

OTMC Bulletin

Bulletin Number 652, June 2005

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.

2 June

This is Queen's Birthday weekend, so there is no clubnight. Enjoy your extra day off, whether it's with our club on the Caples track, holidaying elsewhere, or relaxing at home.

9 June

Antony, Alan, Ann et al will tell us about their 10 day circuit of Mt Aspiring National Park.

16 June

Gary and Heather will host the Great OTMC Quiz. Bring along friends and family to make up teams on the night - lots of fun and friendly rivalry, minimal "knowledge" required!

23 June

Jo Campbell from Macpac will tell us about their products - construction, properties, and how best to use and look after them. Questions encouraged!

30 June

B.Y.O. photos, slides etc to show your latest tramps.

Any ideas, and contact names in particular, are welcome for the Thursday evening activities. Please contact Fiona Webster (Social Convenor) at "fionaw@tekotago.ac.nz", or 487 8176 if you can help.

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

PRESIDENT'S PIECE

The OTMC has been quiet tramping-wise over the past month. After a huge trip to Ohau in early April the club hadn't been away for a weekend trip until the Routeburn Crossover trip in mid May. The scheduled trip to the Eyre Mountains at ANZAC weekend didn't eventuate because of the severe storm which lashed much of the country. If you read the ODT you may have been led to believe that the club was tramping in the Borland area, as a German trampler with the 'Otago Tramping Club' went missing (but was later found). But I can assure members that this was nothing to do with the OTMC, and our safety record remains intact.

Whilst the tramping side of the club may be quiet, the Thursday meetings continue to be well supported, due to the great work being done by Fiona, who is providing a varied and exciting range of speakers. It is interesting to note how fickle the BYO nights can be - in early April we had too many wanting to share their trips, then in early May we had only one person (who managed to talk to 3 photos for at least 10 minutes!) The Thursday meetings continue to be a vital part of the OTMC, confirmed by the fact that we are one of the few tramping clubs in NZ to have a structured meeting weekly.

At the May committee meeting Ray McAlie (a now 'not so reluctant trampler') spoke to us about some ideas he has for the retention of Leaning Lodge on the Rock and Pillars. Ray is a builder by trade and visited the hut in early May to see first hand what work is needed to ensure the hut's survival. Ray has suggested that the hut can be saved by carrying out work on the foundations (some of the joists are currently floating), rebuilding the bunks and interior, and giving the hut a good coat of paint inside and out. Additionally, Ray suggests removing the stove completely (unless you carry fuel in, the hut itself appears to be getting used for firewood!) and re-siting the loo slightly. Ray's interest is such that he has offered to work on the hut over next summer. Before this can happen we need to finalise both the work plan with DoC, and the long term ownership of the hut with the OTMC. Last year the club sent out numerous letters to many different groups to gauge support for the hut, and the replies were positive for its retention. On the other hand, the committee is also aware that there are a significant number of club members who don't think OTMC should retain ownership of the hut. Therefore we are seriously investigating setting up a trust that will manage, and perhaps own, Leaning Lodge. This trust would be responsible for the improvements required by DoC and ongoing upkeep, and it is intended that the OTMC would be a trustee. The current committee is working towards a final resolution to put to the AGM on August 25. This will hopefully mean that restoration work can start when summer arrives, and that before too long the future of Leaning Lodge can be assured again. The committee welcomes any comments on this issue between now and the AGM, either by writing to the Bulletin or the committee. The final decision will be made by an OTMC general meeting (hopefully the scheduled AGM). Be there to have your say.

Regards, Antony Pettinger

“Between a Rock and a Hard Place”

Aron Ralston.

Aron Ralston might possibly be the best-known mountain accident victim in the world at the moment. Even if you don't recognise the name, you'll have heard of the guy who chopped his own arm off. This well written book covers the events leading up to and following that fateful moment, interspersed with chapters on his earlier mountain pursuits.

Many people have questioned how Ralston managed to find himself in his predicament, alone and without anyone knowing where he was. An accomplished climber who had solo-ed most of Colorado's 14,000 foot peaks in winter, he comes across as a guy who likes to push his own personal boundaries quite hard in the hills, but not with complete disregard for his own safety. In fact, as one story about an avalanche illustrates, he has clearly learned lessons – as many of us have – that have given him a better appreciation of where to draw the line. He had also been a SAR volunteer.

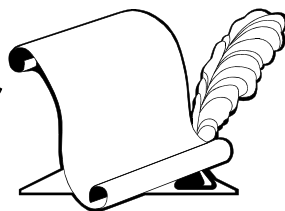
The book shows that the circumstances that led to him being in Blue John Canyon could have happened to anyone holidaying alone - hitting the road with a few days off, a vehicle full of toys and an eye for a good forecast. The trip was one that should have been well within his capabilities. One correspondent to the ODT said that by being there alone, Ralston broke a prime and inviolable rule of the hills. In a reply, I pointed out that the Bushcraft Manual discusses the rewards of travelling alone, and states that those who choose to do so have to accept an enhanced degree of responsibility for their own actions. I suggested that, in amputating his own arm, Ralston clearly accepted that burden of responsibility.

Inevitably, the book leads to the decision that amputation, risky as it was, was the only alternative to death, most probably from dehydration. It seems to me that the five day wait before taking that drastic step – which he had considered at the outset – was critical to his survival. Four days was enough to effectively kill the nerve and vascular systems in the end of the limb, meaning both that the pain of the amputation was bearable and the blood flow from the stump was able to be staunched.

The book is an insightful account of a remarkable tale of survival. I recommend it.

David Barnes

Letter to The Editor



I wish to take up the Presidential challenge given in the May Bulletin and write a letter to the Editor.

Firstly I want to advise our Aussie Trip Report writer, Jack is it?. that not all Kiwis are fly (tarp) fans. I converted to tents about thirty years ago after a torrid experience which happened to also be in the Rockburn Valley. I now carry my Macpac Microlight tent with me virtually everywhere and have many times listened, from the comfort of my warm dry sleeping bag, to the curses of other trampers wringing out theirs.

Secondly I was horrified to read that the Coroner has asked DoC to investigate ways of making the Cascade Saddle trip safer. I ascended Cascade Saddle from the Dart side in March but it has been many years since I have been up there from the Matukituki side. However, from what I recall, there is nothing particularly difficult about the route for the cautious trumper in normal summer conditions. I understand that the January accident happened when the party were crossing snow. It is well understood that steep snowgrass can be treacherous in wet or snowy conditions. There is very little that DoC can do to prevent these conditions other than provide information and educate trampers of the risks.

The Rees-Dart, Cascade Saddle area is rapidly becoming very popular with overseas tourists. We experienced full huts every night in the area. It is almost by default becoming another Great Walk. Along with this, I guess, is the possibility that the Coroner's recommendation might be interpreted as wider tracks, handrails and board walks.

I think the club needs to submit to the Coroner, if possible, or to DoC, that this would not be desirable, nor would it necessarily make the route safer. Trampers need to be prepared when going into the high country and education is the only way to ensure this.

Another point I notice with some concern in the Dart Valley around Daleys Hut, is the high standard of track being constructed. If anyone were to read the New Zealand standard for a Great Walk or Easy Tramping Track they will see that a slot carved through the forest floor by a machine is well in excess of that standard. The trouble is that these tracks are being made by machines for the machines that construct them. A trumper can easily step over small obstacles and turn tight corners. They only need a metre or so of clear space to walk along. Easy curves, a wide carriageway and a smooth surface is for wheeled vehicles and I suspect that the DoC workers are making these tracks so that their machines can easily move along them. This is not appropriate on the Rees-Dart which is supposed to be a more challenging alternative than the Graet Walk tracks. Maybe the Club should look at making its voice heard on this issue as well.

Peter McKellar

Trip Reports

All Dressed Up With Nowhere To Go!

So there we were outside the clubroom, 9 am Sunday morning, 3 April. Doug was sick and Cathy was looking for a volunteer to lead the trip. Kevin Blair (a non member who had turned up just for the day) outlined a trip we could do, we all said "Yes", so off we went.

We parked our two vehicles just by the ford on the Mt Allen road and set off at 10.20 am. We followed the track alongside Big Stream and from there made our way up and onto Long Ridge. On this section we were passed by several runners coming towards us who were doing the Pulpit Rock Pursuit Race. From Long Ridge we walked up and onto Pulpit Rock where we stopped for lunch at 1.20 pm. From there we continued down past the Painted Forest and along the Wanita Forest track, returning to the vehicles at 3.55 pm - a round trip, Kevin informed me, of about 20 km.

It had been a great day weather-wise and the sun was still shining when we took a group photo before heading home. I would like to thank Janet and Jeremy, our two drivers, for getting us there and back safely, and Kevin for standing in at a moment's notice to lead the trip.

Gary Moss for Sue, Jill, Hilda, Janet, Nina, Dave, Jeremy and Kevin.

Maitland Valley Headwaters of Lake Ohau Combined Bushcraft trip

We departed Dunedin on Friday night, hoping that the rain wouldn't last (and it didn't), in fact the weather was perfect for the rest of the weekend. Betul maybe had an ulterior motive in recommending a stop at the new Turkish restaurant in Oamaru for tea, where the owners spoke with Betul in her native tongue, but the kebabs were delicious, and we enjoyed gratis Turkish coffee and apple tea. It was a bit difficult agreeing on a camping spot in the dark, eventually setting up camp at Freehold Creek about midnight. Those in Ivan's group were thankful for his advice earlier in the week that pillows and travel clothes were welcome (and could be left in the van Saturday night).

Saturday morning saw Ivan impressing us with his fishing prowess, catching a fish for (his) breakfast. A short drive past the turnoff to the Ohau Ski Lodge took us to the beginning of the Maitland valley. At the end of the 4WD track skirting the valley we crossed three magnificent scree slopes, walked through cool grey-green beech forests, and eventually stopped for lunch in the sunshine by the river. Shortly after lunch we had the chance to put our river-crossing skills into practice.

We reached Maitland Hut mid afternoon, and inspected the facilities before heading on through more beech forest (to the chagrin of at least one new trumper who thought this was it for the day!). Half an hour later saw us setting up our flies on the river flats. Dinner was competitive -Ivan's group enjoyed a daunting quantity of spaghetti bolognese (but no custard for dessert), while Ewan's group had stir-fried noodles, with gingernut and sherry log for afters (and then Ewan did all the dishes! :-). It got cold as darkness fell - one group fell into bed by 7.30, while the other enjoyed (?) a game of euchre before diving into sleeping bags.

On Sunday morning some of the new Bushcraft trampers were initiated into the dubious pleasures of putting on socks that had frozen solid and wet boots crusted in ice, while Barbara demonstrated the legendary hardness of Mosgiel women by wearing shorts in 0°C. The rest of us waited until Maitland hut, which was drenched in sunshine, to take off our polyprops (and appreciate the facilities). Lunch was had in the sun at the top of the 4WD track where the flies were laid out to defrost. A leisurely stroll back down to the van, a change into travelling clothes, a celebratory drink at Omarama, and we were back in Dunedin by about 7pm. A great weekend!

Some quotes from the weekend:

"Does your partner want to order now?"

(lady at kebab place to Betul, referring to Ivan)

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"Those guys have big ... ["You shouldn't be looking", interrupted Greta] ... bladders"
(at what appeared to be a lengthy comfort stop taken by Ivan and Ewan)

"I've waited so long, I would have faked it anyway"
(Greta when asked if the soup was good)

"You're never in the dark with a headlight on"
(although Rosie later discovered this wasn't true!)

"Did you see that? It looked like a bum, only bigger"
(Anon, referring to the bare buttocks protruding menacingly from the Maitland loo)

"I don't know if it's a quote, but Ewan did put his hand up my shorts"
(Ivan wanting to make "the list", and not realising he already featured twice)

Special thanks to our leaders, Ivan and Ewan (who also did most of the driving)
Judy & Barbara, for Betul, Daniel, Greta, Ran, and Rosie

BUS FOR SALE

**1987 TOYOTA COASTER EX
4.1 DIESEL TURBO
18 SEATER WITH
SEPARATE
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Trip list

CHIEF GUIDE COMMENT

I write this report in the week leading up to the much-anticipated Routeburn Cross-over, a trip that is not offered by the OTMC regularly, hence it should be regarded as being special. Unfortunately the trip is proving quite difficult for the trip leader, Deb Carr. I spoke last month about the commitment that needs to be made upon signing the trip list. To give members an understanding of what the Debs has gone through I offer this:-

The trip list for this trip closed with 35 names (34 trampers, with Debs kindly offering to shuttle the third van from the Divide to Glenorchy). With this in mind we changed our van booking with Rhodes to 3 x 12 seater vans. Our arrangement with Rhodes is that we need to confirm our requirements with them one week prior to departure. This now means that we have 35 people/3 vans and the club will break even on the van hire. Debs now makes up appropriate parties, and allocates leaders and drivers. Over the weekend prior to the trip she contacts the party leaders, who in turn contact their party members. It is common OTMC practice to try and have everyone notified by the Monday prior to the trip to allow time to prepare food and equipment. At this stage everything is fine. On Tuesday, three people pull out. This now means that we can't afford to take the third 12 seater van so on Wednesday we have to contact Rhodes and change the third van to a 10 seater (cheaper). This mucks Adrian around. Then on Wednesday 2nd, possibly three people pull out. Private cars are not an option on this trip so we are forced to decide whether we should tell five more people that they now can't go, or should the OTMC (that's us – the members) carry the loss from the third van. We decide that we have no choice; it would not be fair to the people who signed up in good faith to be told that they can't now go. If any more pull out the club will lose more of your money. Additionally, parties have to be adjusted – one party went from five down to two (and for these two it is their first trip). More often than not, food or other expenses will have been made, leaving more people out of pocket.

I accept that from time to time people do need to withdraw from a trip after it closes, but I have noticed an increase recently, hence last month's Chief Guide report. The aspect that concerns me is that the committee has received no letters of explanation from anyone. It is a condition that upon signing a trip list you are committed to paying for the trip, or you seek a refund from the committee. This matter will be addressed at the June Committee meeting. A possible outcome may be that we will start invoicing people whom we do not hear from, and they will not be allowed on any more weekend trips until that invoice is paid (or an acceptable reason provided to the Committee). Another solution may be that everyone is forced to pay the trip cost upon signing the list, those that haven't paid won't be considered for the trip.

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The end result of these actions is more work for the Treasurer/Leader/Chief Guide, but also goes against everything the OTMC has become – a trustworthy club.

The club does need to sort this out soon – presently your subscriptions contribute to trip costs rather than purely the user pays policy. Contrary to popular belief the club makes no money from trips. Since trip costs have not gone up for around six years we now need a van to be full to break even. There is no margin anymore for empty seats (another issue we need to tackle in the near future).

Antony Pettinger
Chief Guide

Head of Lake Tekapo (Macaulay River) (M-C)

June 25/26

Allan Perry 453-5875

Macaulay River is reached by travelling up the true left (east) side of Lake Tekapo until the junction of the Godley and Macaulay Rivers. From here there is a track (4WD) that leads to Macaulay Hut, which is run by the Mackenzie Alpine Trust. The club had a trip here in 2001 and reports that came back to the club were very positive for this area. If this doesn't appeal it looks like there is a lot of scope for trips into the Two Thumb Range, which is on the eastern side of Macaulay River. Refer to topo map I36 for more details.

Trip list closes June 16

Kepler Track (Luxmore or Iris Burn) (M-FE)

July 9-10

Ralph Harvey 453-4330

July is going to be the month for the club to walk some Great Walks, this weekend at the Kepler and two weeks later it's the Routeburn with Wolfgang.

The Kepler doesn't need much introduction – suffice to say it is a great circuit between Lakes Manapouri and Te Anau. The alpine section between Luxmore Hut and Iris Burn Hut may well be impassable in July, but it 'should' be possible to get near Mt Luxmore from Luxmore Hut. The walk up to Luxmore is a nice wander along the shore of Lake Te Anau before a gradual climb to the bushline then a final sidle above the bushline brings you to the hut. Alternatively, a stroll up the Iris Burn valley may appeal. If conditions are suitable it is possible to complete the circuit in a weekend, in which case it is usual to try and get to Luxmore Hut on the Friday night, or camp in the bush below the limestone bluffs (remember you have to camp 500m from the track!!)

There has been talk of combining this trip with a traditional OTMC cooking competition – keep an eye on the email list or come to club to find out more.

This trip will close on June 30.

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Winter Routeburn (All)
(Falls Hut, Christmas Theme)
July 23-24
Wolfgang Gerber 453-1155

Our second Great Walk for July is yet another mid-winter bash with Wolfgang. We start from the Glenorchy end and if the weather is fine it is a great idea to walk as far as Flats Hut on the Friday night. With a clear sky it is magical walking through the snow in the dark (assuming there is snow, of course). This also provides a good opportunity to explore the area further on Saturday. The obvious destination is the Lake Harris basin, Harris Saddle and Conical Hill. If the lake is frozen over there is a chance to explore further up towards Lake Wilson and the Valley of the Trolls. For the climbers, Mt. Xenicous is an easy snow climb. Mt. Erebus is slightly further away, but offers a great view of the area.

Saturday night will no doubt see the return of Wolfgang's infamous quiz. Sunday provides a chance to explore either the North Routeburn or head up to Sugarloaf Pass, with great views of Earnslaw, or to wander around Lake Sylvan.

Trip list closes on July 14

Committee Members 2004-2005

President	Antony Pettinger	473 7924
Vice President	Greg Powell	454 4828
Secretary	Jenni Wright	454 5061
Treasurer	Ann Burton	476 2360
Imm. Past Pres	Terry Casey	454 4592
Chief Guide/Transport	Antony Pettinger	473 7924
Membership Secretary	Ian Sime	453 6185
Gear Hire	Greg Powell	454 4828
Daytrip Convenor	Cathy McKersey	455 0994
Funding	Greg Powell	454 4828
Publicity/Library	Wolfgang Gerber	453 1155
Social Convenor	Fiona Webster	487 8176
Clubrooms Officer	Alan Thomson	455 7878
Bushcraft	Antony Pettinger	473 7924
Committee	Sandra de Vries	473 7224
Committee	Peter Mason	455 7074
(outside committee)		
Bulletin Editor	Robyn Bell	488 2420
Conservation/Advocacy	David Barnes	454 4492
SAR Contact	Teresa Wasilewska	477 4987

Contributions (limit of 1000 words) are welcome for the July Bulletin, deadline is 16/06/05, publication 30/06/05. You can submit material on floppy disc (PC not Mac please); email 'rbell@pooka.otago.ac.nz' or 'rebell@paradise.net.nz'; or post to Robyn Bell, 8 Roy Crescent, Concord, Dunedin. Thanks.

DAYTRIPS

Rosella Ridge (M/F) 29 May

Rosella Ridge is one of the places in the Silverpeaks that we don't get to that often. The plan is to start at the Tunnels track, go along Yellow Ridge, Rocky Ridge, past Pulpit Rock and out along Rosella Ridge, with a final climb up the firebreak.. This is a chance for a longish walk, and hopefully some great views from all those ridges. Contact me nearer the time for more details.

Contact Roy Ward 473 9518

Queen's Birthday Weekend 4—6 June

No daytrip - enjoy your weekend with OTMC on the Caples track, elsewhere in the hills, or just staying at home!

Berwick Forest (E/M) June 12

An exotic and indigenous forest walk of about 5 hours from Berwick to the Waipori picnic ground, with the track crossing Prentice and Shaw Roads. There is an option for cars at each end to make a one way trip.

Leader Ken Powell ph 488 3395

Catlins River Walk (E)

19 June

A leisurely five hour stroll on a good track in typical Catlins bush, beside a pleasant friendly river which chatters to you all the time as it runs over little rock ledges. Two convenient rest spots where side streams enter, and four short swing bridges to add extra interest. Since we are in bush all the time; neither frost, wind nor rain will cause any problem. Return option via Kaka Point for an ice cream or paddle.

Leader: Ian Sime 453 6185

Government Track (M)

June 26

This track follows the old dray road used to gain access to the gold-fields. A fairly continuous climb is rewarded by good views of the lower Waipori Gorge. We will stop for some lunch before heading back. Oh and did I mention the home baked cake? Not that I'm trying to bribe you into coming along!

Leader Karin Staufenbiel ph 473 1442

Raingauge Spur

Steve Amies Track (M)

July 3

The track goes up the Silverstream from Whare Flat and along Racemans Track as far as the upper weir. It then climbs the west side of Swampy to the Elbow. We follow Swampy Road, briefly, as far as Point Q, back down the Steve Amies Track to rejoin the Racemans, then return to Whare Flat. The walk is mainly in bush apart from a short section around the Elbow, and should take 4-5 hours.

Contact Bill Wilson ph 477 2282