

Social Programme

Coming Thursday Night Meetings

- 4 March** **Rob Wells** will talk about his cycling trip around **Mongolia**
- 11 March** **William Lucas** will tell us about his experiences walking the length of NZ in **bare feet**
- 18 March** **Bring Your Own**
- 25 March** **OTMC Life Members** will be presented with a certificate at a **special evening** to celebrate their efforts supporting our club (see page 3)
- 1 April** **Gavin Clark** will show some **historic films** of OTMC from yesteryear

Any ideas, and contact names in particular, are welcome for the Thursday evening activities. Please contact Fiona Webster (Social Convenor) if you can help - see the Committee member list.

Contributions (limit of 1000 words) are welcome for the April Bulletin, deadline is 11/03/04, publication 25/03/04. You can submit material on floppy disc (PC not Mac please), or email 'rbell@pooka.otago.ac.nz' (without the quotes). And you can leave paper submissions in the editor's box in the clubrooms, or post to Robyn Bell, 236A Taieri Rd, Dunedin. Thanks.

OTMC Bulletin

Bulletin Number 638, March 2004

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

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

President's Piece

I have received some great feedback on recent weekend trips. Trevor Deaker's trip over Waitangi Weekend provided some major challenges to a few of the participants, with the weather throwing just about everything imaginable at them. We are fortunate to have the depth of experience within the club membership to provide leaders to cover all levels of ability.

Tuesday 24th February is the opening evening for the Bushcraft 2004 Programme, which has received 13 registrations to date with a few more to confirm. The course director, Antony Pettinger has been quietly working behind the scenes and he has the makings of another successful Bushcraft underway. Thank you to Antony and everyone who has volunteered their time to ensure the course's success.

Wishing you safe and enjoyable tramping.

Terry Casey, President.

Committee Members 2003-2004

President	Terry Casey	454 4592
Vice President/Clubrooms	Sandra de Vries	473 7224
Secretary	Jenni Wright	454 5061
Treasurer	Ann Burton	476 2360
Imm. Past Pres./Publicity	Alan Thomson	455 7878
Chief Guide	Antony Pettinger	473 7924
Membership Secretary	Ian Sime	453 6185
Gear Hire	Mike Brettell	455 1515
Daytrip Convenor	Cathy McKersey	455 0994
Funding	Greg Powell	454 4828
Library	Jonette Service	454 2323
SAR Contact	Teresa Wasilewska	477 4987
Social Convenor	Fiona Webster	487 8176
Property Maintenance	Peter Mason	455 7074
Bulletin Editor	Robyn Bell	476 7411
Conservation	David Barnes	454 4492

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

DAYTRIPS

Skyline Track (M) 29 February

In conjunction with DCC Tracks Week, we will be walking the Skyline Track, Sullivans Dam to Mt Cargill return, time 5 to 6 hours. Good footwear is essential as the track can be muddy. Car pool, cost \$5.00
Contact Dave Chambers 454-3857

Mt Cargill/ Organ Pipes (E) 7 March

Up from Bethunes Gully over the top, down past organ pipes and through Grahams Bush. If two cars are available they can key swap halfway. Approx 4-5 hours. Car pool cost \$4
Leader Jan Piggott ph 473-8119.

NOTE:- DESTINATIONS FOR 7 & 14 MARCH HAVE BEEN SWOPPED

Archery Have-a-Go 14 March

Meet at Chingford Park (the end closest to town) - watch out for the signposts. You'll see a cream coloured breeze block shed type building - that's us. Trip starts at 10 am prompt, and lasts until 12:00. All equipment, and instruction provided (three coaches). Tea, coffee, biscuits provided, and a little competition to see who learnt the most! Numbers limited to 10, so be in quick to sign up at the clubrooms.

Contact Debs Carr at 456 4356

Bushcraft Rivercrossing 21 March

See the trip card for details of this event, which is part of the Bushcraft course.

Mt Charles 28 March

It's a 20 minute drive from Dunedin to Mt Charles, the highest point on the Otago Peninsula, with great panoramic views from the top at 408 m. We should have plenty of time to explore other areas, perhaps Allans Beach (which often has plenty of seals around) and the Pyramids. You'll need to bring lunch and a jacket for this easy to medium trip.
Contact Robyn Bell at 476 7411

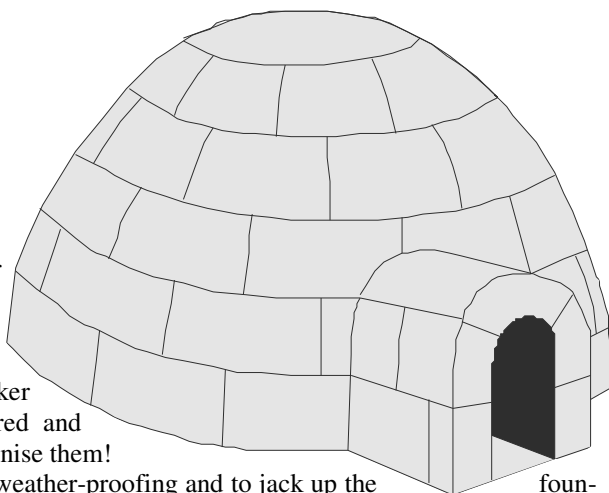
Club News

BIG HUT ROCK & PILLARS REPORT 9 FEB 2004

You will be pleased to hear that restoration of the hut is progressing well. The roof is repaired, drainage ditches dug, and the kitchen, locker room and bunkroom repaired and painted - you wouldn't recognise them!

We intend to finish outside weather-proofing and to jack up the foundations and level the floor. A repaired water tank awaits installation. Inside jobs include cleaning and repairs to the commonroom, and a host of other small tasks. DoC have backed off their hut removal plans. They are offering the R & P Hut Trust a lease instead. Thanks for your letters to the ODT etc.

Bruce Mason
Trust Secretary



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CHANGING PATTERNS

DoC is doing a national survey about changing recreation patterns. It focuses on people whose recreation takes them into national parks and other natural areas on the land, lakes, tracks, rivers and coast, and includes questions on outdoor recreation done over the past five years and how these activities have changed. The survey can be completed online by clicking here <http://www.nzrecreation.info/>, or hard copies can be picked up at 26 outdoor equipment stores (listed on the website) until the end of March. The results of the study will be published later this year. As an incentive, each completed questionnaire goes into a draw for a \$1000 credit at a participating outdoor equipment store.

Sarah Smellie
Strategic Policy Analyst
Auckland Regional Council
ph (09) 366 2000 x 8032



GREAT NEWS ABOUT BIRCHWOOD STATION

The recent announcement of the purchase of Birchwood Station in the Ahuriri Valley by the Nature Heritage Fund is great news for an area frequented by the OTMC. FMC, on your behalf, has long advocated the purchase of this property, as it's natural, scenic and recreation values are just too good for it to be farmed. This move will also clear up niggling access issues.

Birchwood Station was used as a case study in the recent FMC publication "Freedom of the Hills". Copies of this 24 page booklet are at the clubrooms (and I've got a few spare), and it's well worth reading for background on the whole Tenure Review process. Actually, it's worth a look just for the stunning photos by the likes of Shaun Barnett, Kelvin Lloyd, Nick Groves and Colin Monteath.

David Barnes

**CONSERVATION & RECREATION
ADVOCACY REPORT
JANUARY 2004**

Following is the report David presented to our February committee meeting.

The visitor facilities review was a huge job. I decided not to duplicate the FMC effort - without a total rewrite, it would be obvious it was largely the same - so stated in the OTMC one that we largely agreed with FMC, but highlighted our own particular views on the Rock & Pillar and Silverpeaks Huts. It was emphasised that we were presenting our views on the "big picture" - whether there should be facilities and if so, what, rather than on our views as owner/ex-owner of the existing structures.

DoC has also sent a questionnaire on our experience of participating in the review process, which I've completed.

Chris Pearson, resident of USA, drafted a submission on the Dingle Burn tenure review, drawing to a large extent on the submission Mike Float did for FMC. This is a significant property, and one that the club frequents on a regular basis.

Transit NZ is seeking our views on their proposals for realigning the Northern Motorway at Leith Saddle. Attached is my draft response, which emphasises the need to reinstate legal foot access between Waitati Valley and Leith Valley Roads. I'd appreciate any comments you have. I spoke to Ken Mason prior to writing. Paul Coffey has advised that the DCC will be pushing the same points as us.

The trip to Livingstones re-iterated just what a dopey idea the gondola is. Last media reports suggested Skyline and Ngai Tahu would make a decision on whether to proceed with consents etc before Christmas, but so far nothing. In a recent DoC publication on draft general policies for National Parks I did note a proposed policy stating "Aerial cableways (including but not limited to gondolas): Aerial cableways should not be erected in national parks outside defined amenities areas."

I have the analysis of submissions on the foreshore and seabed. Ours isn't one of those quoted, but the outcome is largely in line with our wishes.

FMC nomination forms are out. The two South Island vice-presidents retire from those positions this year (having served the allowable 3 years), so if you're willing to put my name forward for that slot and the executive, I'd be happy. *(With pleasure, David, you do a sterling job! Ed)*

David Barnes

**April 24-25
Rees Valley (Kea Basin or 25 Mile Creek) (All)
Dave Chambers 4543857**

Here's a chance to visit the OTMC's most far-flung hut - 25 Mile Hut in the Rees Valley. The Rees forms one half of the well known Dart/Rees circuit, but is the more interesting of the two valleys. It's only a short walk from the Muddy Creek carpark to 25 Mile Hut. Here you could base yourself at/near the hut and have a quick day trip up to Kea Basin (which is located below Mt. Earnslaw). This involves a crossing of the Rees River which isn't too difficult in the right conditions. Sunday can be spent exploring 25 Mile Creek. This creek is untracked and quite spectacular. Alternatively, you could spend the night in Kea Basin and make your way up towards Esquilant Biv, with great views of Earnslaw. The trip list closes on April 15.

ADVANCE NOTICE

**Routeburn Track Crossover (MF)
May 8-9
Debs Carr 456-4356**

This is a trip the OTMC last did around ten years ago. The plan is to base parties at each end of the Routeburn Track and to tramp the Routeburn end to end. Sounds easy, but it is going to be a bit harder to arrange than a normal weekend trip - so please consider the points below before you sign up.

At this stage we are planning to use vans for this trip, meaning that numbers on the trip will be restricted to the number of seats in a van. Hence the numbers we are looking at is either 18-20, or 36-40. This is based on having either 1 or 2 vans at each end. Other numbers won't work out, and I don't think private cars are a good option. The Routeburn will be in 'winter season', with the 'tourist season' closing in late April. There may be a few people on the track at this time, like the Milford last April, but I don't think we will get 100+ at any of the huts.

For those travelling from the Glenorchy end, it is suggested that you tramp into Routeburn Flats Hut on the Friday night, up to Falls Hut on Saturday morning, then up to Lake Harris and on to McKenzie for Saturday night. From the Divide end, I suggest that you walk into Howden on Friday night. Saturday will entail travelling to MacKenzie, up to and over the Harris Saddle and onto Falls Hut for the Saturday night.

One day on each trip will be longish, so a good fitness level will be required. That said, this will be a great trip. If you are interested in coming along, it would be appreciated if you could sign the list early. This trip has limited numbers - first come, first served basis. In the event that the trip is over subscribed, OTMC members will have preference. Contact Debs for more info, or check out the display at club.

Trip List

CHIEF GUIDE COMMENT

The weekend trips for the start of 2004 have had a really good response. Gary's trip to the Livingstone Range and Giffords Crack was well supported for the first trip of the year, with 19 people attended. The weather was brilliant along the Livingstones, and the party attempting Giffords Crack made an unusual diversion along the way. We look forward to a report.

Trevor's trip to the Rockburn area was meant to be held under typical Waitangi Weekend blue skies, but the weather let the 24 people on the trip down. As always the members on the trip made the best of the conditions and had a good trip.

The planned crossover from the Ahuriri to the Dingleburn is not happening due to the condition of the private road beyond Timaru River alongside Lake Hawea. Currently a heavy 4WD is required to get along the track.

The upcoming trips are interspersed with Bushcraft, (see the trip card for dates), so we are having a busy time at the moment.

Arthur's Pass National Park (M-C)

April 9-12 (Easter)

Mike Brettell 455-1515

The OTMC hasn't visited Arthur's Pass very often, maybe because of the perceived distance from Dunedin. In reality it is probably as close as some of the other places we visit, like Milford Sound or beyond Makarora. As I have only tramped in the area once I'm not going to try and outline the trips that can be undertaken – this is a trip where you can start your research now. There are plenty of guidebooks available for this area (i.e 'A Trampers Guide To New Zealand's National Parks', by Robbie Burton and Maggie Atkinson, or 'Tramping In The South Island, Arthurs Pass to Mt Cook' by Sven Brabyn and Elise Bryant). Additionally, DoC have a good selection of trips on their website, with guides available at their office.

There are lots of trips available from State Highway 73, the main road to the West Coast. As Arthurs Pass straddles the Main Divide, the park is mainly of an alpine nature, with many 1, 2, 3 and 4 day trips available. See Mike at clubnights, where there will be more information available nearer the time. The trip list will close on April 1.

Trip Reports

HAAST TO PARINGA CATTLE TRACK... BY BIKE!

Christmas is a traditional time to do a bit of exploring in the back country where a normal weekend might leave you short. With this in mind I figured it would be an ideal time to shoot away and try something I had read about in a couple of places but never actually seen for myself - the Haast-Paringa cattle track. The Kennett brothers guide book described it as a bit of a mission. However, reports lately had suggested that DoC had been in there and cleared the track, thus giving someone dense enough to try a chance of actually riding. I dropped a note on the OTMC discussion list looking for more information. Paul van Kampen sent me a copy of an article written in 2000 by someone who described himself as a novice which said that 60% of the track was rideable.

Well that was all the encouragement I needed! I enrolled another couple of intrepid explorers (sic suckers) and we set off soon after Boxing Day with light packs and shiny mountain bikes to do battle with the West Coast sandflies.

It wasn't the greatest of starts when the rain began as we unloaded the car, but undeterred we set off into the bush. The walker we met coming out into the car park looked a bit dubious about our intentions, but wished us luck anyhow. In hindsight he may have been right.

The "easy" part of the ride into Blowfly Hut was about 50% rideable (maybe), but fun for all that. After that it was a steady but gradual climb to Maori Saddle Hut. This consisted largely of a track similar to Government Track but covered in various sized rocks. I enjoyed the technical challenge of riding the bike but most, I think, would feel that this was a long way to push or carry a bike.

Maori Saddle Hut, like all the huts on this track, was of an exceptional standard and would make a lovely place to stay the night after 6 or so hours walking. We had lunch here and then continued on our way to Coppermine hut.

This section of the track was the least looked after and had several large washouts. These would have been a nuisance on foot but when laden with bikes they were downright unpleasant! Likewise the deadfalls were very difficult to thread bikes through, especially when wearing hard plastic-soled shoes custom made for bike riding. They don't give you much purchase on rain slick wood!

After about five hours on this section of the track we reached a point where the track improved somewhat and someone had even managed to bring a four-wheeled motorbike up to this point. WELL! If he can ride so can I! I had a great ride the rest of

(Continued on page 6)

