

# OTMC TRIP REPORTS

## 2006

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Sourced from the 2006 OTMC Bulletins



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Cover Photo: Lake Fergus and Lake Gunn, West Eglinton Valley from the Livingstone Mountains

PUBLICATION PHOTOS Antony Pettinger

## **MAKARORA**

**October 1-2, 2005**

**Author: Gary Dawe**

Published in Bulletin 659, February 2006

On our arrival at Makarora early Saturday the weather, although windy, was clear. Travelling in the jet boat at speed we could see the Makarora and Wilkin Rivers were low and many possible crossing spots were sighted and pointed out for our return journey in a couple of days. The walk into Siberia Valley from Kerin Forks started off fine, but by the time we reached the hut the rain had started and was coming straight down.

After lunching at the hut, cabin fever had taken hold and myself and Kerryn Woods could take it no longer; donning already wet coats, hats etc. we splashed our way along Siberia Valley in strong winds and pelting rain. Having crossed and returned over the Siberia Stream it looked doubtful with the rain still pouring down that we would be crossing it tomorrow to visit Lake Crucible. The ever-cheerful Kerryn assured me tomorrow would be better and on our arrival back at Siberia Hut people were enjoying some dubious card/domino game that also involved something about a bus!! When the thunder and lightning started shortly after hitting the sack I just pulled the sleeping bag over my head and moaned.



**A frozen Crucible Lake, October 2, 2005**

SURPRISE!!!! The next day, although slightly drizzly, looked far improved and the Siberia Stream even looked to have dropped. After consulting with the group, we decided we would test the waters and have a look. Crossing the stream was no real problem and the weather kept improving. The track up to Lake Crucible carries on up beside a waterfall with lots of hand over hand which made for slow progress, but once up into the basin it was easy going. On our arrival we found Lake Crucible completely frozen over so no icebergs, but still awe inspiring as so often this country is. Add to this the occasional cry of a lone kea and the rumbling and display of the avalanches, not to mention the views, and it makes all the effort worthwhile. Unfortunately, we had to leave as we wanted to walk out all the way to Kerin Forks to our stashed tents so as to make the following day easier.



**Siberia Stream, October 3, 2005**

At Kerin Forks we pitched our tents under some beech trees beside the Wilkin River, and after a well-earned tea, we swapped tall stories and exchanged light signals with hunters staying at the Kerin Forks hut. Next day we walked out along the Wilkin, which we crossed twice so as to avoid the hillier true right, and again the Makarora, which was about crutch height (just enough to change the voice). Unfortunately, we never did see the farmer with the Unimog which sometimes picks up trampers and transports them over the Makarora.

So in all it ended up not a bad tramp and a big thanks to those in the group. It was a real team effort in choosing the right spots for crossing the rivers and was a lot of fun.

See you in the hills

Gary Dawe.



## JACKSONS BAY

**November 5-6, 2005,**

**Author: Greg Powell**

Published in Bulletin 659, February 2006

This is a really neat place to visit provided it isn't raining. It is quite a hike from Dunedin with about 6 hours traveling by vehicle, but worth taking some time off work to travel during daylight hours.

Friday night we camped on Jackson Road, which is the right fork in the road just past the Arawhata River Bridge. I had some business to complete in Central Otago, so I travelled alone and arrived during daylight to seek out a suitable camp site for that evening. There are some nice grassy spots, but because of the torrential rain most were pretty well waterlogged. However, I did manage to locate a spot about five minutes up the road which was gravelly and therefore well-draining. I put up a fly for the rest of my party who were about one to two hours behind me but got soaked in doing this so decided I would sleep on the back seat of my car. I was also concerned that anchoring the fly with tent pegs in gravel wasn't the most secure way of doing things. Fortunately, they held up through some pretty heavy rain and our party had a reasonably dry night.



**Crossing Smoothwater Creek, November 5, 2005**

There was light drizzle on Sat morning, but by 10 o'clock or so the clouds cleared, and the weather improved as the weekend went on. We parked our vehicles at the DoC shelter as there is more room and it is only about 10 minutes' walk to the start of the track. I should

mention at this point that even though there is a sign saying, "No Camping", the shelter itself would have been a great place to bed down for the night, being drier than in a fly and not as cramped as the back seat of my car.

The initial part of the track is an old road that was originally built when 20 farming families attempted to establish farms alongside the Smoothwater River. Fortunately for us trampers the swampy soils and the remote location saw all the families gone within two years, leaving the area in an unspoiled natural state. This part of the track is well marked and leads to the beautiful Smoothwater River. At this point you have the option of turning right and following the river to Smoothwater Bay (a nice day walk) or, as we did, turning right and follow the river to the next marker where Kakapo Creek joins the Smoothwater. The map shows the track on the true left of the creek but we seemed to make numerous crossing. I think Anthony (webbed feet Pettinger) was leading. Once leaving Kakapo Creek the marked route takes you on a short climb to the Stafford Saddle at 243m.



**Stafford River, November 5, 2005**

Once down from the saddle it is a matter of following a delightful little creek that feeds into the Stafford River, then following the Stafford down just over a km to the Stafford Hut. As the hut is on the true left of the river a crossing does need to be made, and while this was not a problem for us, it could well prove difficult in rainy conditions. The hut is comfortable (sleeps six) and has an open fire as well as some very risqué reading matter. After exploring around the hut and noting the remains of an old tractor, we moved downstream, re-crossed the river and set up our flies on the beach with the usual infestation of sand flies. Dinner consisted of pumpkin soup, venison with stir-fry and home baking. Then with this out of the way a roaring



fire was lit from the ample supply of dry wood on the beach. This reminded me that it was Guy Fawkes night and, what a shame, no-one had thought to bring fireworks. It would have been a safe and pleasant spot to enjoy a display, however we had to make do with the occasional shower of sparks as more wood was thrown onto the fire.



**Campsite at Stafford Bay, November 5, 2005**

Sunday dawned fine and clear with a light dew. The plan for day two was to return back to Smoothwater via the coastline. This was a complete change of scenery from the bush walking the previous day. There were a couple of points where we needed to venture back into the bush to climb over a spur, but most of the time was spent clambering over rocks or trudging through sand. Not a lot of wildlife present but we did manage to spot a penguin before it scurried into a rock hole.

There was one little spot that turned out to be something of an adventure with everyone getting wet from the neck or chest down (depending on one's height). Just before Smoothwater Bay there is a small bluff and you need to drop into the sea to pick your way around it. We reached it about 1 ½ - 2 hours after low tide and I don't think I would have wanted to wait too much longer before attempting it. It was great to see the parties helping each other and hats off to Pete Stevenson who crossed first, dropped his pack and returned to act as an anchor in the water in case anyone was plucked from the face by the outgoing waves.

Smoothwater Bay is a delightful spot and we decided to halt here for lunch and dry ourselves out in the sun. It was such a fine day that this didn't take long, however we had plenty of



time, so it was great just to lie around and laze in the sun. The Smoothwater is a really picturesque river and easy to cross. Rather than follow the bush track up-river we chose to follow the river and enjoy the sunshine. Eventually the river led us to the initial track that we had taken on the way in.



**Wading into Smoothwater Bay, November 6, 2005**

One group learnt the reason why it is important to keep your party together, when they left one of their party behind by dropping into the river without making sure all the party knew what was going on. The result was that one party member became separated and thinking one of his party was still behind him, rightly stopped and waited. This caused a delay of 3/4 of an hour at the end of the trip. Our group was preparing to put our wet boots back on and go looking when the missing member appeared out of the bush.

I recommend this area for an easy weekend tramp, however, be warned that the weather could make or break the enjoyment of the trip.

Greg Powell for Pete Stevenson, Antony Pettinger, Barry Atkinson, and Ann Burton.

## **SPIERS ROAD – DAVIES TRACK**

**November 20, 2005**

**Author: Richard Pettinger**

Published in Bulletin 659, February 2006

This trip has become a bit of an annual thing, to coincide with the regular picnic of the Ben Rudd's Trust. This year, though, the Trust decided against having a picnic, but that didn't deter those who turned up. Nine of us enjoyed a quiet walk over Flagstaff and a long lunch at Ben Rudd's hut. It was a nice warm day, but for some reason it got cool enough at the hut for us to do a bit of broom-clearing and just go home early. Nobody wanted hard enough to see the Rhododendron Dell. Fine, fine!



**Brockville and beyond from Spiers Road (track)**

The Davies Track, as always, is a real pleasure to walk. Thanks, Tracy for finding it. The native bush smelt lovely in the warm, damp air. It's still not a highway, so it tested Rosa and Naomi's route finding a bit. There's no litter. Just nice bush. Let's hope it stays that way.

Thanks for coming along everyone. I thanked Gavin for the use of his car by putting on a beer for him in our garden at home that afternoon – a fitting end to a great day.

Richard Pettinger, for Tracy and Rosa Pettinger, Naomi Peacock, Bill Richardson, Gavin and Janet McArthur, Judy Wilson and Bruce Johnston.



# KAKANUI PEAK

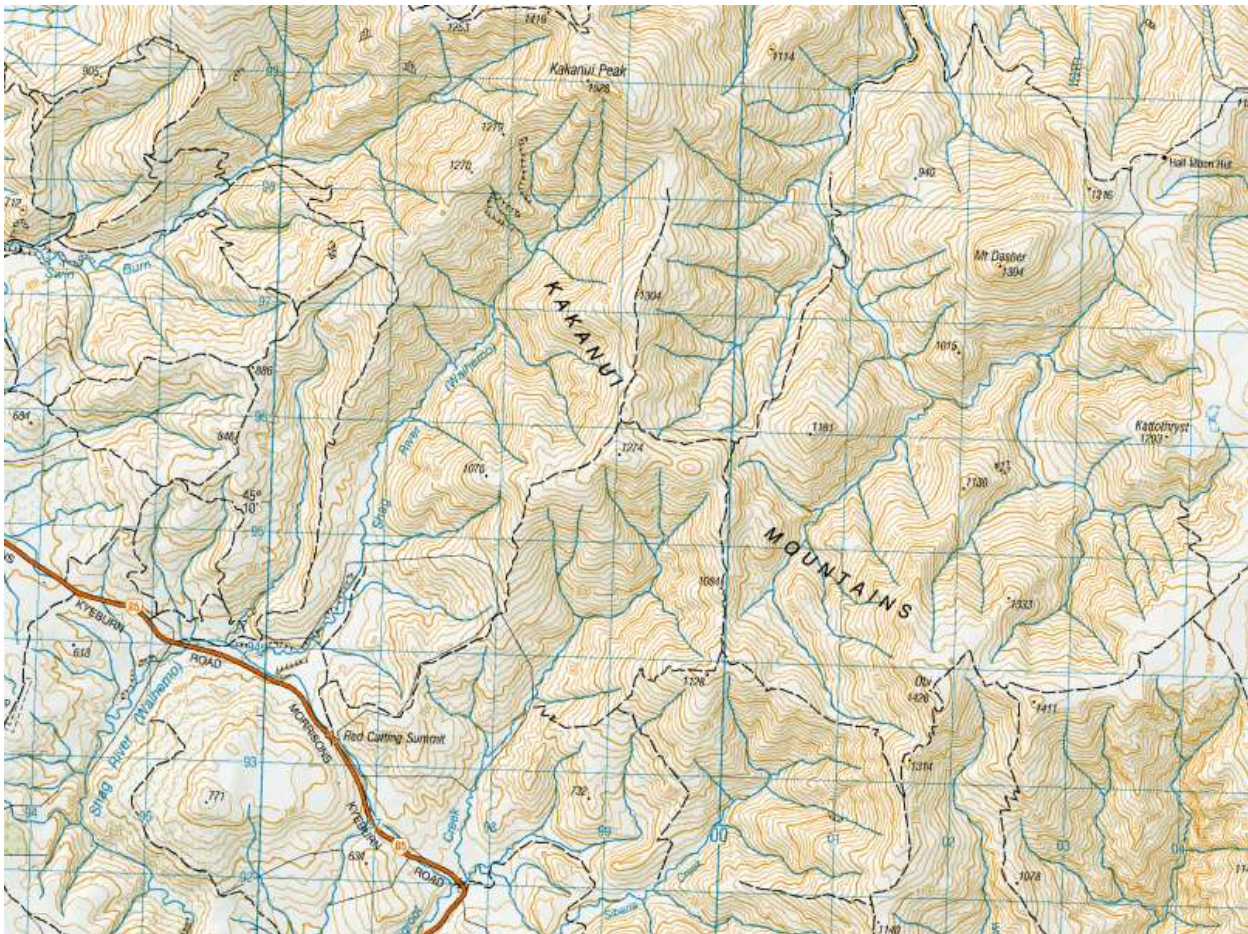
**December 11, 2005**

**Author: Gordon Tocher**

Published in Bulletin 659, February 2006

We set off under low cloud and into drizzle over the northern motorway, the optimists amongst us predicting much better weather inland. By the time we reached the Pigroot the sun was out and prospects for fine weather were much improved, until just before the summit when particularly menacing black clouds come into view.

The turn off we had to find was virtually invisible heading inland, so we chose to continue until it was absolutely certain we had passed it and then turn around and look very carefully for the minor 4WD track we would park on. This proved quite simple as Rob, David and Paul were now there, standing by their car gesticulating wildly.



We set off in bright sunshine, travelling up a fence line in the general direction of a long ridge which leads to the cloud enveloped Kakanui Peak, the first section was through tussock and Matagouri leading to a rocky 4WD / bulldozer track. Good progress was achieved, and we were soon able to look down on the valley floor and road well below. The drizzle and wind arrived, however we were heartened to see the ridge and valley we intended to come down were in full sunshine.



Lunch break was called just before noon, in the lee of a rock outcrop, during which the drizzle turned into rain, out came the jackets and off we went into the gloom. The next point of interest in the ascent was a couple of old sheds which had been part of a rudimentary ski field many years ago, the rope tow was still in place complete with rope. We were already well acquainted with the wind, but the state of one of the sheds bore testament to its force, the roof was intact about 5 metres from the collapsed walls. The other shed was in reasonable order except for one missing window.

The climb continued (take note if you do not like long hills, this trip is certainly not for you) until the track levelled out. The rain was getting heavier, the wind stronger and the visibility less. At this point the wisdom of attempting to find the peak off track and then fulfil our plan of returning to the Pigroot by the chosen ridge (one of many available) was in question. We decided there was no point continuing as we were well acquainted with the inside of the cloud and prospects for its disappearance were almost nil.

Terry's ability to walk happily through driving rain dressed in a merino singlet and shorts, when everyone else had jackets, hats, etc. on was quite surprising; in fact, anyone studying hypothermia ought to investigate his freakish ability to avoid the affliction in adverse conditions.

The descent was via the track until we got to the ski huts, where we turned off down another track into the valley we would have reached on our intended route. By this time the weather and visibility were much improved. We arrived back at the cars about 3pm marvelling at how utterly different the conditions were about 1000m higher, the grass where we parked was dry, and the sun shining.

In better weather this would be a great trip with excellent views but take plenty of water as you will not find any enroute.

Many thanks to Rob for leading the trip.

Gordon Tocher for Rob Seeley, Terry Duffield, David Barnes, Paul Rijlaarsdam, Francis Gallagher and Joseph Donnelly

## **GREENSTONE - CAPLES**

**February 4-6, 2006**

**Author: Allan Perry**

Published in Bulletin 660, March 2006

First thing is, "Thank you, Ray and Jill, for organizing the weekend".

My first thoughts to this trip are "will I or won't I go?" I had listened to many people on different opinions of this trip. It's taken a while but from this trip I discovered a trip is what you make of it.

Friday night we slept in the shelter at the road end. And on Saturday morning we climbed out of our sleeping bags early and got ourselves organised and going for a big day. Dave, Wendy, Sharon, and I were first away and didn't see the other party of six until after we had had lunch near the Steele Creek Bridge.



**Greenstone Valley**

A while before this we had heard a noise in the riverbed below the track. We stopped to look and were excited to see a fallow deer feeding on the river flats, and as we watched we noticed there were more. We watched until they became aware we were there, and when they bolted, we counted eight or nine of them.

All day we were noticing the bird life along the track. Each time we stopped the local robin would pop down and entertain us and became the subject of many photos. The little riflemen were nearly always darting from tree to tree following us along the track. Luckily for us we had

a secret weapon to identify birds and their calls. It turned out that Wendy had done a bit of study on local birds. By the time we reached McKellar hut our group decided a mattress were a lot softer than bed rolls and opted for a hut bunk.



**Caples Valley**

Sunday we were up early again, and once again we were the first group away to go over the pass. We rested on the pass, then headed down through the bush for lunch by the river and more entertainment from the bird life. It was then the long wind down to the Upper Caples Hut, where once again we decided mattresses would be softer than bed rolls and learned we were going to be joined by the Southland and Wakatipu Tramping Clubs for the night.

Monday was a quiet walk back to the car park and on arrival we had a difficult decision ..... dry biscuits and cheese for lunch, or lunch at Glenorchy Hotel. I will let you guess the decision, but it was unanimous!

Thank you Dave, Wendy and Sharon - you made this an enjoyable weekend



# **BIG HUT 60<sup>TH</sup> ANNIVERSARY**

**February 11, 2006**

**Author: Peter Strang**

Published in Bulletin 661, April 2006

It is hard to believe that Big Hut on the R & Ps has been there for 60 years. In 1946 the Otago Ski Club built this 70-bunk ski lodge near the summit of the Rock and Pillar Range at some 1300 metres, 1.2km SE of Summit Rock (refer Topomap Middlemarch 260 H43 812261.) It is the highest habitation within the limits of Dunedin City and there is no comparable hut on Otago's many mountain range tops. In the forties and early fifties it was the venue for large weekend parties of enthusiasts who engaged in all forms of skiing: downhill, slalom, jumping and langlauf. They climbed on foot to their ski grounds most weekends until they were lured away to Coronet Peak.

Big Hut is a unique structure. It was built to withstand gale force winds and snow cover for several months of the year. It has withstood 60 years of alpine conditions and today provides welcome shelter for year-round recreational activities: tramping, rock climbing, botanising, landscape photography as well as cross country skiing.

The Department of Conservation in their review of huts in the Otago region, recently suggested that this hut should be removed. That this could have even been contemplated, considering its history and the shelter it has provided over the years, was incredibly difficult to believe, but largely due to the prodigious energy of Bruce Mason, the Rock and Pillar Hut Trust was formed and they have spent literally hundreds of hours and thousands of dollars on the hut, repairing it from the bottom up: foundations, interior fittings, walls to roof, and it has been recently painted. It looks quite stunning. It is now able to accommodate 12 people but this number will increase when fire escapes are installed. The old "4 x 2 knock out a window" approach is not now acceptable! The local Middlemarch Community has been amazingly supportive both in labour and financial help.

Ongoing financial support is vital. Hut fees are now \$10 per night up from the nominal \$3 in times past, and you can also become a "Friend of Big Hut" by giving a donation of \$100 or more. If you have any queries talk to Pete Strang 03]4877478, phone (03)4473554, (03)4557074, email bighut@middlemarch.co.nz, or go to [www.middlemarch.co.nz](http://www.middlemarch.co.nz). Postal address is Rock and Pillar Hut Trust, PO Box 127, Alexandra. I cannot overestimate the importance of people paying hut fees...it just will make all the difference.

The 60th Celebration on Saturday 11th February went off incredibly well. As Ian Sime, Marion and I drove through to Middlemarch early on Saturday morning the weather did not look good and it was raining from time to time. The mountain was enveloped in cloud and it looked quite gloomy. Around 8am the walkers set off and the rest of us "arm chair travellers" spent time looking around the displays set up in "Bottom Hut" an old stone structure and shearers quarters on Glencreag Station which was the checking in point many years ago. I can remember leaving

my motor bike there some 43 years ago! Also it was a stopping place when we had walked from the rail car at the R & P station on our way up the hill, almost invariably at night.

Around 9.30 am the sky looked lighter and the mist was clearing so it was "all go". The nine-seater chopper arrived. It was an incredible experience taking off and winding up the mountainside ducking around wreaths of mist and searching for the hut. We could see the climbers below standing on a scree covered knob waving to us. Four flights later we had everyone up to the hut. Whereas down below it was a north easterly breeze, on top it was blowing from the west but only around 10 knots and fortunately it did not get much above that in a place which is incredibly exposed and renowned for some of the strongest winds and severest weather in the country.



**Big Hut**

There were scones (with raspberry jam and cream) and tea to greet us all on arrival, and we met some amazing people. Most memorable of all, Margaret Gilkison, widow of Scott Gilkison, and her daughter, Ann, were there. They read an excerpt from one of his books about this very spot. It was a journey back through time and a very moving one for many of us there. Scott, of course, was one of the most active OSONZACS, in the thirties, forties and fifties before his untimely death. He had also been President of the Club. His contribution to the Rock and Pillar enterprise was huge as were those of other Alpine Club members like Harry Stevenson who used his bulldozer to take some 38 loads up from Bottom Hut to the hut site. Much of the timber was carried up on people's backs.

There were also many older members of the Otago Ski Club present, some into their '80s and '90s. It was a privilege to meet these old campaigners and particular among them was Stuart Boyd, now 90, along with Royce Sise, Ralph Markby and Ian Pairman. These guys were involved in the building of the hut. Stuart was so keen to live the old experiences that he insisted on walking down later that afternoon. No mean feat! Murray Raffills talked of the move from Big Hut to Leaning Lodge further along the range in search of steeper slopes to ski on, but by the mid '60s the sound of the tows was heard no more as everyone had gone to Coronet Peak. Neil Grant from Glencreag station was also there. We all owe him much over the years, and especially for negotiating an easement through his property so that access can continue. It was a pity that the Department of Conservation were not there, as this was a gathering of people with a huge commitment to the Conservation Estate, and advocates for the new R & P Recreation Area.



**2001 OTMC Workparty at Big Hut**

A lone piper greeted the arrival of what in the end were around 60 people. I found it a very moving experience, and I am sure the ghosts of those old skiers and climbers from time before, who were possibly present in the wind sighing around the rocks, were greatly chuffed by our remembering and honouring them. You could almost hear them chuckling.

Time was all too short. Clouds and the ubiquitous westerly were building up and so we had to leave. I headed down on foot while Marion and Ian returned on the chopper. It was incredible to watch, as it seemed to almost fall down the mountain side and had people back at Bottom Hut in some 5 minutes or less! More time was spent reminiscing outside Bottom Hut in the afternoon sun, and there was a brilliant dinner put on in the Community Hall by the local



Historical Society that evening. It was a great conclusion to a very special day. It was sometime around 11pm when we finally got back to Dunedin.

I am indebted to Ian Sime for providing transport and companionship for Marion and me on the day. Bruce, Ken and Peter Mason, along with Fiona Lundy and other members of the Trust, deserved a huge vote of thanks for organising the day, and this was certainly given. It was just brilliant and a very significant occasion.

I was left thinking that we need to be very vigilant about how some things that are incredibly important to us, which are part of our history and in actual fact quite priceless; for some like myself almost part of soul, can be removed or taken away from us by a corporate mentality that only sees things in dollars and cents or in avoidance of so called "risk". Sure, we have to be fiscally astute and be aware of risk and so on. No one is doubting that. But there is something about respecting and honouring those who built places like Big Hut under conditions that we would just not accept today. It would just be "too tough" or "not sensible" and so on. There would be so many rules today and forms to fill in we would choke on the paperwork alone. Those old skiers and climbers would be struggling to understand what we are talking about and would find the present corporatisation of good government something beyond their ken. They would think we had lost the plot and any sense of history, regard, and what is more, respect for them, to possibly consider dismantling an icon like Big Hut. I think they would be absolutely correct in their concerns.

It is good to know that the other hut in the R & Ps, Leaning Lodge, in the shadow of Castle Rock, has been saved from demolition by another Trust, finding its initiative within the OTMC. Work has already started in bringing this hut "up to standard". What "standards" mean in the face of a southerly blizzard is a moot point, but they are just getting on with it. More on this enterprise another time.

Pete Strang

# GARVIES AGAIN

**January 2006**

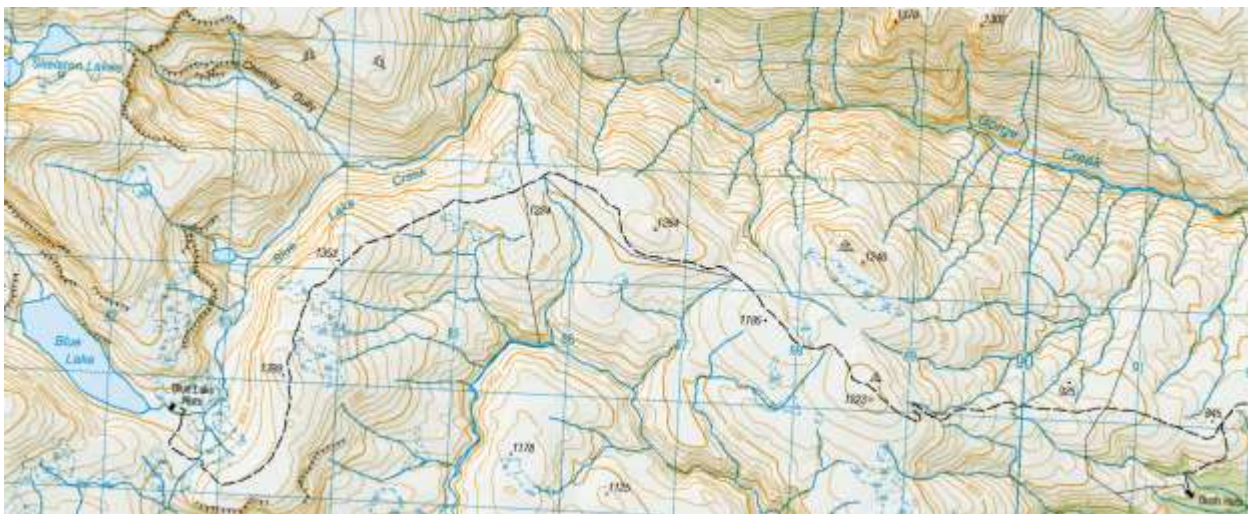
**Author: Ian Sime**

Published in Bulletin 661, April 2006

After I tramped for 3 days in the Kiwi Burn with daughter Elspeth and her three youngest children late in 2004, we agreed we should do it again. But because school finished late in 2005, it had to be early 2006.

In mid-2003, my reccy trip to Blue Lake in the Garvies with Bruce Johnston ended prematurely when my patella tendon tore within 30 minutes of our destination. So, there was some unfinished business there. My suggestion of our family going there was approved but going right in in one day was more than we could manage.

Bush Hut is much closer to the head of the Piano Flat Road, so we asked, and got permission to spend a night there. We thought of spending a night in Christies Hut at the road end to get an early start, but Horace Miller, manager of Glenarary Station told us it had recently been burnt down. Since Bush Hut is within four hours of the road, we decided we could make it right from Chatton (near Gore) in a day.



On a Thursday in mid-January, by the time everything necessary was done on the farm, it was 11 am before we got away on a fine day. Going up the road from Waikaia to Piano Flat we were slowed by meeting three large mobs of Glenarary lambs being shifted. However, we were parked under the large beech at the road end, and down the steep 4WD road to the massive (Canton) bridge over the Waikaia by 1 pm. Fifteen minutes up the steep zigzag to the west, we rested under another shading tree for lunch, before reaching Bush Hut in four short stages by 4pm. There is an old log cabin right by the bush edge, a store hut and a long drop.

Glenarary use the hut as a mustering base. It is a relatively new corrugated iron hut just past a small stream. One room contains eight bunks, while the main room has two more, a two-oven Shacklock range, open fireplace, Yunca heater, bench with sink, table with seating forms, and a

well-padded three-seater settee. A tank collects rainwater but has several pinhole leaks which continually spray water jets. We filled two water buckets to be sure. Two excellent chopping blocks and a sharp axe made splitting the good supply of firewood a pleasure. The range smoked, so we confined our cooking to our Optimus. The bunks have good mattresses, so we spent a comfortable night.

The morning dawned fine, so we made an early start for Blue Lake. The track tends upwards with a couple of steeper sections. By mid-morning a strong NW wind got up and continued all the way. After lunch the children went on ahead and reached the hut by 12.30, but Elspeth and I had a longer rest and arrived 90 minutes later. The stream ford was mid-calf deep, but the children found a natural bridge just 20 m or so upstream where they could cross with a small jump.

This hut is a much earlier one than the Bush Hut, probably not updated because it is not now regularly used by the station. Again, it has ten bunks, a Shacklock range, bench with sink, table and bench seats, and one armchair. There is no local fuel - not a tree in sight - just tussock and rock. And there is no spouting and so no tank. Water buckets are available to get water from the close-by stream. Again, there are a nearby store hut and long drop, but also the remains of a very basic stone hut which had had an iron roof but no sign of a fireplace.

But it does have a hut book since 1992. It features a few OTMC parties and individuals: Elspeth Gold, Josephine King, Chris Mansfield in Jan 1994, plus Paul Bingham on a mountain bike; Doug Forrester on two successive weeks in Oct that year, coming and going from different places; Lynda Jacket, Zena Roderique, Grant Burnard and Peter O'Driscoll in Nov 1996; Mike Floate with a DoC volunteer work party in Feb 2003; Ken Mason in April that year; and Bill & Diana Wilson in Feb 2004.

Once we were snugly settled in for the night, the weather followed a classic pattern; SW change with rain, and even, when we were in bed, a noisy hail shower. Then the rain stopped, but the wind continued and dried things, so that when I went outside at 1 am in my bed socks, they stayed dry, and the full moon shone in the doorway.

On Saturday morning it was calm for our walkout, and although cloudy at first, later cleared to be very hot for the final steep climb up the gravel 4WD track to the car. We took the camera over to record the remains of Christies Hut.

Ian Sime



## ROUTEBURN - ROCKBURN

**February 4-6, 2006**

**Author: Toby Eglesfield**

Published in Bulletin 661, April 2006

Following a rainy start in Queenstown, the evening turned pleasant, so we aimed to reach a rock bivvy halfway up the Routeburn North Branch. Once into this quiet valley, we passed through an area of blossom trees and ferns with butterflies in the evening sun contributing to the 'Garden of Eden' feel. With the light fading, we arrived at Hobbs Bivvy, which was large, yet cosy and hospitable.



**North Routeburn, looking towards North Col, February 3, 2006**

In the morning, mouse poo showed we weren't the only residents, and we christened the little fella - "Hobbs". Shortly after we set off, seven keas descended and took up places on nearby rocks. We later met Ralph from the OTMC and beneath some threatening clouds, made an apprehensive grunt up loose scree to the top of North Col. An impressive view from our elevation revealed Mount Tutuko, the giant of Fiordland. Acquiring Ralph as our unofficial guide proved useful; we were led an easy route towards Lake Nerine, sidling lower than described in Moirs. En-route, Jo took a scary tumble, thankfully managing to grab a boulder and stop her fall. With her spirits shaken less than the witnesses, we charged up towards Lake Nerine. The weather of North Col had given way to sunshine, and out of the wind we made our way, shedding hats, gloves and jackets.

Lake Nerine was a spectacle, perched in an alpine cirque with water brilliant blue, framed by huge rock formations and just a sprinkling of mosses and daises for company. The other two groups were camped here and we tentatively set our fly adjoining another that was set at a right angle to the main group.



**Looking across the smaller lakelet towards Lake Nerine, February 4, 2006**

I found some others who shared my masochistic love of swimming in alpine waters, so we took a dip in the Lake's smaller twin. Swimming around long enough to get 'comfortable' and take in the scene was a real treat. Ivan even managed to show us his bomb technique off an overhang. Some apre-swim relaxation preceded a twilight stroll to the outlet of Lake Nerine and stunning views across the Rockburn and up to the Park Pass glacier. Gigantic rock slabs below the glacier stretched partway to the valley floor, forming huge overhangs. Evidently, in its younger days the glacier plucked the lower reaches of the slab away and distributed them down-valley and beyond. With the jagged Amphion Peak to the right, and the pristine panorama of the Rockburn below, this view alone made the trip worthwhile. After dinner, rain sent everyone scurrying under flies and tents. Although the rain didn't amount to much, the wind blew through the main group of flies like a wind tunnel. Our expertly chosen (fluked!) position had paid off.

On Sunday, after a fogged-in delay, we took a warming clamber up the bouldery exit of the south facing wall. Experimental route-finding saw the three groups spread out, threading through bluffs for an hour or so. After this, our group elected to 'press ahead' across the pass. While I stayed back to keep the group together, we went too high on the ridge, taking a



gruelling route via boulders and scree whilst the other groups leisurely took the easy path below us. Baah!



**Park Pass and beyond to Hidden Falls Creek, February 5, 2006**

It was now a glorious day and the Tasman Sea was visible in the far northwest, and far down the Rockburn, a glimpse of Lake Wakatipu could be seen.

On the valley floor, it was Greg's chief task to find holes in the moss cushions that flanked the banks of the Rockburn. I got the prize by dodging one he pointed out, stepping in another and putting my arm into a third hole whilst trying to break my fall. From the nice, solid ground of the forest track, we took a short side trip up to 'The Rock Garden' to examine curious bonsai versions of bush foliage.

When we finally reached camp we were beat. We made dinner of pooled-in Backcountry Cuisine meals. - a delectable buffet of no less than six different carbohydrate types stretching our stomachs to capacity. This nutritionist's nightmare was followed by sweet dreams under a clear sky, with the pleasant murmur of the Rockburn and no more the buzz of the sandflies.

To shorten the last day, the groups tore-off down the valley at turbo-speed, which thankfully eased and we got a glimpse of a blue duck whilst filling water bottles Barry fell back a little and showed us the innards of a stoat trap. He told us that keas have been known to dismantle the boxes and bombard the mousetraps with stones to steal the bait.

Sugarloaf Pass – the third and final pass is sneakily not advertised as "The longest climb of the trip". After a lot of sweat, water stops and what felt like hours, the forest gave way to tussock and the top of the pass was reached with rewarding views over the familiar Lake Wakatipu.



The track down to the Routeburn was less steep, and with the sun shining from behind, the beech forest glowed gloriously. A moss-laden clearing by a small waterfall made an idyllic lunch spot. We joined the Routeburn about five mins from its start and rounded off the trip with a refreshing dip of the feet by the final bridge.



**OTMC members at the Rock Garden, Rockburn Valley, February 5, 2006**

My hopes and anticipation for this area were not let down. It's a very special, varied trip. Each of the passes is plenty different, the views awesome, and there's so much different terrain, with magnificent beech and alpine flora. The Rockburn valley is beautiful and spending a few days there to enjoy walks with a day pack would be a magnificent escape.

An additional map of wider surrounding area was useful for identifying distant peaks and ranges.

Thanks to Greg and the OTMC for making this trip possible. It was nice to see the rest of the crowd and meet a few new acquaintances too – hope to see you all again soon.

Toby Eglesfield on behalf of Jo Eglesfield, Beth Ryden and Simon Taverner

## **BUSHCRAFT SILVER PEAKS 2006**

**March 11-12, 2006**

**Author: Antony Pettinger**

Published in Bulletin 661, April 2006

Another successful weekend for the Bushcraft 2006 course this weekend saw nine parties of intrepid trampers converge on the Silver Peaks for the practical segment of the course.

The weather on Friday may have alarmed some people but we set off under clear blue skies come Saturday morning. A covering of cloud around lunchtime brought cooler weather, with the odd spot of rain encountered on the way to Cave Stream. Once there, a pleasant night was spent in two different locations.



**OTMC Bushcraft 2006 at the Yellow and Rocky Ridge Junction, March 11, 2006**

Sunday saw most people headed up the Devil's Staircase, whilst two parties went out via ABC/Yellow. A southerly blast showed vividly what we meant about the weather that can often be encountered on the tops, with many examples of layering taking place.

A badly sprained ankle for one bushcraft participant provided the leaders with an important decision to make. In the end we decided that the slow rate of travel up the Staircase (and knowing what terrain was to come) and the incoming inclement weather that struck on the tops justified calling on the Police for assistance. We had stopped on a suitable section of the



Devil's Staircase and arranged for a rescue. Within 90 minutes Lyn was safely away in the helicopter, and the rest of us completed the planned trip.

I cannot speak highly enough of all the leaders who took parties out via the Staircase today. We had two situations; one was our obvious concern for Lyn's twisted ankle and the other was the safety and comfort of the remaining participants who now had fewer leaders. The leaders on this trip all made a huge contribution to the very successful outcome that occurred and I thank all you guys for your commitment to the safety of the group. I also thank all who offered without hesitation to assist Lyn by carrying her gear (although Barry and I were quite grateful to the rescue chopper for taking Lyn's pack as well!). Well done team, in hindsight it has proved a very educational trip for all concerned.



**Helicopter airlift from the Devils Staircase, March 12, 2006**

The bushcraft course would not run without the dedication of club members - I would like to thank the following for leading a Silver Peaks party:

Ann Burton, Barry Atkinson, Greg Powell, Paul Bennington, Nicola Woods, Kerryn Woods and Wolfgang Gerber. I would also like to thank Deb Carr and Debbie Pettinger for their work in preparing for this trip – we're sorry you couldn't make it, but your parties were well organised.

AMP



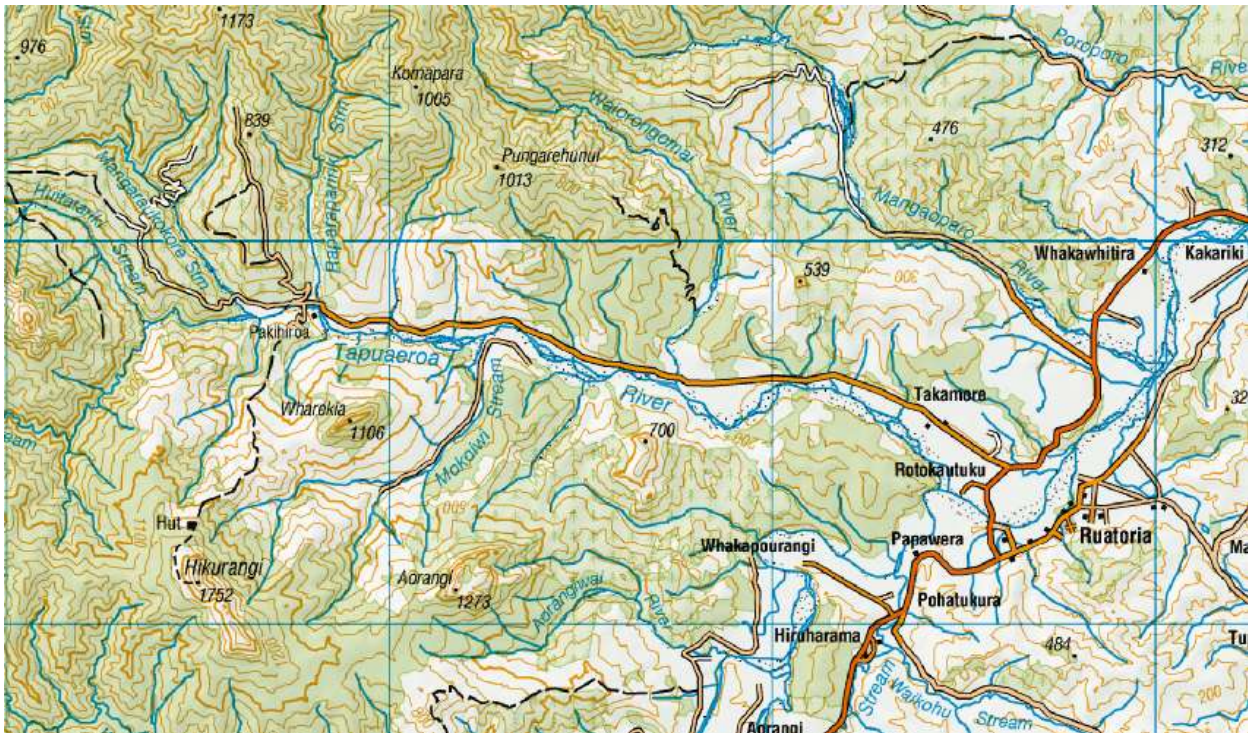
# HIKURANGI

**March 13, 2006**

**Author: David Barnes**

Published in Bulletin 662, May 2006

An FMC meeting in Gisborne provided an opportunity to head for the hills in a different part of the country and saw 9 of us (including fellow OTMCer Rob Mitchell) heading for Hikurangi, inland from Ruatoria. Being able to take 4WDs to 1200m didn't feel like cheating, as the route was up a fairly uninteresting farm track, but only having to walk for 15 minutes to the hut did. The mountain is sacred to Ngati Porou, and the carpark is the site of some amazing sculptures erected by them for the (year-early) Millennium celebrations. The figures appear to be modern takes on traditional Māori designs and represent Maui and his whanau.



After lunch, although the prospects of a view were slim, we decided to head for the summit. A steep burst up a regenerating slip led to a patch of goblin forest, which is always so much more impressive on a misty day. From there, the route sidles around the northern side of the peak. Rising winds and falling temperatures led to some talk of piking, but once we reached the gut leading to the summit ridge there was no turning back. A couple of hundred metres of airy goat track along the ridge, with a very inconveniently placed Spaniard to duck past, led the 6 of us to the trig, about two hours from the hut. At 1752m, we were making a detailed inspection of the interior of the North Island's fifth highest cloud.

As we descended the gut, the swirling clouds parted briefly to provide an extensive view of the waves of forested ridges of the Raukumara Wilderness Area. A quick thought was given to returning to the summit, but I think we would have been disappointed, as the clearance didn't amount to much.

The night in the hut was marked by great cuisine, and the highest concentration of Aveo-sleep anti-snoring devices I've ever seen. Some thought had been given to a very early start to return to the summit for sunrise (the first on the mainland – if you accept the North Island as 'mainland'), but it was obvious that the weather wouldn't favour that. A check was made at 6:30 to see if it was worth getting up for a consolation prize of sunrise at the hut, but the report was 8/8 cloud. So, we had an early return to the vehicles, removing a lot of bottles (not ours) and leaving an FMC Bulletin.

David Barnes



## THE EGLINTON TRIP (LIVINGSTONE MOUNTAINS)

**March 25-26, 2006**

**Author: Allison Coveney**

Published in Bulletin 662, May 2006

Well, Bushcraft 2006 is over for this poor little Australian and my legs don't know what to do with themselves.

After the Silver Peaks I could take on anything. Little did I know the Silver Peaks were nothing! The elective trip to Eglington was amazing fun and also a lot of hard work for these uneducated Aussie legs. But thanks to the patience and skills of our excellent leaders we all had a fantastic time, climbing and stumbling (mostly on my part) through the scrub, up hills, and over a lot of moss. My immediate team was Kerryn and Faye, but we were also lucky to be accompanied by Antony and Ann's teams and also (Rambo) Barry.



**Crossing Cascade Creek, March 25, 2006**

The Eglington Valley tramp, (near Milford Sound), was a two day tramp up Cascade Creek to the Livingstone Range, then up/down to the Key Summit, along the Routeburn Track, and ended at the Divide (where you are not supposed to camp).

On the Friday night everyone going for the weekend met at the club rooms at 6 pm and we headed off to all our various destinations. We stopped off on the way for some tasty fish and chips which were nice and greasy, and then made it to the "non official" camp site at about 11:30pm.



We woke up early and had breakfast, then at about 8am we all hopped in the vans and headed to our specific dropoff points. We were originally going to head up Mistake Creek, but thanks to Kerry's keen decision making, he changed his mind and we headed up Cascade Creek with the rest of the gang. Here is where this little Australian had her first taste of a river crossing (I couldn't make it to the other weekend). This was a lot of fun, apparently it wasn't very deep, but it did get up passed my knees at one stage which was enough for me.



**Head of Cascade Creek, Livingstone Mountains, March 25, 2006**

After a couple of hours of wet feet we started up into the bush which was fairly up hill - not the Devil's Staircase, but it was still steep. I had a little bit of a fall, but thanks to a really strong rope and fast-thinking Antony; I was hauled onto steadier ground, with a nice bruise in the shape of a hand to show for it. All was good, lesson one: take your pack off if the climb looks too hard, and listen to your team. I quickly got over that little mishap thanks to a mouth full of Ann's milk bottles, and we started up again ....up up up up up up! I have forgotten how far up we went but it was pretty much uphill all day for about 9 hours (we did have half an hour for lunch).

After lunch I discovered that walking over moss wasn't my most favourite thing, and also boulder mine fields are a great thing to avoid. Lots of "thank you's to Kerry and Barry for guiding us through that one, (and taking this poor little Aussie's pack for me). So after that ordeal we decided to make camp in the valley where it was really, really, really cold. It was so cold we all went to bed at 7 pm, and when we woke up some people had frost on their packs, socks and boot laces. I was sensible, (I know, amazing isn't it?!!) and put my pack and boots inside the fly with me, and I wrapped my boots in a plastic garbage bag. Fay's socks where so

frosted she had to put her socks around the hot billy to melt them so she could put her socks on. It was crazy cold.



**Bushcraft 2006 camp at the head of Cascade Creek, March 25, 2006**

After a quick breakfast we started up the valley and along the ridge towards the saddle, where we met another group from another tramping club, so we had a bit of a chat with them to see what the conditions were like and then we moved on.

The weather was amazing (for both days) - blue, blue sky with just a wisp of cloud wandering along the horizon, and thanks to this we had fantastic views with many a great photo opportunity. It seemed like the mountains on the skyline went on forever, with snow-capped peaks and lakes dotted everywhere.

We stopped to have lunch beside one of the lakes, and after lunch it was pretty much downhill all the way, which wasn't much fun for the knees. However, this little Aussie learnt quickly that if you walk in a zig zag pattern it isn't that bad. The only difficult thing now was trying not to think about how high up you were.

After about three hours of up, down, up, down, we stopped for afternoon tea and a few photos at the junction where the trampers track meets the tourist (Routeburn) track. It was easy as pie from there on, taking about 45 minutes to get down to The Divide where the bus was meeting us, and then we were out of there (on time), getting our tummies ready for more greasy fish and chips.

The trip was over, and with loving thoughts of a hot shower and a nice soft pillow, I wasn't too sad that it was, but proud that I had finished something I never thought I could do in a million

years. Thank you to everyone that made this trip possible and fun. It was excellent, and even though a few naughty words did escape my lips at times, I think I can truly say that this little Aussie is well and truly on her way to a tramping addiction.

Allison Coveney



# NELSON LAKES FOR 10 DAYS

**March 31-April 8, 2006**

**Author: Allan Perry**

Published in Bulletin 663, June 2006

After nearly a full year in the planning, the time was finally here. It was the morning of the 31st March, the car was finally loaded, and Dunedin was disappearing in the mirror behind us. The long trip north had begun and there would be many stops between here and Murchison, our planned overnight stop. Whilst enjoying our dinner at the local, the other group (Antony, Ann & Barry) joined us for their final meal before we parted for the night. They were off to Lake Rotoroa to rough it for the night, and we were off to a cabin in a local holiday park.



Lake Rotoroa, March 31, 2006

## Day 1

Last shower, sort packs and down to the local diner for the last breakfast I would enjoy for a while. Then we were off to meet the others and the water taxi that was to take us over Lake Rotoroa. By 10.30 we were unloading the boat at D'Urville Hut and starting our long walk. Funny, we were only a stone's throw over the lake from where we were going to be in nine days! Morgan's Hut wasn't too far up the D'Urville Valley but was far enough with the heavy packs. That evening the radio gave the grim news of what was coming.



**Dinner at Morgans Hut – L-R: Ann Burton, Sharon St Clair-Newman, Allan Perry, Ralph Harvey, Gary Dawe, Barry Atkinson, March 31, 2006**

## **Day 2**

The start of porridge breakfasts. On a training tramp a month before Sharon had come up with the idea of using dried apples to help hide the taste of porridge. Great stuff, it was working. George Lyon Hut (old Ella) was only three or four hours up valley, so we planned to be there for lunch. No sign of the others by the time we ate lunch, so we decided we would walk the track to the bridge over to Moss Pass to fill in the afternoon. On arrival we got the first taste of what the radio had promised and had to make a fast return to the hut where the others were taking shelter. That evening the radio again gave grim news for the next couple of days.

## **Day 3**

All gathered around the 8.30am sked to make a decision on the day's tramping. Not good, better stay put for the day. Group discussion and decided to forget Thompson Pass and go over Moss Pass to Blue Lake.

## **Day 4**

Should have moved on yesterday as it wasn't that bad. But it had been during the night. River well up, a lake where there was no lake yesterday, water falls where there was nothing yesterday and parts of the track were knee deep. We were staying put again and by early morning some were getting a good dose of cabin fever. Fatso was becoming everybody's friend.

**Day 5**

Rain stopping but tops fogged in - who cares, we were moving! Moss Pass has a steep climb from the D'Urville, but it wasn't too bad as we were soon on the pass with the fog breaking every now and then for some views. The Sabine side of Moss Pass has an interesting descent. I will leave it to the photo night for you to see. The descent to Blue Lake Hut was quick so we had soon dropped our packs and were off up to have a look at Lake Constance. The radio that night again gave bad news on the weather for the next few days. Tomorrow would be ok but Friday the rain would be back.



Sabine Valley from the descent from Moss Pass, April 2006

**Day 6**

Up early as our group decided we would get over Travers Pass ahead of the incoming rain. It meant we were in for a big day as we first had to get down to West Sabine Hut (three hours away), then over Travers Pass to Upper Travers Hut, (another six to nine hours). We said our goodbye to the other group who had decided they would stay another night at Blue Lake and headed off for our big day.

The tramp down to Sabine West Hut was quite easy and took a little under three hours, then came the challenge. The track climbed a little after the hut then followed along both sides of the West Sabine, and after a while crossed a side stream and turned hard left. This was the



start of the climb we were expecting but we had no idea how much of a climb was ahead. Not far from the bottom we met a trapper coming in the other direction and his last words to us were GOOD LUCK! We then found out why - very steep and no turns in the track, it just went on and on.

The view from the top was only fair with the top surrounded on all sides by rock walls. The view was better as we climbed from the West Sabine and looked back. Again, it's a short downhill to the other side where the new Upper Travers Hut is located, with a great view back down the valley. On reaching the hut we were quite pleased with ourselves; the whole days trip had only taken just under eight hours.



Blue Lake, April 2006

### Day 7

Once again, an early start as our plan was to get right to the start of the valley at the head of Lake Rotoiti, (another seven to eight hour day). The bad weather front had arrived through the night so it meant a long wet day in the bush was ahead of us. Cold Water Hut at the head of Lake Rotoiti was about an hour past the turn off up Hokere Stream, which was to be tomorrow's route up to Lake Angelus. It was worth the extra walking to spend a dry night in a hut and we would also get to visit another lake that was not part of our original plan.

### Day 8

Again it had rained all night so we weren't in much of a hurry to get going as it was only an hour back to the Hokere turnoff and 4.5 hours from there to Lake Angelus. And we knew we were going to get very wet.

As we packed we had no idea of the surprise we were about to get. As the fog lifted from the hills around us it became very obvious that it had not only rained heavily all night but the tops had received a good coating of snow. Yet another team talk - should or shouldn't we go as it was clear Lake Angelus was well above the present snow line. We decided to go as it wasn't that far and there would be plenty of time if we had to come back.

To our surprise, after leaving the bush line the climbing was not as hard as expected until well up in the snow where blizzard conditions slowed us to near crawl. Angelus Hut was a welcome sight, especially as the local DoC warden was just about to leave and had the hut Corker Cooker cranked up. And from the way he greeted us he was more than surprised to see us. The rest of the day was spent close to the fire keeping warm and drying gear.



Lake Constance, April 2006

## Day 9

First up for that routine visit outside was back in a hurry. Overnight the snow conditions had changed, it was now well over knee depth and strong blizzard conditions were coming and going. Team meeting again, but no need as we all had the same idea - "Let's get out of here while we can!"

It wasn't long before the safety of the hut was disappearing behind us and we could only see a couple of snow poles in front. We realized that teamwork was needed to get out of there. Once in front you soon became very exhausted punching footsteps or pulling yourself from a waist-deep snowdrift. The team effort worked very well, no one had to say anything and as each got exhausted the next just took over, we all knew our place.

Although the going was extremely hard, once we hit bush line we were off and were soon approaching Sabine Hut on the shores of Lake Rotoroa. It was straight into the hut, turn on the radio for the water taxi and ask to be picked up. Thirty minutes later it was all behind us as we were heading back across the lake and the only thought in four minds was hot showers at Murchison and Maruia.

To see more on this wonderful area come to the club night that is to be planned and see the hundreds of photos

Ralph Harvey, Sharon St Clair – Newman, Gary Dawe and Allan Perry, one group of the two that traveled to Nelson Lakes.



# HAPPY BIRTHDAY IN THE GARVIES

**April 1-2, 2006**

**Author: Tony Timperley**

Published in Bulletin 663, June 2006

It was one of those moonless but beautifully clear southern nights, with more stars than sky, when the advance guard of this Garvies/Blue Lake trip arrived in the McAliece's 4WD at the Whitcoomb/Canton Road end around 10pm. Two-metre deep wheel ruts (they appeared so in the headlights!) deterred us from driving on to Christie's Hut, so we pitched tents by the road, then contemplated the universe whilst we awaited the arrival of our followers. Our cosmic musings were rudely interrupted by the arrival of the Woods' vehicle and as they noisily set up camp. Their passengers, Faye and Angelica, were by contrast very well behaved.

Just as we were all settled in our tents and one person already snoring (he shall remain nameless, but hereafter be referred to as "The Birthday Boy"), Ian Sime arrived and set forth where the rest of us had feared to tread, to spend the night in the burnt-out Christie's Hut, or more precisely, in the still standing shed next to the ruins of the hut.

The next morning, April 1st, was clear and crisp. While we were breaking camp, Jill announced that today was her husband's 55th birthday and although someone muttered "Congratulations, Birthday Boy", the significance of the two dates coinciding was lost to us all as we continued to pack our rucksacks. Ian, of course, had packed his long before and set off early for Bush Hut. The rest set off soon after, except for Tony who followed 15 minutes later, as usual.

The track to Blue Lake starts by dropping down to the Waikaia River then climbs steeply for 200 metres to a fenceline. The frontrunners rested here, naturally, allowing the late leavers to catch up before starting the rest of the 1000 metre steady climb over rolling tussock country.

At 845 metres Ian wisely parted company with the other nine members of the expedition and sidled gently down to Bush Hut. This hut can be viewed from many points on the climb to 1399 metres, and as we toiled upwards on a hot and windless day the rest of us frequently envied Ian as we looked back and imagined him taking an afternoon nap. (What was he doing besides taking a nap? On good authority, namely Ian himself, we have it that he found a beautiful axe which was a bushman's dream, and so with consummate ease he was able to chop a plentiful supply of firewood.)

Meanwhile, the rest of us trudged on until midday when our collective fatigue and hunger called us to a halt in the shade of a large rock tor. During our masticatings, one of the party, whose mind was working at a faster rate than the rest of us, came out with the revelation, "Today is April Fools' Day." Before the rest of us could put two and two together "Birthday Boy" (he has a large moustache) quickly reminded us that as it was past midday it was too late to play any pranks. So we all had a nap.

Fully refreshed, or so we thought, we continued our ascent but with recovery stops getting more and more frequent. By mid-afternoon most of us were down to our last drops of water

(there is no water by the track between the Waikaia and Blue Lake), and were gasping at one of our many stops, when lo and behold, Trish pulled out a full three-litre bottle from her pack! We were all more than willing to help her lighten her load! This was just the boost we needed to reach our 1399 metre high point (a couple of group members did a one-metre standing high jump, with packs, just to say they reached 1400 metres!) before dropping down to Blue Lake and the hut. We all had a relaxing late afternoon with lots of nibbles washed down with copious mugs of tea – all except Diana, an erstwhile mountain runner, who went bounding up a ridge above the lake.

The evening meal was a real treat, as admirable and devoted spouse Jill had lugged up a birthday cake complete with "Happy Birthday" candles for her "Birthday Boy" (the guy who's a builder and drives a large 4WD). He was even more pleased with his present of Kerryn and the two had to be prised apart so that "Birthday Boy" could share out his cake.

Despite the previous night's revelries, on Sunday we were up and away at a decent hour, except Tony who left 20 minutes later than everyone else, as usual. Whereas the slog up had taken seven to eight hours, the jog down took half that time. There was also a slight cooling breeze which made traveling very pleasant. Consequently we were able to have lunch on the Waikaia River bank. This was lethargy-inducing, so much so that the rest of the group managed to blackmail "Birthday Boy" and his "toy" Kerryn to climb the final stretch of track up from the river and return with the 4WD to ferry us to the road end.

Here we were reunited with Ian (we had collected his note at the point 845 track junction) who informed us that he had been kept entertained by fourteen 4WDs from the North Otago 4WD Club assembling for a drive over the Old Man Range to Alexandra. We dispersed, taking more conventional routes back to Dunedin, although Ian took Tony and Diana through some back roads via Waikaia to Edievale and Lawrence to Lee Stream via Lake Mahinerangi. What we previously didn't know about the South Otago back-country we certainly know now! Thanks, Ian.

Tony Timperley (with artistic license) for: Ray & Jill McAliece, Trish Saunders, Kerryn & Nicola Woods, Faye Brock, Diana Munster, Angelica Treschl, and Ian Sime.

## **SCOTT – DEATH – KAY – CAPLES – FRASER – EMILY - ROUTEBURN**

**April 14-17, 2006**

**Author: Rob Porteous**

Published in Bulletin 663, July 2006

Wahoo, its Easter time and we're off to Lake Unknown. Not without some trepidation though. I was up there at Easter last year and while it was a great trip, a lot of it wasn't pleasant in the rain. The forecast is not ideal this time either.

We arrive in Queenstown and after some discussion it is decided that Lake Unknown will remain just that for this year. Plan B is hatched... traverse along the tops of the Humboldt and Ailsa mountains. It's decided to start up Scott Creek and see how we get on. Simple enough until we reach the tops above the Scott basin, snow. Not enough to give traction but plenty to make things dicey as it falls off the bluffs above or slides out from under you.



**Scott Creek – The final climb to the Kay Creek Saddle**

Sitting around in the snow after tea on Friday, feeling the temperature drop and our toes freezing, plan C is hatched. Toddle from our current campsite at the head of Death Valley, down Kay Creek to the Caples. From there back up Fraser Creek to Fraser Col, over into Emily Stream and onto the Routeburn highway for a shortened trip. Sweet as! Imagine the brownie



points I'll score with family being home a day early (that's an important consideration, the way I burn brownie points!)

It feels a long way down Kay Creek the next day. The track is fine, but I at least feel very sluggish. However we soon reach the bridge and decide to wander down to the Upper Caples Hut for a brew and check the latest forecast. As expected, it hadn't changed much. So plan C is confirmed and back up the track to the Fraser we go. What a great valley that is. Easy going bush, nothing very steep. Lots of nice camping and plenty of deer for the more feral-minded. We saw a total of three, one of which stood long enough to get photographed. A pleasant evening was had around the campfire discussing how good she would have tasted.



**Kay Creek, looking towards the Caples**

The next morning was a leisurely start up a series of flats, then boulder hopping the last bit of stream before turning upwards to Fraser Col. As we hit the saddle it's very easy to see why a certain pair of Israelis ended up in the wrong place from here. Israeli Creek definitely looks the most obvious choice. Lunch at the top of the creek is followed by a steep descent through the rocks. Unfortunately, plans to surprise a couple of walkers on the Routeburn by jumping out of the bush onto the track were foiled when no-one gave the signal for Nick to jump. Still they already looked grumpy so maybe we saved DoC from another complaint!

So while we didn't spend as much time on the tops as we had hoped, a good trip was had anyway. Thanks to Aaron (OTMC, OUTC, OSNZAC), Steve (OUTC) and Nick (OUTC) for the company and Kate (OUTC) for catching a ride up to Queenstown with us and thus spreading the fiscal burden even further.

Rob Porteous

## **JUBILEE HUT – SILVER PEAKS**

**Author: Antony Pettinger**

Published in Bulletin 664, July 2006

At the June meeting of the Committee, we received a letter from Bill Wheeler of the Department of Conservation (Programme Manager – Visitor Assets).

To summarise, two years ago DoC met with the OTMC, NZ Land SAR and the Rotary Club to discuss the future of huts in the Silver Peaks. DoC's Recreation Opportunities Review had previously identified the need for a new hut as an overnight destination to replace the 'current range of dilapidated huts' (DoC's description!).

Further to this meeting the OTMC held a general meeting (on 24 June 2004) to discuss the situation of club huts, in particular Jubilee and Yellow Hut in the Silver Peaks. This meeting strongly supported the retention of a hut in the Cave Stream catchment. The long-term retention of Yellow Hut was not seen as desirable given its poor condition.

DoC are now (June 2006) proposing to construct a new hut to replace Jubilee Hut. A site has been selected more or less across the stream from the current Jubilee (on the true left) and approximately 100m above it. This is a very nice terrace, void of scrub and facing north. This will mean the hut won't become hemmed in by surrounding vegetation and will have a sunnier outlook.

The proposed hut would be a basic DoC standard 6 bunk hut, with a water tank and adjacent toilet but no form of heating. DoC have funding in place and are planning construction to take place over the summer with a tentative opening date of 1 April 2007 (the 20th Anniversary of DoC).

The hut will become a single destination hut, meaning that DoC will remove the current Jubilee Hut and Yellow Hut (at their expense). The current site of Jubilee is becoming quite overgrown and damp due to the rise in vegetation cover since the area was de-stocked. Any other unofficial huts in the Silver Peaks will also be removed, except for Possum Hut which will be retained for historic reasons.

The Committee has supported DoC, both on the design and location of the new hut, as well as agreeing to the removal of Jubilee and Yellow Huts. This is in agreement with the outcome of the 2004 general meeting.

As Jubilee Hut has been a strong and tangible link to the OTC/OTMC's past (the hut was built for the 25th Jubilee of the Otago Tramping Club) I would personally hope that some recognition of this link can be incorporated within the new hut.

AMP

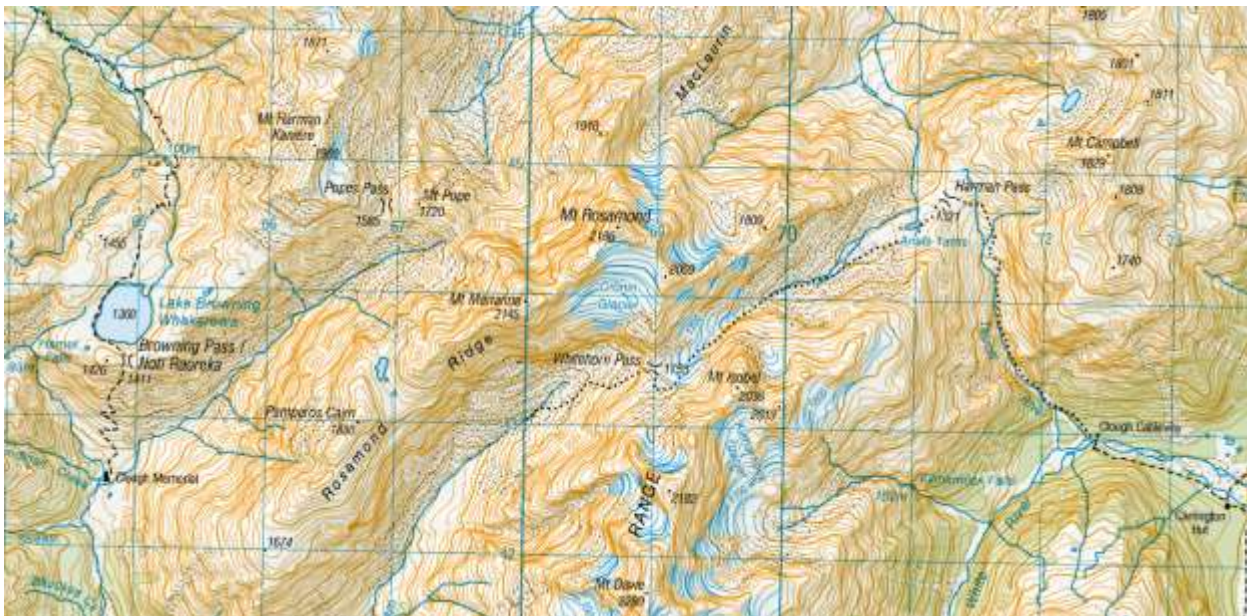
# THE THREE PASSES: HARMAN – WHITEHORN - BROWNING

**April 14-17, 2006**

**Author: Terry Duffield & Pam McKelvey**

Published in Bulletin 664, July 2006

I guess the most amazing aspect of this trip is how it ever got off the ground in the first place. The original idea was immediately in jeopardy when the trip list was populated by keen trampers fresh from Bushcraft but lacking the experience for a trip of this scale. I cast about for alternatives, briefly considering Mingha – Lake Mavis – Tarahuna Pass – Otehake River – Hot Springs – Lake Kaurapataka – Aikens (but rejecting this again based on experience level), and finally settled on the Mingha - Deception (with Lake Mavis option) with a possible extension past Lake Kaurapataka to the hot springs in the Otehake River and back to Aickens corner.



Pam, however, was not at all interested in this option, having done the trip some years before, and suggested a solution to the logistics problem of the three passes trip by having her partner drive across to Hokitika and pick us up on the Monday afternoon - (what an obliging fellow!) Now, with Michael Foley and Steffan Rolfe agreeing to co-lead the Mingha – Deception trip we were back in business – The Three Passes Trip was on!!

The high-pressure system, which I had ordered specifically for the weekend, began making its way over the country on Thursday afternoon. We left the clubrooms before six and were settled into Klondyke Corner Shelter by midnight under the bright light of a beautiful full moon. On the way we had been treated to the rare pleasure of a scientific treatise on the collection and analysis of elephant mucus for the study of pheromones (had to be national radio). One minor disaster – the 750ml bottle of green ginger wine, which I had transferred into a Mizone



water bottle, had entirely emptied into the contents of my pack.... but, by a stroke of good fortune had been almost completely absorbed by my Mountain Tech Jacket. (An enterprising businessman should introduce this fabric to Libra to produce the ultimate panty shield!) I left it outside the shelter on a table where it attracted the nocturnal attention of a soon-tipsy possum.

Good Friday: We drove with the others to the start of the Mingha – Deception track, then went to the visitor centre to fill out the intentions forms, have a coffee and replenish my supply of recreational alcohol (a small bottle of Coruba). We set off up the Waimakariri in bright sunshine, smelling vaguely of fermented ginger, and made Carrington Hut in 3.5 hours for lunch before the three-hour grunt up to Harman Pass. From our vantage point by Ariels Tarns the slope of Whitehorn Pass appeared daunting. Also on the pass were three other guys intent on completing the three passes trip by Sunday afternoon, a couple bivvying over the ridge and another tramper heading north to the Taipo River. We set up the tent and had a comfy kea-free night.

9:30 was our planned start time the next morning (to allow our neighbors plenty of time to make steps for us to follow) and we were pleasantly surprised to find the slope much more moderate than anticipated. Snow coverage on the pass was high and the western slopes steep. After one unintentional slide and self-arrest, I thought I may as well get some practice in and continued down in the same manner. We made our way down valley via the river and discovered later that travel on the terraces was marginally better (we were overtaken by the Senior Citizens Tramping Club while we stopped for lunch and a brew). The route from above the gorge to Park/Morpeth Hut was well marked with poles. The hut and surrounds were a tad congested and as Pam turned out to be a snoreaphobe we pitched our tent down by the river. To our right, up the Wilberforce, was what can only be described as a mountain with a little notch in the top – Browning pass! Hard to believe they drove sheep over it in the 1860's – I assume they lost more than a few!

It didn't take long for my bright orange tent to attract the unwanted attentions of a lone kea, and no amount of hurled rocks or abuse would drive the sod away. Just before dawn he was joined by another eight of the winged bandits so with one thing or another I didn't get much sleep. We were expecting a longish day to Grassy Flats so I guess the keas did us a favour by giving us an early morning call. One cheeky bugger stole Pam's glove and flapped off over the river, necessitating a two-pronged assault to retrieve it.

Browning pass was just as steep as it looks from a distance, at least near the top, but we were up and through the notch in a little over two hours. Unfortunately, the sky had clouded over and rain was threatening for the afternoon, otherwise I might have been tempted with a quick dip in lake Browning. Foregoing that dubious pleasure, we made good time down the easy trail which threaded its way between the bluffs, gorges and waterfalls on the far side. We had a leisurely lunch at Harman Hut then tackled the bridge over the river Harman. This is perhaps 100 ft across and at least 150 ft down and accessed by a rope-assisted rock climb – not for the faint hearted. (I'm told a stainless-steel ladder is planned for the near future.) A last bit of

uphill and we descended to the Muddy Flats turnoff and the boggy Styx Saddle. This was so bad in one place that the marker pole had just about disappeared under the slime.

Grassy Flats Hut; Pam had correctly located the turnoff again (her being right most of the time was getting a bit annoying!) and yet again the hut was packed. We had the bivvying couple we had shared Harman Pass with, another contingent from the Senior Citizens Tramping Club (eight) who had made the trip to Lake Browning but lacked sufficient gear to confidently make the descent) and three women from Westport who had balked at Harman Bridge and turned back. Time to pitch the tent again. We used the hut for cooking and drying, then spent a drizzly but comfy night tenting on the flats.

Day four was a straightforward but varied and interesting trip down the Styx to the road end at Lake Kaniere. Lots of river crossings, some steep sidling sections but mostly good well-formed tracks, made this a fast but not boring walk and we even passed a kayak club making their way up the lower reaches with their boats on their backs (have to be keen for that sort of carry on). An hour later and tucking into a restoring bottle of Guinness, the odd moments of hardship were already fading to a dim memory. Time to go home. My thanks go to John and Pam who made this trip possible and a pleasure.

# GPSING THE MAUNGATUA TRAVERSE

**June 11, 2006**

**Author: Antony Hamel**

Published in Bulletin 664, July 2006

Seven hardy souls turned up for the 11 June daytrip. This was a good turnout, given a very doubtful weather forecast. A southerly front had been predicted all week and chances were it was going to be a very wet day. With four cars we had the luxury of leaving two cars at each end of the range. We made sure everybody was well equipped for a change in the weather. We started from Munro Road on the theory the southerly may blow us over the top. Also, the southern end of the mountains has fence lines and farm tracks, so it is not as easy to get lost.

Working with the data I've collected with my GPS, I've attempted to accurately predict travelling times tramping in the Silver Peaks. I calculated it was going to take us six hours at slightly overweight balding lawyer (SOBL) speed. Given it was going to get dark at 5 pm, we agreed to not take a lunch stop. We left Munro Road at 10 am and found a good track through the gorse above Wesleydale Camp. The three tracks up Maungatua all have short, high maintenance sections at bush line where gorse, bracken and broom can quickly close the tracks.

At Trig F we had good views to the west of Lake Mahinerangi, the Blue Mountains and the Rock and Pillar. We followed the fence line over the top through the *Dracophyllum* scrub. There was still evidence of damage by motor bikes along the fence line. We read aloud and with feeling, the ODT article 12 August 2003 "Recce turns to rehearsal for SAR adviser". We debated with Phil the need for the comma in the rather unfortunate phrase "We've had a very thorough run through, though."

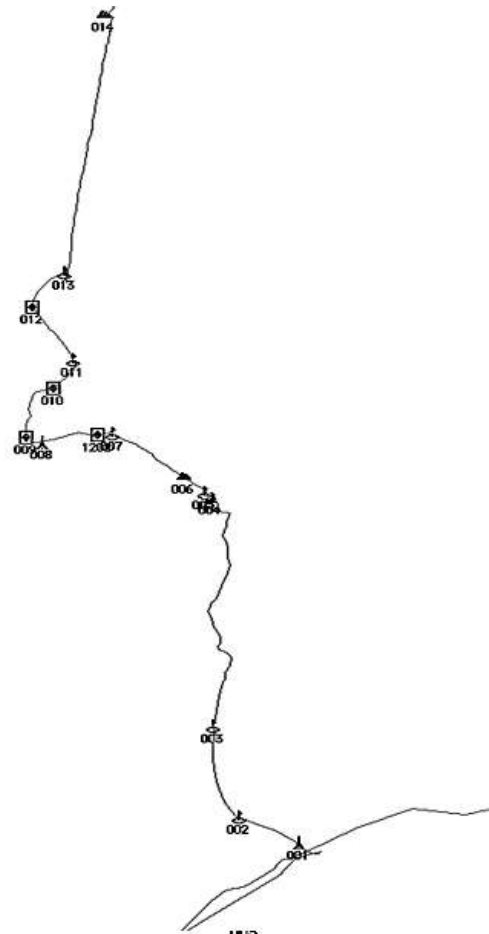
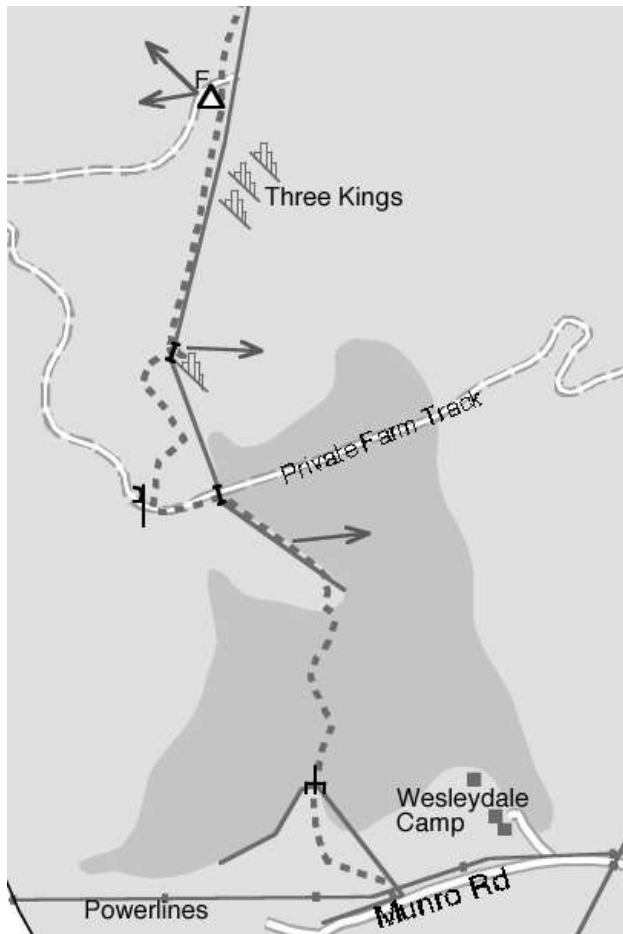
There is no track down the northeastern spur but there are occasional animal tracks, however, these come and go. The size of the tussocks on the spur makes for slow going. The top of the route down to Grainger Road is marked with waratahs. At the bush line above Woodside Glen my brother arrived wielding an umbrella. It started to rain heavily just as we entered the bush. There is a new slip on the track at the water race which some members of the party floundered around in for a while. We were at Woodside Glen and getting into the cars at 4 pm. I was pleased the SOBL calculation had worked and the times I have collected seem to reflect the times for a M/F group.

During the last two years I have used my GPS to collect information to make the maps for my new Dunedin guidebook, which I hope to publish by the end of 2007. I have only used the GPS a couple of times for actual navigation, despite the manual saying navigation is the main use of a GPS. As a result of discussions with SAR and a number of other people, I am looking at creating track and waypoint data files for the tramping tracks in the Dunedin area which are described in the new guidebook. The data would be designed to be downloaded into a GPS and then the GPS can be used to assist in navigation. I note the Canterbury Tramping Club



provides GPS track data on its web site for some of its trips. My primary tool for navigation is still a map. GPS need to get cheaper, consume less batteries and have bigger screens before they can match a piece of paper.

Antony Hamel for Jill Dodd Gavin McArthur, Roy Ward, Megan and Phil Sommerville and Bronwen Strang



## **DART – REES CIRCUIT (QUEENS BIRTHDAY)**

**June 3-5, 2006**

**Author: Antony Pettinger**

Published in Bulletin 664, July 2006

Our plan from the outset was to complete the Rees / Dart during the club trip to the Rees at Queen's Birthday. As the trip list closed, we decided to travel up the Dart first with the intention of getting to Dart Hut on Saturday. This meant that we would get the one required biggish day out of the way first, then we would be able to enjoy a leisurely trip up the Snowy and down the Rees.



**Dart Valley, June 3, 2006**

Getting up at 5am at the Glenorchy Camp on Saturday meant we were on the track at Chinamans Bluff by 7am, heading for Daleys Hut in the dark. You could sense the grand scenery across the open Dart Valley, but of course none could be seen. For Barry, Matt and I this was the first time we had set out to do the circuit, but Ann was a veteran, this being her third visit. As the day lightened, we could see that the forecast was not quite right – although it wasn't raining, a light mist hung down quite low over the valley, creating a surreal feel to the whole area.

In true Barry fashion, he soon zoomed in on a pretty good bush shirt beside the track – another item for his ever-growing 'acquired' wardrobe. As we approached Daleys Hut the light mist

gave way to light rain, and as we were having lunch in the hut the rain became decidedly heavier. Still, our plan was to make it to Dart Hut so we donned our coats and ventured out. About an hour from the hut Matt declared optimistically the nearby rock biv was the halfway point to Dart Hut. Ann decided to believe him to keep her spirits up – more fool her! About halfway along Cattle Flat (which is everything but flat) we came across the real halfway biv, although we didn't visit it, but continued across the remainder of the (non) flat and on to the gentle (according to DoC) climb to Dart Hut. We were glad it wasn't described as steep as we clamboured up and into the darkness again. Soon enough we were at the sidetrack to the Whitbourn Valley where we dutifully read out the remaining time to Ann (30-45min). Tiredness was starting to set in and, when we hadn't reached Dart Hut in 30 minutes, Ann was looking to throttle the person who misread the sign to her. Fortunately, we were saved by coming across the verandah of the hut. The trip to Dart Hut had taken us 11 and a half hours including lunch. A warm fire and a late tea saw us quite content in the well-designed hut.



**Dart Hut, June 4, 2006**

It rained heavily during the night, but only light rain greeted us in the morning. The Dart and Snowy Rivers both appeared to be at their normal levels so we planned to travel to Shelter Rock Hut in the Rees. We knew the upper bridge across the Snowy had been removed for the winter but we figured we would be able to cross the river anyhow. In the event that we couldn't, we knew we still had enough time to retreat back down the Dart. We set off from Dart Hut in improving weather; in fact, there were copious amounts of blue sky back down the Dart. The track up to Dart Hut had been virtually 'great walk' standard, now the track up the Snowy was a pleasant 'route' grade track. In time we arrived at the crossing of the Snowy. It



turned out to be a piece of cake, you could easily jump across two large rocks or partake in a short paddle. The track from here climbs steeply for a while and then crosses above a tarn before the final swing up to Rees Saddle. The Snowy was spectacular, particularly the mist-shrouded ice in the river itself. Unfortunately, the view from the saddle was nil so we quickly headed down to Shelter Rock Hut. During the afternoon the skies cleared, promising a good frost that night.



**Rees Valley, looking towards Kea Basin, June 5, 2006**

We were away at 7.50 am on Monday, headed for Muddy Creek. The day was awesome, not a cloud in the sky. It wasn't long until we were down at Slip Flat, and then finally into the sun just below the park boundary. A pleasant wander down the Rees, crossing the river as required, saw us at the road-end by 1 pm. Earnslaw was looking spectacular, as were the Forbes Mountains at the head of the Hunter. After dropping off Trevor's car to him in the Dart we enjoyed a late lunch in Glenorchy. So ended an incredible trip, my thanks to my companions for making it so.

Antony Pettinger for Ann Burton, Barry Atkinson, and Matt Corbett.

## **MAITLAND REVISITED**

**February 18-19, 2006**

**Author: Gary Dawe**

Published in Bulletin 665, August 2006

Once again I found myself leading a trip to the Maitland area. This time, being early February, the crossover into Freehold Creek would not be a problem. The same trip in October 2003 has been a "no go" due to snow depth and bad weather.

The Friday night had been fairly uneventful, although one of our numbers was almost run over by a car while he lay in his sleeping bag. Saturday morning revealed that a few of us in the dark had chosen dodgy sites to rest our heads.



**Maitland Valley, upstream of the hut**

The morning was cool and as we set up the Maitland, people chattered amongst themselves, becoming better acquainted with each other. Gary Moss was telling me his latest jokes and tales of London life. The track to Maitland Hut is fairly straight forward with a couple of grunts and a wee scree slope to play on. The day began to heat up, a huge change from last time, and we stopped for lunch at the hut. It had seen some attention since my last visit but was otherwise as I remembered it.

Continuing on our trek, we picked our way through tussock and the infamous Spaniard grass which seemed to lunge at us at every available opportunity. When we hung a left and headed up to Lake Dumbbell, the day got hotter, the Spaniard got thicker, and the climb got steeper

(well that's what it felt like). It began to take its toll on the group. But with people helping and encouraging each other on (oh, and the occasional death threat!), we all arrived at Lake Dumbell safe and well, if not a little buggered.



**Dumbell Lake**

We had the lake to ourselves, and it wasn't long before tents were up, teas made and the sound of chainsaws and bullfrogs could be heard across the lakes waters.

Next day was clear with no clouds and no wind, so after brekkie we marched off to the top for some rewarding views of Lake Ohau and the surrounding area. After some discussion we took the route down to the head of Freehold Creek, where, after a rest, we clambered on down the track looking forward to the bushline to get out of the sun. The rest of the trip went without a hitch with quite a nice track, and I was glad I was heading down and not up.

Overall, not a bad trip, nothing too exciting and the views on Sunday certainly the highlight, with the Spaniard grass and high temperatures a low point. And, of course, the people - can't remember the entire list of names, but thanks for the company, see you in the hills.



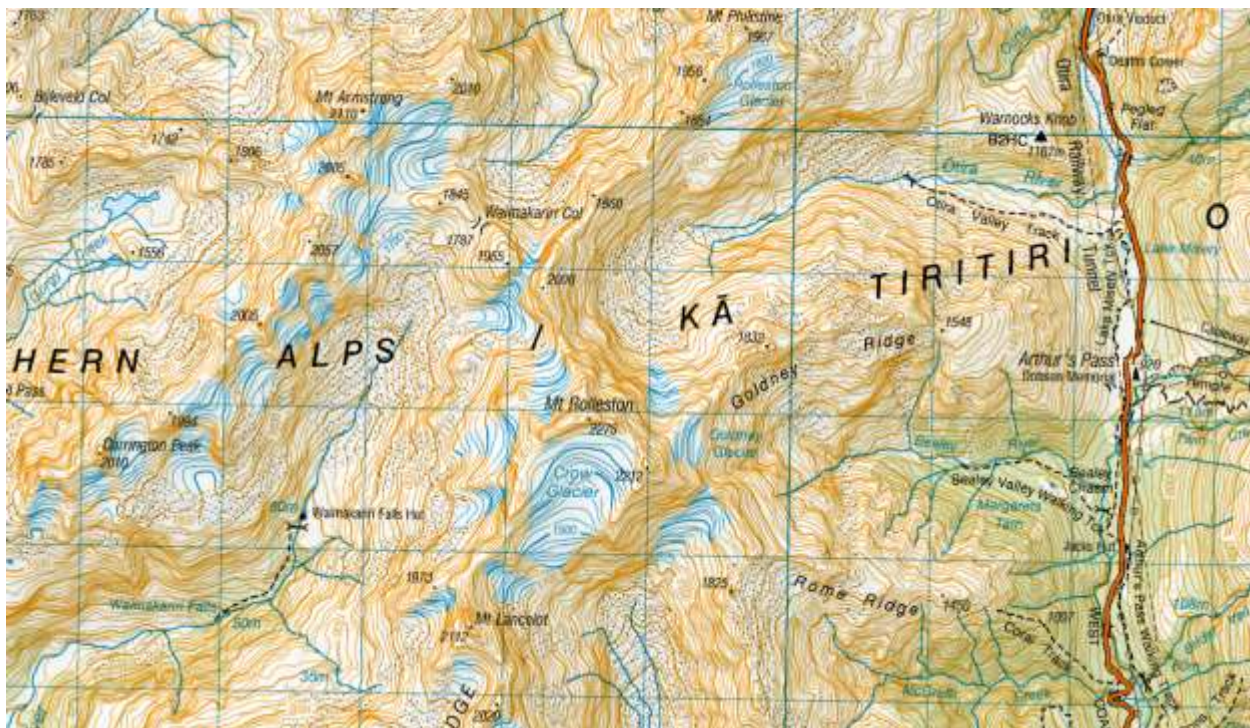
# WAIMAKARIRI COL

**April 29 – May 1, 2006**

**Author: Terry Duffield & Rob Seeley**

Published in Bulletin 665, August 2006

A Xerox function prevented a Friday start to the weekend, which was originally going to be the Polnoon Burn and Black Peak. The Anzac Day weather and stock mustering at the Shotover Branches Station put an end to that and Arthurs Pass had a better forecast, so a plan change was in order. Even then my original intention was a loop trip crossing Jordan and Sphinx Passes, I made the mistake of bringing the guidebook along and the plan was changed by Rob en route to Arthurs Pass.



One of the advantages of the Waimakariri Col trip was the conveniently placed huts, which meant we could leave the tent behind in the car, so we had nice light packs as we began our walk up the braided river at 2 o'clock. About the halfway point, in lovely sunshine two paradise geese swooped past and glided along the river. I stopped to watch and thought to myself, "It's great to be alive and tramping in the mountains!" Rob pointed out that the estimated time to Carrington Hut was about the length of one of the Lord of the Rings movies (hmmm...) and in due course, about the time Gollum and Frodo were wrestling over the possession of the One Ring, we reached our abode for the evening. The hut is quite large with two bunkrooms and at least 36 bunks, but the fire was smoky and difficult to keep going and the woodshed was empty.

Next day was a cruisy jaunt up to Waimakariri Falls Hut so we had a sleep-in, then foraged around for some logs to cut up for the woodpile. Around ten we made our way upriver,

disturbing a pair of blue ducks on the way. The lower of the Waimakariri Falls were encountered as we made our way up the steepening slopes and were quite an impressive sight in their narrow gorge. Further up, just before the hut, the stream is crossed by a suspension bridge at the mouth of a straight-sided narrow gorge. It was easier to cross the river than climb up to the bridge, but I imagine the flow would be quite forceful with spring melt water. We settled into the Canterbury Mountaineering Club hut (4 bunk) then headed off to the sunny slopes on the far side of the valley for a relaxing read.

The final day was ten hours by the guidebook estimation, so an early start was decided on, starting the first stretch by headlight before seven. The sun still hadn't touched the frosty scree as we approached the head of the valley, so the footing was treacherous and the rock climb to the snowfield a trifle intimidating. On good snow we kicked steps and made good time over the saddle to the left of the Col – the easier route. Hard, sweaty travel on steep scree and snow grass above the true left of the Rolleston River finally brought us to a nice spot on the bank for lunch before launching into the final stretch of 'formed' track. Ironically this proved to be the hardest going of the day, but necessary because of tight, gorgy sections at either end. It appears that no track work has been done since it was made and, coupled with copious regrowth and treefall, combined to make this the trail from hell (on second thought – that may be a little unfair on the devil!) And what better way to complete this smeggy riverbank crawl than a snarly stand of broom on the approach to the Otira rail bridge – lovely! A pedestrian stroll down a metal access road completed the days walk – nine hours.

Half an hour of hitching finally bore fruit (thank you, Ross and Sharon) and we were soon in the pub at Springfield with a well-deserved beer and a works burger that would have won accolades from Homer Simpson himself. Long drive – home by midnight – great weekend.

# KEPLER TRACK

**May 6-7, 2006**

**Author: Greg Powell**

Published in Bulletin 665, August 2006

This trip was originally proposed as a two-day trip to complete the whole 60 km track. Like quite a few others I have done each end of the track but never the entire circuit, so this was a good opportunity to tick another trip off my “to do” list.

I didn’t want to “bust a gut” by doing the two-day option, so instead opted to take the Friday off work and do a 2.5 day trip. Fortunately, there were 11 others like-minded, this being enough to take a separate van. We departed Dunedin at 8.30 am on Friday morning bound for Te Anau and had a pretty uneventful trip. We didn’t actually start walking until around 2.30 pm that afternoon. Checking in at DoC, paying the camping ground fees for the other parties following for the two-day option, and arranging a taxi shuttle so we didn’t have to leave the van at the Floodgates, all took extra time.



**Kepler Track, above Luxmore Hut, May 6, 2006**

Our aim was to spend Friday night at Luxmore Hut, which is about a four-hour tramp, and the last of our group would have arrived at about 5.30 to 6.00 pm, so overall the timing was pretty good. Not much to say about the track. It is wide flat and relatively easy as one would expect from a great walk. The climb up to Luxmore Hut is a bit of a grind and seemed to take forever to get out of the bush, particularly with all the zig zags in the track. I always find it a relief



when you get above the bush line as the tramping becomes more interesting, probably because of the views.



**Mt Luxmore, May 6, 2006**

Day two saw us have a bit of a lie in and back on the track at about 9.00 am. This day is definitely the best part of the tramp, with most of the time spent above the bush line and great views and photo opportunities. There were plenty of other people on the track, most of whom were tourists, and it was interesting to have a chat and see where they were from. The 20 or so minute climb to the trig on top of Mt Luxmore is certainly worth the effort and it was good to dawdle on the top taking a few photos and admiring the view.

Lunch stop was at the emergency shelter where we shared some light banter with a group of our foreign friends. From our lunch stop time seemed to fly as we ate up the track running downwards along a ridgeline. In no time at all we were back in the bush and our knees telling us we were heading back into a valley. Funny how time drags when one gets back into the bush. The boredom however was broken with good conversation and before long we encountered a small group of OTMCer's who had walked in to the Iris Burn Hut that day. They had time to spare and were wandering up the track to meet up with the two-dayers. Just before reaching Iris Burn Hut we took a short detour of about 20 minutes to have a look at the waterfall.

That night all the OTMC parties met up at the Iris Burn Hut. It was a bit of a social event being Antony P's birthday. One of the things I really enjoy about the OTMC is the social atmosphere

that always prevails, and it was great to relax around the hut, have a quiet gin and a few laughs as well.



**The Kepler Tops, May 6, 2006**

Day three was nothing really special with a gentle, but long downhill tramp to reach Rainbows End and the van. I took some time out to just sit on a secluded beach and enjoy a little bit of solitude watching some ducks paddling on a gentle Lake Manapouri. Unfortunately after about 5 minutes a couple of Bl....y sand flies found me and seemed to call in their mates for reinforcement. At that point it was time to don the pack and start moving again. About 10 minutes further on I was startled by a great white OTMC-er emerging in all his naked glory from the waters of Lake Manapouri. In sheer fright I ran the last kilometer or so to the lunch stop at Moturau Hut.

Overall, it was a good weekend and I can now say "been there, done that". The best day is the middle one, which is spent meandering over the tops. Out of 10, I would rate the tramp as only a 5, but as with all club trips, the company was good and we all had a great time.

Greg Powell for Trish Saunders, Jill McAliece, Harry Griffiths, Gary Moss and George Kemmet.

## GILLESPIE PASS

**June 3-5, 2006**

**Author: Sharon St Clair-Newman**

Published in Bulletin 665, August 2006

After an early departure from Dunedin and a tea stop at the Pie Cart in Alexandra, we arrived at Makarora in light rain on Friday night, ahead of the 'Red Team' who had to wait for Dave M. to arrive off an Auckland flight. In fact, we'd had our late-night cuppa and were tucked up in bed by the time they arrived. (Co-incidentally, members of each team had either red or blue jackets – not planned, honest!).

It was still drizzling next morning when we met up with 'Chopper' the jet boat driver and headed for the Young River mouth. Unfortunately, the drizzle turned to rain after an hour or so and raincoats were reluctantly pulled from packs. What happened to the good Saturday forecast?! This was supposed to be our best day, with deteriorating conditions and snow predicted for Sunday.



Gillespie Pass

The Young Valley is a relatively flat three hour walk to the junction where a very welcome day shelter is situated to the right after the swing bridge is crossed, about two minutes away. Good campsites are to be found here as well. We huddled under the shelter and ate lunch, enjoying a brew and hot soup.



The track gets a little rougher from here and climbs steadily, even steeply in sections to the new Young Hut, which surprised us by being about 1-1.5 hours down valley from the old one, and set in bush, (4 hours).

The fire proved an effort to light, but Dave C. brought his pyromaniacal skills to the fore and despite wet wood soon had it roaring. The hut is devoid of any form of clothesline inside, so Pam went to work with a few nails she found and, after tying her bootlaces together, soon had enough line for our wet clothes. By teatime the fire had a decided red glow to it but held up and didn't melt into the floor.



**Siberia Stream**

Saturday was no better and we headed for the pass and into the snow. There is no sign of the old hut now, only a track heading towards the site. A steady climb from this side saw us quickly into the first skiff of snow, with the drizzle easing off and only the odd flake falling. Luckily there was no wind as snack-stops were cold enough without it. The steep climb saw us on the pass in ankle to calf-deep snow and ice axes came out. Good powder allowed us to move without crampons, but care was needed down the Siberia side with a light layer of snow on rocks and snow tussock. Once we left the snow, we made good time down to the bottom end of the tussock and into the bush.

General consensus had been to snack instead of stopping for lunch and a longer stop was made when we hit the stream, where some opted to attack something a little more filling. We could see the Siberia Valley, but it seemed a long time before we arrived at the confluence.

The track down this section is obvious due to its high usage, as is the rest of the track, and I saw a huge difference since I was last here about 1994.

Allan cheered us up by saying the hut was only about 10 minutes from the junction, but after about an hour he was fielding a good share of light-heated abuse for his error in judgement. Those of us that hadn't bothered with lunch were very pleased to see it and a brew was very welcome.

Only two others were in the hut, and it was good to arrive to a roaring fire and a warm hut. Clotheslines were installed here so once again we could look forward to dry gear next day.

We woke to a good frost and clear skies. Finally, our photos would look a little more appealing. The 'Blue Team' set off about 10.15 am with plans to loiter and have lunch while waiting for the jet boat, which was picking us up just below Kerin Forks. The others planned to leave about 11am.



**Jetboating on the Wilkin River**

Just past the hut we looked back to see the sun rising behind a gut in the mountains beside the pass, making an amazing inverted triangular glow in the sky. The lack of photos was made up for here as we made the most of the snowy tops around us poking out into the sun.

This section of track is reminiscent of the Routeburn and Kepler and obviously formed by heavy machinery rather than tramping boots! A sign of tourism but admittedly it makes for pleasant walking and allows for a good look around rather than having to watch the ground. The sun coming through the bush was very pleasant after two wet days.

The others soon caught us and we carried on to the pickup point for lunch. Unfortunately, this side of the valley doesn't see the sun at this time of the year and even with a brew on board we were cold and very pleased to see the jet boat when it arrived. We were then to find out how cold it could really get after a hugely exhilarating 30-minute ride back to Makarora.

The 'Red Team' (Ralph Harvey, Dave McArthur and his overseas student Lena, and Pam McKelvey) hit the road while the 'Blue Team' (Allan Perry, Dave Chambers and I) spoilt themselves with hot showers first.



## **ARTHUR'S PASS TRAIN & TRAMP**

**August 12-13, 2006**

**Author: Wolfgang Gerber**

Published in Bulletin 667, October 2006

Months of me rambling on about this trip on a Thursday night had finally come to an end (hooray!!!) It's a wonder that anybody signed up at all. I must admit we've got some patient people. The idea for this trip was born over a year ago as I (with the help of some committee members) were looking for something different, something new for my annual winter trip. So, this is how the weekend came about, an Alpine Train/Tramp staying at the Arthurs Pass Village.



**Waimakariri Gorge from the train, August 12, 2006**

Three vans and a car left at different times, and we all met and bedded down at Meadow Park, Christchurch, for Friday Night. Saturday morning was an early start as we had to be at the train station at 7.45am to book in, get the tickets, and get our seats. "Hey what the?? Who are those people in our seats??" Oh no, double booked, but thanks go to Christine and Co, who offered to move into the next carriage. At least they got a table with their seats. Some of the carriages had a covered viewing area which I thought was great as the views were wonderful but windy.

The train turned off at Rolleston and climbed gradually over the Canterbury Plains where it passes Darfield and stops at Springfield for five minutes, then into the Alps, passes Cass and stops at Arthurs Pass. But our deal was to continue our travel out to Greymouth, have a quick

look around, then back on the train to Arthurs Pass, where were greeted by some white fluffy stuff. Yes folks, it snowed for us.

We dropped off the gear at the Arthurs Pass Outdoor Education Centre, claimed a bunk and set off to check out the local village and, dare I say it, "Local Establishments". We had a wonderful meal at the Middle South Hotel and, to our surprise, when we left the weather had cleared and the snow turned to ice, so it was an interesting walk back to base camp.

My annual quiz was the closest I've had in years and, rather dramatically, "Terry the Duff's" team prevailed. There was much controversy as always, and I was challenged a few times, but of course I expect that, no I demand it! That's why I do it, year after year, and I love it. My lovely assistant this year was the Boisterous Barry.

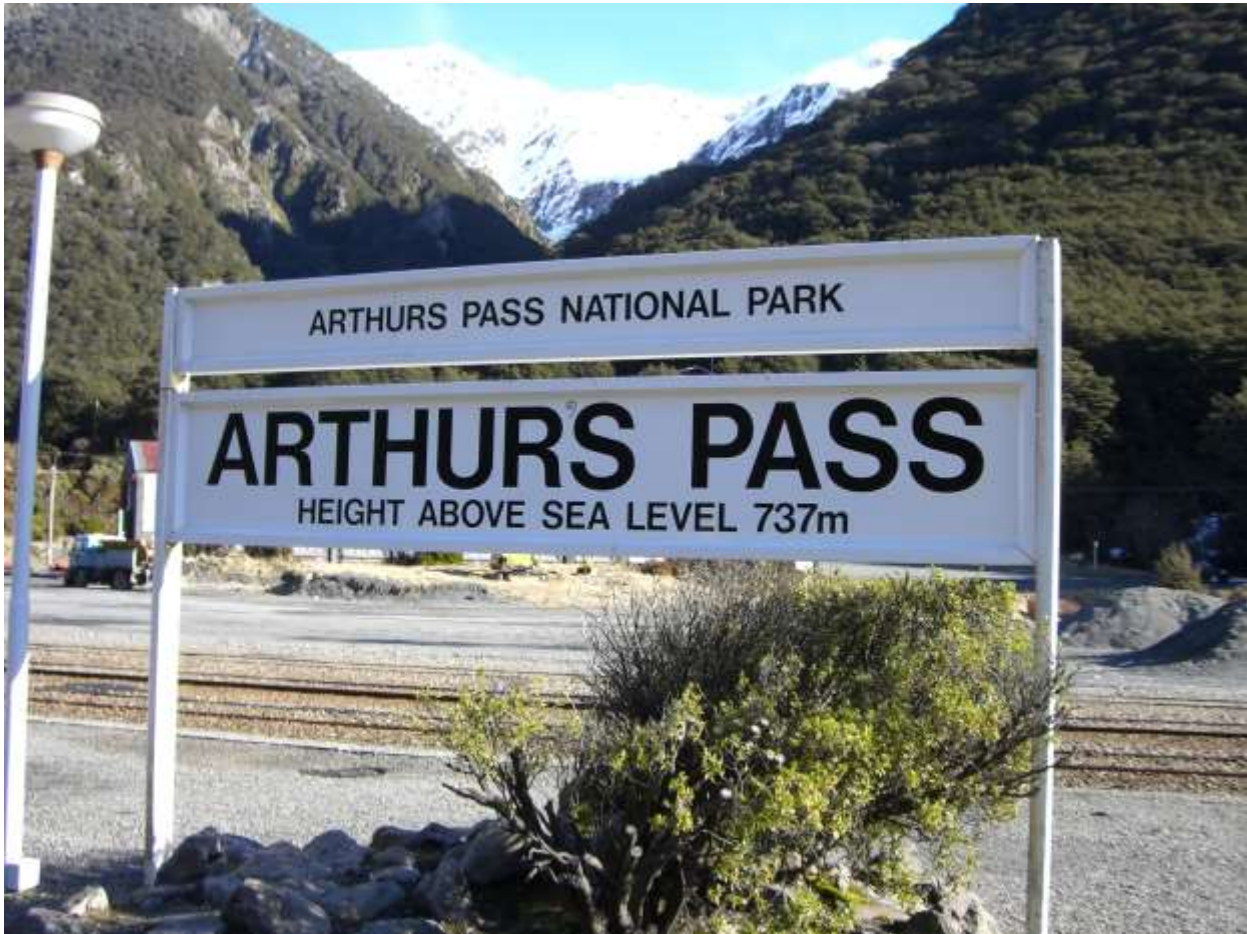


**Arthur's Pass Village, August 12, 2006**

Next morning people were free to do what they wanted, just as long as they were back in time for the train. The beauty of the alpine village was the different walks available lasting from an hour and longer. Some even made it up to Avalanche Peak, a no mean feat, and they were back by 2 pm. Then it was cleaning up and I must admit it was a good effort from everyone. Then time to say goodbye to Arthurs Pass as we waited, and waited and waited, for the train. When it finally did arrive, it was to be delayed even more by a coal wagon derailment down the track. The coal trains are a sight to see with five diesel engines pulling 30 coal wagons from Greymouth and up the long steep Otira Tunnel, then eventually out to Lyttleton.



At Arthurs Pass we un-coupled to go back to Greymouth. We finally left AP over an hour late, only to have more drama at Springfield where we were greeted by paramedics rushing past our carriage to help a poor soul who had become quite ill. So back to Christchurch and, as I warned everyone, home very late. For me into bed at 1.40am.



**Waiting for the train, Arthur's Pass, August 32, 2006**

Overall, another great trip with the club as we, the committee, strive to give members, family, friends and visitors, a variety of trips during the year. It seems to be working as 38 people signed up for the train. For once the headache wasn't people pulling out, but it was people wanting to join in the fun after the list closed and it was great to see some of the spouses of members come along too.

Wolfgang for Dave Ch, Antony and Debbie, Alan and Sharon, Ann and Chris, Kerryn and Nicola, Alan and Robyn, Stefan R, Jill and Ray, Bruce B, Barry A, Wilbert and Monika, Fieke and David, Terry and Barbara, Roy W, Cathy and Graeme, Terry and Carmel, Christine Cory and Clem, Andrew D, Margaret and David, Alex and Christian and last but not least Jo and Julie.

Quote of the trip:

"Are there any cool people going on this trip?" asked Bruce. " Yes, you are, Bruce", I replied.

"Ah that's really cool", said Bruce, "Count me in"



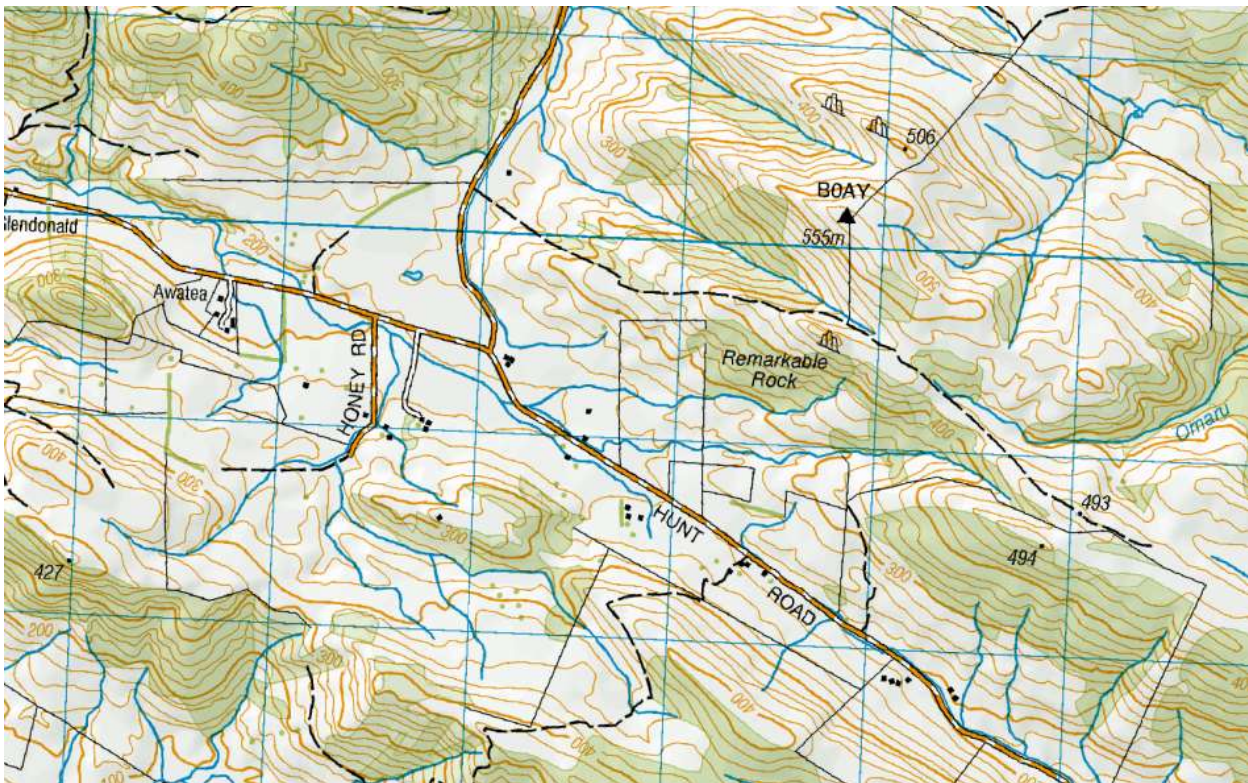
# PICNIC AT REMARKABLE ROCK

**August 13, 2006**

**Author: Janet Barclay**

Published in Bulletin 667, October 2006

On Sunday 13 August, four brave women squeezed into Ian's vehicle for a cosy ride down to Balclutha. From then on, only Ian knew where the heck we were, despite him supplying us with maps to follow. We were heading for Remarkable Rock via the Catlins back roads and we were all glad it was Ian's car we were in when the tar seal promptly turned to gravel and mud. And we were slightly concerned when the black clouds in front of us started showering us with sleet. We eventually found ourselves following the Puerua Valley Road and there in the distance, covered in snow, was what Ian informed us was Remarkable Rock.



As we sat and looked at it from the warmth of the car, Ian kindly suggested we could do Plan B. But we all agreed that we were here now and we were going to climb to that rock, come rain, hail or shine! Well, as it happened, we got all three on the way up the muddy farm track. We found that walking on the bailage put out for the cows was much easier going. When we came to an electric fence, we asked Ian to check to see if it was going, but he didn't want to do that, so he kindly offered to use his stick to hold the tapes down while we stepped over. As we were doing this, he calmly informed us that "Yes, the fence is on." The shaking stick told us

that he was not kidding! With us four women safely over and continuing onwards, Ian had to remind us that someone might hold the stick to let him across too. Brave Judy came to his rescue.

Shortly after this we were walking through snow until we reached the rock about lunch time. The rock was indeed remarkable up close (a bit like a kiwi Ayers Rock) and right on cue it started snowing in earnest, much to Nicole's delight. She's from Malaysia and it was her first experience of snow. So we wedged ourselves between the crevasses out of the wind and had our picnic, then took some photos before making our way down again. The views from the track were magnificent, and the snow-covered hills added to the feeling of being in a special place. Ian pointed out the farmhouse he lived in as a boy and just up the road were his grandmother's house and her brother's house. Our descent was closely watched by a herd of cows and we got the feeling they were willing us to fall in the mud - payback for walking on their lunch! But we all arrived at the car none the worse for wear just before the heavy rain really set in. There was enough time left to drive to Kaka Point to enjoy hot chocolates and lattes at the quaint little pub before heading back into town.

An enjoyable and informative day out, thanks to the knowledge and always gentlemanly manner of Ian Sime.

Janet Barclay for Nicole Quek, Elizabeth Liefting and Judy Wilson



## **BURNS SADDLE – POUSSUM HUT - SWAMPY**

**August 20, 2006**

**Author: Roy Ward**

Published in Bulletin 667, October 2006

I'd been really looking forward to a good long walk in the Silver Peaks, so it wasn't only out of concern for David Barnes that I was sorry to hear he had an injury. To make sure the trip happened, I offered to lead it.

A group of five of us set out in the rain (but weather predicted to improve) up Burns Track, with Dick at the front setting a very quick pace and soon leaving us all behind. We also found a possum caught in a trap at the side of the track and stopped to put it out of its misery (with an aluminum pole!) At Burns Saddle (where the weather started to clear) we headed towards Green Ridge, taking the turn-off down Eucalyptus Spur (sometimes called Bluegum Ridge). Eucalyptus Spur was a place I'd never been before, as it isn't really on the way to anywhere, but it is a good walk with some fantastic views, so I recommend it as part of a trip.



**The so called 'Son Of Green Hut', near the old hut water supply**

David had tentatively suggested lunch at Possum Hut, but it was a bit damp and still a little early, so we went up Possum Ridge. We also had a quick look for a side track that used to lead up Green Hill many years ago, but it is all dense bush now. After lunch at Green Hut site, a small side trip down to the water source near the site discovered a very small hut made from some of the Green Hut corrugated iron. Back towards Swampy, Bronwyn was having trouble



with one of her boots, and I had a knee I was looking after, so the two of us headed back around Rustler's Ridge, while the others went over Swampy and down the Leith Saddle Track, with them arriving at the cars first.



**Swampy Summit, near the junction with the Rustlers Track**

The only thing that really marred the trip was that there were a lot of gin traps, some with live possums in them, right on the Burns and Rustler's tracks. We dispatched the possums that we saw (breaking the end off Bronwyn's hill pole in the process). A follow up later with the D.C.C. discovered that the traps were set by a contractor to the Animal Health Board. Water and Waste were not happy about traps right on the track (against regulations), so they were very promptly moved.

Thanks, David, for planning an excellent trip, I'm only sorry you couldn't join us.

Roy for Dick, Pam, Wayne and Bronwyn.

# CAMERON CREEK ABANDONED, BUT SAWYER BURN HUT CONQUERED!

**September 2-3, 2006**

**Author: Tony Timperley**

Published in Bulletin 667, October 2006

After a squally night spent with the wind whistling through the Kidd's Bush shelter, we optimistically piled into the minibus and headed towards Haast Pass. Our initial optimism was soon dampened, however, when we drove into rain as we approached Makarora.



The rain had set in as the Cameron Creek group of Kanh, Ran, Grant and Tony disembarked at the beginning of the track and watched the rest of the group drive off into ever increasing rain towards the Brewster track. (Our tramp was supposed to be the "soft" option on this trip, but this was not to be the case as we shall see.) The first few hundred metres was a gravel highway to a viewing platform from where we looked down over the creek. At this point it was braided and, although the separate streams looked slightly swollen, they looked crossable. We knew we had to cross the creek after we had negotiated Cameron Gorge, but if it was no worse than what we could see, this would be no problem. How wrong we were! With each step the track became more difficult underfoot as the rain increased. The gorge was spectacular, but we could not help but notice that the volume of water that was thundering down (in perfect



counterpoint to the thunder and lightning that was going on above our heads by this stage) was increasing exponentially the further we squelched up the track.

When we reached the crossing point it took just one look to convince us that we would be going no further. We were still in the gorge and, although it was wider at this point, great volumes of water were still crashing down. We had assumed that the crossing point would be out of the gorge where the creek would be braided and we could possibly cross without problems. As none of us fancied body rafting down the gorge, it was with saddened hearts and boots we turned around and headed back.

We had only gone about a third of the way back when, lo and behold, who should appear out of the dripping bush but two of the "Brewster Hardmen" – Phil and Wayne! (but without rucksacks, note). They had had to abandon their tramp at the first stream crossing as it was impassable and so they had returned to Cameron Creek to see how far we had got. Shortly afterwards we met up with the rest of the Brewster group and were just about to give them a hard time, but refrained when we realized that they would have brought the minibus back with them, which would save us a 10 km walk along the road in the rain to Makarora for shelter.

As we were all soaked, and it was still pouring, there was some discussion as to whether we should stop at Makarora and share some cabins for the night. However, our wise leader, Phil Somerville, decreed that we should return to Kidd's Bush as it was further east and therefore could be dry. None of us dared to question his undoubted authority. And how right he was! As we drove past Makarora and towards The Neck, the curtain of rain parted, and we were into blue skies. Back at Kidd's Bush shelter we were able to spread out our soaked gear to dry in the warm sun. Some of the frustrated Brewster Hardmen and Hardwomen (or should it be Hardpersons?) vented their pent-up energy by climbing Isthmus Peak before dinner.

On Sunday, after a calm, clear night broke to a calm, clear day, our still frustrated leader called for volunteers to climb Sentinel with him. The Brewster Hardpersons all suddenly softened and found aches and pains that they were previously unaware of, except for Wayne who bravely got his gear and jumped into the van with Phil. After the dynamic duo had departed, the rest of us did not loiter and by 9.15 am were heading up towards Sawyer's Burn Hut, a climb of about three hours according to the track marker.

Tony, as usual, took longer than the others to get ready and set off at 9.30 am. However, this was part of a master plan: he and Ran were sharing a day pack which Ran was carrying first and Tony reasoned that if he timed it right, he would catch Ran just as they reached the hut. Tony would apologise, then offer to carry the pack (minus the weight of food and water which had been consumed for lunch) all the way down back to Kidd's Bush. That was the least he could do, wasn't it? Unfortunately Tony undid his own plan. Being unfettered by the weight of a rucksack, he was unable to restrain himself and bound up the track like a geriatric gazelle, catching up with Ran within an hour. Despite attempts at flattery by Tony ("Your pack looks custom made, it moulds into your back."; "If it was my pack, I wouldn't let anyone else wear it." etc...), Ran gladly handed the pack over.



The view over Lake Hawea from above the bushline was so stupendous that the whole group (including the Brewster Hardpersons) agreed to a half-hour stop. Despite this, we still reached Sawyer's Burn Hut in under two and a half hours. The hut is basic but cosy, and has two bunks, although there is plenty of room on the floor. After descending from the hut to the stream, we all enjoyed a leisurely lunch in the warm sunshine before heading back to Kidd's Bush. There was time for a leisurely afternoon tea and snooze in the sun while waiting for Phil and Wayne, but when they did arrive on the dot of 4.00 pm, we showed no mercy and made sure we were away by 4.05 pm. (We have to admit, though, that theirs' was an epic feat – but we wouldn't tell them directly!)

Tony Timperley for: Kanh Mai, Ran Turner, and Grant Burnard. (Plus some Brewster Hardpersons on Sunday.

## MOPANUI / DOCTORS POINT

**September 10, 2006**

**Author: Gavin McArthur**

Published in Bulletin 667, October 2006

After parking our cars beside Mopanui we descended down a track that leads to Purakanui and on to the pa site. After enjoying smoko we proceeded along the beach to Doctors Point and on to Orokonui for lunch. We then climbed up through the reserve past the Tallest Tree to the top road, up to the top of Mopanui, and then back to the cars.

All in all, a very pleasant day enjoyed by all.

Gavin MacArthur



Stone walling adjacent to the McKessar Track carpark



# BREWSTER ABANDONED BUT SENTINEL CONQUERED

**September 2-3, 2006**

**Author: Philip Somerville**

Published in Bulletin 668, November 2006

I'm told that usually you can wear gumboots and keep your feet dry when you cross the Haast River before the grunt to Brewster Hut. You're only a few kilometres from Haast Pass itself and, by rights, should strike no problems near the headwaters of a catchment. But try telling that to a drenching nor'wester! The river was wide, swift and dirty with unknown depth. After a few shakes of the heads, we walked up the road looking for a likely alternative. Not only was the river still mean, but the terrain on the far bank and beyond was too rugged and the voluminous and precipitous Fantail Falls was also in the way. Our best-laid plans to climb Mt Armstrong were washed away.



So, off we drove to Cameron Creek to begin a speculative sloop and slog through its gorge to try to join the others. When we splashed through a vigorous side stream after an hour, Andrew



and I knew immediately (having "done" Cameron Creek before) that the main crossing would be dead cert impassable. It was time to dump packs, walk on to meet Tony's party and then retreat to the van. We met the sad and sodden quartet about an hour in. They looked happy to see us as they realized we had saved them a long wet trek on the road to Makarora.

Rather than stop at Makarora, I drove on to Kidds Bush in the hope that it's sheltered position would protect it from the wet nor'wester. My hopes were fulfilled as we drove into a sunny campsite. That afternoon five of us clambered up from The Neck almost to the top of Isthmus Peak (1386m) which overlooks Lake Wanaka, using all of the remaining daylight.

The following morning Wayne and I struggled up Sentinel Peak (1814m) from The Neck, heading west rather than east this time. High winds and mixed snow conditions kept us up to the mark in what was an exhausting day. On our ascent we were able to see that it was still raining in the west towards Makarora, which gave us a real sense of satisfaction on reaching the summit of Sentinel, that we had made the right decision in heading east.

After urgently shuffling/stumbling down the mountain, we made it back to camp with two minutes to spare before the scheduled 4pm departure time. The rest of the group were all ready and waiting and showed no sympathy for our exhausted state as they urged us to hurry so we could all get on our way. (Wayne and I could detect some grudging admiration, however.)

Sentinel is a worthwhile alternative for alpine trampers when those nor'westerlies stuff up options towards and beyond the Divide. It's a long day via The Neck or, as I've done before, from Kidds Bush and past Sawyer Burn Hut.

So after the wet and relative disappointment of Saturday, we all made up for it on a fine and clear Sunday.

Philip Somerville for: Wayne Hodgkinson, Pam McKelvey, Andrew Donnelly, Allison Coveney, and Philip van Zijl.

# LAGOON SADDLE

**September 16-17, 2006**

**Author: Roy & Kim**

Published in Bulletin 668, November 2006

Trip leader Dave Chambers had promised us fine weather - it looked like it was going to be a good trip. We left the clubrooms a little while before 6pm for the long, long drive. Having somehow missed the turnoff to where we were going to spend the night, we arrived at the Klondyke Corner shelter (not far from Arthurs Pass) sometime after midnight. Kim and I were in a tent, and the sound of rain for most of the night didn't seem all that promising.



**Looking sown the Cass River (valley)**

We were the easy-medium party, so after the others set out from the Cass end at about 8am, Kim drove the van back to the Lagoon Saddle end, and we took the very short walk up to Bealey Hut which we used as a base ("What, are we there already?" - Kim). Bealey Hut is a tidy six-bunk hut in a good location - the only downside is that the location of the long drop is not obvious (hint: try downhill).

After a bit of a snooze, we set out for Lagoon Saddle as a day trip, with the sign promising two and a half hours (unusually for DoC, this was an underestimate). The track ascends gradually through beech, pine, more beech, more pine, then opens out onto a long gradual ascent through mud and tussock (and 26 stream crossings!). The views of the Waimakariri were fantastic, but we were also exposed to the wind and sleet. The track climbs to within 400 m of

the top of Mount Bruce, which looked very tempting to me, but I didn't have an ice-axe and this wasn't supposed to be a fit trip. Around the corner into the Harper Valley, and we were mostly in beech trees, with a little snow still around. We had a quick stop at the Lagoon Saddle shelter, having walked for three and a half hours, then detoured to have a look at the lake itself, crossing a lot of bog, then headed up the hill to rejoin the track ("A bit uppy" according to Kim). This was followed by the long walk back, for a total of six and a half hours.



**From near Lagoon Saddle, looking over the Waimakariri into the Bealey**

Sunday was a bright sunny day (you finally came through, Dave!) and we decided to have a look at Bealey Spur. This is a gradual climb, first through beech, then manuka, then tussock alternating with beech, and is a good 4-5 hour round trip. Kim had a sore tendon from the previous day and turned back after about an hour, so I went up to Bealey Top Hut alone. Again, the views of the Waimakariri were stunning.

After going to Arthurs Pass to get petrol (it was snowing there - what a difference a few kilometres can make!), we arrived back at the car park just a few minutes before the others at about 2:30 pm, then still had to go to the hut to get all our gear.

It was a great trip in a gorgeous area, which would be worth going back to. The only downside is the very long drive to get there. Kim tells me that she thoroughly enjoyed her first OTMC weekend trip and that she has been well and truly bitten by the tramping bug.

Roy and Kim.



## NICOLS CREEK (PART 1)

**September 24, 2006**

**Author: Anonymous**

Published in Bulletin 668, November 2006

On 24 September a party of eight enjoyed a fairly easy track. We travelled on foot to a home of glow worms, unfortunately we noticed the sign later and really hope we did not stand on any!?



**Canyon below Nicols Creek**

From there, further on up we spotted Nicholls Creek Falls, where some snaps were taken. Then up a steep incline onto the Moon Track, and at the top we posed for a well-earned breather and lovely views of the ocean and harbour. On and up went our group of eight, through flax and tussock, neat walking country. There were some mountain cyclists to avoid that were coming down the hill, wonder how long it took them to bike uphill?

At the top, "Yay", we sheltered behind a brick wall from cool breezes. 'Beautiful day' or what, blue sky, no rain and yummy lunches we enjoyed. Plus, a couple of us had a tiny wee catnap!

Then back on down the hill over mud and thankfully boardwalks, through bush, and didn't that tramper with the teddy bear daypack do well?

Overall, a great tramp, so thank you Richard and Tracy.

Anonymous contributor.

## **NICOLS CREEK (PART 2)**

**September 24, 2006**

**Author: Tracy Pettinger**

Published in Bulletin 668, November 2006

I was hoping for really bad weather on the Sunday morning, so that nobody would turn up and I could go back to bed, but no such luck. We had been in the 6-hour rogaining event in the Silver Peaks on Saturday and the announcement of results and prize-giving etc. didn't finish until after 10pm, hence my reluctance to get out of bed and go walking again, albeit at a much slower pace.

Nine of us met at the clubrooms and set off in two cars to the start of the Nichols Creek Track. Richard and Diane took a car up to the end of the track at Leith Saddle while the rest of us worried about the extra UV rays we were soaking up while we waited for them at the side of the road. There was an extra 25% to be absorbed that weekend, so we had lots of covering up and sunscreen splashing to do.



**Dunedin City from Swampy Summit**

When Diane and Richard got back, we set off up the track. We had a short detour to see what the glow worms look like in daylight. They were pretty unimpressive, and we thought because they were so invisible, we were probably standing on a few of them. We carried on up the track for 10 minutes and then one of our party had to turn back as she had an appointment

with a friend. We decided it was okay for her to walk back on her own, but she would ring us when she got home, so that we knew she was safe. More walking up and up in the bush and then into those bright UV rays. On the tops there was a bit of a warm breeze. It was a very drying day.

We stopped for lunch at Swampy Summit around the side of the building, out of the wind. It was then that I spotted ten pixies out for a skip through the tussocks in their pyjamas, waving bananas around like pois and singing Christmas carols. I knew that I hadn't drunk enough water that morning, so I desperately sucked on the camel pack straw until the pixies vanished, leaving a trail of bananas scattered around like yellow feathers, except more chunky...

Richard then popped some acid drops and passed them around the group, and he had some other kind of drug to banish the sun and dehydration headache that he had. Now everyone knew that the pixies were real... We started to get very sleepy sitting in the sunshine and knew it was time to finish this trip, before the pixies turned nasty, now that they'd eaten their bananas and were looking at the remains of our lunch.

So, we struggled to leave our warm haven and stepped out into the swift breeze to march quickly down the Leith Saddle track. Thanks to the guys that put up the board walk down the track; it would be quite gluggy without it. The bush is very beautiful down there and it was a real pleasure to walk down, with more down, to the car park. Jonette, Bill and I then did a route march down the road to meet Richard coming back up in the car to get us.

Our trip didn't end there, as Richard had been talking beer with Bill on the boardwalk, so a social occasion was had at our house with Jonette, Bill and Diane sampling a few of Richard's delicious beers and cider to round off the day nicely. Thanks everyone for turning up, it was a lovely day.

Tracy Pettinger, for Richard Pettinger, Diane Munster, Etsuko Yamada, Elizabeth Liefting, Jonette Service, Fieke Neuman, Nina Burleigh and Bill Richardson.



## **POST OFFICE CREEK BY BIKE**

**October 8, 2006**

**Author: Rob Porteous**

Published in Bulletin 667, October 2006

In spite of my assurances that this trip would be suitable for almost anyone who rides a mountain bike, only four hardy souls were awaiting my arrival on Sunday morning. We packed into two vehicles and made our way to the carpark at the bottom of Government Track. After giving Matt some grief over the size of his cycling pack we were off.

As it turned out, Government Track was more challenging for some than I would have thought, but everyone was still in good spirits when we reached the pylons at the top (sweaty but happy). After this initial challenge it was an enjoyable ride along the road to the beginning of the Post Office Creek track (that Matt and Andrew very nearly rode right past). After crossing one fallen tree and a partially block culvert we on the track proper. The bracken and odd small pine stump did a splendid job of removing any mud accumulated on Government Track. Taller team members also remarked the same may have been the case for their heads had it not been for their helmets. There was the odd section where the track left the trees long enough for me to want to be sure everyone found their way back. It was here that we got to watch a lovely piece of bike ballet as Andrew and his bike parted company. Not every tussock can be ridden through, as it turns out.

Lunch was had at the Post Office Creek school house. This gave us an opportunity to repair Andrew's broken gear cable and puncture. Then it was the climb up the hill. I discovered my flat rear tyre at this stage (a slow puncture, so air only). Not long after, Ralph was forced to repair his front tyre and while that was happening Matt pumped up his tyre. That was enough to get us to Kowhai Spur, which was its usual sublime self. So much so that at the bottom Ralph was heard to say, "Rob after that, I almost forgive you for Post Office Creek!"

So it was with smiles and flat tyres all around that we headed back to town. Cheers for a good day to Ralph Harvey, Pete Stephens, Matt Corbett and Andrew Fausch.

Rob Porteous

# **UNEXPLORED SILVER PEAKS (OR: A RETURN TO THE ANGEL'S STAIRCASE – BY ACCIDENT)**

**October 14, 2006**

**Author: Tracy & Vincent Pettinger**

Published in Bulletin 669, December 2006

We all met at the clubrooms at 9 am, give or take ten minutes. The Richard and Tracy Pettinger's are usually ten minutes late for most meetings.

We managed to have just two cars for the seven people on the trip, although Wayne's car was perhaps not the best other car we could have taken given that it has a slipping clutch and when we were behind it, it looks as if the back driver's side wheel is splayed out and ready to roll off into the middle of the road. But it didn't. We kept behind them, though, just to make sure they made it. It could be an adventure in the making!

We started out from Whare Flat and walked up the track, surprised that the bridge is not there anymore. There is a slight deviation, up and down and around to get to the other end of the other bridge. Then we were on our way, walking the same track as last year's Unexplored Silver Peaks trip. Then we walked up a stream for ages and ages, with its lovely gorge, until our feet were numb from the cold water. There was supposed to be a turn off, where the stream splits into two, but only I (Vincent) noticed it, but because it was so excruciatingly obvious, I didn't think I needed to tell anyone about it. Consequently, when I chose the left-hand fork to walk up, and everyone else was chatting so heartily they didn't notice, they all followed me, like lambs to the slaughter. (Well, it could have been like that if they'd all fallen off a cliff following me.)

This was going to be a nine-hour trip, if we had taken the right-hand fork. Taking the other option shortened the trip by about three and a half hours. Nobody seemed to mind that, though, at the end of the day, which turned out to be the middle of the afternoon.

We got as far as a waterfall with a plunge pool with steep sides and decided to start walking up the side of the hill. It was a bit of a bush-bash in places, but we tried to stick to the top of the spur where the animal tracks are. Unfortunately, the animals are much shorter than us, so there was lots of under-overgrowth for tall people. It was a walk for short people, or older people with severe stoops.

We had lunch near the top, huddled together in the spot that most resembled a clearing. It didn't have much of a view, but the wind was cooling, and we didn't want to linger longer than we had to. Then we were glad it was a shorter trip, as we could see big black clouds heading our way.

The end of the trip was very similar to last year's trip. We saw the pine tree again that we tried to kill last year with Vincent's pocketknife and Roy's walking pole. It was looking very healthy, with big scars where it had been ring barked, but still reaching for the sky. It annoyed us, so

we pulled off a couple of branches and swore at it a bit. That'll learn it! If we do this trip again, we will take a saw, or maybe two or three. Then we "Baa, humbug"ed a bit and carried on our merry bash, following the pink tags and blue possum cyanide spots.

On the way back down the Chalkies, the track came to a very abrupt stop. There is now a dug-out area for a new Carisbrook, or was it just a turning circle for the diggers and trucks that have come up the road for the building of two huge new houses? The track ends, or starts, depending on which way you're going, in midair... The road is deeply rutted and ugly, with mud pushed into the bush with its struggling clematis. The stream has had heaps of gravel shoved to the side of it and although it didn't look dirty, it doesn't seem right that suburbia has infiltrated into what was once a lovely place. It was a sad end to a lovely day.

Tracy and Vincent Pettinger, for Richard Pettinger - our leader, Wayne Hodgkinson, Roy Ward, Nicole Caruso and Sharon O'Sullivan.



## SADDLE HILL

**October 29, 2006**

**Author: Alan Thomson**

Published in Bulletin 669, December 2006

Nine of us met up at the clubrooms and travelled out to East Taieri where we met up with another six intrepid trampers. Away we went, following the farmer through gates, under electric fences, and over wire fences, up the hill through farmland and over a weir that had created a wetland where some waterfowl were in residence. On, up the hill 'til just before the top road where we came across some young calves who took quite an interest in our passing. Four more people joined the group here, including two young lads of seven. (They came in handy for checking the electric fences!) Then down a gravel road and into a driveway that led to a private oasis of approximately 80 native trees and plants, quite a few had been labelled, making the walk down through this hidden bush area very interesting.



**Saddle Hill from Friends Hill**

Then, just as we were getting peckish, we came upon a mowed area complete with picnic tables. Time for a wee break. After our morning tea we travelled up through a pine plantation, then through a eucalypt forest to where we could get a view out over Westwood to the sea. We then climbed up a road where most continued to the top of the quarry while two of us carried on around the road to the woolshed where we sat in the sun and had lunch while waiting for the others.

After lunch, and with the weather deteriorating, we made our attempt on Saddle Hill. Everyone made it to the trig and while the view south was blotted out with cloud, we still got reasonable views over Dunedin and the Harbour. From there it was all downhill, once again through farmland. A most interesting walk.

Alan Thomson.

## **OTMC COMMITTEE (2006-07)**

**President** – Antony Pettinger

**Vice President** – Barry Atkinson

**Secretary** – Jill McAliece

**Treasurer** Ann Burton

**Chief Guide / Transport** – Antony Pettinger

**Bulletin Editor** – Robyn Bell

**Membership Secretary** – Ian Sime

**Social Convenor** – Fiona Webster

**Day Trip Convener** – Roy Ward

**Conservation & Recreation Advocacy** – David Barnes

**Library** – Wolfgang Gerber

**Publicity** – Wolfgang Gerber

**Funding** – Greg Powell

**Gear Hire** – Matt Corbett

**Gear Hire** – Dave Chambers

**SAR** – Teresa Wasilewska

**Website** – Antony Pettinger

**Clubrooms** – Terry Casey

**Committee** – Alan Thomson

**Bushcraft 2007** – Antony Pettinger

**Hon. Solicitor** – Antony Hamel

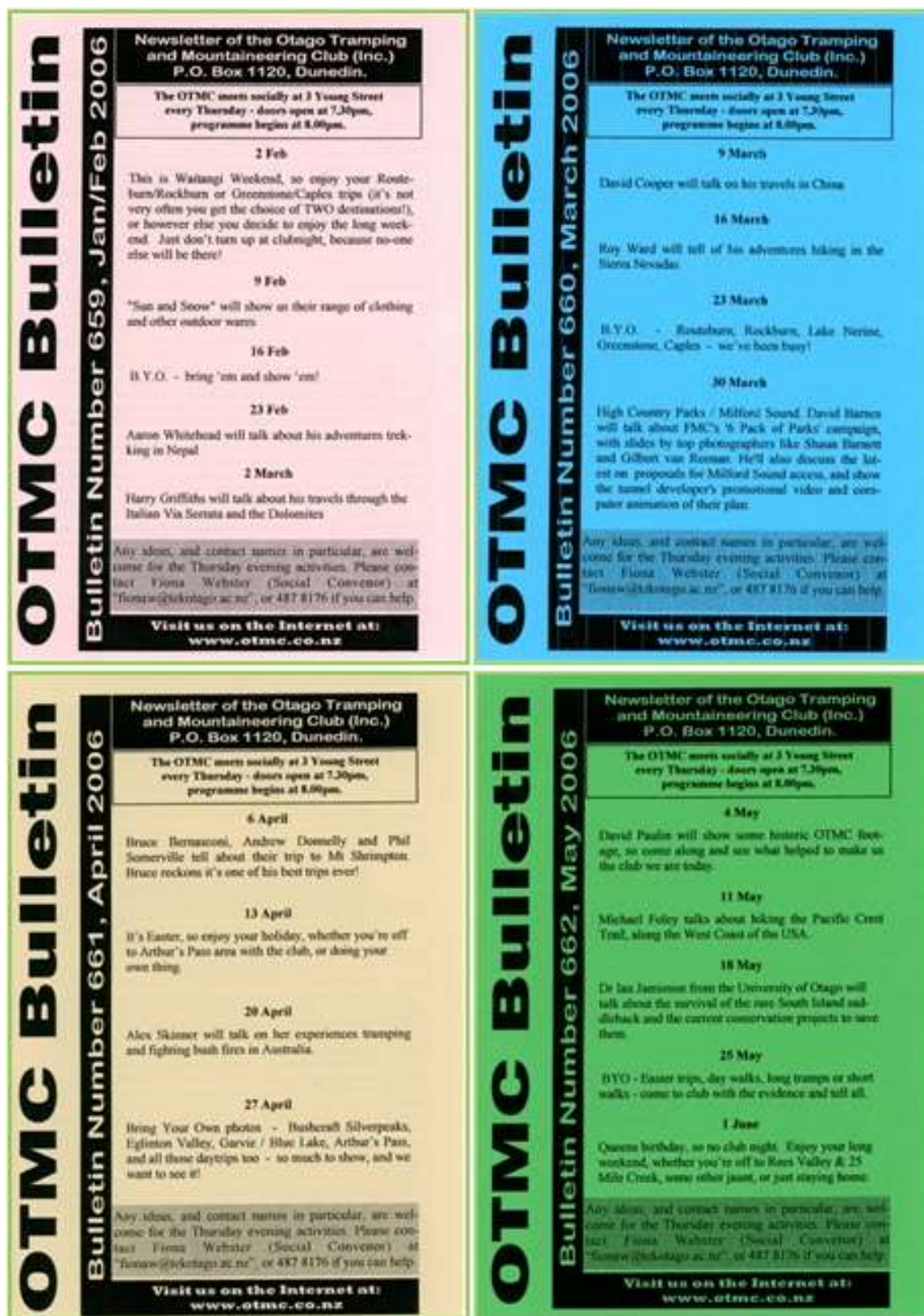


## OTMC TRIP PROGRAMME 2006

Month	Date(s)	Specific Trip	Leader
January	21-22	Mt Domett - Danseys Pass	Antony Pettinger
January	22	Taieri River Walk	Olive Neilson
January	29	Orbell's Cave	Bill Wilson
February	3-6	Routeburn / Rockburn	Greg Powell
February	4-6	Greenstone / Caples	Ray & Jill McAliece
February	12	OTMC Picnic	
February	18-19	Maitland / Freehold Creek (other options available)	Gary Dawe
February	19	Mystery Destination	Cathy McKersey
February	21	Bushcraft 2006 (Introductory Evening)	Antony Pettinger
February	25-26	Bushcraft 2006 (Tirohanga Weekend)	Antony Pettinger
February	25	OTMC Silver Peaks Marathon	Roy Ward
February	26	Millennium Track	Fieke Neuman
March	4-5	Green Lake / Borland Area	Peter Stevenson
March	5	Te Papanui / Lammerlaws	Ian Sime
March	11-12	Bushcraft 2006 (Silver Peaks Weekend)	Antony Pettinger
March	12	Lee Stream	Alan Scurr
March	19	Bushcraft 2006 (River Safety Day)	Antony Pettinger
March	25-26	Bushcraft 2006 / OTMC Trip (Eglinton Valley to Homer Tunnel)	Antony Pettinger
March	26	Nicols Falls - Morrisons	Ran Turner
April	1-2	Garvies - Blue Lake	Ian Sime
April	2	Pyramids / Victory Beach	Sandra de Vries
April	9	Rustlers Ridge	Gavin McArthur
April	14-17	Arthur's Pass National Park	Antony Pettinger
April	23	Long Ridge / Powder Ridge / Chalkies	Bill Wilson
April	29-30	Mt Somers	Terry Casey
April	30	Mt Hyde / Taieri Aquaduct	Alan Thomson
May	6-7	Complete Kepler Track (Partial Options Available)	Ann Burton
May	7	ABC Cave / Bendoran / The Gap / Mt Misery	Bill Wilson
May	14	Rustlers Ridge	Jonette Service
May	20-21	Ahuriri Conservation Park	Allan Perry
May	21	Mt Cargill	Jill McAliece
May	28	Alexandra (Mountain Bike)	Peter Stevenson
June	3-5	Rees Valley - Twenty Five Mile Creek	Kerryn Woods
June	11	Maungatua Traverse	Antony Hamel
June	18	Heyward Point and Kaikai	Robyn Austin
June	24-25	Day Trips From Aspiring Hut	Peter Stevenson
June	25	Solstice Sunrise Swampy Circuit	David Barnes
July	1	Visiting Ancient Establishment's Part Deux (Take 2)	Wolfgang Gerber
July	9	Raingauge Spur - Steve Aimes	Ran Turner
July	15-16	Winter Routeburn (Climbing Options Available)	Ralph Harvey

July	16	Karitane / Huriawa Pa	Robyn MacKay
July	23	Sutton Salt Lake	Carmel Casey
July	29-30	Leaning Lodge - Rock And Pillar Range)	Ray McAliece
July	30	Careys Creek	Bill Wilson
August	6	Ship At Anchor	Alan Thomson
August	12-13	OTMC Tranz Alpine Arthur's Pass Expedition	Wolfgang Gerber
August	13	The Remarkable Rock	Ian Sime
August	20	Burns Saddle - Possum Hut - Swampy	David Barnes
August	26-27	Snowcraft (Iceaxe and Crampons)	Matt Corbett
August	27	Mopanui / Doctors Point	Kathryn Jeyes
September	2-3	Makarora Region (Climbing Options Available)	Philip Somerville
September	3	GPS Familiarisation Exercise	Teresa Blondell
September	10	Skyline Track	Roy Ward
September	16-17	Cass / Lagoon saddle	Dave Chambers
September	17	Coast To Coast	Ralph Harvey
September	24	Nicholls Creek - Moon Track - Swampy Spur	Tracy Pettinger
September	30-1	Lake Isobel - Mt Crichton	Antony Pettinger
October	1	Leaning Lodge	Greg Powell
October	8	Post Office Creek Circuit (cycle)	Rob Porteous
October	15	Unexplored Silver Peaks	Richard Pettinger
October	21-23	Skippers / Mt Aurum Area	Antony Pettinger
October	29	Saddle Hill	Alan Scurr
November	4-5	Piano Flat	Jill McAliece
November	5	GPS Familiarisation Exercise	Teresa Blondell
November	5	Flagstaff (7.30pm Start)	Fieke Neuman
November	12	Spiers Road - Ben Rudd's - Davies Track	Richard Pettinger
November	18-19	Greenstone Valley	Antony Pettinger
November	19	Silverstream Bush Bash	Wayne Hodgkinson
November	26	Possum Busters	Gavin McArthur
December	3	Mt Trotter - Mt MacKenzie	Bill Wilson
December	9-10	Conical Hill (Mystery Day Trip)	Wolfgang Gerber
December	10	Waikouaiti Beach	Antony Hamel

## OTMC BULLETIN COVERS (FEBRUARY TO MAY)





## OTMC BULLETIN COVERS (JUNE TO SEPTEMBER)



## OTMC BULLETIN COVERS (OCTOBER TO DECEMBER)

