Bulletin Number 857, August 2026

OTMC Bulletin

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

Looking over Otago Harbour—21 June 2026
Kaikai Beach/Purehurehu Point day trip—photo Tom Kirk

Upcoming Trips

August
2 Taieri River Track (Taieri Mouth)
8 Annual Dinner & Curling
9 Burns Track Loop (Swampy Summit)
16 Walk up a Thirst
22-23 Snow Caving (Old Man Range)
23 Davies Track Circuit (Flagstaff)

September
6 City to Port Chalmers
13 3 Peaks/Escarpment/Cloud Forest circuit

OTMC Committee Needs You

The OTMC Annual General Meeting is on 27 August and with it comes the opportunity for you to contribute by joining the committee.

Our current committee is small, with a few dedicated people carrying the weight of multiple roles to keep the club running smoothly. By stepping up and joining the committee at this year's AGM, you are not just giving back to the club that has given you memorable adventures in the hills but also sharing the load and ensuring the OTMC is there for others. There is no need for decades of experience to make a difference—bringing your unique skills, fresh energy, and a willingness to help with keeping our club thriving.

Nominations are open for all committee positions including President, Vice-President, Secretary, Treasurer, Chief Guide, and General Committee which includes Membership, Day Trip convener, Bulletin Editor, Thursday night coordinator, Weekly Update and Gear Hire

Download the **OTMC Nomination Form**, complete it with a proposer and seconder, and email it to **otmcsecretary@gmail.com** or hand it in at the clubrooms before 13 August.

Subs are now due

1 July heralds the new OTMC financial year and that means your **subs are now due**

As part of the mandatory update to the OTMC Constitution, the 2025 AGM approved a change to the club's subscriptions classes – with new simplified membership categories now in place.

All club members, older than 18 years and who are not elected as Life or Honorary are now classed as Full members

- **Full Member: $65.00 (incl. GST)**
- **Junior Member: $32.50 (incl. GST) Junior members must attend a Secondary School.**

Subs need to be paid directly to the OTMC bank account
ASB: 12-3150-0311684-00 (please reference with 'membership', and your name)

FMC Backcountry Direct 2 You

As discussed at the 2025 AGM, and again at the June Special General Meeting, the club will no longer be distributing the FMC Backcountry Magazine. The club remains a fully affiliated FMC club, and the decision to not distribute the Backcountry magazine does not affect your FMC membership with FMC membership benefits not changing. You will still receive a FMC card and be able to purchase a back country hut pass at a discounted price

OTMC members who would like to continue receiving a printed Backcountry magazine can do so via the FMC Direct to You (D2U) service. There is an additional cost for this (currently $25 per year, payable directly to FMC). To sign up for Backcountry via D2U visit the FMC website.

Paid parking at DoC sites to continue

After a seven month trial of paid parking at three Department of Conservation sites, Aoraki/Mt Cook, Franz Josef and Punakaiki, which raised around $1.5 million in gross revenue, the Department will continue with paid parking at these sites. DoC reports that overall, visitor feedback has been positive and monitoring has shown that the implementation of paid parking has had no impact on visitor numbers.

Some changes have been made and these include

- Car park charges will now be in half-hour rather than hourly increments.
- Improved signage and information clarifying that paying for a single day's parking allows multiple entries and exits within that day and clearer guidance on how to top up payments.
- The $10 annual permit for locals will now apply to two vehicles rather than one and is a one-off charge with no additional charge if the local permit is renewed.
- West Coast residents' permits will cover both Punakaiki and Franz Josef (one permit covers both sites).
- The free 20-minute period will reduce to 10 minutes in Punakaiki and Franz Josef to clarify that the free period is for drop-offs and pick-ups only. It was found people were rushing to complete the walks in 20 minutes to avoid paying for parking.

Other sites are being considered for paid parking

Trip Reports

Cloud Forest Track Maintenance
23 May 2026 By Debbie Pettinger

It had been a number of years since the Cloud Forest track from Sullivans Dam to the Powerlines had received any serious maintenance and with some of the board walks being almost completely covered in ferns, nine people picked up some tools and headed up the track to tackle the worst parts.

Before and after track clearing
(photos Debs Pettinger)

The main work started at Calvert Dell and continued along the main track past the junction to the Leith Loop. The focus for most of this section was cutting the ferns well back so that the track and board walks are clear as well as trimming low hanging branches that were overhanding the track. Some of the group continued on and removed a tree that had fallen, blocking the track as well as clearing other low hanging branches further on. The idea for clearing the track well back is that new growth from the ferns will not overgrow the track this spring.

There is a very large tree across the Leith Loop track not far from the junction which may require diverting the track around the fallen tree but as this did not impact the Cloud Forest track up to the powerlines, this tree was left for another time.

While a good amount of track clearing was achieved there is still quite a lot more to do and another work party will be needed before the spring growth.

Debs Pettinger for Antony Pettinger, Wayne Hodgkinson (leader), Mark Stevenson, Andrew Sewell, Kath Danaher , Arshad Aci, Jakub Zavacky and Rob Seeley

Rosella Ridge—14 June 2026
By Helen Emerson

Ah, Rosella Ridge. One of my personal favourites in the Silver Peaks. The last time I did this route with the club (June 2024) we came back with a dog which we named Tracker (who was later collected by his owner from the DCC Pound). We had a great winters day back then - and I'm hoping for a repeat today (maybe minus the dog?)

Eleven of us set out at 8am from Woodhaugh. Eeek, it's cold and frosty down there in mid-winter. But no worries, the forecast for today is great - we just have to be bold, start cold...

It really is worth the early start coming over the northern motorway looking at the morning sun on Blueskin Bay, and it's not so cold once we arrive at the Mountain Road carpark. This is Tom's first day-trip-leading, so we exchange the usual banter about the acceptable attrition rates, and then we are off, down the Miners Direct track. Down, down, down. This is really a great track. We hit the cold again at the bottom, as we head along the River Track - it's frosty, and beautiful, down there in the patches that don't see the sun. The track is in great condition and has been recently cleared - thanks Green Hut Track Group, I presume! No signs of any stray hunting dogs (I'm slightly disappointed) and we stop for morning tea at the bottom of the Rosella Ridge track. At that point, I should have kept my mouth shut when the discussion turned to who would write the trip report. Oh well, here we are …

Emerging into the frost at bottom of Gold Miners Direct track (Photo Helen Emerson)

The bottom of the Rosella track didn't seem to be as steep as I remembered it. No bad thing - it's still plenty steep enough. We pause part-way up to re-group and re-fuel and then it's onwards to the fabulous rocky outcrop above the tree line for lunch at midday. It's shorts and t-shirt weather as we enjoy our lunch. Stronger westerly winds are forecast, but so far we are out-pacing their arrival - perfect for this section of the track. After lunch we get to enjoy the undulating ridge line. Up, down, up, down. The views are glorious, the track is in great condition, and the conversation increasingly ridiculous. Perfect. A further pause at the next flattish section, and we debate what it would be like to camp there (anyone done that?). At the junction with the main route, most choose to do a further climb onwards to Pulpit Rock - and why not on such a great winters day.

A few of us amble back to the Green Hut site to wait there. We all pause to admire the view at 'Tracker's Lookout' on the way out, and then before you know

it, we are back at the car park. It's not quite 4pm. Perfect time to head to Arc Brewery for a well-earned pint!
Well done Tom, for successfully leading your first day trip, and only losing someone late in the day between the Green Hut site and the pub (sorry, Tina!).

Helen Emerson, for Tom Kirk (leader), Clare Ridout, Mark Stephenson, Rebecca Armstrong, Joe & Sharon Bretherton, Rodger Clarkson, Rob Seeley, Tina Anderson, Nicole Hook

Nyhon Track-Harbour Cone-Hoppers Inlet
19 July 2026 By Lucy Jones

Fourteen people set off from the cars warmly wrapped up from the very cold wind. With clear blue sky and the sun just starting to come out, walking up the Nyhon track certainly got us warmed up. We stopped at a gateway and our leader realised that we needed to keep going up the track which had trees on either side until it flatten out. On top of the hill we had extensive views looking out in all different directions and back down to Hoopers Inlet. We turned down a road to the Lime Kilns where we had our morning tea. It was very sheltered out of the wind. Some of us saw a Morepork up in the trees but it was quite small and hard to see blending into the tree that it was sitting in. We then had quite a bit of road walking to Highcliff Road

Lime Kiln (photo Tom Kirk)

The plan was to walk up Harbour Cone and have lunch on top. Walking up through the paddocks over to our right there was a sign on a rock that said Coffee Rock with views looking back to Hoopers Inlet. There was a very cold wind, and everyone just took their time walking up, working out the easy way and following any tracks which were a bit greasy and pooey from sheep poops under foot. As we got nearer to the top it was quite rocky and the rocks were slippery. From the top you get incredible views looking out to the Harbour and back to the city. All the hardy souls went right up to the top apart from me, I stayed back a bit. Everyone didn't stay on top for long, just have lunch and see the view. It was very cold windy on top, A lot of the people came running down from the top. Down the Nyhon track back to the cars.

Lucy Jones for Tom Kirk (leader), Lisa Harkness, Rob Seeley, Leeanne Jack, Mark Stephenson, Cecile Torr, Shannon Sealy, Alison Evans, Rachel Easson, Kath Danaher, Jakub Zavacky and Rao Khan

Kaikai Beach/Purehurehu Point
21 June 2026 By Rob Seeley

.This is one of Gordon's regular trips and is surely one of the highlights of the day-tripping year.
Seven of us turned out at Waipuna Bay and we start by taking on the mighty Stone Hill in deep shade at mid-morning. It was slow going and the nibbling sheep had plenty of time to move away as we ground our way up. There is a spinney of macrocarpa about a third of the way, the site of some long-gone farmlet, now encompassed about with a thicket of ongaonga (urtica ferrox) which would dissuade even the randy-est prince from reviving a sleeping beauty abed therein. This may have been the former home of a Mrs Stone after whom the hill is possibly named. See Gordon for full details. Further up we get the first welcome rays of sunshine of this stunning mid-winter day. Behind us the harbour is a pattern of blues showing its depths and shallows, the Peninsular glows in the sun. The final part of the climb is interrupted by a splendid wall of rocks that harbours an impressive range of natives that have escaped the nibbling in its cracks and crevices. A large whiteywood marks the start of a perfect ramp allowing us easy climbing under a vertical rock bluff. From here a series of ledges and steps wind up through bush and rock to the top – a highly enjoyable climb. By this time some of the party are noticing symptoms of caffeine deficiency and morning tea breaks out in the sun and out of the wind on a mown berm of the top road.

Kaikai Valley (photo Rob Seeley)

The descent on the far side is much gentler (begun at a small gate at the junction with the Whareakeake Beach road) following the valley floor leading to Kaikai Beach. This is a highly attractive place of verdant grass and clumps of native bush. More ongaonga is encountered by a stand of totara, this time littered with cow bones (the nettles have been known to kill cattle). We deviated slightly from the old track to allow a bevvy of living cows to move away

before finally reaching sea level and the Lewis Family cave. Then it was over the dunes to make the beach for lunch.
Out of the wind again and in full sun, it was actually quite warm and people were seen shedding clothes and footwear and heading for the waves. Not content with paddling though, Anaïs psyched herself up and went for full immersion. The verdict? Not as cold as Lake Harris apparently.
Our beaching had to come to an end alas, but not before I'd broached the idea to our leader of actually going to Purehurehu Point rather than simply noting it from the sands. He was open to the idea but only if we ran, once we'd reached the Kaikai-Whareakeake ridge, to the Point, there being some time constraint. So it was that six of us arrived at the Point with its tongue-twister name and trig-beacon, puffed but chuffed (some of us) to learn that we could still run at all. But it was well worth the effort and the view was superb up and down the coast and down to a secretive little beach at the cliff base.

Secret beach (photo Tom Kirk)

Walking back to rejoin Gordon, we began the long but gentle climb up the ridge, back to the top road. We stopped off at the old concrete house (and re-enacted an old photo) before completing the climb, the last part being on the Whareakeake Beach Road. Back on the main West Harbour ridge, Stone Hill was again in shadow and a chilly -as well as steep and sheep-poo littered- descent to the Aramoana road lay in store.
A fabulous day out and thanks again to Gordon for leading and arranging access and the three land-owners that gave us permission. To continue the ongaonga theme, Peter and I noticed a red-admiral butterfly landed on one of these plant's spiky leaves. It seems (Wikipedia) that they and their caterpillars are immune to the stings and ongaonga is a main food source and prevents birds eating the grubs.

Rob Seeley for Gordon Tocher (leader), Peter Barton, Tom Kirk, Kath Danaher, Anaïs King, Lucy Jones