

**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.



North/South Temple, upcoming trip in November 2013
View of Belfrey Peak and the route to Gunsight Pass—2007

Committee Members 2013/14

President	Antony Pettinger	473 7924
Vice President	Richard Forbes	453 1327
Secretary	Richelle Adams	476 1302
Treasurer	Tina Anderson	
Chief Guide/Transport	Wayne Hodgkinson	473 0950
Membership Secretary	Richard Forbes	453 1327
Bulletin Editor	Debbie Pettinger	473 7924
Ben Rudds / Gear Hire	Sam Patrick	
Social Convener/ Gear Hire	Gene Dyett	455 7465
Social Convener	Tony Timperley	473 7257
Daytrip Convener	Alan Thomson	455 7878
Website	Antony Pettinger	473 7924
Conservation/Advocacy	David Barnes	454 4492
SAR Rep / Bulletin	Ross Hunt	
Clubrooms Maintenance	Andrew Pask	453 5719

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

Well it's been a very busy winter for me and the club. The OTMC celebrated its 90th Anniversary in August and since the beginning of the year I have been involved with the organising committee. There were many things needing to be organised and done with a great bunch of people lending a hand. I volunteered to look after the registrations of people attending the event. How hard can it be? I thought, I already looked after the OTMC membership as part of my role as Membership Secretary—it turned out to be pretty full on.

We had a goal for the 90th of about 150 people (based on other anniversary's) and it turned out to be 200 registrations with the various options available. 150 people attended the Friday night function, 150 people for the Saturday night dinner, 100 people attended the open day at the clubrooms and 100 people attended the picnic at Ben Rudds (the weather held off considering it was August). Over 100 people have requested a copy of a 90th publication and DVD marking the event. My thanks goes to my wife Theresa for spending hours entering data into the clubs database, stuffing envelopes and registration packs. She helped sort a few of the problems we had along the way such keeping track of who had paid as well as people paying the wrong amounts. We set up a Gmail account for the 90th with many people contacting us thru this and paying by e-banking which took a lot of time coordinating and organising.

I was blown away by the response! People had registered who were in the club from the 1940s right through to the present day. The most popular decades were 1960s and 1970s but all decades were well represented. Unfortunately only two life members could not make it due to ill health which was one of the main reasons we were holding the event. Registrations were from all over New Zealand and a few from overseas. With less than a month out there were only 70 odd registered and wouldn't you know it, many registered in the last week and even up to a few days before the event. This made it a bit tricky for me as I was also in the middle of club subscriptions so I hope no one fell through the gaps. I always said that I would not turn anyone away from the 90th who wanted to attend

I had a special story to tell that I was holding back for the 90th dinner and it goes something like this. The author's gardening

company was working on a new project on Drivers Rd in January this year. The property was said to have been owned by the Driver family who the road is named after in the 1890s. It was a modest 2 storied weather board home with attic rooms above and in a bad state of repair. The house was due for demolition to make way for a new dwelling and we were clearing the garden for this. In the corner was an old derelict shed covered in ivy and Jasmine, rotten and half falling down.

As the shed was soon going into the landfill I had a poke around. There were some old tools, boxes, a pile of coal and in the corner was a stack of old brooms, mop handles and garden stakes. One of the poles caught my eye as it had an ornate silver top. On closer inspection it turned out to be a walking stick missing its foot!. Out in the light I noticed the walking stick had an inscription on the top but as it was curly writing and didn't make any sense to me, thinking it looked cool I put it in my Hilux.

A few weeks later I happened to mention the walking stick to a client who used to live in the area. He asked me what number Drivers Road and then told me that it would be Oscar Balk's walking stick, a well know Dunedin businessman who lived there.

The inscription said "O Balk from AEB". I had no idea who O Balk was so I Googled it when I got home and was shocked to find he was the first president of the Otago Tramping Club and he was the one who imported the pineapple tins that were left on the fence posts that the Pineapple track was named after. I got goose bumps on the back of my neck to find that I had saved a bit of history of the tramping club.

As I was reading the inscription at the Tramping Club's 90th anniversary dinner a little voice in the crowd said "AEB that's my Grandmother". Wow I didn't know there were still members of the Balk family around. Mary Balk who died 2 years ago was the last to live in the house, then it had been tenanted before being sold late last year. The voice in the crowd was the grand daughter of Oscar and Edith Balk. Two of Oscar's great grand children were also at the 90th dinner!

As descendants have come to light I have meet up with one of them and given Oscars stick back to a very grateful family. She showed me many photos of Oscar at his house in Drivers road. The house used to be very large including a tower and only the back part of the house survived (the front was demolished years ago when Mary lived there). It was on a large 2 acre block

of land including a few cows. I could see the old stone walls that still survive and a glass house of which the foundations survive. The house now sits on a small section and is surrounded by other newer homes. She fondly remembers Oscar making porridge in a big pot and eating it with the grand children on the large porch overlooking the garden and city. One last note if you are reading this and you haven't yet paid your subs (due 1st July) please get in touch before I have to ring or e mail you as you have already had 3 written reminders.

Richard Forbes
Membership Secretary and Vice President

Membership

According to my records financial members number 168 with 37 still to pay. Another written reminder will be sent out with this bulletin. Our club constitution states that payment needs to be done before 1st November, after that I will be contacting people by phone/email. Please contact me if this is you and let me know your membership status.

Members Resigned last month

Bill Wilson (11 years in club)
Ron Minnema (14 years in club)

Members Joined last month

Rose Colhoun
Raewyn Duncan (returning member)
Jacqui King (returning member)

Membership subscriptions (and trips) can be paid directly to the OTMC bank account 03-0903-0452673-00. Please include your name and reason for payment as reference so I know who is paying and email me on forbespotter@hotmail.com to let me know of any changes in your address, email, etc.

Richard Forbes
Membership Secretary

Gear for Hire

The OTMC has a large amount of gear available for members to hire.

Ice axes	Crampons	Packs
Cookers	Billies	First Aid Kit
Tents	Personal Locator Beacons	Climbing Helmets
Avalanche Transceivers and Probes		

Members can hire gear for \$5 for up to one week. If you can't get it back to club then each week is an additional \$5. Phone Gene or Sam if you can't make it to club nights to bring gear back.

Book Review

Letters from Everest, by George Lowe

George Lowe was "the other" New Zealander on the 1953 Everest expedition. If he's remembered, it's often as the recipient of Ed Hillary's line, "Well George, we knocked the bastard off". But Lowe was a vital contributor to the team effort that put Hillary and Tenzing on the summit. He was largely responsible for securing the route up the steep Lhotse Face at the head of the Khumbu Glacier and, although not originally intended to go to South Col, let alone beyond, ended up carrying a load to Camp IX at 27900 feet (8500m). He also did the high altitude filming for the movie that was made of the expedition.

In this book, compiled before but published just after his recent death, Lowe's insights into the expedition are revealed through his letters home. He manages to combine one of the best accounts I've read of the expedition's progress with fascinating insight into the more mundane aspects of expedition life – whether it be the menu when it was his turn to cook, or the perennial wait for the mail runner. He also vividly conveys the personalities of those involved. John Hunt's combination of organisational brilliance and a level of humanity that you perhaps wouldn't expect from a British Army colonel shines through, as does the utter determination of both Hillary and Tenzing to be selected for the summit team and then to succeed. But the personality that is best conveyed is that of Lowe himself. His wry observation manages, probably inadvertently, to portray a man who, although capable of being in a summit party, was just as keen to play the part of a consummate team player if that enabled the expedition to put someone on top.

In a field that is spoilt for choice, this little book stands out as one of the best books on Everest ever written.

David Barnes

Trip Reports

Rongomai Ridge/Philip Cox Memorial Hut

4 August

After battling snow-damaged vegetation on the Green Hut-Possum Hut circuit the week before, and hearing tales of similar difficulties in the Silver Stream, I was expecting this trip to be a grovel. Grotty weather on Saturday night added to that view, and I really wasn't as enthusiastic as I should have been. However, four others were keener than I was, and the weather was okay and getting better. So off we went.

Starting at Evansdale Glen, we followed the good track up Careys Creek. It can be a frosty spot at this time of year, but we struck mild conditions. The steep pinch at the bottom of Rongomai Ridge was quickly surmounted and then it was a pleasant climb to bush line. The top 15 minutes of the ridge has had its exotic forest cleared and replanted, so although it's ugly the views are good. Turning right at the top, 10 minutes on the Mountain Road took us to the steep descent of the Tunnels Track. We took the right hand fork so that everyone could visit the eponymous tunnels and wander along the associated water race to rejoin the main track. A splash across the river led us to our second steep climb and brought us to Philip Cox Memorial Hut, in a little under three hours from the car.

After lunch in the sun, we retraced our steps, with some electing to take the slightly longer and steeper option of Honeycomb Ridge instead of Rongomai Ridge.

I've used this route a couple of times recently on weekend forays into the Silver Peaks and recommend it. It means Jubilee Hut is a reasonable day's walk from the car (6 hours), while Philip Cox Memorial becomes an option for those wanting a short trip who think an hour from Tunnels is too short.

David Barnes for Ross Hunt, Lucy Jones, Paul Cunliffe & Katie Blakemore

Snow Caving on the Old Man

17/18 August

I am doing this because it is fun. That is what I kept telling myself as I kneeled on the hard, cold snow and did my best to keep the entrance tunnel to our snow cave clear. Alan was inside digging 'like a demon' or that is what it seemed as I struggled to keep the tunnel from filling with snow. Dylan and I took it in turns to keep the tunnel clear and when not in the tunnel entrance we worked on keeping the 'porch' area outside our snow cave clear of accumulating snow. Yes this is what we do for fun!

It started on a wet, drizzly Saturday morning, driving to Roxburgh and being pleasantly surprised to find the rain had departed and left low lying mist on the hills. We headed up the Waikawa Bush Road as far as the cars could go but with the road

ruted and slippery from the recent rain we didn't get very far up the hill. Parking on the side of the road we jokingly comment that we shouldn't have any problems with traffic, as it isn't a busy road. No sooner were those words out than a friendly farmer comes round the corner and offers us a ride up the hill on the back of his ute. Of course we accept and are taken all the way to the snow, well we did have to walk about 100m to the gully but that was nothing compared to the 2+ hours of walking up the hill that the farmer had saved us.

Wayne checked out a snow-laden gully, making sure of snow depth and that we had a close water source before giving us an area of the hillside to dig. It was good digging, not too hard and not too soft meaning that Alan and Dylan made good progress on digging the entrance to our cave. While waiting outside I created some



pathways so we could visit our neighbours and cut some shelves/seating around our tunnel entrance as well as moving the accumulating snow from the tunnel.

Eventually we called a stop for lunch with time to boil the billy, regroup and discuss progress. Spirits were high despite the fog that refused to lift, limiting our visibility to a few metres. After lunch it was back to our snow slope and on with digging. By this time our entrance tunnel had been dug and we were making good progress on the inside. It is amazing how much snow comes out of what seems a small hole. Alan was happy to dig inside but it was a struggle to keep the tunnel clear of snow. I was most disappointed with his answer to my question of how big

our cave was – big enough for one person! After all that digging and only big enough for one person to lie in, this was going to be a long afternoon. Dylan had his turn inside the cave and eventually we had enough room for two people. About now I decided I needed to have a look. With the amount of snow we had moved, there must be more room inside!

Inside I was pleasantly surprised with how roomy it was but the boys were correct, we needed to make it bigger

so I had a go at digging inside. It wasn't much longer and we hit dirt, not so bad considering our cave was long enough to lie down in, but we needed to make it a bit

wider to accommodate the three of us. Talking to our neighbours we found out they were digging towards our cave and we weren't sure how much snow was between the two caves so we dug a bit more on the other side, widening it out so we could comfortably sleep three.

It soon became time for afternoon tea and another boil of the billy. Feet and hands became quite cold. The mist, cooling breeze and wet clothes making things uncomfortable. My team decided our cave was big enough which meant we could change into dry clothes and put out our sleeping bags. Some of the group opted to go for a walk up the hill in the mist to warm up while others decided to try out their caves and warm up inside their sleeping bags.



By 5pm it was time to start tea and with the gathering gloom and mist we didn't want to waste time. It is always nice to socialize at tea time, check out what others are eating and chat but we didn't linger long and by 7pm everyone had headed off to their own snow caves. It was going to be a long night. Inside a snow cave at night, it is surprisingly light and we chatted for a bit before dozing off. It was a relatively comfortable night, not cold at all in our sleeping bags and it was 7am before we realised it. The long night had passed quickly.



The morning dawned clear as we emerged from our caves to have breakfast. The snow outside had frozen and it was very slippery. Not wanting to linger standing around on the snow in cold, wet boots we packed quickly and headed down the hill to the cars.

Snow caving is hard work but it is also lots of fun. Sleeping 'under water' is a unique experience that everyone needs to try. Getting the ride up the hill from the farmer was such great luck. It saved us a huge amount of walking and meant we had more time to dig our caves.

Thank you to Wayne Hodgkinson for your expert guidance, Alan Williamson and Dylan Pettinger for all your hard work in digging our cave and ?? for helping make it such an enjoyable weekend.

Debbie Pettinger

TripList

CHIEF GUIDE COMMENT

30 November—1 December

Wye Creek [M]

Kathy Woodrow ph. 455 4673

For me this will be new territory. I haven't even been to the ski field. The trip is described in "South Island Weekend Trips" by Nick Groves as being of moderate grade, starting at the ski field and going over a pass into the Wye Creek catchment and down to State Highway 6 taking 8-10 hours. This makes an ideal weekend tramp spending time camping at the tarns towards the head of Wye Valley and exploring the crags and ridges overhead. My intention is to start at State Highway 6 and go up the valley. There is a hydro dam about 45 minutes from the start and the DOC website for the lower Wye Creek Track says that it is a 4hr return trip to the lower basin which is above the tree line. The idea is to divide into separate food groups with similar fitness levels travelling together. This will allow the faster/fitter people more time in the upper basin area by Double Cone. At this time of the year we have plenty of daylight but we will be in an alpine environment and there are likely to be patches of snow around. Friday night will be at the camping ground at Bannockburn or at a DOC camp site along Lake Wakatipu.

16-17 November

North/South Temple (All)

Wayne Hodgkinson Ph.473 0950

It has been a while since the club has visited this area, which has in the past been the final trip on Bushcraft courses.

The valleys offer pleasant beech forest tramping with easy road access. A range of trips are on offer: Easy would take you up a good track to the head of the North Brach in about 2 hours, camping as the hut shown on the map is not there. Otherwise, Temple Hut can be approached from the

South Branch again along a good track in around 3hr, with the upper basin further up river on a bit rougher route in another 3. A crossing from the North branch over what has been variously called Gunbarrel or Gunsite Pass (about 1900meters) into the South branch is possible depending on snow conditions, for a reasonably fit party. Ice axes and crampons would be required in this case.

Sign the Trip List or contact me if interested, and note on the list your preferred option.

Trip List closes 7 November.

DAYTRIPS

3 November

Catlins River Walk (M)

Janet Barclay ph. 489 2598

An early 8am start from the clubrooms. We drive to Owaka then in to the Tawanui camping area. From here we may be able to park the cars and be transported by some friendly locals to the Wisp and then tramp back to our cars OR we may have half the party start walking from Tawanui and the other half drive to the wisp and make their way back with a car key swap when we meet for lunch. Expect to be back in town around 5pm.

10 November

Silver Peaks 1, 2 & 3 [M]

Tony Timperley Ph. 473-7257

Did you know that there are Silver Peaks 1, 2 & 3 and that over the years they have been interchangeable? Just to make sure we cover them all we will climb each one with great ceremony and record these events. The route will first take us up Green Ridge, with a drinks and snacks stop at the Green Hut site. Then we will proceed to climb up to our first peak above Pulpit Rock before diverting to our second peak on Rocky Ridge. Our final ascent will be to the highest peak at 777 metres. Here we will lunch and

(Continued on page 11)

admire the 360 degree expansive views before returning via Green Ridge again. (Car share cost: \$8)

17 November

Skyline Track Maintenance [All]

Alan Thomson ph. 455 7878

Starting from Sullivans Dam, the Skyline track heads up towards Mt Cargill with the OTMC being instrumental in building the track. The committee are organising some track maintenance on the overgrown sections so please bring your loppers, pruning shears and gardening gloves for some track maintenance. Many hands make light work and the more people we have, the more work will get done. This is a great opportunity to put something back into our local walking tracks.

24 November

Taieri Ridge/ The Crater [M]

Gordon Tocher ph. 472 7440

The Crater is a volcanic formation on the Taieri Ridge, overlooking the Strath Taieri Valley and is the best example of a volcanic crater in Otago. Car pooling from Dunedin, we'll head towards Middlemarch before heading up Taieri Ridge with expansive views over the Strath Taieri to it's highest point at the Crater. Please bring plenty of water. Leader: Gordon Tocher 472 7440 or (021) 677 818 - If you live in the Mosgiel it may make sense to pick you up on the way, eliminating the need to go to the clubrooms first. Phone me to arrange this. Carpool cost \$15

1 December

Rosella Ridge [F]

David Barnes ph. 454 4492

Enjoy a day following the lesser travelled Rosella Ridge in the Silver Peaks. We'll follow Green Ridge past Green Hut Site and Green Hill, turning off onto Rosella Ridge before reaching Pulpit Rock. Then it is all down hill until we reach the South Waikouaiti River. It might sound simple but be prepared for a full day's walking, getting up close with the bush. Leaving from the club rooms at 9am.

Thursday Night Programme

7 November

John Shults is an Associate Professor at the University of Northern British Columbia in the Outdoor Recreation and Tourism Management program. He will present a slide show on a recent hiking trip to several national parks in Utah.

14 November

Alaska travels, exploration and surprises. Active OTMC member, Peter Loeber, recently spent some time visiting Alaska during the Northern summer. Peter will describe his experiences by giving us a presentation entitled "Alaska: travels, exploration and surprises", which will be illustrated by some very interesting photos.

21 November

Dave McArthur will tell us everything we've ever wanted to know about hemodialysis. This will be an informative talk about what you need to know about your kidneys.

28 November

It's been a while since our last BYO so we expect a LOT of photos from recent tramping trips. Bring your photos along on a USB.

5 December

Dave McArthur has recently returned from Scotland and USA. He will give a presentation on his adventures around Lake Superior.

12 December

Join the OTMC for a BBQ at Woodhaugh from 6pm. Please bring your family along with some food to cook.

Any ideas, and contact names in particular, are welcome for the Thursday evening activities. If you can help please contact Tony Timperley (phone 473 7257, email tonytimps@xtra.co.nz) or Gene Dyett (phone 455 7465, email m.gdyett@xtra.co.nz)

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