boiling for a hot drink with lunch. Some flies which had been hibernating in the cold also found this good and woke up, so we had to keep lids on the billies to stop them falling in.

We were hoping for snow, but not too much to walk in. There was a little snow about, not much but enough to show hare tracks in places and quite a bit more in sheltered gullies. After lunch most of the party went to visit Stonehenge, a circle of rocky tors on the top of the ridge about 6 km away. This proved a bit too far for the time available, so they visited the club's other hut, Big Hut, and played in the snow on the way back. Jonette and Tony went up to Summit Rock and had fine views of distant mountain ranges and cloud formations. It was much less windy on the top of the ridge and not so cold.

Three Dunedin people arrived for the night as we were having dinner, making ten in the hut, and more players for cards. There was sleeping room enough with two on the floor but some of the older mattresses were very lumpy.

On Sunday we watched a fine sunrise. Later it was snowcraft instruction for some, on the use of iceaxes in self-arresting. We walked and slid in the snow near the hut for some time before returning down the hill to the car park.

Jonette Service for Paul Van Kampen, Roy Ward, Tony Timperley, Fiona Webster, Bruce Bernasconi, Mike Brettell

ROUTEBURN TRIP

August 2-3, 2003

Author: Judy Wilson

Published in Bulletin 633, September 2003

Nineteen adventurers left on Friday for the traditional Winter Routeburn weekend.

Eleven of us left late so after arriving at 1am at the start of the track, decided to spurn the concrete floor of the shelter and make our way in the dark to the Flats Hut. It was actually a delightful walk on the well-formed track with periodic walls of glistening glowworms attracting our attention. And it was very pleasant to spend what remained of the night in a warm hut.

The Falls Hut was reached early the next day. It is a splendid hut perched above the beech trees with an outlook over the valley and adjacent snow-covered mountains in your face. Sun streamed on to the full-length balcony and we felt as if we were in some expensive tourist resort.



Basin below Lake Harris, Routeburn Track (PHOTO Antony Pettinger)

Most of the group headed for the Harris Saddle and some attempted Conical Hill. The snow was hip to waist deep in parts and the frozen Lake Harris could be crossed - easily for the ice skaters. Treats were the snow, the tussock poking through, the frozen lakes and tarns, the sky and the silence.

In the evening the ritual Wolfgang quiz stretched our minds and each group thought they must be the winners. "What do you call the tongue like appendix which hangs down the back of your

mouth?” or “Name the seven wonders of the ancient world?” to “Who was the English poet who drowned off the coast of Italy and had his heart sent back to England?”

The fancy dress was won by Merv the mustachioed cricketer, with Karpov the chess master and Lance Armstrong the cyclist getting a mention. The weather was perfect, so it was off to the Lookout on Sunday morning before returning home. The track above the hut follows a watercourse and, in the shade, this was a sheet of ice with pockets of snow which made for an exciting ascent



Basin below Lake Harris, Routeburn Track (PHOTO Antony Pettinger)

On top the snow glistened with millions of diamonds and blinded us. The tarns were ice covered and were ideal for perfecting skating skills. Some of us defined a “geriatric limit” near the periphery of the frozen tarns. When on top the view was stunning - the winding river down the Routeburn valley, and wall to wall snow laden peaks. It was certainly well worth the climb.

The jaunt down the valley seemed routine after this but it was interesting to see where we had gone in the dark two nights previously.

It was satisfying to have all arrive home safely satisfied with a delightful weekend in the mountains.

Thank you to Wolfgang for his fun and expert leadership and to all the group for their enthusiasm.

Judy Wilson

TROTTERS GORGE

July 12-13, 2003

Author: Heather Deason

Published in Bulletin 634, October 2003

On Saturday 12th July, five OTMC'ers ventured into Trotters Gorge for an overnight social stay at the University Hut. After a strenuous 20-minute walk we arrived at a frozen hut that had a permanent frost for the whole of the winter surrounding it. The hut was pretty rough and rickety.

The lads (Gary, Matt, Bruce and Paul) decided to go for a wander in the hills surrounding the hut and with the day being brilliant blue skies they got great views of the area.



Otago University Hut, Trotters Creek (PHOTO Antony Pettinger)

A fire was lit late afternoon but was not much chop as the heat never arrived and the lack of firewood did not help matters. Matt made an effort to get the heat going by racing back into Palmerston for a bag of coal.

A late arrival in the form of John Cox happened just as the evening festivities were starting. The night consisted of huddling around the fire, having a few quiets and munching on homemade rocky road.

The next morning we awoke to a minus 7.9° at 9.30 am. We had lots of problems with the gas cookers and the cold. After breakfast we headed out and met up with the Sunday day-trippers in Palmerston for a scramble up Puketapu for a look at the views as once again we had another perfect day.

Heather Deason

MT COOK DAY WALKS

August 16-17, 2003

Author: Dave Chambers

Published in Bulletin 634, October 2003

With an unfavourable weather forecast ahead of us we set off to Mt. Cook, and to confirm our doubts we were given a spectacular display of rain, thunder, and lighting on the other side of Palmerston. Tea stop at Kurow, the weather had cleared and as we came into the town we could see a large bush fire raging in the distant hills. We had arrived at the shop just in time because as we received our last order we were ushered to the door, and it was locked behind us.



Looking towards the Sealy Range from the head of Hooker Lake (PHOTO Antony Pettinger)

Some of us stopped for fuel at Omarama (note for future van drivers, you can get from Dunedin to Mt Cook, drive up and down the Tasman Glacier and back to Twizel on one tank, just!) The weather remained clear until we got within a few km of Mt. Cook Village when a little light snow began to fall, and the closer we got the heavier it got. Matt's 4WD didn't even notice the conditions, but the van with trailer was having problems with traction.

At last, we found Thar Lodge, a four bedroom, open plan kitchen / dining room / living room, washroom with shower, has its own generator, inside toilet and can sleep fifteen quite comfortably with room for more on the floor - luxury!

After a good night's sleep, we set off to explore the area. One group went up in the direction of Mueller Hut and the others stayed in the valley and went to have a look at the Hooker Glacier, and to take photos of everything and everybody. One group photo took fifteen minutes to

complete once everyone's camera had been used. There were some people in this group that just had to throw snowballs, luckily badly and not many making their mark. We returned to the lodge to find that the others had had a successful tramp with two making it to Mueller Hut and the others having a challenging time on the same track.



Aoraki / Mt Cook (PHOTO Antony Pettinger)

Because we could drive right up to the lodge there were plenty of extras taken and that night there were some great meals prepared.

Next morning we woke to see Mt. Cook and Sefton set in clear blue sky, so we had breakfast, cleaned up (with the use of a vacuum cleaner), jumped into the vehicles and headed up the Tasman. With skilful driving and the use of weight distribution our van got to within ten minutes' walk of the road end, beaten by the icy conditions.

On our walk up to the Ball Shelter we were treated to the best of conditions and scenery that I have ever seen. We lunched at Ball Shelter and then went a little further up for a look around, then returned to the van and back to Thar Lodge to change and a final clean up before returning home.

More fish and chips at Kurow (Terry recommends the Works Burger), and we were back in Dunedin by 8:30 pm - a great trip.

Thanks to Matt Corbett for taking his truck and Terry Casey for driving the van.

Dave Chambers

SNOWCRAFT REPORT

August 30-31, 2003

Author: Not recorded

Published in Bulletin 634, October 2003

We headed off to Awakino ski field in two vehicles - a van and a 4WD. The road up to the ski field is, well, a ski field road. It is quite steep in places with a few bumps and a few tight bends and traction is not always good. The van did well but, alas, could not make it to the top under its own steam. We all got out and walked the last bit, coming back the next day to tow the van up to the lodge.

The ski lodge itself was very comfortable with a big coal range that heated the room and hot water. In the bunkrooms there was another fire, which was useful for drying wet clothes.



OTMC Snowcraft Course (Ice Axe and Crampons) (PHOTO Matt Corbett)

Day one was a lovely day but the snow was soft, so we practiced walking in crampons and kicking steps. We walked up onto the ridge and had some amazing views of Mounts Aspiring and Cook and the lakes. The windblown snow on top also formed some interesting snow sculptures. We descended back down a steep slope getting more practice moving around snow covered terrain before it levelled out enough for some fun glissading back to the bottom. The

sun was going down, and it was getting very cold. Most of us were wet from having collected quite a lot of snow in our clothes. It was good to head back to the warm lodge for a change of clothes (hot showers for some) and to warm up again.

The next day was colder, and the snow was well frozen. We went back up to the ski field and practiced self-arresting. It was a lot of fun once we got the hang of it. At first, we did it without crampons, then went for a walk up the hill again and did more of the same but with crampons on.

Thanks to Matt and Mike for a fun and educational weekend.

From Nicole, Deidre, Bruce, Fiona, Joseph, Tony, Roy, and the others (15 in all)

BEN OHAU WEEKEND

September 6-7, 2003

Author: Grant Burnard

Published in Bulletin 635, November 2003

The Ben Ohau Range, situated between lakes Pukaki and Ohau, is frequently overlooked by trampers on their way to the “sexier” Mt Cook area. Our group of three planned to do a little exploratory trip in the hope that this might be the start of more frequent club trips to the area.

There are a number of side valleys off State Highway 80, on the eastern side of the range, so our plan was to either go up one of these, camp in a saddle, and return down a different route, or, if conditions didn’t allow this, do two-day trips.

We left the decision on this until we arrived, so as to properly ascertain the snow conditions. After a midafternoon departure from Dunedin, and a tea stop in Twizel, we camped at Boundary Stream beside Lake Pukaki, having declined the opportunity to wander up the hill for half an hour to camp beside some tarns. (too dark) In the morning it was overcast and quite cool. We decamped and after a final peruse of the map in the car, we decided on a route for a day trip, which, in the light of the weather forecast (a front was due to come through in the afternoon) seemed the best course.



**Two Thumb Range with Lakes Tekapo (distant) and Pukaki, from above Boundary Stream, Ben Ohau Range
(PHOTO Antony Pettinger)**

Our route took us up a spur from Boundary Stream. It didn't take too long to get up into the snowline, and from there on a gently rising ridge to a high point. This seemed an ideal place to have lunch. There were grand views over the lake and over towards Lake Tekapo, and Mount Cook was visible in the distance, although the summit was shrouded in cloud. After lunch and a discussion on what the weather was going to do, we carried on toward another high point.

After a while I decided I wasn't up to doing much more, so Paul and Roy carried on while I had a sit down. Within a quarter of an hour though, they were back. Weather approaching! There had already been a few skiffs of rain/sleet, so there was nothing for it but to retrace our steps.



Boundary Stream road-bridge and Lake Pukaki (PHOTO Antony Pettinger)

That night we stayed at the same spot amongst the pine trees beside the lake, and just got tea out of the way before the rain started, which continued for most of the night. Sunday morning was cool again, and a light coating of fresh snow adorned the Ben Ohau hills, or what we could see of them. It was time for a change of scenery, so up the highway we went in the car and tried to suss out some possibilities. We eventually settled upon Twin Stream, near Glentanner Station, as a suitable valley for exploration. What was so distinctive about this place was the extensive number of slips which have occurred. Whole hillsides had crumbled, exposing the underlying soil and rocks. The three of us took it gently through there, not hanging around at certain points where boulders were perched precariously above our heads. We managed to get through without incident and found an old, no longer used, four-wheel drive track. This took us quickly up valley before eventually giving out to a distinctive track through the tussock, which became a cairned route when it came out onto the creek bed. The claginess which had marked most of the morning gave way to some dear periods and we had glimpses of the dazzling

whiteness of the upper reaches of the valley. Looking behind us, the lake stood out very blue. We soon got into the snow and scrambled up to just short of the top basin. Time, unfortunately, was against us, as well as there being possible avalanche danger ahead of us, so after some photos beside a frozen waterfall, we backtracked.

We took a higher route back to the car, avoiding the slips, but not entirely avoiding great stands of Matagouri. What we managed on this trip was only scraping the surface. There were a number of round trips we could do, and maybe a crossover to the Dobson. We left the area enthusiastic for a return trip, probably in summer though. (Just hope that summer trip list hasn't been sent to the printers yet)

Thanks to my fellow co-leaders

Paul and Roy.

Grant Burnard on behalf of Paul van Kampen and Roy Ward.

THE MOUNT COOK EXPERIENCE

November 16-17, 2003

Author: Deirdre Pim

Published in Bulletin 635, November 2003

So, what do you get up to at the weekend? The weather forecast was gale force winds, lots of rain and some blizzards. Would a tramping trip into Mackenzie country and beyond have interested you? An action-packed weekend with opportunities to see glaciers, ice bergs, frozen glens, swing bridges and roaring rivers as well as some keas flying over snowcapped mountains.

We all packed into a wee van and 4WD on Friday evening, thankful to stay dry while the heavens were opening all around us. Leaving Dunedin behind, a full moon guided us towards the never-ending town of Oamaru and glowed across the dams. A fire blazed on a hillside above Kurow and could be seen for miles away, we nattered for a while getting to know each other and soon arrived at Mt. Cook where the snow was falling, much to the van's dislike.



Novara Peak from moraine below Tasman Lake (PHOTO Antony Pettinger)

The Deer Stalkers' cottage lay in the shadow of Mt Sefton - not Mt Cook, Bruce!!! With bunkroom and a main living-kitchen area with carpets and curtains, it was not what I had expected at all. As the snow fell and wind roared, we all slept soundly and woke to a dull, windy, and cold winter's day. Mt Cook and Mt Sefton were hidden from view, so the group split

in two, one headed for Mueller Hut with ice axes and crampons while the rest of us took off towards Hooker Valley. There was crisp white snow underfoot like a blanket and we took photos of the landscape and of Nicole holding all the cameras.

We made it to the hut just as a blizzard fell so it gave Carmel and Dave time to demonstrate the use of foldable pannier toasters for tramper's cuisine. We headed on up to Hooker Glacier and Lake to see icebergs slowly drifting down. How small I felt in comparison to the size of the mountains surrounding us! Then back to the hut for another bite to eat and to add our graffiti to the walls of the hut alongside other tramper's names dating back to 1969.

On our return we watched avalanches fall off the mountains and fired snowballs at each other. Leaving our bags and the cabin behind we wandered down the valley to the Hermitage Cafe for a cup of hot chocolate. We returned to cook tea on the selection of gas cookers and the barbie. Then we played musical chairs in the search for something comfortable to sit on without a squeak or dodgy leg, and shared card games and the odd glass of wine.

Sunday brought with it blue skies and a heat wave. We headed off in the direction of Tasman Glacier in the van and 4WD. Through the mountains and tussock covered flats, over the lane, through the stony riverbed and up the old road surrounded by avalanche danger areas and old stonewalls - how did the van make it up that road?

We left the 4WD and van near each other and went off in search for Ball Shelter. Some of the pass had disappeared due to avalanches so we had to climb up and down the scree in search for it. The snow was deep and there were many snowdrifts in places. A hare's track was visible but ours were the first tracks of the day. The snow glittering in the sunlight, the deep red tin of the hut sank within it, the glacier far below carving away the mountainside, turning blue in the afternoon light and carrying pea sized boulders along with it - most likely bigger than your house if you were beside them.

From the hut, the toilet had the best view, to the left you could see the Tasman and Ball Glaciers meeting and surrounded by the Mount Cook range. To the right you could see the beginnings of the glacier lake, lots of scree and gravel piled high by the glacier, and Lake Pukaki's deep turquoise in the distance.

Rob, Ralph and I ventured up the ridge towards Caroline Hut to get a better look of the valley and behind. Fantastic view. After returning to the hut and cleaning it we headed for home, the snowman looking worse for wear and the two paradise ducks still hoping for a scrap to eat. Watching the golden sun sink over the horizon, touching everything with a radiant glow. Just a few sheep here and brown fields. Famous fish and chip shop again for tea before heading home.

Many thanks to you all for organising such a great weekend and making us all feel so welcome. Thank you to those who drove all the way there, roundabout and back again, and especially thanks to those who pulled the trailer.

Deirdre Pim

UP THE MAITLAND

September 20-21, 2003

Author: Gary Dawe

Published in Bulletin 604, December 2003

"You get much sleep?" I asked. "No", replied Heather. It had been a rough night. No sooner had the tents been erected on the shores of Lake Ohau at about 11pm when the winds blew gale force. Well, that's what it felt like and several times during the night I thought we would take flight like a flying carpet.

It was still blowing like mad when we set off at the start of the Maitland track and I kept nervously looking back at the van hoping it would still be upright when we got back. The start of the track was across farmland, steadily trudging up along a 4WD road. This gave everyone a chance to mix and chat before hitting the narrower track proper. Leaving the 4WD road you begin slowly descending to the Maitland valley floor, crossing two scree slopes almost straight away, giving us the chance for a bit of fun. Hitting the beech forest, the track rose and fell but was well marked and reasonably clear of windfall (by all accounts not a well-used track).



Maitland Hut (PHOTO Antony Pettinger)

Lunch at the Maitland River and a chance for everyone to regroup and sample others' offerings. I had just finished explaining to Phillip and his daughter about Bruce and his habit for

losing/misplacing something on every trip when the words had hardly left my mouth and Bruce walked straight up to us and said "Oh Gary I think I've lost my hat".. .cheers mate.

The next section was a bit harder to pick tip here and there due to old flooding etc. but after an hour of beech forest and a small river crossing, we came upon the Maitland Hut in a small clearing. After a rest, tents were pitched, some near the hut and others amongst the beech trees.



Barrier Range from the Maitland Stream track (PHOTO Antony Pettinger)

Terry, after urging Grant and Daniel, had already set off to make camp further up the valley. It would seem Terry was determined to make use of his two large bananas strapped to his pack, or were they some new age snowshoes? Wayne, Bill and I decided to see if we could catch them up and others went for a jaunt up the nearest peak while the rest stayed back and kept the home fires burning, which was much appreciated later.

The weather soon packed in so after meeting Terry, Grant and Darnel we returned to the hut, which was nice and toasty. That night was spent in the small but comfy surroundings listening to the usual strange and general hard-case banter that hampers tell, eating good food and watching Bruce (with a wary eye) who kept putting his arm around Heather saying, "This is what we would be like if we were a couple." Awoke the next day to blue skies and snow all around us that had fallen during the night, which completed our ensemble of weather patterns. Wayne, Bill, Maggie, and I took the chance to visit the peak climbed by the others the previous day. It was hard going with the snow quite deep, but the views were excellent at the top and the descent was great fun if you didn't mind a numb bum.

Back at the hut we signed the hut book before leaving and found Wayne's name back in 1984 on an OTMC Bushcraft trip and Doug Forrester's name in 1983!! The trip out was tiring with the scree slopes not as much fun as the day before and the 4WD road was no quicker down as hoped.

It had been a great weekend for Heather and myself and a big thanks to all that were on it – I hope you all enjoyed it as much as I did. Thanks also to James for the phone calls and snow updates.

'Til the next trip,

Cheers, Gaza

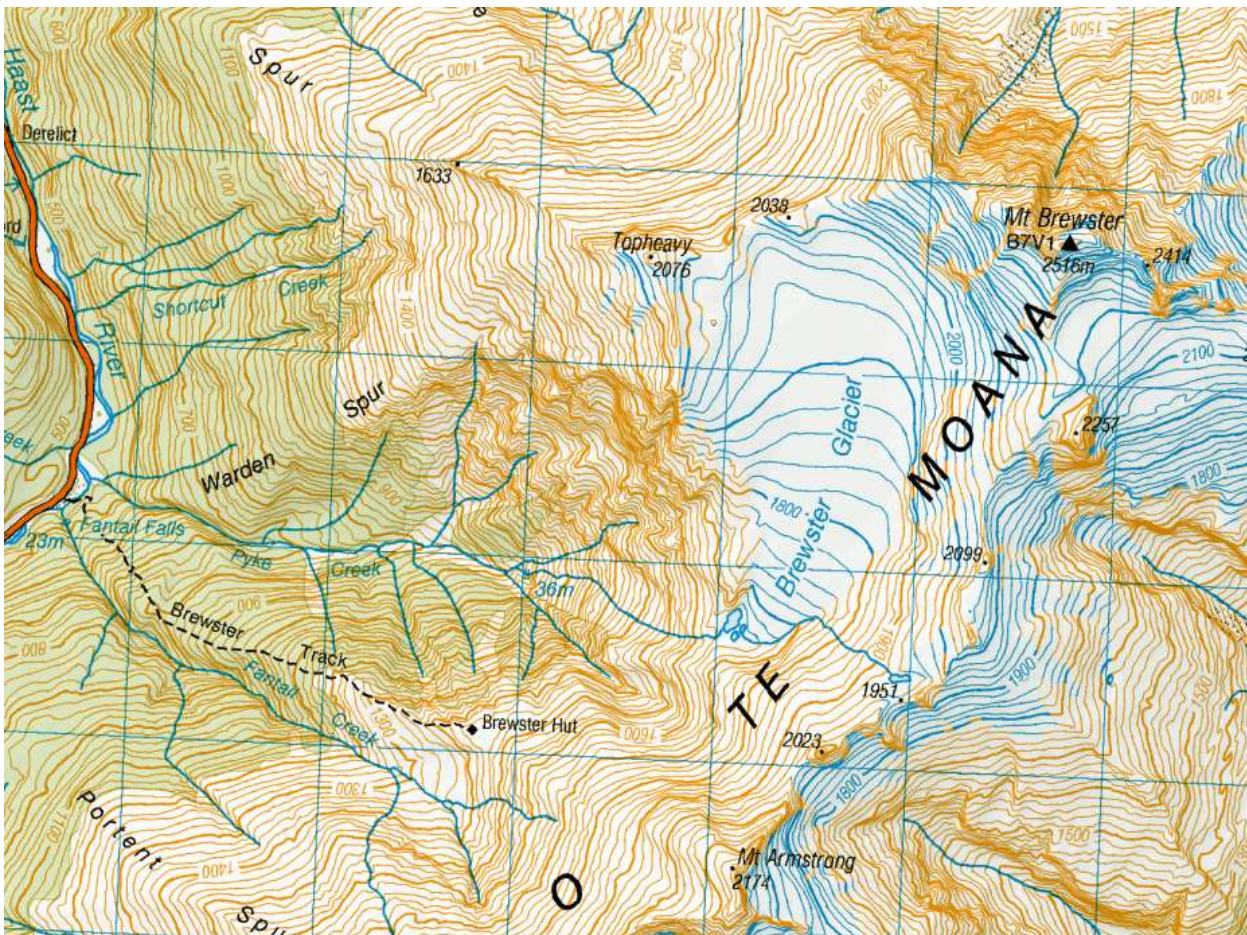
MT BREWSTER

October 4-5, 2003

Author: Terry Duffield

Published in Bulletin 604, December 2003

With oodles of snow on the mountains and uncertain weather prospects it promised to be an interesting weekend. The original plan was to take the van with trailer and one car (mine) but after two of my party called in sick (or perhaps daunted by the long-range forecast) the numbers were sufficiently reduced to manage with just the van and off we went with the customary stop at the Alexandra pie cart for dinner. Taking the back roads to Hawea we reached Cameron Flat before midnight and set up the tents - well most of us anyway. I spread out in one of the toilet cubicles, which was better than it sounds, and Rob Seeley took over the empty trailer. The weather was not looking good in the morning, however, it was magnificent! It took a while for people to organise themselves and by the time we arrived at the Fantail Falls car park it was a glorious day.



We crossed the river in our gumboots, stowed them on the far bank, then set off through the immediately steep beech forest. Things proceeded well until we emerged from the trees into the crappiest snow imaginable - even with snowshoes (which I had brought along for just this eventuality) the going was only slightly better. Rob Lawrence, showing his usual energy and

determination, scampered up the steep incline on all fours and was quickly out of sight. The snow conditions at this point cost us an extra hour and we arrived at Brewster Bivvy about 12:30, dug away the snow obscuring the entrance (it was up to the roof) and had lunch.

In deteriorating conditions, we dug out platforms for the tents then familiarised ourselves with the avalanche transceivers we had hired. One pair would bury a unit to simulate an avalanche victim and the next pair would go out into the worsening weather to find and dig it up. No problem until Bruce ("Butterfingers") Bernasconi dropped the sender unit down the slope! - it was found within half an hour. We made tea and, after deciding on a 5:30 rise, hit the sack and slept in. 6:15 - all the bad weather gone and another beautiful day.

A quick breakfast, squeezing cold feet into icy boots and we were off: a group of six to tackle Brewster and three to climb Armstrong. The straightforward sidle soon became a steep front pointing exercise (perhaps we had gained too much height too soon?) and the leading group (Rob Seeley, Rob Lawrence and myself) were soon faced with the decision of losing our hard-won elevation or climbing higher still to the top of the ridge. We chose the latter option and it soon proved to be a good choice as we were rewarded with the prospect of a gentle traverse to the base of the peak to the east of the glacier. At this point the other group could be seen topping out on Armstrong and the rest of our group progressing up the valley below the glacier.

Now things started to get very steep. We had to keep well left at one point to avoid a 5-metre corniced edge, then started up a 60 degree, crumbly, razorback snow-ridge. Everyone had turned back by now and Rob Lawrence, after taking a look at an alternative route up a snow chute, also headed down taking the rope with him. Twenty minutes or so later with the front points of our crampons in hard ice (and thinking the rope might come in handy at this stage) I finally ran out of climbing partners and followed Rob down to the hut. Going down was much faster, easier, and fun with much glissading.

After lunch and a quick tidy of the hut (the rest of the group had been long gone) we headed down and were back at the van in an hour and forty minutes.

Terry Duffield for Rob Seeley and Rob Lawrence

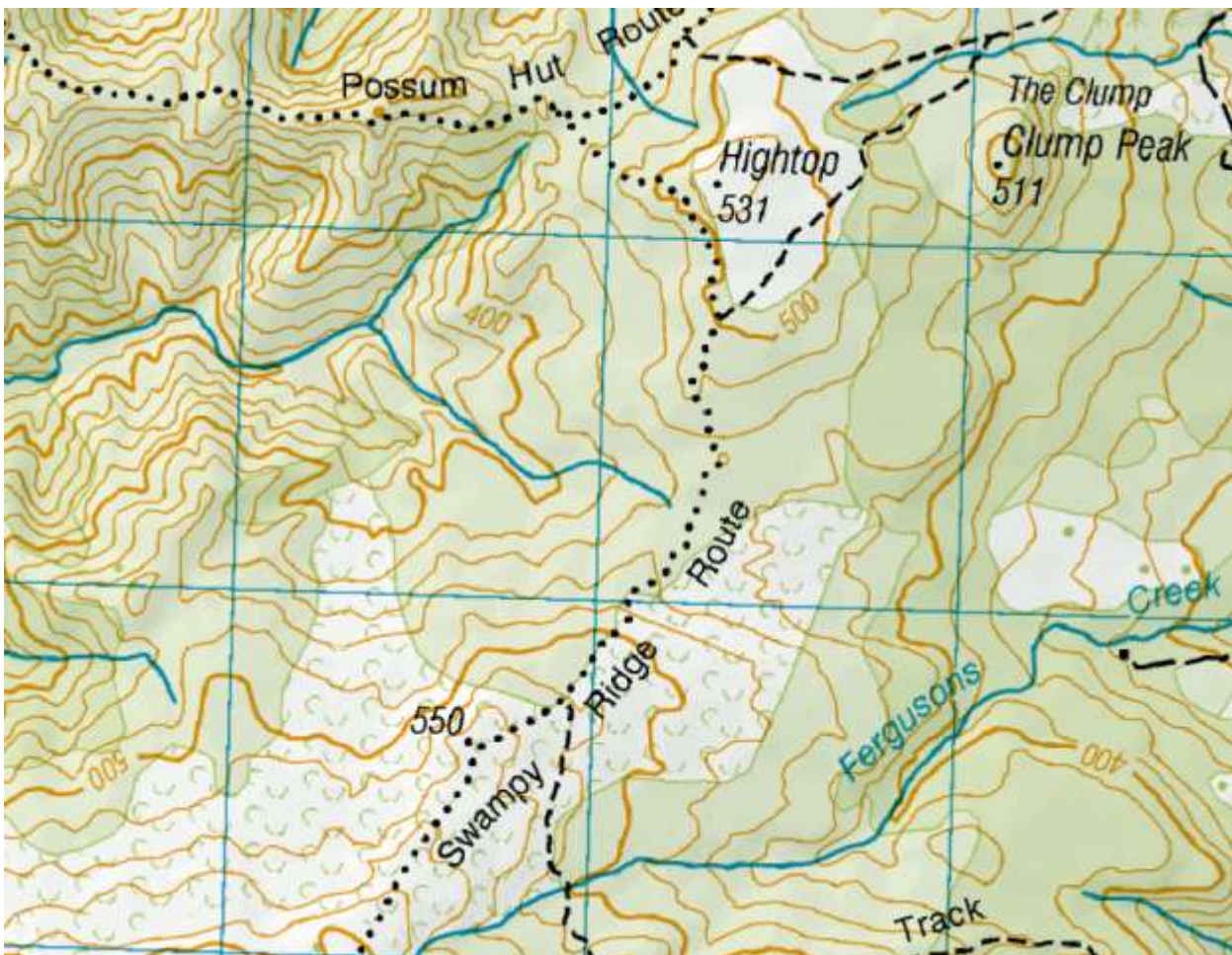
UNEXPLORED SILVER PEAKS

October 19, 2003

Author: Richard Pettinger

Published in Bulletin 604, December 2003

As in January, when I arranged a similar day trip, we would see who turned up at the Clubrooms on the day, identify a location in the Silver Peaks none of them had ever been to, and go there. The idea of masochists' trips in the Silver Peaks had had its day, it seemed, so I thought it time to establish a better, more pleasant theme. Everyone who had gone on the first such trip in January turned up this time, plus 5 others: a total of nine. It turned out that someone had been to all the places that were nominated, until Antony suggested the cluster of pine trees on the northwest flank of Swampy, below the Lagoon. This promised to be a place of great masochistic delight. I kept saying "Are you sure you want to go to this ridiculous place? It won't be nice." But they wanted masochism!



We made it to our destination in time for lunch and assessed the enormity of the task of felling those big trees. Someone will be busy! There are relatively few small ones, I think because the ground cover has been too complete to allow seedlings to establish. For several years, in fact. Well, the ground cover was certainly complete this year. Lovely friendly bush, this. Didn't seem

to mind you pushing it aside with your face, which is inevitable when you're on your hands and knees.

We then nosed our way (literally!) off the shoulder into Silverstream, crossed it, then scrambled through the more lush vegetation of the spur opposite, onto the Green Ridge track. Apparently there had been a popular shortcut track somewhere near there, once upon a time. Used by fools trying to get to Green Hut from Swampy about ten seconds faster than going through Sleepy Hollow, and assuredly risking a coronary on the hill. Well, it is always good to know when you are keeping a tradition alive. Insanity, that is, nobody seemed to suffer a heart problem. Just scratches and scrapes leading to skin conditions of epic proportions.

I was amazed at the ability of nine people, including some who really wanted a gentler trip, to move so fast through this type of jungle, AND retain a great sense of humour. It was almost sad to be heading back to town so early. So, some of the team diverted to inspect the condition of Semple/Mountain Road. In one of the mud hollow tank traps, we found a dead 4WD. It was quite new and probably in good nick and should be well-preserved in its mudpack. Beware someone trying to sell a modern wagon as-is-where-is, though. You might be swallowed up in the mire just trying to reach the door.

Oh, you know how someone has obliterated the famous historic groove on Green Ridge, and filled it in with soil and clay? Well, m. bikers have found this makes a lovely road. I'm all for a bit of insanity, but whoever did that work on a perfectly good tramping track that had survived 'til last year, is a very sad case.

Thanks to the team for a great trip: David Barnes and Antony Hamel (thanks for driving, guys), Wayne Hodgkinson, Philip & James Somerville, Jill McAliece, Roy Ward, Joseph Donnelly, Katherine Jeyes.

Richard Pettinger.

OTMC COMMITTEE (2003-04)

President – Terry Casey

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Website – Antony Pettinger

Committee – Ron Minnema

Property & Maintenance – Peter Mason

Bushcraft 2004 – Antony Pettinger

Immediate Past President – Alan Thomson

Hon. Solicitor – Antony Hamel

OTMC TRIP PROGRAMME 2003

Month	Date(s)	Specific Trip	Leader
January	19	Maungatua	Terry Duffield
January	25-26	Ahuriri - Canyon Creek	Grant Burnard
January	26	Unexplored Silver Peaks	Richard Pettinger
February	1	OTMC Silver Peaks Marathon	Committee
February	2	OTMC Picnic - Trotters Gorge	Committee
February	3-6	Tuatapere Hump Ridge Track (Mid-Week Trip)	Ian Sime
February	6-9	East Matukituki Valley	Antony Pettinger
February	8-9	East Matukituki Valley	Dave Chambers
February	9	Exploration Of Quarantine Island	Cathy McKersey
February	16	Practical Map and Compass Day	Antony Pettinger
February	22-23	Dingleburn / Timaru River	Ann Burton
February	23	The Complete Skyline Walkway (25 Years From Start to Finish)	Ken Mason
March	1-2	Bushcraft 2003 (Tirohanga Weekend)	Antony Pettinger
March	2	Peninsula Cycle Trip	Paul Van Kampen
March	9	Wine Tasting In Central Otago	Wolfgang Gerber
March	15-16	Bushcraft 2003 (Silver Peaks Weekend)	Antony Pettinger
March	16	Catlins	Deb Carr
March	22-23	Takitimu Traverse	Grant Burnard
March	23	Bushcraft 2003 (River Safety Day - Outram Glen)	Antony Pettinger
March	29-30	OTMC/Bushcraft Combined Trip (East Eglinton to Divide)	Antony Pettinger and Sandra de Vries
March	30	Hoopers Inlet Track	Judy Wilson
April	5-6	Welcome Flat - Copland Pools	Ron Minnema
April	6	Naseby Cycling Trip	Tony Malcolm
April	12	OTMC Pre Easter Social	Committee
April	13	Blue Mountain Tops	Ian Sime
April	18-22	Makarora Region	Antony Pettinger
April	24-27	Milford Track Backwards	Antony Pettinger
April	25-28	Milford Track Backwards	Antony Pettinger
April	27	Silver Peaks	Greg Powell
May	4	Swampy Cycle Trip	James Griffiths
May	10-11	Mt Somers	Peter Stevenson
May	11	Swampy Summit Area	Jonette Service
May	18	Skyline Track (Mt Cargill Section)	Jonette Service
May	25	Taieri River Track	Olive Neilson
May	30-2	Hollyford Area (3 or 4 Day Options)	Barry Atkinson
June	8	Mt Allan	Grant Burnard
June	15	Pyramids	Cathy McKersey
June	21-22	Leaning Lodge	Paul Van Kampen
June	22	Racemans Track - Powder Ridge	Deb Carr

June	29	Ship At Anchor #1	Antony Hamel
July	6	Middlemarch Area	Liz Keast
July	12-13	Trotters Gorge - Mid Winter Wine And Dine	Gary Dawe
July	13	Trotters Gorge Area	Gary Dawe
July	19-20	Kepler Track In Winter	Rob Lawrence
July	20	Berwick Forest	Ross Davies
July	27	Mt Watkin	Rob Seeley
August	2-3	Falls Hut (Routeburn) Fancy Dress	Wolfgang Gerber
August	3	Pulpit Rock via Jack's Track	Alan Thomson
August	10	Jim Freeman Track	Tim Jowett
August	16-17	Mt Cook Day Trips	Dave Chambers
August	17	Silverstream Water Race	Bruce Bernasconi
August	24	Nicholls Creek (The Hard Way)	Andrew MacKay
August	30-31	Snowcraft 2003	Matt Corbett
August	31	Racemans Track - Raingauge Spur	David Barnes
September	6-7	Ben Ohau Range	Ken Powell
September	7	Mihiwaka and Mopanui	Jacob Feenstra
September	14	Truby King Reserve - Huriawa Pa	Wolfgang Gerber
September	20-21	Maitland River - Freehold Creek	Gary Dawe
September	21	Maungatua	Rob Mitchell
September	28	Post Office Creek	Greg Powell
October	4-5	Mt Brewster (Climbing Trip)	Matt Corbett
October	5	Te Papanui (Tramping and MTB)	Ian Sime
October	11-12	Routeburn Track (Crossover)	Deb Carr
October	12	Wainakarua Scenic Reserve	Michael van der Hurk
October	19	Unexplored Silver Peaks	Richard Pettinger
October	25-27	Lake Hauruko - Hump Ridge - Port Craig	Greg Powell
November	2	Alexandra (Mountain Bike)	Rob Lawrence
November	8-9	Mt Peel Range	
November	9	Rustlers Ridge	Gavin McArthur
November	16	Silver Peaks	Wayne Hodgkinson
November	22-23	Lake Manapouri (Kayak or Tramp)	Mike Brettell
November	23	Racemans Track - Raingauge Spur	Peter Stevenson
November	30	Te Papanui Conservation Area	Alan Thomson
December	6-7	Borland Burn or Green Lake	Peter Stevenson
December	7	Berwick Forest	Grant Burnard
December	13-14	Silver Peak Tramp and Train	Antony Pettinger
December	14	Orbell's Cave	Tony Timperley
December	21	Swampy Area	Roy Ward

OTMC BULLETIN COVERS (FEBRUARY TO MAY)

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P.O. Box 1120, Dunedin.

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Bulletin Number 626 Jan/Feb 2003

President's Piece

Hello and welcome to 2003!
This is the club's 80th year, so let's make a good start. I trust that everyone had an enjoyable Xmas and New Year break and managed to do some Tramping, Climbing, Kayaking, or Mountain Biking that we can look forward to reading about in the Bulletin.

I found on the Radio today that Ian Sutton (MP) had set up a committee of very knowledgeable people to advise him on the rights of access for New Zealanders to traditional recreational areas. It appears that this action is because of a concern that in some places people are now being charged for access to areas that they have traditionally

(Continued on page 2)

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Bulletin Number 627 March 2003

President's Piece

Having just read a letter in the latest North & South Magazine from a Taupo lady who was commenting on the number of trampers/day-trippers on some of our tracks (the Tongariro crossing and Abel Tasman) and also expressing surprise at having to book to go on the Kepler, I then read an article in the February Wilderness magazine on the benefits of belonging to a club. Maybe the Taupo lady should join a tramping club. According to the club article she would gain the benefit of having information on places to go where there is less crowding, or the best time to tramp the "great walks" to avoid the snow in tall exposures.

According to the club article the three benefits of belong-

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Bulletin Number 628 April 2003

President's Piece

In writing this instead of packing the truck in preparation for heading up to the catcans at Blomberg for the weekend. We were up there last weekend and the weather was great, let's hope that it's the same for this weekend.

It sounds like the weather for the last few weekend trips has also been very good, so this is the time of year to make the most of the tramping opportunities. It's good to see that trips are being well supported at present as this makes the effort of organising and planning well worthwhile. And some of the areas that are being visited certainly show that we are privileged with the variety of scenery that we have on our doorstep.

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Bulletin Number 629 May 2003

President's Piece

Iwould like to extend a warm welcome to all new members reading their first copy of the OTMC monthly Bulletin.

The May issue of the Bulletin sees the new winter weekend tramping itinerary out, with challenges to suit all abilities. I always think the winter is the best time of year to trek in the wilderness, as there are no mosquitoes! We would be keen to hear from anyone who is prepared to lead or assist with organising a day trip.

The new Skyline Track is progressing well and is already proving to be a popular amenity for locals. A good deal of board walking is yet to be completed, however the track can be covered from start to finish with a little extra effort.

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OTMC BULLETIN COVERS (JUNE TO SEPTEMBER)

OTMC Bulletin
Bulletin Number 630, June 2003

Newsletter of the Otago Tramping and Mountaineering Club (Inc.)
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President's Piece

Hello, This week I attended a Track Users meeting at which a number of topics were discussed. First there was a presentation on the new skyline track by Ken Mason, then a talk from the President of the Mountain Bike Club, then a general outline of how the new OSH rules might affect volunteers. The majority at the meeting were in the retirement age group and these are the people who should be applauded for the voluntary work they do on walking tracks around Dunedin. Then there was a discussion on whether a 'Friends of the Tracks' committee or society should be formed to promote the interests of society.

(Continued on page 12)

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Conservation	David Barnes	454 4492

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OTMC Bulletin
Bulletin Number 631, July 2003

Newsletter of the Otago Tramping and Mountaineering Club (Inc.)
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President's Piece

Boyce - Last Thursday night, Robyn and I spent the night in a small stone cottage in St Bathans - I had forgotten what Central Otago forests could be like. We arrived about eight thirty at night and there was already a good covering of frost on vehicles and a white landscape the following morning which remained white up until lunchtime, when the fog lifted and let the sun come through. The temperature stretched the landscape - really cool. I managed to read some pamphlets on walks in and around Central and look forward to finishing a house warming project so that I can get back into tramping and go and explore some of the areas that I read about.

Cheers,
Alan Thomson

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OTMC Bulletin
Bulletin Number 632, August 2003

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P.O. Box 1120, Dunedin.

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President's Piece

Yes it's that time of the year again when you have the opportunity to be part of the next OTMC committee. This is your chance to have some influence on the general direction and management of your club as well as gaining some experience in the running of meetings. Being on the committee means that you meet once a month with a stimulating and intelligent group of fellow club members to ensure that the club is catering for the current needs of its members. Meetings take up approximately two hours once a month and the enthusiasm and humour within the present committee can make it quite an entertaining experience. Whoever has it that there is an opening for a bulletin editor so be in and keep up with what is

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OTMC Bulletin
Bulletin Number 633, September 2003

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P.O. Box 1120, Dunedin.

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President's Piece

Approximately 50 committee meetings and around 248 Thursday evening meetings as chairman can produce quite a number of highlights. Firstly there was the strategic plan which helps the club with its focus by giving us a reference document. Then there was the setting up of the Ben Radd Management Trust, and with a consent being put on this property last year it provides some certainty with the direction of management for this property. Then there was the donation of money for the Skyline walkway and the steady progress that has gone into the building of this project. And along with these has been the steady growth in club membership, the continuation of a very good and varied trip programme, the excellent publi-

(Continued on page 12)

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OTMC BULLETIN COVERS (OCTOBER TO DECEMBER)

OTMC Bulletin

Bulletin Number 634, October 2003

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

Another year starts for the club, with the new committee in place and territories allocated at Monday night's meeting, my first in the chair. For a small club we are fortunate to have the calibre of individuals representing the OTMC. The diverse range of backgrounds and the common passion for the outdoors equip us well for the challenges ahead.

I would like to extend a huge vote of thanks to Alan Thompson for his stewardship over the past five years as President. Alan would be the longest serving President in the history of the club by some margin.

Our congratulations go to Ian Sims, who was recently made a life member of the club. Thursday night meetings just don't seem the same without Ian in attendance and we eagerly look forward to his speedy recovery.

I would encourage you all to attend Thursday evenings and please feel free to invite friends. Wishing everyone safe and enjoyable tramping. Terry Casey

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Secretary	Jenni Wright	454 5061
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SAR Contact	To be advised	
Social Conveener	Flora Webster	487 8176
Property Maintenance	Peter Mason	455 7074
Bulletin Editor	Robyn Bell	476 7403
Conservation	David Barnes	454 4492

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OTMC Bulletin

Bulletin Number 635, November 2003

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

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President's Piece

Great to see Ian Sims back at last Thursday's meeting along with all the new first timers. Please continue to encourage friends and work colleagues to attend Thursday's meetings, its a great way to get into tramping.

Unfortunately the popular Roundburn Track (crossover) for October 11-12 had to be cancelled due to the depth of snow over the saddle, some three metres I believe. The Lake Hauko/Hump Ridge/Fort Craig trip over Labour Weekend should provide a challenge to those participating and may be the warmest weather of the last week be with you.

We are still looking for a S.A.R. Club Representative, should anyone be interested please contact me on 454 4592 after 6pm.

Did anyone tape the documentary "Do or Die" on TV One?

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OTMC Bulletin

Bulletin Number 636, December 2003

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President's Piece

Great to see so many members and first timers attending Thursday evening's meetings, a sign the club is in good heart. The ongoing success of the Thursday evenings is strongly influenced by the vast range of guest speakers from organisers. Our sincere thanks to Ian for the time and effort she puts into the social calendar.

A new tramping list has recently come off the press and we would encourage you all to actively participate in the activities. For many of us (myself included) that means making a genuine attempt to increase one's level of fitness. Make it an early New Years resolution - get started now!

I would like to extend my thanks to those members who voiced their concerns over the future of the club the OTMC owns, particularly the recent sale of Big Hut. We have taken on board your comments and will incorporate the valid points raised in any future review of the club's current OTMC ownership.

Wishing you safe and enjoyable tramping.

Terry Casey, President

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