

The Bulletin

Newsletter of the Otago Tramping and Mountaineering
Club Inc #839 March and April 2024



WEEKEND TRIPS

★ Beech Hut ★ Freehold Creek ★ Wilkin/Young via Gillespie Pass ★ Earnslaw Burn ★

DAY TRIPS

Ben Rudd's ★ Mihiwaka Bush Bash ★ Burns-Rustlers ★ Allans Beach ★ Unexplored Silver
Peaks ★ Karatei-Peg 41 track ★ Chalkies circuit ★ Lake Whare circuit ★ East of Flagstaff
★ Gerry's Rock ★ Wild Dunedin – Sutton Salt Lake ★ Swampy Loop

OTMC Bank Account

The OTMC bank account with ASB is 12-3150-0311684-00

Please include your name and the reason for the payment when using internet banking (which is the preferred option). Non-members must pay for trips when signing the trip list, members should pay before departure. Vehicle suppliers/drivers will normally not pay the trip fee and will be reimbursed for fuel costs later (check with the trip leader or Treasurer Amy if in doubt).

Gear Hire

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

NO hire charge for members for the first week!

- Ice Axes
- Crampons
- Cookers & Billies
- Packs
- Tent/Flys
- Climbing Helmets

Your Committee

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Thursday meeting at 3 Young St, South Dunedin

Doors open 7pm for 7.30pm start, all welcome

Sign up to our email list: <https://lists.otago.ac.nz/listinfo/otmc>

Trip Reports

2 March, Ben Rudd's via Ross Bush Track, E, Debbie Guthrie

Ben Rudd's and Return on a Dunnerstunner.

Absolutely perfect weather awaited us on this Saturday, meeting at Woodhaugh 9am, the bus stop had been wiped out by an errant car during the night. Leaving its bumper and a mess, but thankfully avoiding missing all the mature trees surrounding the bus stop.

We car-pooled to the Booth Road entrance to the Pineapple track. We had 2 little people with us, Mia 7 and Isobel 4 and their parents Valfred and Sophie, we also welcomed Eve, who is a new student to Dunedin. All were keen to check out the old Pineapple track. The shade from this track was most welcome and as always, this track was delightful to be in.



At Pineapple Point. Photo credit: Debbie Guthrie

Coming out at Pineapple Point we had a stop for the group to assemble and a quick something to eat. This was the end point for our new walkers as all had other plans for their day. And it also gave time to take in the views and enjoy a longer stop here.

The rest of us carried on up to the top of the current Pineapple track, the day was now getting very hot, so we made haste to the shade of Ben Rudd's and enjoyed cooling off in the shade here. The shelter and grounds are looking great and are very welcoming, the shelter visitor book is well used and an interesting read.

Retracing our steps we returned to the main Flagstaff walkway and descended the Pineapple again, onto McGoun's and then back to the cars. A quick and enjoyable Saturday wander on a glorious Dunedin day.

Debbie Guthrie for Charlotte and Chris Handley, Rebecca Armstrong, Ash Flintoff, Sandy Webb, Sophie Belton, Valfred Jarl Mia and Isobel, Eve Rnons, and Jill Brunson.

2-3 March, Beech Hut, F, Andrew McConnell

Andrew did a great job at finding us a plan B option due to high winds predicted for Symmetry Peak. Beech Hut now being our destination and a keen party of 10. We spent Friday night at a lovely wee campground in Athol. On Saturday morning we travelled up to Cainard Road just past Gaston and drove in as far as our non-four wheel drive cars would allow us.

We set off following a 4-wheel drive track up to Cowshed Hut. A cute wee rustic hut halfway up the valley ... we stopped there for lunch.

We then carried on up the valley continuously zig zagging across the Mataura River. Weaving in and out of welcome patches of bush, grateful for the shade. The crisscrossing of the river was lots of fun and rather pleasant as it was helping us keep cool. Even though the river was relatively easy to cross the slippery rocks caught quite a few people out.

We reached Beech Hut and its very unique toilet!! Someone had gone to a lot of effort making that toilet. It has 360 degree views and air-conditioning - due to it having no walls, windows, floor or roof!!! Sossie just had to try it out!! It's definitely good old kiwi ingenuity for you. After much laughter and crap jokes about the superb toilet we set up camp.



The best toilet! Photo credits: Sharon Campbell

With a few hours left in the arvo Saskia, Tomas, Kristy and Lynda set off to see how high they could get, up behind our camping spot. Saskia and Thomas both climbing up to 970m ... a fantastic effort made by all. Meanwhile Caitlin, Soss and I wandered up the river some more looking for a swimming hole, while Alla, Tom and Andrew chilled out back at camp.

Sossie's delicious cheese and crackers with quince jam and tomato were enjoyed by all before having our dinner. Out came all the dehy meals apart from Alla and Tom who made a lovely meal which they kindly shared with everyone. After dinner all the treats came out for dessert - what a feast!!! Chocolate biscuits, chocolate fudge, cakes of chocolate, lollies ... hmmm chocolate!!

Once we finished our sugar overload a great game of 5 Alive was played by everyone while Caitlin and I snuggled into our sleeping bags and played Wordscapes on my phone.



Sunday morning was super chilled while we had our breakfasts and hot cuppas until Sergeant Sobek (Tomas) gave us all the chop-chop. "You have 15 minutes to get your tents down and packs packed!!" That certainly got us all moving and within 20 minutes we were ready to go!! We headed off back down the valley criss-crossing the Mataura river all over again.. 101 river crossings extraordinaire!! What a fantastic trip.

Sharon Campbell for Andrew McConnell, Tomas Sobek, Saskia Bronstring, Kirsty, Lynda, Caitlin Robertson, Alla, Tom, and Andrew Nicholls

2 March, Ben Rudd's via Ross Bush Track, E, Deb Guthrie

Ben Rudd's and return on a Dunnerstunner

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Charlotte and Chris Handley, Rebecca Armstrong, Ash Flintoff, Sandy Webb, Sophie Belton, Valfred Jarl Mia and Isobel, Eve Ruchs, Jill Brunson and Debbie Guthrie

3 March, Mihiwaka Bush Bash, M, Gordon Tocher



Gordon Tocher, Magdalena Hamwala, Rob Orchiston, Nic Kearns, Deb Guthrie

10 March, Burns – Rustlers - Pipeline Tracks, E, Rebecca Armstrong

Nine set off from Woodhaugh to drive to the Leith Saddle carpark. The weather was a Dunner Stunner of a day - clear blue skies and just enough crispness in the air in March to remind us of autumn's arrival.

From the carpark it's a short walk down the gravel road to the start of the Pipeline track. After a short walk along the Pipeline we head up the Burns track. The track is in great condition and we enjoyed the climb up through the bush. After about an hour from setting off we dropped down to cross Burns Creek, after which there's a steep but short-ish climb to the intersection with the Rustlers track. There are great views back to Swampy and across to Mt Cargill as you climb up this section.



At the Burns/Rustlers junction. Photo credit: Helen Emerson

We stopped at the junction for refreshments, photos and a comparison of the various maps apps. After a good break we headed off down Rustlers Track, stopping again after about 5 minutes at the clearing. Here there is great views across to the Silver Peaks, (the Gap!), and around to Blueskin Bay. A few meters on and you're presented with great views of Mt Cargill. This track just keeps on giving.

And down we go - through beautiful bush and the track is in really good condition. A little bit of over-growth makes a few of think we should tramp with secateurs and loppers in our packs for cases like this. The track is clear and navigable - we just need to keep on top of the growth!

It's a beautiful descent - through ferns and fuchsias. And before long we are back at the Pipeline track. Here, along the flat, things are a bit muddier and you can see how after prolonged rain, or later in the year, this track could be quite mucky. But today it's only a few sidesteps required and it's too soon that we are back at the start of the track and walking back up the gravel road to the cars.

Thanks, Rebecca for an awesome morning out. We covered about 8.5km and we're all looking forward to doing the extended version (up to Swampy) soon.

Helen Emerson, for Rebecca Armstrong, Deb Guthrie, Leonie Loeber, Kate Botting, Denise Hardchurch, Marcus Gough, Geraldine Kerr, Tony Timperley

16 March, Allans Beach (loop), E, Jade Pettinger

A wonderful wild afternoon on Allans Beach

Despite a stiff breeze and overcast sky, 10 of us braved the weather to explore one of Dunedin's remote beaches, Allans Beach. Thanks to Jade for organising with the local landowner to cross private property which made this trip a more interesting circuit. We started with a short 1km walk back along the road from the Allans Beach car park to a gate with a large 'closed' sign. With permission to ignore the sign, we entered the paddock and followed a farm track with lovely views of Mt Charles/Poatiri behind us and Hereweka/Harbour Cone to our right. We kept an eye out for cattle but only spied a gaggle of ducks which we avoided and continued on the farm track for about a kilometre until we reached a track through the sand dunes and emerged well down Allans Beach.



The beach was a stunning place to be with spray being blown off the top of huge waves which were pounding the shore. I'm not sure that I have ever seen such powerful surf and it was a stunning sight which had us mesmerised as we watched a group of surfers try their luck in the massive surf. Our attention was diverted to a sea lion grunting at it's pup as the adult cajoled the pup along the shore on the other side of the outlet. We stood enthralled as the adult kept the pup moving until a second adult sea lion appeared and the happy family disappeared into the undergrowth.



Photo credits: Jade Pettinger

We followed the outlet to the sea and then walked the 2.5km along the beach to the cliffs at the other end. There was the odd rogue wave that came well up the beach which meant we had to make the occasional hasty retreat before continuing on our way. As we walked along the beach we passed a few seals doing a good job of pretending to be washed up logs as they slept on the sand above the tide. Once we reached the cliffs we caught up with a cruise ship wildlife tour and managed to receive a ‘free’ commentary on seals and sea lions before continuing as far along the beach as the tide would allow. After watching the wildlife we followed the tour group as it headed back to the Allans Beach carpark.

Thank you, Jade, for a wild and exhilarating walk along Allans Beach. Debbie Pettinger for Wendal Broek, Alan Hanson, Fiona Faris, Ruth Thomas, Jane Ward, Megan La Hood, Dylan Pettinger, Antony Pettinger and Jade Pettinger

17 March, Unexplored Silver Peaks, M, Richard Pettinger

Silver Peak stream-bash

Richard’s annual UXSP bushbashing exercise of the “Unexplored” Silverpeaks is always something to look forward to, for an all-over body muscle training workout, if one has

the energy to keep up with the old fella. The old fella is undyingly inspired to introduce younger OTMC members to:

1. Experience Fiordland-style Wilderness setting without the *necessary* rain
2. Take opportunities to have a go at route-finding in tricky terrain
3. Go beyond daytrips that could become mundane
4. Experience Dunedin's ecology upfront and personal without going insane
5. Laugh at scratches, slips and vegetal blockages of passage without cursing the pain
6. Overcome obstacles in one's way as well as in one's brain.

He even tried, undyingly, (- successfully this time) to encourage me to come along!

I agreed to join him, but that's not all. I even tempted my work mate, Minshym, who I've been hassling for some years to come tramping with the Club, to join us, and this was her first trip with us, so I was hoping it would be inspirational for her. And not put her off forever. Min is a lovely person.

Six of us met at the Clubrooms for a long peruse of the map, to see if there was a place that none of us had explored before. Kate decided, on reflection, that she wouldn't come with us, as she had "possible work commitments". (Actually, as Richard pointed out, there was an Importance of Earnestness moment. Her inability to join us was because of the loss of a certain item: "A handbag"?? – you had to be there.) We spent an inordinate amount of time looking at tramping opportunities near her home where the missing item of importance dwelled... As we wished to be in the Silver Peak area and away soon, she bailed out.

Five of us remained – we travelled in one car up to Semple Road and walked around to the junction of the Green Ridge and Swampy tracks, where there was a check point for the Three Peaks Race. They were still waiting for 17 runners to come charging down towards us, so Richard, with us in tow, headed off-track at that point and we barged into bush in the general direction of the head waters of Silverstream. Much to the dismay of the race's 'checkpoint charlies'.

We had to shimmy and squeeze our way through semi-mature trees, including the young native cedars that grow thereabouts, getting down and crawling in pig-sized holes in the bush and rough and tumble our way down until we got to the stream. I hadn't realised just how much walking in the stream we'd be doing when I agreed that it was a good idea, but it tested out my new socks which kept my feet relatively warm, for the long paddle.

After lunch, Richard talked of a long-lost confluence in the stream near where there is a rope that helps you to haul your way up the side of the cliff, and up onto Green

Ridge. Last used by him and an UXSP party with then-newbie Jill McAliece many years ago.

I walked straight into a thin twig that poked me right in the eye at this point. I can't help thinking of the advice Gordon Tocher gave when he last led a bush bash, that having eye protection is a good idea. I'm thinking that, a day later, as I sit here with my eye still sore. Oops!

We seemed to walk around in a big semi-circle following pig diggings for a while before coming back to the stream and then continuing down for ages. Then, there was some serious map reading to make sure we weren't going to end up in Mosgiel for dinner (or ice creams), well away from the cars!

We all decided that we hadn't passed the confluence and continued to splash our way down for about 30 seconds, until suddenly Richard saw a sign, and we thought we should get out of the stream. It is on the other side of the tree from the way we had come. If you were coming up the stream you would have seen it like a beacon. But from our direction it could be easily missed. It is a large yellow lid off a bucket nailed to a tree.

This was very steep territory and after wishing there was a rope there to climb up, both Richard and I spotted it coincidentally in different places, hidden under the vegetation.



Rob intrepidly climbs out of the Silverstream wilderness into yet more of the same (only drier), with Tracy inspecting the elusive rope for damage.

Photo credit: Richard Pettinger

Last time Richard used this rope was about 25 years ago. It looked okay and when we pulled on it; it seemed to hold us. All of us used it to haul ourselves up the steep

section. We were surprised to see what it was tied to at the top: what was once a healthy living tree was now a ragged looking stump that could have given way at any point.



Tracy, Min and Geraldine glad to be out of the stream and going home. Note knot on rope by Rob's leg. Photo credit: Richard Pettinger

The land levelled out a little after that and we were aiming to get to the top of Green Ridge. We were fighting through large ferns, lawyer, big holes and closely growing kanuka trees to get to the top. Then it was a leisurely stroll on a real track on Green Ridge, with good views.

We had a real sense of achievement and felt deserving of an ice cream, which we enjoyed at Waitati's Harvey Street Merchant. They had a mango coconut cream non-dairy cone that is absolutely delicious, with an outside seating area guarded by a wooden hippo that became happy Min's friend. Lynley Copland from 2017 snow caving with us, shared a laugh and a memory or two, in the shop.



Tracy, Min and Geraldine glad to be well and truly away from Silverstream. On spur off Green Ridge. Photo credit: Richard Pettinger

A wonderful, challenging day out! Thanks to Richard Pettinger for leading, Rob Seeley for conferring with the map, Geraldine Kerr for bringing safety pins to keep a broken backpack together and having Strava on her phone to help with navigation, and my buddy Minshym Chan Wong, for being ever-cheerful. We were pleased Kate Botting became reunited with her essential handbag (and its phone for being on-call on.) Kate would have enjoyed our little outing, despite the terrain, wet feet and occasional insane nonsense and pain. Next time?

Tracy Pettinger, for Richard Pettinger, Minshym, Rob Seely, Geraldine Kerr, Kate Botting (in absentia)

23 – 25 March (Otago Anniversary Weekend), Freehold Creek, F, Andrew McConnell

This was a small group consisting of Garry, Emma, Saskia and Linda led by Andrew.



Late on Friday night, we all met up and set up our tents in the dark at Lake Middleton Camping Ground in Ohau.

Saturday morning, after packing up camp we dropped second car to Maitland Stream car park and returned to the start of Freehold Creek Track.

It was a beautiful sunny day as we walked up the track through the bush until we reached a lovely shady spot for lunch before continuing out in the open. As we ascended, we looked back and could see Lake Ohau getting smaller and smaller.

Andrew led the way off track towards the tarn at 1514 meters to tent for the night. This was by far the best campsite I have been in with amazing views, out of the wind and a clear tarn with stone bottom. We set up our tents and then had nice sunny afternoon relaxing in the sun.

We woke Sunday to another lovely sunny day. After breakfast we checked the map and headed up the saddle with a plan to ascend around 1843m and drop into Snowy Gorge then head to Maitland Hut to complete the loop back to the second car. Unfortunately, we ended up on the wrong side of a ridge at the top and it was going to be a tricky traverse to get into the correct valley. With bad weather forecast we

made a group call to head back the way we come in and a plan B 4wd trip up the nearby Hopkins Valley into Monument Hut for the night.



We headed back down the valley, the view of Lake Ohau getting bigger, back to the car.

It was a bumpy ride, but we got most of the way in along the road before parking up and getting our pack and raincoats on (it was now raining). As we approached Monument Hut, we could see five cars parked outside and were concerned the six-bunk hut may not accommodate another five of us. Luckily, we only found two other people in the hut, so a dry night was had indoors. This turned out to be the correct move with heavy rain and gale force winds overnight.



A cosy night in getting to know the other guests staying at the hut, cooking dinner and a card game was had before lights out.

Monday morning a very short walk back to the car and we had luckily decided not to drive all the way to the hut as a section of the of the track was now part of the river. Which the 2wd would not have made it through.

After picking up the second car, we headed to Omarama for the compulsory morning tea and debrief.

Nice relaxing trip with great people and a bit of a sleep in all three days.
Thanks again to Andrew for leading another awesome trip!



All photos: credit Garry Power

24 March, Karatei – Soldiers Monument – Peg 41 Track, E, Debbie Guthrie



29 March – 1 April (Easter), Gillespie Pass and Crucible Lake, F, Saskia Bronstring

Sixteen trampers gathered at the Wonderland Lodge in Makarora on Thursday night, some of us arriving in time to have a delicious pub meal ahead of settling in for 4 days of de-hy and cheese and crackers. OK, so some of us had also packed some real food, which was going to haunt us for days, but more of that later.

Early on Good Friday morning, we gathered at the river to pile into jetboats to take us to our starting point across the Makarora and Young rivers. We had an early indication how busy the area was going to be – we were some of 50+ trampers the company was dropping off that morning. An exhilarating (read, cold!) ride across the rivers had us eager to get going up the misty Young River valley. The track winds in and out of beautiful beech forest and along the river flats, and we enjoyed watching the sun burn off the early mist, while the frost remained stubbornly on the flats out of the sunshine. This was to be day 1 of absolutely stunning weather for the weekend. We enjoyed basking in the sunshine over lunch at the lovely camping shelter at the North Branch.



Young River. Photo credit: Tomas Sobek

It was after lunch that the hard work began - clambering up over tree roots and rocks as the track climbed steeply through the bush. It was at this point that the folly of carrying fresh fruit and veg became apparent to this trampster. An overly heavy pack made the track much harder going than was necessary - a lesson learned the hard way is not easily forgotten, at least!! And the beauty of the track was a good distraction to the physical challenge.

By the time the first of the group had arrived at Young Hut we were quite spread out, and decisions were made about pressing on the planned camp site versus a small group stopping at the hut for the night to re-group. The campsite was about an hour further on from the hut - uphill of course - and above the tree line, rewarding those who reached the campsite that night with a stunning sunset on snow-capped mountains.



Peak 1903 metres in the evening light. Photo credit: Tomas Sobek

We were still shaking the frost off our tents in the morning (after admiring the sunrise) when the hut-staying group arrived at our campsite. Wow, they'd made good time, refreshed and keen for an early start after a stay in a very crowded hut. Together again, we set off for the Gillespie Pass. There's not much opportunity to 'warm up' on the flat of the valley before the climb starts. And what a climb! Despite munching as many carrots and tomatoes as seemed humanly possible in the preceding 24 hours, my pack was still noticeable, and as the sun started beating down on us, the climb up to the top of the pass was a 'good challenge'! Plenty of short breaks to catch my breath meant plenty of opportunities to admire the views and appreciate just how far we had climbed.

About half of us gathered at the top for lunch for an hour across the middle of the day - enjoying the views, the sunshine, the clear air, the snow, lots of photos, a clamber to the peak ... and only the shrieks of a group of trampers who departed ahead of us gave any indication of what was coming ...



The climb up the Gillespie Pass. The bottom of the valley, and the trampers below, look very small now. Photo credit: Rodger Clarkson



Mount Awful. Photo credit: Tomas Sobek

The Siberia valley side of the pass had a whole lot more snow to navigate. It took about 45 mins to drop down out of the snow-line, and while much of it was powdery and relatively easily yomped through, some sections were compacted and icy. A variety of bum-sliding techniques were deployed to descend some of the trickier sections. The later group sensibly resorted to using their ice axe to cut fresh steps, as the large numbers of people crossing the pass that day had really polished the slides!



Navigating the snow on the Siberia side of the Gillespie Pass. Photo credit: Rodger Clarkson

Once through the snow, it was just down, down, down, eagerly noting the changes in vegetation as signs of progress down to river level. The sun continued to beat down, water supplies ran low, and arriving at the river never felt so good. Water bottles filled, swimming, a nap in the sunshine - the little clearing was filled with trampers enjoying the sense of accomplishment. But we were still some distance from the Siberia valley camp site - so reluctantly we shouldered packs and carried on.

We'd arrived in about 3 separate groups; the first group down had taken a decision to cross the river and set up camp in the middle of the valley. The second group over spent some time debating the pros and cons of crossing the river then, vs in the

morning, vs camping nearer the bush, and thrown into the mix was the issue of who was sharing tents with who As a result, we ended up split into two campsites (and I'm not sure if we determined which was better!). There were many, many tents in the valley that night; camp fires and head torches making beacons of light only rivalled by the glorious stars and the Milky Way above us.

Day 3 and it was off to Lake Crucible. A couple of river crossings and its up the hill we go. It was steep - we were glad of our lighter day packs as we scrambled up the steep bluffs alongside the river. A small river crossing, and then the valley opens up - like a Swiss alpine meadow! The sun was strong, the valley warm, and lake appeared to be 'just over there'. About an hour later and we're at the lake. Most stripped off and jumped in - the general recommendation was to do that as soon as you arrive otherwise the water feels too cold once you've cooled down after the walk in!



There were some impressive launches into the water - which were then duly repeated so it could be captured properly on camera. Kudos to Saskia and Sharon for their repeated jumps in, Kristen for the full-on head-first dive, and Roger for staying in the longest?

Lake Crucible. Any guesses for who created these splashes? Photo credit: Helen Emerson

We could have stayed there all day (and indeed it was tempting, knowing how many sandflies were waiting for us back at camp!) but eventually it was time to return. The campsites were still warm in the sun when we got back, and we kept warm in the evening with a camp-fire party at Camp 2. We toasted socks, and we raised a glass to Steffan to celebrate his birthday.

Day 4, and it's another glorious sunrise as we emerge from our tents. We have an appointment with a jetboat at 3pm and the penalty for missing it spurs us into action. The first hour, to Siberia Hut, is cold - the sun hasn't reached this part of the valley yet. We spot a couple of excellent looking swimming holes in the river (about half way between the campsite and the hut), and then stop to check out the waterfall near the hut and have second breakfast. After that, the track is like a superhighway compared to the previous days walking. This makes sense - tour operators run a combined package to fly into Siberia Hut, walk out to Kerin Forks and jetboat back to Makarora. The track is wide, free of obstacles and although it's a steep-ish up and down, it's easy going. Time to talk, admire the views and the lush vegetation, and enjoy the final day. We are back at the pick-up point in plenty of time, to nicely build the anticipation for our jet-boat ride out. And what an exhilarating end to an exhilarating tramp. Thank you, Saskia, for leading this trip - it was awesome!

Helen Emerson for Saskia Bronstring, Rodger Clarkson, Sharon Campbell, Steffan Rolfe, Mark Stephenson, Tomas Sobek, Kate Botting, Elke and Ben Mathewson, Emma and Garry Power, Judith Murdoch, Kirsten, Jonathan Bull, Michael Priestnall.

7 April, Chalkies Circuit, E-M, Mandie Lungley

Mandie Lungley was team leader for 14 people to enjoy the morning grunt up to the top to get lovely views of the Taieri. We met at the carpark past the ford on the Silverstream Valley Road. There was a helpful rope to help with one "gnarly" section but generally an easy walk.

We enjoyed several breaks, nearly at the top and halfway down, after viewing the broken limestone formations.



Kate Botting for Mandie Lungley, Ruth Thames, Denise Van Hardenbroek, Kirsty McNeil, Meagan Lahood, Lucy Jones, Leonie & Peter Loeber, Lovyn Kindley, Sandra Divitt, Lawrence Prattly, Alison Kim, Regina Karoulcher (student from Vienna).

13 April, Lake Whare Circuit, E, Jade Pettinger

We met at Woodhaugh Gardens at 9am and made our way to Rollinsons Road, where we parked and began the Lake Whare Loop Track. It was a misty start to the day and great fun walking in the clouds. We had morning tea part way and also stopped for an early lunch as we were well ahead of schedule.

It was a really varied walk that included lots of bird song; curious fantails; stunning autumnal colours/hues; lots of creek crossings (and wet feet); some slipping and sliding in glorious mud (after the recent rain); and lots of uphill slog. Of course, what goes up must come down! I certainly appreciated the lovely team spirit and moral support for those of us that don't have a head for heights (i.e. me!)



Photo credit: Jade Pettinger

One walker commented on how she had found the OTMC day walks to be a welcoming space for those trying to develop their tramping skills and felt safe. Thanks, Jade, for leading such a fantastic morning out and thanks to all our lovely group for the company, the chats and for having each other's backs.

Annie Yohannan for Jade Pettinger (Trip leader), Debbie, Regina, Ruth, Andrew and Lloyd.

14 April, East of Flagstaff, E, Charlotte and Chris Handley

A fine, pleasant, sunny, Sunday. 9 of us left the Booth Rd carpark, and warmed up by heading up the Pineapple Track to the start of the Old Pineapple Track which takes us through the bush. It was great to hear the bird song in this bit of the bush, and thanks to the trappers who were busy clearing traps this morning. Great to have more pests removed from our back yard. Once at the top, we went past Pineapple Point. Good to see it was getting used by passers by.



We then went down the Shortcut Track to the Nicols Falls Track & the Pepper Tree Track. All three tracks were in bush & slippery after this week's rain, but each one was very enjoyable & we ended up back at Pineapple Point, right in time for lunch. Sun was shining on us for lunch & the views at Pineapple Point are amazing & all those that were there were very thankful to those involved in planning & building this spectacular area.

After lunch we headed back to the Old Pineapple Track but veered off onto an informal track used by trappers called the Rimu Track & its name became clear along the track when we came across a huge, very old, Rimu tree. It was truly an amazing tree, not seen by many people, I would think.



After following the Rimu Track, we met the Davies Track, then another informal track which dropped us steeply down to the skid site & a short stroll back to the cars at Booth Rd. All in all, another excellent trip, well lead by Chris & Charlotte.

Thanks to Lucy, Regina, Spen, Jane, Mark, and Alison for sharing this walk with me.
Regards Ash.

13-14 April, Earnslaw Burn, Steffan Rolfe

Earnslaw Burn, centered in Middle Earth
precluded by bush and mountain girth

Snow caps and glaciers we were not to see
We were all pleading the clouds would flee

The weekend tramp started with a sudden incline
Plodding through the mud like a laden swine

Further into the bush we meandered and explored
The many shades of green lichen we all adored

The fungi were plentiful and varied
As to what type, we all queried

One thing was for sure during this trip
The straddling of fallen trees with a firm grip

Robins appeared when we least expected
Their hopping and fluttering about were perfected

The roar of the burn below us was never far away
While tip-toeing over wet roots, like performing a ballet.

More trees, and caking mud, then appeared an intriguing rock face
Suspended through the trees, and it's beauty we stopped to embrace

Up Into the basin, the weary trampers arrived
Seeing the river flats we were all revived



From the ridges above cascaded numerous types of falls
Near the head of the basin, they created minuscule squalls

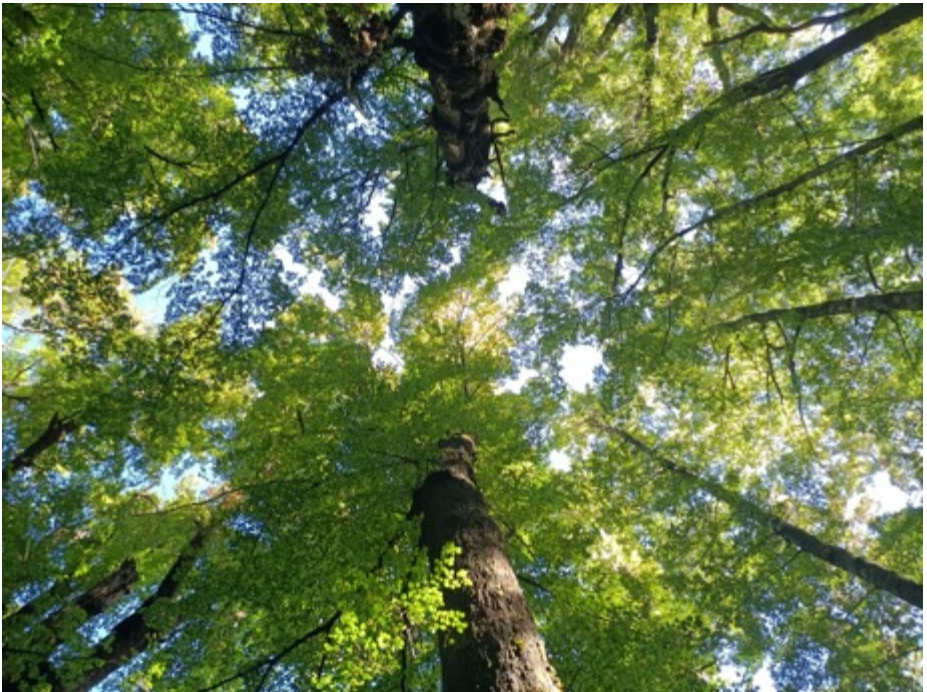
It was time to turn around and head back to camp.
Dusk was about to come, shall we quickly tramp?

Time for tea, let's huddle around our dining table rock
The temperature was dropping, oh what a shock!

Once tea was finished everyone quickly jumped into their tents
The last of the diners huddled, somewhat warm with pretence

Soundly sleeping, everyone was dreaming of bluer skies the following day.
The Middle Earth gods were not listening, and in the morning the skies were grey

Some of the party explored further up the basin hoping for a glimpse of the Middle
Earth beauty
The rest of the party packed their gear and headed back down the track, all twisty
and rooty.



As the party got near the head of the basin the weather was not going to alter
We turned to head back, the cloud was slowly parting looking like it was about to
falter.

But no, alas the Middle Earth Gods were not polite
Internally cursing the trampers returned feeling not alright

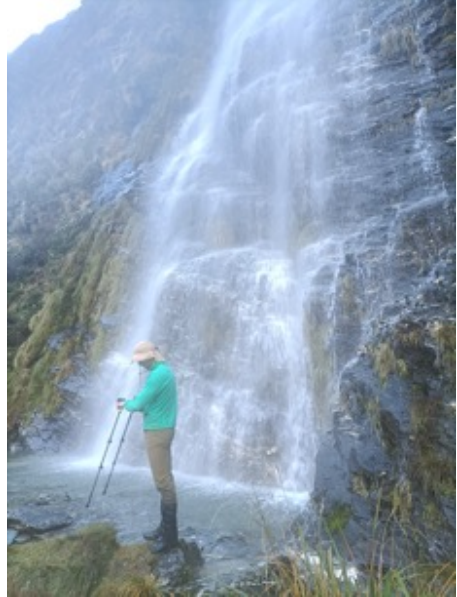


Photo credits: Nathan Dawson

Back to the cars we returned with a sense of gratification.
Feeling warm and fuzzy, bathed in our fellow trampers' adulation.

Thanks, Steffan for leading such an awesome weekend jaunt
In the future, we will hopefully revisit these current trampers haunt

Nathan for Steffan Rolfe, Rodger Clarkson, Sharon Campbell, Sergey Ryazanov,
Rebecca and Kezia Armstrong, Rose Colhoun, Magdalena Hamwala, Helen Emerson,

20 April, Gerry's Rock, Burns Reserve, Jane Bruce and Spen Walker

On this Saturday afternoon, seventeen of us met at the Signal Hill Memorial for a trip led by Jane Bruce and Spen Walker. Once we had assembled, Jane gave us an interesting synopsis of the history of this area and the Gerry family who owned a dairy farm on these slopes between 1901 and 1946. "[This] Reserve preserves a valuable area of un-milled podocarp-broadleaf forest with mahoe and fuchsia and some mature rimu, totara and miro trees.", to quote Jane.



Spenn then led off with the eye of a hunter searching for spoor. This hunt was a search for routes (not to be confused with tracks), and are marked with yellow or pink tags. The mandate is that the routes are not to be turned into tracks in this reserve. The forest was absolutely gorgeous. Footing re-quired care, for the sake of the vegetation, as well as staying upright!



After some time, we came to a fence and got a glimpse of the view that would open up a bit later. We continued down the slope, still in the bush, until we found ourselves in the presence of a huge rimu tree. This tree certainly has a presence, both on these slopes, and within the forest. We then headed back up the hill and along to Gerry's Rock itself, where we had afternoon tea while admiring the gorgeous views east, north and south.



The views over the harbour from these slopes provide a subtly different perspective. While we were in the vicinity of the actual rocky outcrop we were spoiled for choices of 'activities'. Fortunately, we did not really have to choose. We could go to see some old, and protected, 'graffiti' on the rocks, dating back to late last century, and we could go in search of some Easter orchids which Jane had assured us were in bloom.



We were treated to a wonderful display of blooms. They gave off a gorgeous, sweet, perfume, which was most powerful a short distance away from the plants. The photo above shows the actual Gerry's Rock outcrop, as well as Jade setting up for the group photograph. In addition, one can see the heap of dead Darwin's Barberry, cleared by Friends of the Burns Reserve (whose next work meet is on May 4th. Hint, hint!). The re-turn trip went through both DOC and some private lands and gave us a good workout!



Thank you to Jane and Spen for leading this excellent hike. It was enjoyable and we learned many interesting facts. For many of the group, this was a new place to explore. We had a great afternoon and enjoyed one another's company. The weather was pretty good with the sun making a bit of a appearance and lighting up the far end of the peninsula, while we were admiring the scenery.

Written by Charlotte for and on behalf of Chris H, Mike, Jade, Debbie P, Lyn, Gwenda, Tina, Kathy, Chris P, Saskia, Alison, Rebecca, Kate, and Richard.

28 April, Swampy Loop (20km+), M-F, Helen Emerson

Twelve keen members met at the bullring car park at 7.50am on a glorious morning and had an excellent tramp from the Bullring - Flagstaff – Swampy - Rustlers - Pipeline - Leith Saddle – Swampy - Firebreak track and back to the Bullring. The following members were briefed by our team leader Helen Emerson, saying that we had to make good time due to the daylight hours being shorter at this time of the year. She was the only one with a head torch, just in case 🧡

Elena Niktina, Rob Seeley, Sarah Swan, Joe and Sharon Bretherton. Nicola Kearns, Ricky Kim, Tom Kirk, Alison Kim, Sandra Divit and myself, Kate Botting, started walking. Helen mentioned that Rebecca was walking up to the Burns track and down the Pipeline with us and had her car by the northern motorway car park. She had extra water if we needed it. Sandra mentioned that she would be going back with Rebecca, as she was working at 4.30 pm.



The team at the top of Rustler's track, where we met Rebecca. Photo credit: Rebecca Armstrong.

We made it in excellent time with morning tea at the UFO (the radar on Swampy summit), then lunch at the junction of the Burns track and Pipeline before Rebecca

and Sandra left us at the base of the Leith Saddle track, after topping up our water supplies. We had spectacular views at the lookout and enjoyed seeing the bush regeneration happening, naturally and some native plantings. We also sighted a falcon above us near the firebreak track. At the top we were led by Ricky Kim with some yoga stretches, which I am sure helped our muscles recover much quicker, the following day.

After 24km, we had a wonderful surprise, when we met Rebecca and her lovely dogs walking towards us from the Bullring after 4pm, as we made excellent progress and Helen had updated her as we hit milestones. Rebecca and her daughter, Kezia, had a basket full of delicious hot scones with jam and cream at the bullring car park - it was very well received.



Tramper's stretches at the top of Swampy - it felt really good! Thanks Ricky. Photo credit: Helen Emerson

Thank you, Helen and Rebecca, for a wonderful trip.



Upcoming Trips

As a reminder you must pre-register on the Weekend Trip Lists at the club rooms (or contact the leader direct) before the closing date (normally two weeks before the trip start). Members must pay before departure, non-members upon registering (non-members pay \$13 more than the members fee shown below. Vehicle providers may be exempt from the fee (check with the leader). Trip organizational details will follow by email. You are responsible for your gear and medical / first-aid needs (also see Gear Hire). (E)asy, (M)edium, (F)it required.

For the next day and weekend trips see:

<https://otmc.co.nz/tripcard.html>



Note from the editor

Bulletins will be published every 2 months during 2024 so please email your trip reports for the next issue to **helenemerson@yahoo.com** **within a week after the trip.**

The trip leader does not have to write the report so put your hand up to take some load off their shoulders! If you include a photo or two, please note appropriate captions (names of people pictured, names of land features, etc.)

A BIG THANK YOU TO ALL THAT CONTRIBUTE!