ulletin Number 679, November 200

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.

1 November

Otago Girls High School students Susan Smirk, Annika Metua and Peggy Russell went to Greenland to see the effects of climate change and global warming.

8 November

OTMC quiz with hosts Cathy and Graeme. Get your team together (or make one up on the night!), friends and family also very welcome.

15 November

B. Y. O. - time to show us what tramps etc you've been up to recently

22 November

Nik Hurring has cared for injured kereru for many years, and has many tales to tell of his nursing skills.

29 November

To be confirmed at clubnight.

Any ideas, and contact names in particular, are welcome for the Thursday evening activities.

Please contact Fiona Webster (Social Convenor) at "fionaw@callsouth. net.nz", or 487 8176 if you can help.

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



As we come to the end of the current trip programme, numbers are still lower than we have been used to, which continues a trend that has developed over the past year or so. Weekend trip numbers dropped around 25% in the 2006/07 financial year, and have been on the low side since then. In the three trips since the AGM there have been a total of 19 people on them, an average of just over 6 each. I have been through all the possible reasons for this and have put it down to a cyclic pattern rather than trip destinations. The weekend trip programme was a discussion point at the recent AGM to try and ascertain if the current destinations were what people wanted, given one hears the comment of 'where else can we go?'. All recent trip cards have attempted to be innovative and include new destinations. Past trips show that 'newer' destinations often have the lowest numbers. Popular trips like the Winter Routeburn are generally well supported. I'm sure there are many reasons why members are tramping less, but I would like to see some further discussion on this, particularly from those unable to attend the AGM. A good way to discuss with the entire membership is to write to the editor of this fine Bulletin. The email list is also available, but has a limited audience.

To counter the above, included with this posting is the latest trip card, covering the period from November through to early May, 2008, with some different trips included. I'm picking the mid-November trip to Jacksons Bay will be popular after the successful 2005 trip to the same location. December sees two quite different trips planned – The Routeburn Track (but in one day), and the end of year celebration overnight trip down Lake Roxburgh from Alexandra. (More information on these trips is included in the Chief Guide section).

2008 will begin with a summer trip to Mt. Cook, opening up many more possibilities. A return trip to Mt. Domet is followed by another local trip a week later, a journey to the centre of Te Papanui, another first for the club. Attempt #2 will be made on the Earnslaw Burn following the 2006 trip. I have Easter 2008 down for a 5 day trip as I am still unsure of what will happen to Anniversary day, given the clash with Easter Monday. (Some sources say Anniversary Day will be Tuesday the 25th). The remaining trips are pretty standard, the date for Ben Ohau has changed, and Mistake Creek / Hut Creek repeated after it's recent cancellation. The final trip is a return to Milford Track in early May. This will require some time off work but will avoid the crowds seen in 2003. It will be in the 'normal' direction and is an OTMC trip only.

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I have written recently of the upcoming review of the Mt. Aspiring National Park management plan by DoC. The first meeting will be held on November 27 (to be confirmed). The following is taken from a message from Danilo Hegg (NZAC):

"The plan is still in the writing, and it is not out for public submissions yet. This meeting is for recreational groups to tell DoC what they want / don't want to be in the plan.

Any issues that are important to your club are open for discussion at this meeting; you can bring them up to the attention of the DoC planners, and if you are convincing enough your input will be part of the plan's first draft. Tracks, huts, helicopter access, roads, hunting, wildlife, conservation, zoning, anything relevant to the park management can be brought up at this meeting. It's a golden opportunity to tell the Department that you don't want the plan to allow a road to the tunnel up the Routeburn (or that you do!), and anything else that is important to your club members".

David Barnes will be representing us, and I strongly encourage all members to tell him any issues/comments they have with the current management of this critical tramping/mountaineering/recreation area. Keep an eye out for more info via the Bulletin/email list or watch for information on the DoC website.

Regards Antony Pettinger

Membership

No new members this month, but we farewell Robyn Austin who has moved to Nelson; Mary Keenan, Jenny McIntosh and Kerryn & Nicola Woods are not renewing their membership.

Ross Davies has moved to 138 Signal Hill Rd, 473 7088; and Alyth Grant to 9 Epsilon St, 470 1142.

Ian Sime, Membership Secretary

The Land of Doing Without Davey Gunn of the Hollyford

by Julia Bradshaw

Most people who have tramped in the Hollyford or visited Gunn's Camp will know at least snippets off the legend of Davey Gunn, the man who farmed the area when all hope of a settlement had died, who ran guided tramping and horse trips, and whose epic journey from Big Bay to Marian Corner in 20 hours saved the lives of plane crash survivors. This book fleshes out the legend quite nicely. Considering the isolated life that her subject led, Bradshaw has succeeded in getting inside his head. She explains how he first went to the Hollyford, having taken up leases unseen, in the hope of getting ahead following a failed farming venture in the Strath Taieri. Leaving his wife and young family in Oamaru, he lived in the Hollyford for thirty years, usually only venturing out for biannual musters. It was a harsh life, with many of the things that my grandparents would have taken for granted non-existent. It's likely that Davey never drove a car, and if he owned any electrical device it was before 1926. His trips to Oamaru gave him a chance to catch up on six months worth of newspaper. Medical treatment was a week or more away, and on at least two occasions he had to be taken to Queenstown or Invercargill for life-saving treatment. Despite the remoteness, he was not often alone for long periods, with staff, customers for his guiding operations, and trampers passing through. The 'man alone' myth is somewhat deflated by the revelation of the existence of a couple of longstanding female companions.

I find it interesting that his son Murray, who he probably spent less than two years of his life with, chose to move to the Hollyford after Davey's death and ended up living there for even longer than his father. Murray Gunn is, of course, the face of the Hollyford to many of my generation.

This book is essential reading for anyone with a love of the Hollyford region.

David Barnes

Trip Reports

Matukituki to Lochnagar (and return)... March 2005 (Part ii)

Day 4 was to be an easy hike from Hundred Mike Hut to Lochnagar, but it was actually tougher than we had expected. We followed a well defined 4WD track from the hut to Lake Creek. Lake Creek flows very fast at the crossing point, but there is a cable-device here to get across on. Unfortunately the other team were in front of us and had left the device unreachable, so it was a good practice of mutual river crossings techniques for us. The track from the river crossing to the 'Goatel' is poorly marked and quite a grunt. It did, however, offer good views of the subterranean outlet from Lochnagar itself. It must have been quite spectacular when the rockfall that formed the lake came down around 600 years ago. Above the Goatel (a rather open bivy spot) was the sub-alpine scrub and easy travel. After the less-than-ideal marking lower down it was now simply a matter of following the snow poles to the hut beside the lake.

One of the aims of our trip was to reach Lochnagar and enjoy some time here. The day by now had turned hot and sunny so it was a swim for some first. We had lunch on one of the few beaches beside the lake, but were slightly put out by the appearance of a helicopter. After landing on a beach at the top of the lake it spiraled straight up before heading off towards the Rees Saddle. Our peace restored, the afternoon was spent airing out gear and lazing about. Ann tormented herself by gazing at the route ahead – little did she know that this was the easy side! The other team bunked down in the hut while we made do with one of the few flat spots right beside the hut. The forecast for day 5 was good so we planned an early start as we wanted to travel right through to Dart Hut if possible.

Away at 6am and more-or-less uphill from the word go. Today we were heading to the ridge between Lochnagar and Pine Creek, then following

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ledges (as per Moir) around to the basin in the head of Pine Creek. From here it was a matter of dropping into the Snowy and thence onto the Rees Saddle. Sounded relatively simple, but there were a couple of interesting sections.

The climb to the ridge was straight-forward, where we had a breather to admire the view. From here Moir suggests traversing at the same level for about 200m before dropping into Pine Creek. We started doing that, but it soon became apparent that the ledges were non-existent and we decided to drop down a steepish snowgrass gut. Unfortunately the tussocks were very short and didn't give much to hold on to. Eventually the terrain levelled out somewhat. We were now heading to a very broad ledge which meant climbing up again. To get to the Pine Creek basins we climbed down one last rocky section to reach easy country. A check of the GPS and we were on our way. The head of Pine Creek is a vast and beautiful area, with great views. We lunched at a point between Pine Creek and the Snowy, at a grand elevation of around 2000m. By this time wispy cloud was burning off, giving us good views of Mt. Tyndall and the Tyndall Glacier. The Rees Saddle also became visible, and appeared to be so far away, although it was only 5km as the crow flies.

With some trepidation we started the 600m descent to Snowy Creek, but it turned out to be an easy route to pick. I really enjoyed the wander down the Snowy itself, crossing the creek as required. After the unknown of the morning it was nice to be able to really relax, knowing we would soon be on the Rees Saddle ready for a quick jaunt down to Dart Hut. The climb back up to the saddle certainly felt more that the 200m we actually climbed.

The journey to Dart Hut was undertaken at a fast pace – before we knew it we were crossing the swing-bridge and were there. The replacement hut was still relatively new and is actually very nicely designed. The trip from Lochnagar to Dart Hut was extremely satisfying and remains one of my favourite tramping days ever.

We had planned to spend the next day at Dart Hut, with a day trip up the Whitbourn Glacier. Unfortunately the forecast on the mountain radio was not good, with marginal weather for the next day, and poor weather for the foreseeable future. We decided that our best opportunity to get over Cas-

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cade Saddle would be the next day (Day 6), so it was another early night ready for a 6am departure.

Away from the hut under headlamp again, following the well-trodden track up the upper Dart. The day was murky and we didn't get to linger and admire the peaks. Another idea we had before we left town was to camp near Cascade Saddle and spend a day in the area. The mist put paid to this but for us first timers here we were still impressed with both the size of the area and the environment. One thing I hadn't really looked at was the route the track took to get to the West Matukituki. After traversing from Cascade Saddle to Cascade Creek some of us were surprised at the last climb required to reach the Pylon. This was a 200m climb we had overlooked, however we lunched at the Pylon with absolutely no view, in fact we were lucky to be able to see each other in the mist.

We took our time down the steep descent to Aspiring Hut, with some of us lingering for what turned out to be the last views of the trip just above the bush-line. From here there is not too much to report. We had planned to finish our trip by a circuit comprising Scotts Biv and French Ridge in the head of the West Matukituki, but the deteriorating weather certainly put paid to that idea. Our party ended up spending two relaxing nights at Aspiring Hut. The hut warden was able to arrange the shuttle bus for us via radio so our last day saw us departing Aspiring Hut in the rain in time to meet the van. I picked up the pace on the last section due to a hidden agenda - unbeknown to the rest of the party I had stashed some beer (and wine for the lady) in a creek near the shelter and was quite keen to recover it in time to celebrate the end of the trip. I'm sure Mike thought I had lost it as he watched me anxiously lifting rocks in the now flooded stream, but sure enough, the stash was soon located. A nice cold drink and some well travelled Easter eggs was a perfect end to a very enjoyable trip. The weather could have been kinder at times, but I still had a fantastic trip with some really neat people.

My thanks to Ann Burton, Mike Brettell and Dave Chambers for a most satisfying trip.

Antony Pettinger

LIFE IN THE DEATH ZONE! Mt. Cook Area 25 – 26 August

It was still dark on Saturday morning when Phil emerged from his bivi-bag after a sleepless night, with the wind swirling around him, and stumbled the ten metres to the warmth and snugness of Thar Lodge, where he was greeted by the harmonious snores of his fellow trampers all cosily tucked up in their bunks. It was with sweet revenge that Phil woke the five hardy (foolish?) souls who had indicated on the Friday that they wished to climb up to the Meuller Hut and possibly also scale Mt. Olivier.

An hour later, we sleepily set off to mount the steps to Sealy Tarn. Gusts of wind were felt, but these were few and far between and seemingly not too strong. Tony, in order to relieve the monotony of the seemingly endless steps up to Sealy Tarn, decided to count how many recycled railway sleepers, or parts thereof, had been used. On reaching the top he had counted 1158.

By now we were into some snow, although not enough to warrant crampons. The wind was gusting occasionally, but was not a problem. After about a further 100m climbing we decided to don crampons before heading up what had now become a snow-face. As we progressed, crampon and ice-axe skills learnt in Snowcraft were put to good use, with the novices being instructed on the finer points (excuse the pun!) by the experienced Phil and Ralph. We were still being buffeted occasionally by gusts, but were able to cope with this by hunkering down until they passed. This was just a minor irritant – the sky was blue, the views magnificent, with Mt Cook in all its glory. "Doesn't this view just blow you away!" gasped Grant. His words were prophetic.

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It was with some relief that the snow-face leveled out into a basin just below the ridge which we were to climb to next. But our relief was very short-lived. We heard a whistle which became a roar as the strongest wind yet hurtled down off the ridge, bringing with it plate sized pieces of frozen snow which came at us like frisbees. This was no mere gust – it became constant. It was then that we realised that we were in – THE DEATH ZONE! As if to confirm our worst fears, Grant was blown away – this time literally! However, he used his considerable experience to regain his balance as we all hit the ground, hung on to our ice-axes and waited for the wind to ease. When it did, very slightly, we came to a unanimous decision: - it was time to beat a retreat!

With frozen snow frisbees disintegrating into powder as they hit our retreating backs, we retraced our steps. Whereas previously we had stopped briefly to wait out the odd wind gust, now we were having to hunker down in the constant wind, awaiting a brief respite so we could make a short dash before again plunging our ice-axes into the snow and hanging on. Nevertheless, we were able to quicken our descent by further utilising our Snowcraft skills of sliding down a snow slope and self-arresting – all good fun! As we descended we noticed that the wind did not decrease and when we reached Sealy Tarn we were still having to cope with a very strong wind. We certainly would not have climbed any further if it had been blowing this hard earlier. As it was now lunch time, and we needed to recover from our ordeal in "The Death Zone", we found a sunny, sheltered spot in which to relax and contemplate the real meaning of life.

After along lunch and a "power- nap" by Phil, we raised our weary bodies to begin the long descent. We had to take care as the wind was still strong, so it was with some relief that we completed the 1158 steps and stepped onto the valley floor. On the walk back to Thar Lodge we passed a number of strolling tourists, who recognized immediately by our demeanour that we had just returned from a life-threatening situation. Whilst we posed obligingly for numerous photos, we were heard to frequently repeat loudly the words "Death Zone" and "It was hell up there", to the gasps of the now large, awe-struck audience as they translated the monumental significance of these words from their phrase books. Finally they parted respectfully to let us continue on our weary way.

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No such respect, however, was forthcoming from the other OTMCers. As we staggered into the lodge gasping "Death Zone" and "cuppa tea", their response was to not even look up from their reading but merely to point to the billy. Ray McAliece even had the effrontery to continue snoring from his bunk! But we knew where we had been and were able to cement our bond by making our own cups of tea.

The next day, fully refreshed and undaunted, the Death Zone team with new member Kate Bernard, mounted the 1073 steps (yes, Tony counted these also!) to Red Tarn and then on to climb Sebastopol. We reached the summit to be greeted by beautiful 360 degree views, which made up for our ordeal of the previous day. The wind had dropped but still had a cold bite to it, so we did not linger.

On our return to Thar Lodge we found that our fellow OTMCers, who had followed us up to Red Tarn before returning, had cleaned out the lodge, so we had nothing more to do than change and pack our own gear. Thanks guys!

Tony Timperley, with much artistic licence (but no hyperbole) for: Ralph Harvey, Philip Somerville, Grant Burnard, and "Young" James.

Postscript: Tony sent an e-mail to DoC asking them to confirm the step numbers. He received a reply which gave him the name of a psychiatrist who specialises in treating Anal Retentive Behaviour.

ON ASSIGNMENT

It's ten past eight on a July morning, and I'm perched precariously on a rock on top of Buttar's Peak. The sun is trying to peek above the cloud bank out to sea, but there's no warmth in it. A howling southerly is trying to push me off my rock, and my gloves are failing to keep my fingers warm. Logic says if I moved ten metres I'd be enjoying the view and out

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of the wind. But I'm not here just for the view. I'm "on assignment" with renowned outdoors photographer and author Shaun Barnett, who is researching for a forthcoming project, and he needs me in this specific spot for a photo.

My brief had been that we needed to get to the Organ Pipes and Sandfly Bay, with a good sunrise shot to start the day. Anything else is a bonus. The map suggested that the sun wouldn't be making an early appearance at Sandfly Bay, and it might even be obscured by Mt Charles at Sandymount. So we found ourselves driving up the very icy road to Mt Cargill in the pre-dawn and heading across to Buttar's Peak. Photos secured, we carry on to the Organ Pipes, pleased to have respite from the wind. Quarter of an hour clambering around the Pipes sees enough shots taken, and then it is back up to Mt Cargill.

Although a late afternoon visit to Sandfly Bay is a better time for seeing penguins, the lousy forecast means we head there as our next step. Starting at Sandymount, we first wander over to The Chasm and Lover's Leap. The coastal cliffs really are quite spectacular, especially with a big sea running. This is my first look at Lover's Leap since the development of the crag, and it is interesting to speculate on where some of the routes might lie. From there we carry on around the loop track, avoiding the ongaonga, and then up to the trig on Sandymount. Here I leave Shaun to make his way down the dunes to Sandfly Bay, while I take the car round to Seal Point Road.

As I stride across the beach at Sandfly Bay, I am surprised there are no sea lions. Last time I was here, there were fifteen – outnumbering the penguins. I make a mental note to find out if it's likely to be a seasonal thing. I arrive at the hide a minute before Shaun – perfect timing. More photos, of course, and then we're retracing my steps to the car. There are a few gulls and some oystercatchers circling above us, but today this doesn't seem to be a key site in NZ's wildlife capital!!

As we slog up the dune, the forecast rain finally hits. We flag Flagstaff and Tunnel Beach – the bonus tracks – and head home for lunch, then shoot down to the museum for a look at the Andris Apse exhibition. While there, I get a text from Barry Flamank saying he's on Flagstaff and it's sleeting. Looks like we made the right call.

David Barnes



December 1-2 Routeburn Crossover (In One Day) (FE Only) Antony Pettinger 473 7924

We did a day trip to Conical Hill last December and it was a great success. During the club crossover of the Routeburn in May it occurred to me that to do the complete track in one day would be a great follow-up to the inaugural 'ultimate day trip'. Due to the way the track operates the club is normally restricted to visiting this favourite 'great walk' in the off-season. By doing the track in one day we negate the need to book and stay at the DoC huts. The planning is rather loose at present, but the first idea I had was to run two vans as with the other crossovers. Then we simply swap keys (normally on the Hollyford Face) and take the other van home. But unless some careful planning takes place we will end up carrying a full weekend pack. The other option I am seriously considering is to cajole someone to be our driver. We will probably start from the Divide and head towards Glenorchy, then our obliging driver will bring the van (and overnight gear) to the other end for us.

The track is around 33km in length and I expect most people to be able to complete the day in 9-10 hours, so the grading is getting into Fitness Essential. Numbers may be limited depending on how the trip ends up being run.

More information will be available nearer the time, and the list will close on November 22.

December 8-9 Lake Roxburgh (End of year celebration) (All) Jill & Ray McAliece 455 6740

It is always nice to end the year with a social type of trip and this year we are doing something I don't think OTMC has done before. So I'm unsure

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of what details to write, but Ray and Jill will have carried out a reconnaissance by the time you read this. We are starting at Alexandra and heading down the true left hand side of the lake with the object of travelling to a suitable location for an overnight camp. I am told that a boat will be available for all those heavy objects.

There is meant to be some interesting history to be discovered in this area, even with the formation of the lake in the late 1950's.

Due to the relatively short travelling time it is proposed to leave from town early on the Saturday and start walking by 9-10am. We will be using private cars so you are free to make your own arrangements.

Again, more information will be available at club. The list will close November 29

Committee Members 2007-2008

President	Antony Pettinger	473 7924
Vice President	Greg Powell	454 4828
Secretary	Jill McAliece	455 6740
Treasurer	Ann Burton	476 2360
Imm. Past Pres	Terry Casey	454 4592
Chief Guide/Transport	Antony Pettinger	473 7924
Membership Secretary	lan Sime	453 6185
Gear Hire	Matt Corbett	487 6595
and	Dave Chambers	454 3857
Daytrip Convenor	Roy Ward	473 9518
Funding	Greg Powell	454 4828
Library	Kathryn Jeyes	455 2473
Clubrooms Officer	Terry Casey	454 4592
Website/Bushcraft Director	Antony Pettinger	473 7924
Publicity	Tony Timperley	473 7257
	Ralph Harvey	453 4330
(outside committee)		
Social Convenor	Fiona Webster	487 8176
Bulletin Editor	Robyn MacKay	488 2420
Conservation/Advocacy	David Barnes	454 4492
SAR Contact	Teresa Wasilewska	477 4987

Contributions (limit of 1000 words) are welcome for the December Bulletin, deadline is 16/11/07, publication 29/11/07. You can submit material by email to "rebell@xtra.co.nz"; or post handwritten/typed copy or a CD to Robyn MacKay, 8 Roy Crescent, Concord, Dunedin. Thanks.



Chalkies Loop (E) 28 October

Note: This trip differs from that advertised on the trip card. In particular, the usual 'no dogs' rule applies.

The Chalkies is named for the colour of the sandstone cliffs that can be seen on the side of Powder Hill. The track is a relatively short (approx three hour) walk that climbs up one spur of Powder Hill (about 400 metres of climbing, but there's no hurry), then down an adjacent ridge. The bottom is unmetalled road, but the rest of it is a good bush walk that gives way to tussock at the top, where we will take a short detour to get to the top of Powder Hill with a really good view of the Taieri Plain. Cost \$3.

Leader: Roy Ward 473-9518

Spiers Road / Ben Rudds / Davies Track (E) 4 November

A nice easy amble on Flagstaff for those who like nice views and a chance to chat, have a relaxed lunch, appreciate the flowers and the history, and be home not too late. 9 am start at the clubrooms.

Leader: Richard Pettinger 487 9488

Quarantine Island (Family) 11 November

Meet at clubrooms 9am. Trip cost \$10 (additional car pool charge of \$3 applies) All monies to be paid to me before you leave. Travel to Back

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Beach at Port Chalmers for boat departure at 10am. There will be a talk on the history of the island when you arrive, then you a free to explore. Bring your lunch and warm clothing. Boat for your return to the mainland departs at 1pm. Please contact me prior to the day if you intend coming as I need to confirm numbers.

Leader: Cathy McKersey 455 0994

There are TWO daytrips on 18 November, one easy, one not.

Yellow/Jubilee/Rocky/Yellow Ridges (FE) 18 November

This trip will start at the Tunnels Track, go up Yellow Ridge and down to Cave Stream via ABC Cave. Brief lunch at the new Jubilee Hut, up the Staircase ridge and along Rocky Ridge. We return down Yellow Ridge. This will be a long day so we will have to keep moving. Hopefully out by 7-8pm. Cost \$6.

Leader: Trevor Mason 481 1125

Intrepid Tramping Tour of Retail Wilderness (RE = Ridiculously Easy) 18 November

On Sunday 18 November there is the easiest trip ever (boots optional). We meet at the clubrooms at 9am to travel to Nova Café for breakfast because the shops don't open until 10am or later. Kathmandu and Smith's City open @ 10am, R&R @ 10.30 and Bivouac @ 11am. (Centrefire McCarthy's and Allan Millar's don't do Sundays.) We can Christmas shop for loved ones or ourselves to our heart's content.

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Please phone Carmel on 454-4592 or email principal@rotarypark.school.nz so I can book you in for breakfast. Another option would be to meet us at Kathmandu at 10am.

Pyramids / Victory Beach (E) 25 November

The Pyramids are an interesting rock formation that are well worth visiting. The beach takes it's name from the wreck of the Steamship Victory (1861) which can be seen at low tide. Come along and enjoy exploring a unique part of the Otago peninsula.

Leader: Alan Thomson 455 7878

Outram Glen to Lee Stream and Beyond (E/M) 2 December

We follow the Taieri River for about an hour and half up to Lee Stream. On crossing the river (wet feet) we intend climbing up to a low ridge, which should give us some good views into Lee Stream.

If adventuresome desires persist we can explore further into Lee Stream or up the Taieri Gorge using our Bush Bashing 101 skills. Cost \$3

Leader: Ran Turner 473 8652

