

Volunteers afternoon tea and walk up Peggy's Hill - By Sophie Fern

On Sunday 22nd, OPBG held a volunteer's afternoon tea at the woolshed up on the side of Peggy's Hill. It was an opportunity for everyone to catch up with each other after the summer and to find out how things have been going with the OPBG trapping programme.

Brendon, Moira and Cathy updated everyone on the trapping in sectors, 1, 2 and 3 and the ongoing monitoring. There was then a brief discussion about the trapping in sector 4 that is coming up this winter. There was time for questions, but by then, we were all eyeing the afternoon tea table, with good reason. Cups of tea were drunk, cake was eaten (I heard special mention of the tastiness of the egg sandwiches) and more chatting was done.

A group of us then donned tramping boots and headed up Peggy's Hill. There was the odd moment when we stopped to "look at the view" also known as "catch our breaths" but, to be fair, the views are completely spectacular. Up on the hill were amazing patches of bush, views of some of the STOP replanting that is thriving, and of course you could see right over the harbour to Port Chalmers and its visiting cruise ship and back over Papanui Inlet, Harbour Cone and Hoopers Inlet. We clustered around the remains of felled old totara that are littering the paddock, the ghostly reminders of the forest that once covered the hill.

Further up, through a couple more gates, and the track started getting vertical. Everyone other than Lala Frazer and I decided that they were staunch and kept climbing. Lala and I stayed by the gate and she told me stories about the history of the landscape. The climb down was so much faster than the walk up and it was not because the views were in any way less exquisite. There is a moment when Larnach Castle peeps through the macrocarpas that is just stunning, and looks like a genuine castle in that view.

We arrived back at the woolshed, with slightly aching feet, and there was leftover cake and more tea for those who needed a wee pick me up after their long walk. But many of us looked at our watches and squeaked, rushing home to feed animals and get ready for the coming week.

Does anyone know who Peggy was, or how the Hill was named? Cathy would love to know, as would I.

Have a look at the photo gallery (Page 3) for photos of volunteers in the woolshed and on their way down from Peggy's Hill.