



# OTMC Bulletin

**Newsletter of the Otago Tramping  
and Mountaineering Club (Inc.)**



Snow skills weekend at Rock & Pillars—9-10 August 2025

## Upcoming Trips

- October** 5      Flagstaff/Swampy/Swine Spur/Ben Rudd's  
11-12 **Introduction to Ski Touring (members only)**  
18      Jubilee Hut Work Party (day trip option)  
18-19 **Love our huts: Jubilee Hut Work Party**  
25-27 **Peel Forest (Labour Weekend)**  
26      Maungatua from Woodside Glen
- November** 8      Taieri River Track  
15-16 **Cycle & Tramp—Mt St Bathans/Manuherikia**

# Update from your committee

The OTMC AGM was held on 28 August and a 'new committee was elected, welcoming back most people, who are continuing for another year along with a couple of new people keen to make a contribution to the club.

**Wayne Hodgkinson** is leading the club for a third year as President and is ably assisted by **Antony Pettinger** as Vice-President and Chief Guide. Antony has much experience in the Chief Guide role having taken on this role many times over the past 40 years. **Rebecca Armstrong** is continuing looking after the day trips for another year. Please reach out to Rebecca if you have ideas about leading a day trip as she is always keen for more day trips to different destinations and of course people to lead them. **Jade Pettinger** is keeping the president and the rest of the committee in line as Secretary for a third year along with **Amy Telfer-Chiles** who is again looking after the club's finances. Please make Amy's job a little easier by paying trip costs promptly so that she isn't forced to chase people up. **Helen Emerson** has a busy year ahead as she continues to keep us up-to-date with the Weekly Update as well as co-ordinating the Thursday night speakers. **Tracy Pettinger** will again be keeping track of who has paid their subscription as our Membership Secretary. **Andrew Sewell** is new to our committee and has agreed to keep track of the gear hire so expect to be in touch if you borrow something and don't bring it back in a timely manner. And finally, **Debbie Pettinger** is back to keep the pages of this newsletter full as Bulletin Editor.

## Committee Members 2025/26

President	Wayne Hodgkinson
Vice President	Antony Pettinger
Secretary	Jade Pettinger
Treasurer	Amy Telfer-Chiles
Chief Guide	Antony Pettinger
Day Trip Convener	Rebecca Armstrong
Membership Secretary	Tracy Pettinger
Thursday Night Convener	Helen Emerson
Weekly Update	Helen Emerson
Bulletin Editor	Debbie Pettinger
Gear Hire	Andrew Sewell

# Editors Thoughts

It is with some surprise that I find myself as Bulletin Editor after more than a 10 year hiatus. With the OTMC having the smallest committee, certainly during my time in the club, I felt I needed to step up and share some of the workload.

Looking forward to the coming club year, and my tenure as Bulletin Editor, I have been reflecting on what the Bulletin is and what it currently means to club members. My plan is to bring the Bulletin back to a monthly newsletter and build the readership up. One of the big challenges will be to get engagement with our members so along with trip reports will be updates from the committee and notices /articles of interest to club members. I know getting those trip reports, etc can be a challenge so please don't be surprised to get a request (or two) from me for a trip report, I can be very persistent and the easiest way to avoid me is to put pen to paper and write a few paragraphs on the great day out you had tramping with the OTMC, whether it is a day, weekend or longer trip.

I believe the Bulletin is a valuable tool for recording the club's history which is why I need your help, if you have any thoughts on what makes a good club newsletter, please feel free to drop me a line.

**Debs Pettinger**  
Bulletin Editor

Please send trip reports/articles to [Debspettinger@gmail.com](mailto:Debspettinger@gmail.com)

## Membership Update

**Subs are now due** and it is fantastic that 85% of our club members have paid.

Individual reminders have been sent to those who have not yet paid their subs. If you have received one of these reminders and no longer wish to be a member of the OTMC, **please let Tracy know by emailing your resignation to [tracy@pettinger.nz](mailto:tracy@pettinger.nz)**

Should no payment of subs be received by the end of October, this will be your last newsletter .

# Trip Reports

## Morrison Burn/Porkies/McQuilkan's/Moon Track

24 August 2025

By Andrew Sewell

A frosty Sunday morning saw fifteen keen souls (20% were Belgians) gather on Leith Valley Road to attempt the southern faces of Swampy Summit.

The ascent to the horizon launched on a very muddy Morrisons Burn track with a welcome “second breakfast” stop at the bushline. Up the Powerline track and traversing west, our view over Dunedin and the peninsula rotated to Taieri and snow-capped inland Otago. A short “third breakfast/early brunch” break at the Busters track junction then down heavily pig-rooted Porkies track, passing Old Swampy’s own snow field (hand-sized). Crossing a branch of Whare Creek to ascend McQuilkins track for lunch near pt 594, amid the weather-shaped rocks and rich shrubbery. Down the benched, bermed, rideable Moon track to Nicols Falls and back to the road, right at the predicted time.

We had struck perfect weather; not a cloud in a breathless sky. Faultless track navigation by trip leader Helen Emerson (“Is this where we got lost last year, Tom?”) was confidently supported by Tom Kirk (“Ummm...”), with several experienced OTMCers nudging as necessary. Great all-round company, constant chatter with new members welcomed in. We headed home, mud-smeared and weary, better for the experience.



Team photo on the Moon Track (photo Helen Emerson)

Andrew Sewell for Helen Emerson, Megan Lahood, John Kaiser, Tom Kirk, Laura Sanalone, Joe & Sharon Bretherton, Roy Ward, Gilles Donneau, Martin Motlhey, Laurence Prattley, Andrew Sewell, Alison Evans, Kate Botting, Ruth Han

## Walk up a Thirst - 20 July 2025

### By Helen Emerson

The winter version of 'Walk up a Thirst' can be a chilly affair - at least in the first half of the walk until the sunny plateau is reached. But the chill of the winter morning is more than compensated for by the promise of a hot coffee - or more likely - a beer at the end of the walk. Twelve of us gathered in the Emerson's Brewery carpark on a crisp sunny morning - just a hint of frost was reported from people as we gathered from various parts of Dunedin. The route takes us along Anzac Ave and Logan Park Drive - it's a little slippery under foot. Setting off uphill quickly warms us up and although the track is in the shade at this time of day, it's still glorious to look out across Dunedin and to Flagstaff (what a glorious day to be on the tops - hmmm, we should have gone up Flagstaff or into the Silver Peaks today!).



The Plateau is in full sun and we quickly take over the two picnic tables. There are plenty of bikers out today, and runners too. After a spot of 'can you see my house from here?', we head off across the track to Ravensbourne. The only debate here is whether or not to take the steep zig zag footpath - how slippery

Enjoying the sunshine at the Plateau (photo Helen Emerson) would it be? Not too bad as it turns out, and Joe went first to test it and catch anyone who built up too much speed

.Then it's a straightforward walk around the Harbour pathway, over the bridge, under the railway line, and into the Brewery. The sun is streaming in and it's warm enough to sit outside for lunch. Perfect!

Thanks to David and Penny McArthur, Joe and Sharon Bretherton, Nicky McKay, Rebecca Armstrong, Hadir Kerdani, Lucy Jones, Mark Stephenson, Tom Kirk, and Ruth Yan.



# **Buskin—Boulder Beach-Paradise Track**

## **16 August 2025**

### **By Chris Fraser**

Saskia Bronstring led this great walk on a beautiful, sunny August Day! With a mix of long-time members and first-timers, our group set off from the clubrooms at 9am and travelled the short distance to the start of the track on Buskin Rd

The Buskin track follows an unformed legal road over farmland, down to Boulder Beach. The going was a little slow at times, due to the rugged, uneven terrain – with a lot of large hoofprints in mud! After successfully navigating our way through, we connected with the Highcliff Track and followed it south to the viewpoint – the perfect place to stop for morning tea and admire the stunning

views over Boulder Beach. We then retraced our steps back down from the headland and carried on to Boulder Beach – following the track over the sand dunes and through some scrub. We emerged onto the beach - a beautiful beach with hard white sand and the many boulders that give it its name.



Our group spent about half an hour at the beach enjoying the sunshine, eating

lunch, paddling (with one brave soul going for a swim!) before heading back through the sand dunes to the main track. At the junction, we headed up the hill along Paradise Track. This is a fairly steep track that follows an old stone stacked fence for part of the way. The views were again very impressive as we wound our way back up to Highcliff Rd and the end of our walk.

Enjoying the sunshine and views (photo Tom Kirk)

A fantastic morning's hike – thanks to Saskia for organising and leading. Saskia Bronstring, Sharon and Joe Bretherton, Mike Scott, Laurence Prattley, Shirley Welsh, Kristy McNeill, Andrew Sewell, Ash Flintoff, Tom Kirk, Toni McErlane, Alice Fraser, Chris Fraser

## Government Track -6 September 2025

### By Ali McDonald

It's just before 9am on a Saturday morning in early spring. One by one individuals trickle into OTMC clubrooms. They've dressed pragmatically for the southerly winds in an assortment of layers. More optimistic souls stand resolutely in shorts, wielding small tubes of SPF 50 whilst rummaging for a sunhat. Clipboards signed and gear safely stowed, we drift towards the allocated vehicles and head in the direction of Waipori Falls reserve.

At 9:50am our trip leader, Rebecca, herds all eight of us to a spot on the gravel road edge. "Come on team, group selfie time!" We grin into bright sunlight as her battle worn cell phone captures an obligatory 'before' shot. Ritual complete we drift, single-file, towards our objective for the day – the historic Government track.

Following the tracks gentle gradient, we chatter excitedly amongst ourselves, like an animated flock of silvereyes dispersing into the surrounding bush. It's a relatively benign track but our progress stutters at multiple treefall obstacles – a red beech, a puka, a kotukutuku – each of them a compartmentalised agility test.



As I pop up on the other side of a still-green-needled matai, I can't help but ponder what this old conifer has witnessed in her lifetime. The diameter of her trunk makes her at least a hundred years old. Was she a silent witness to the construction of this bridle path during the 1890's? How many carts and weary travellers did she see trundle past en route to the Waipori goldfields? When did she see her first OTMC

Negotiating treefall (photo Rebecca Armstrong)

"tramper" pass by? In places, the original bench of the track is well defined, with stacked stone revetments propping up the outer edges. In other areas, the topography and climate have taken their toll, leaving slips and alternative desire lines to navigate – but never anything particularly tricky. For the most part, aside from the obvious sign of pigs rooting

around for tasty snacks, the path is in good condition. Late morning sees us hunkering down on the far side of a clearing for elevenses.

This small section of farmland affords us an unimpeded view over the valley below but we don't sit for long. Despite our best efforts to fold into the topography of the hillside, the southerly wind still finds us. Cold hands rummage for extra layers and it's time to push on.

During the second half of the walk that the track reveals its sinister side. Rebecca has already alerted us to the presence of stinging nettle along the track but ongaonga and bush-lawyer barely register in the shadowy undergrowth and their enquiring tendrils regularly make contact with passing limbs. Most walkers understand that these plants are not inherently malicious and their thorns are merely adaptations – an aid to climbing the forest canopy or a deterrent to a hungry herbivore – nevertheless, it's hard not to take it personally when tissues are required to mop up the blood.

Various forest inhabitants have shown themselves as we trudge by – pīwakawaka, korimako and riroriro – but now I hear the characteristic call of a red-crowned kakariki somewhere in the valley. Kakariki are partial to nesting in tree cavities, typically only found in the more mature specimens of old forests. I can see why they like the real-estate here.



By early afternoon we have reached the end of the track and settle into a lunchtime repose. It's an area where beech forest beauty juxtaposes with municipal infrastructure. Somehow though, the presence of a double line of power poles seems in keeping with the area's municipal history. After a ceremonial photo at the end of the track we return along the same path. It's a six hour round trip all up but it doesn't feel it. I can see why one of our group declared such a fondness for this path. It's quiet unassuming nature belies its ability to cater to such a diverse range of people: Whether you're into history or nature, social walking or quiet contemplation, tramps or bike-rides, able bodied or not so able – the Government track can provide you with a little slice of what you need.

Ali McDonald for Rebecca Armstrong, Helen Emerson, Tom Kirk, Susan Dunn, Shirley Welsh and Kristy McNeill



# **Snow Skills on the Rock and Pillar Range**

## **9-10 August 2025**

### **By Helen Emerson**

It was a chilly Friday evening when 9 of us gathered at the Middlemarch Holiday Park for Steffan's gear talk prior to heading up into the Rock and Pillars the next morning. The re-purposed Guard's vans at the holiday park made for a perfect gathering point, while Steffan gave us a run-down on some of the gear we would be playing with over the next couple of days; having a go at fitting crampons to our boots, triggering the avalanche search beacons, how to hold an ice axe without endangering the limbs of our fellow trampers, and testing out the length of an avalanche probe (and most importantly, how to collapse it again!). This was a great introduction to the gear, and Steffan has a huge amount of knowledge and experience to share with the group. We're feeling excited for the week-end ahead!



It was a crisp Saturday morning as we load up the cars. There's been a bit more snow overnight on the hills overnight -yippee. But first, coffee. Luckily the Kissing Gate opens at 8am, so we piled in there to get our takeaways, before driving the 9km up the road to the start of the Kinvara track.

Steffan has challenged us with walking up the 4WD track to Leaning Lodge hut at a steady pace - with the forecast weather (and the expectation of the usual winds on the R&Ps) there's nothing to be gained from overheating on the climb up - and then getting cold once wet. It's a good call - we make steady progress up the track, rotating leader every 15 mins or so, and sticking together as a group. The forecast snow flurries arrived, and before too long we are up in the snow line. Cue snow-balls flying, and much discussion

about the animal footprints we can see in the snow. Evidence of a rabbit wearing crampons was spotted (without doubt).

By lunchtime, Leaning Lodge was in our sight. To our delight (and Rebecca's credit for summoning the snow) it's clear that we are going to have sufficient snow to make for a fun weekend - I mean, good practice of the skills we are going to learn. After getting settled in the hut, and fuelling up with

some lunch and hot drinks, we layer up our thermal layers, don helmets, gloves, and glasses, and head off in search a slope to go sliding. This afternoon's skills focus on navigating in snowy conditions without crampons, and how to self-arrest if that goes horribly wrong. We learn a couple of techniques of gaining good foot-holds, how to correctly use ice-axes, and



Practicing self-arresting (photo Ali McDonald)

then for the fun stuff - slipping, sliding, and stopping.

Steffan found a good slope up and behind the hut, and we spent a couple of hours taking turns to slide and self-arrest, with guidance, critique, and encouragement from Steffan. The light was fading, and the weather had clagged in as we headed back to the hut for the evening. Seemingly throwing yourself down a slope is hard work, and the chance to have another theory session with Steffan over a hot drink and some snacks was welcomed. A discussion on avalanches quickly revealed who had done their homework (full marks, Ally), and also set us up nicely for the next day.

Leaning Lodge on a winter's evening is chilly for sure, but everyone is well prepared, aided by some tasty beers (thanks Steffan) and some gin liqueurs to sample (thanks to my sister-in-law). Before bedtime the sky had

cleared, so visits to the loo were rewarded with the full moon lighting up the hills and the hut—just stunning.

Sunrise the next morning was just as spectacular, and it was exciting to put on all our gear again - with crampons this time - and get training from Steffan on a variety of cramponing techniques. Prepared and checked, we head up the hill - with the aim of reaching Summit Rock and completing a circuit route back to the hut via the 4WD track. Much of the snow is soft, but as we gain some height we get into some nice icy/crunchy stuff that enables us to test the crampons better. This is fun - and the scenery is stunning. The cloud swirls a bit, and we get some sunshine too, and the whole landscape is eerie, atmospheric, moon-scape-like, and intoxicating. I could stay up here all day. The famed R&P wind is even holding back for us. We take our time up there - loads of

photos, ogling at the rocks (great schistocity - real word, trust me ...), studying the patterns made by the ice and wind. We reach Summit Rock in time for morning tea (of course - it's always time for morning tea) and more photos, and then we set off along the fence-line to



make a loop route back to the hut using the 4WD track.

The team about to embark on a morning of snow adventures  
(photo Steffan Rolfe)

The fence is a work of ice-art - really stunning.

With a few stops to adjust crampons, and take more photos, we went back to Leaning Lodge, in time for a late lunch to pack up gear and tidying the hut after our stay. Even in the 4 or so hours we've been out, the snow has started melting back at the hut, so we are feeling lucky with our timing this weekend. And then it's back down the Kinvara Track to the cars. It's as relentless

down as it is up, but we're all in good spirits after a fun weekend. Huge thanks to Steffan for sharing his knowledge and expertise, and planning a great weekend of snow skill activities. There's still plenty more to do and learn - we didn't get to play hide and seek with the avalanche beacons, and we didn't get to practice any limb amputation with the ice axes (oops, that was not part of the official programme) - so let's do it all again next year!

Massive thanks to Steffan Rolfe, and to Rebecca Armstrong, Fransina Breedt, Sergey Ryazanov, Esther de Lange, Alison McDonald, Ruth Han, and Georgia Harrison for the great company this weekend.  
Cheers all, Helen Emerson



**Trip reports needed**—if you've been tramping lately, we'd love to hear from you. Be it a day or weekend trip, please put a few words on paper and let us know where you went. Include a photo or two if possible and send to [debspettinger@gmail.com](mailto:debspettinger@gmail.com)