

Old Man Range Trip report: By Allison Knight.

There was a good turnout on this trip, despite the threatening weather and the early Sunday morning start. Three 4WD vehicles left from Dunedin promptly at 8am. Alan Mark took Geoff Baylis and a student and picked up David Galloway on the way past Millers Flat. Susan and her husband took Rory and Paul Guy and there were 7 brave souls in my van - Bastow, Rex, Nola, Audrey, Fredrika and Cheong. The convoy was doubled at Mitchell's Cottage, where we met up with another three 4WDs; Brian Patrick and his son Hamish in one, John Douglas and 3 other Upper Clutha Forest and Birders in another, and Gaynor and partner in a Landrover. Prof. Alan Mark handed out a detailed paper from the 1980's on the vegetation of the area and challenged us to update it. He stopped to show us representative vegetation zones, from Montane and Subalpine through to Low and High Alpine, giving us a very informative and entertaining botanical and conservation history of the area. Dr David Galloway pointed out some of the more interesting lichens. David has taken up the challenge to update by producing a preliminary list of lichens from the area, bringing the published number up from 5 to over 200! Lunch was eaten in the shelter of some of the striking, lichen covered tors near the Obelisk, and then we explored along the summit ridge as far as Hyde Rock, where the bluffs were so full of unusual plants and lichens it would have been good to have had a whole day to explore there. People did seem to enjoy the outing despite the bitterly cold wind. The road was pretty rugged after heavy washouts and we were very grateful for a hot drink at Gaynor's place at the bottom of the hill on the way home through the glorious autumn colours.

John Douglas has left us a folder about his ecotours for those who would rather be driven than drive up those rugged roads. It is pinned to the noticeboard in the University Botany Dept tearoom, along with a copy of Alan Mark's paper and the newsletters from