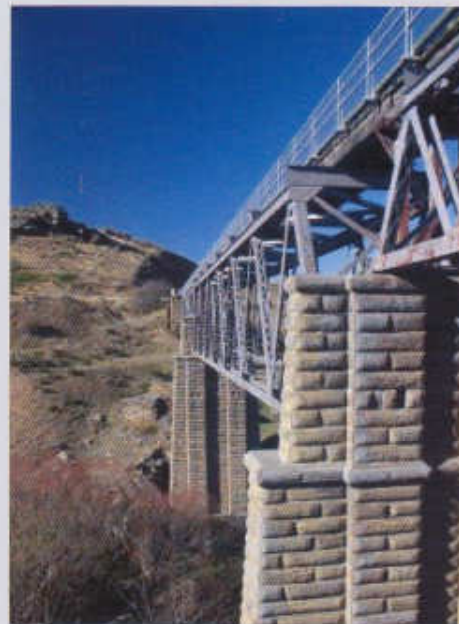


MANUHERIKIA VALLEY & IDA VALLEY



CENTRAL OTAGO • NEW ZEALAND



For accommodation and booking requirements contact your nearest Visitor Information Centre in Alexandra, Ranfurly, Cromwell or Roxburgh.

Websites to visit:

www.centralotagonz.com
www.otagocentralrailtrail.co.nz
www.fishandgame.org.nz

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MANUHERIKIA VALLEY

Chatto Creek - Omakau - Ophir - Lauder - Becks - St Bathans

Thousands of miners flocked to the valley when gold was discovered in the 1860s. Evidence of those days remain, although the life blood of the valley now is pastoral farming and, more recently, tourism generated by the Otago Central Rail Trail.

The journey along State Highway 85 is to experience the heart and soul of the small farming communities often signalled by the local gathering place, the pub. At the base of the valley **Chatto Creek** tavern, with its original stone work dating from 1886, is worth a visit, as is the corrugated iron post office next door.

Omakau caters for the local farmers and is the valley's main centre. It is also a starting point for a journey to what remains of Matakanaui, once a large gold mining township at the base of the Dunstan Range.

Over the Omakau bridge and two kilometres along the road is **Ophir**, an historic township noted for its quaint cottages, post office and extreme high and low temperatures. The Daniel O'Connell historic bridge (1880) with its solid schist piers is one of the few remaining suspension bridges in Central Otago.

Back on State Highway 85 and 40km from Alexandra is **Lauder** where the dry climate, big skies and pollution-free atmosphere make an ideal home for the NIWA climate observatory.

Becks, which sits on the 45th Parallel, was named after John Beck, the first licensee of the White Horse Hotel, established in 1864. The hotel is being restored by a locally-run trust and is open to visitors.

St Bathans is one of New Zealand's best-preserved gold mining towns. The Vulcan, its only remaining hotel, is reportedly haunted. This mud brick building dates from 1882 and still serves locals and many visitors.



IDA VALLEY

Moa Creek - Poolburn - Oturohua

Set between Rough Ridge and the Raggedy Range, the Ida Valley is bounded by the Ida Range to the north and Poolburn Hill to the south. It was named in 1857 by Otago's first surveyor, John Turnbull Thomson, after King Ida of Bamburgh Castle near his birthplace on England's Northumberland coast.

At **Moa Creek** the old pub has been turned into a backpackers and it is worth asking for directions to the well-preserved but not so well known old Chinese miner's town.



A worthwhile detour is to **Poolburn Dam** where movie director Peter Jackson created the village of Rohan in his "Lord of the Rings" films. It is also possible to retrace the route (by four-wheel drive) followed by the 19th century miners who trekked from Dunedin to Central Otago's goldfields over the **Old Dunstan Trail**. (Road closed during winter).

Oturohua is noted for Gilchrist's General Store, unchanged since the 1930s and still trading today. Nearby, and in working order, is Hayes Engineering Works, originally a family business dating from 1895 where many agricultural tools were invented and sold worldwide. Explore the remains of Golden Progress Mine where you can peer down the shaft that carried both ore and people.

In winter the frozen **Idaburn Dam** is the venue for the famous Roaring Game, the ancient Scottish sport of curling. You might be lucky to catch a Bonspiel when curlers nationwide descend on Oturohua.

Poolburn Dam →



ACCOMMODATION

The best way to experience both the Manuherikia and Ida Valleys is to spend a night or two enjoying the rural hospitality offered by many accommodation facilities.

There is a wide range of places to stay including country hotels, bed and breakfast, home stay, backpackers, lodges, and camping grounds.

For more details on where to stay, contact any of the local information centres.



Chatto Creek Post Office →

Approximate travelling times

St Bathans to Alexandra	45 minutes
Omakau to Ranfurly	50 minutes
Poolburn to Alexandra	25 minutes
Cromwell to Alexandra	30 minutes
Queenstown to Alexandra	1 hour
Dunedin to Alexandra	2 hours 15 minutes

Known as Sarsen Stones on the North Rough Ridge →



EATING OUT

Local hospitality can be enjoyed at pubs and eateries in both valleys which cater for any taste or budget. Don't miss the chance to buy local wines or just-off-the-tree cherries, apricots, nectarines, peaches or apples in season.

Pack a picnic and ask a local for directions to the best picnic spot, then sit back and savour the flavours of Central Otago.



ANNUAL EVENTS

Some of the major events that attract national and international interest in these valleys include:

Omakau Races — January

Picnic and punting fun at the gallops and trots.

Otago Central Rail Trail Duathlon — February

A 150km mountain bike and running team or individual event from the Clyde railhead to Middlemarch, passing through the Manuherikia and Ida Valleys. For more go to: www.otagoctrailtrail.co.nz

Ghost to Ghost Triathlon — March

Held in the historic mining village of St Bathans.

Goldrush — March

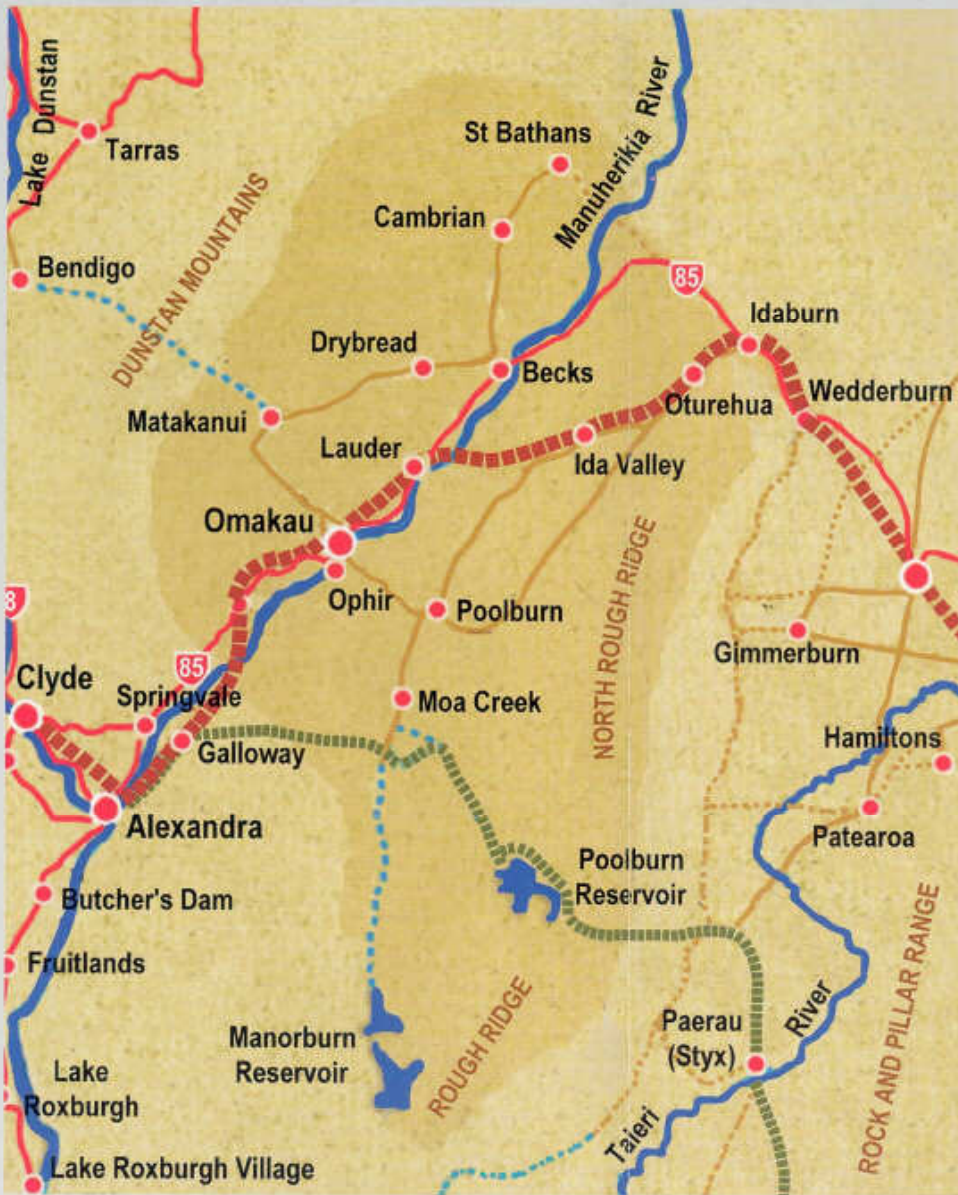
A popular three-day multisport event.

Brass Monkey Motor Cycle Rally — June

A huge motorcycle hoedown near Otarehua where hardy souls brave sub-zero temperatures.

For more information on any of these events visit: www.centralotagonz.com

MANUHERIKIA VALLEY & IDA VALLEY MAP



Legend

- Major Roads
- Minor Roads
- ... Unsealed Roads
- ... Dry Weather Tracks or suitable for 4WD
- - - Rail Trail
- - - The Dunstan Trail



RECREATION

There are many outdoor recreational activities such as mountain biking, walking, historic tours, golf, swimming, fishing or star-gazing in the clear night skies.

A journey on the internationally-renowned Otago Central Rail Trail (www.centralotagorailtrail.co.nz) is a unique experience. The old railway line attracts many visitors who walk, cycle or horse ride part or all of the 150km route. It takes in spectacular gorges, tunnels, viaducts, farmland, gaunt hills and outcrops of lichen-covered schist rock.



For something a little more leisurely, explore the countryside. We suggest you pick up copies of the St Bathans and Ophir "Walk Around" series and learn about the history of these tiny settlements.

Their companion, the "Self-Drive Heritage" brochure takes you on a journey to the area's significant historical sites. You can examine old schist and mud brick buildings and stroll around the old cemeteries in St Bathans and

Fishing huts at Poolburn →



Drybread where the gravestones of those resting there tell of the harsh life endured by settlers and miners.

In Spring, the roadsides are spread with colourful wildflowers while in November the wild thyme covering the hills bursts into tiny lavender-pink flowers. Try walking on the thyme to breathe in its rich perfume.

In Summer, a haze of vibrant blue Viper's bugloss appears, and hawks circle lazily looking for their prey. If you are lucky you might see the smaller New Zealand falcon, the Karearea. This rare and protected bird inhabits the rocky heights but can sometimes be spotted seeking live prey on the lower slopes.

Ask the locals where you can cool off in one of the many swimming holes along the Manuherikia River or visit one of the many beautiful large farm gardens open for public viewing from October to March. For more details inquire at local information centres.

If fishing is your game and brown trout is your quarry, try the Manuherikia River or the Idaburn, Upper Manorburn or Poolburn Dams. (Check the regulations and purchase a fishing licence from information centres before setting out).

This is a superb landscape to photograph or to paint. The spectacular beauty of a hoar frost in winter, the stunning golden light at dawn or the shadows of the setting sun have inspired noted local artist Grahame Sydney as well as words from former New Zealand poet laureate and local poet Brian Turner.

Over the winter months when it is cold enough, there is plenty of action: enthusiastic curling teams gather on the Idaburn Dam near Otarehua while ice skaters flock to the Lower Manorburn and the Idaburn Dams.

Karearea, New Zealand's Native Falcon →



LANDSCAPES

Take time to absorb this panorama of immense open spaces, endless blue skies, and the rugged terrain of the Manuherikia and Ida Valleys – a landscape found only in this region of New Zealand and virtually untouched by the stresses and pace of modern times. A visitor from a busy city who travels the long and lonely roads here might well be overwhelmed by its solitude.

The valleys have a tumultuous geological history. Eons ago it was a sub-tropical area covered by an immense lake. Two to five million years ago huge land upheavals created the mountains and valleys exposing the schist (Greek for "split") rock which has eroded to form the fantastic shapes seen today. The extreme hot and cold, dry climate has created an almost lunar landscape of vast sun-baked valleys, rugged schist-clad ranges and rocky tors.



The harsh environment creates a land of distinctive seasons: Spring brings many tiny plants found only in this area as well as the soft lavender of wild thyme. Summer's relentless heat bakes the land into hues of brown and gold, only interrupted by green irrigated farmland and the colours of wild flowers.

Autumn blazes with a stunning palette of purple, gold, red, orange, and yellow, while sub-zero winters often bring hoar frosts which transform the countryside into an icy beauty.

Tiger Hill and its changing colours →



HISTORICAL

Much of the history of the Ida and Manuherikia valleys was shaped by Irish, Welsh, Scottish, and Chinese prospectors who flocked here in their thousands in search of gold. Their legacy is throughout the area.

To wander around St Bathans is a journey back in time to the old mining days. Around the village is an eerie moonscape carved by the sluicing and diggings of the 19th century gold seekers. Nearby, the famed Blue Lake was formed by the flooding of the huge Kildare Mine, dug by long-gone miners.

The Vulcan Hotel in St Bathans and the original Becks Hotel were built during the gold mining era and the Vulcan along with the "new" Becks Hotel (built in the 1920s) still quench the thirst of locals and visitors.

Both valleys are dotted with mud brick and schist buildings built by the early settlers and preserved by the dry climate. Some are in ruins, but many are still inhabited or used as farm buildings.



Golden Progress Mine →

Pioneering pastoral farmers also made their mark by breaking in the land despite inhospitable conditions. The tenacity of these tight-knit rural communities was recognised in 1912 when the Ida Valley received the first Government-sponsored irrigation system. Their descendants still farm these valleys.

Vulcan Hotel, St Bathans →

