



Auckland Climber

Welcome to the New Zealand Alpine Club Auckland Section Newsletter.

Join us for alpine or rock climbing trips, and social or armchair climbing. Meetings are usually held at St Luke's Community Centre, 130 Remuera Rd, Newmarket on the first Monday of each month – exceptions will be published. Meetings begin at 7:30pm with announcements and usually a slide show, then tea & coffee and nibbles are provided afterwards. A gold coin donation for food and refreshments is appreciated.

*This month's meeting: **Monday October 4th***

Social Evening

Have you been climbing somewhere exciting this year? Or had some other outdoor adventure? Want to talk about it? We would love to hear from you, as there is no organised speaker for this month's meeting. Come on Alpine Club members – let's hear your stories! If you would like to volunteer to speak at a meeting or have other ideas about what we should do at our Club meetings, please contact Tim Swain, Meetings Officer.

*Next month's meeting: **Monday November 1st***

Climbing & Barbeque

Come along to the Adventure Specialties Trust climbing wall in Henderson and enjoy clambering up their walls for a change, and discuss your upcoming summer adventures around the Barbie.

Where: Adventure Specialties Trust, 1/4 Winston Place, Henderson

When: 7:30pm

How much: Bring about \$5 for the climbing and some gold coins for the barbeque

Committee Contact Information

Mark Roberts Chairperson	630 6265	mark_roberts26@hotmail.com
Dave Crofts Vice Chairperson	820 2248	dave.crofts@aut.ac.nz
Maurits van den Berg Secretary	521 4147	maurits@mvdvdb.tax.co.nz
Tristan Harrison Treasurer	377 1773	tristanh@xtra.co.nz
Kathleen Lee Trips Organiser	630 6265	kwt_lee@yahoo.co.nz
Tim Swain Meetings	482 2275	tswain@ihug.co.nz
Deryn Williams Climber Editor	527 7689	deryn@hyper.net.nz
John Salisbury Membership	834 6699	Salisj@xtra.co.nz
Suresh Nanu Ruapehu Hut Bookings	021 815210	ruapehuhut@paradise.net.nz
Geoff Bradly Ruapehu Hut Maintenance		Geoffrey.Bradly@police.govt.nz
Sarah Owen Snowcraft Organiser	027 5589081	Sarah.Owen@acnielsen.co.nz

Gear for sale

- **Bivvy Bag**, made by BASK (www.bask.info). Waterproof & highly breathable. Weighs only 450gm. Brand new. Excellent emergency shelter. \$190
- Very light and compact red BASK **down jacket** designed for extreme alpine performance. Insulation: white goose down 400gm (F.P. 750 +/- 5%). Weight: 1-1.2 kg; Temp rating: down to - 25 C. \$400

Alex 021 1609217

Notices

Mt Eden Quarry

OLDER MEMBERS!!! A group of climbers interested in the Mt Eden Quarry is trying to put usage on a more formal basis. One of us has a vague memory that ownership of the quarry may have passed from Auckland Grammar School many years ago, when there was a move to deny access to the public. Can anyone remember anything that may help us trace this line of enquiry? Contact John Salisbury 834 6699, salisj@xtra.co.nz

Photo Required

Can you help me on my quest to find a photo of Doreen Pickens (Urquhart)? I know she climbed with many from Auckland during 1948/9 and 1950/1. Does anyone have a photo of her from that time? I interviewed Doreen and am hoping to write an article about her historic all-woman climb but without photos it won't work. Thank you for any assistance. Erin Hawke, DOC ehawke@doc.govt.nz.

NZAC Guidebooks

The Section is selling some of the climbing guidebooks published by the NZAC at the monthly meetings, so if you are interested and want to save yourself a bit of postage, see Mark after the meeting. There are two new books in the range: Arthur's Pass and Ski-touring in NZ.

NZAC Home of Mountaineering

The NZAC is looking for a home, a permanent base for our mountaineering literature, memorabilia, archives, club administration, and general support for mountaineering. The project involves the club raising money to buy a building in Christchurch and attracting suitable historical material and literature to expand the current collection. The building will house many artifacts, photographs and books associated with mountaineering. It will also accommodate the staff of the club and allow for future expansion. If you would like to know more about this project or make a contribution towards it, please see the website www.alpineclub.org.nz or contact Dave Bamford, president@alpineclub.org.nz.

NZAC National Annual Climbing Camp Ahuriri Valley 31st Dec to 8th Jan 2005

The valley provides easy access to mountain routes with a range of difficulties and also has some excellent walking possibilities in forest and open tussock country. Road access is possible all the way to camp. The Mt Brewster to Barron Saddle guidebook, written by Ross Cullen, gives details of mountain routes ranging from Grades 1 to 5, including Mt St Mary, Mt Barth and the challenging Mt Huxley. There are several possibilities for multi-day circular trips beginning at the campsite. To find out more you can visit our website at www.alpineclub.org.nz or email: climbingcamp@alpineclub.org.nz

Taranaki Alpine Club 75th Jubilee Reunion next year

The Taranaki Alpine Club's 75th Jubilee is now being planned for Queen's Birthday weekend (4th & 5th June 2005) and will be held in New Plymouth. For anyone wishing to join in the celebrations or provide photographic materials, please contact John Jordan (ph 06 7624752 e-mail jd.jordan@xtra.co.nz).

Website Watch

www.alpineclub.org.nz - subscription forms, alpine & rock climbing guidebooks, information about huts, regional and national club news, and inspirational articles.

www.doc.govt.nz - track and park information, weather and maps.

www.snow.co.nz - latest snowfield information and webcams.

www.avalanche.net.nz - check the avalanche risk before heading out there.

www.mountainz.co.nz - share your mountain adventures.

Trips

If you have any questions about any of the trips regarding itinerary or skill levels required then contact the organiser for that trip or myself. To sign up, either contact the trip organiser or sign up at Auckland Section NZAC meetings. Trips marked with "organiser TBA" means that we don't have a trip organiser for that weekend. If you'd like to contribute by organising a trip yourself or have any more ideas of how we can make our trips programme better/more interesting then please contact me on 09 630-6265 or email on kwt_lee@yahoo.co.nz
Kathleen Lee (Auckland Section NZAC Trips Officer)

October 2/3 Ski-touring & Avalanche course *Intermediate*

The Avalanche course has been postponed twice so third time lucky. Longer days but softer snow in the afternoon. Maybe camp out. Still room left on this one
Kevin Jose Tel: 6244522 Jose.Brothers@xtra.co.nz

October 9/10 Ski-touring *Intermediate*

Trying to make up for not much touring so far this year. Let's make use of the long daylight hours and get some good trips in.
Kevin Jose Tel: 6244522 Jose.Brothers@xtra.co.nz

October 9/10 Sea kayaking – Lake Tarawera *Beginners/Intermediate* TRIP NOW FULL

Allan Maclachlan Tel: 09 579 8009 allan_mac@xtra.co.nz

October 12 (Tue) Summer Trips planning evening

Galbraiths Ale House, top of Mt Eden Road, 7.30pm onwards
Bring along your guidebooks and ideas about what you want to do in the South Island. The objective of this evening will be to introduce you to other people who may be interested in joining you and coming up with a plan to make your summer dreams come true.

October 16/17 Ascent of Girdlestone and Tahurangi *Inter/Advanced*

From Turoa side, with options of ice climbing too. Aim is to walk into Blythe hut which is 90 mins from the road end and then to make a summit attempt from there – this will be a true mountaineering experience (i.e. we will not drive to the road end or use the ski lifts to get to the top)

Grant Sutton (09) 638-3346 or 021 123 5502 grants22@clear.net.nz

October 23/24/25 Taranaki (Tahurangi Lodge) - Labour wkd *Inter/Advanced*
Ice climbing, alpine ascent of the East Ridge, ski descent (?), cold rock-climbing, wine, beer, and socialising!

John Salisbury 09 834 6699 salisj@xtra.co.nz

October 30 K2 - 200k/100k cycle challenge.

See www.sportzhub.com/arc for details. This is a good opportunity to get your fitness levels up for summer. You can compete as part of a relay team, so give me a ring if you are looking for a team and I'll see if I can do the matchmaking!
Kathleen Lee 09 630 6265 [Kwt_lee@yahoo.co.nz](mailto:lee@yahoo.co.nz)

November 6/7 Mystery Mountain Biking in Central North Island

Plan is to get the guide book, close eyes, pick a page and go there
Chris Wood chrismw@ignite-direct.com

November 13/14 24 hour peak challenge - Te Heu Heu, Tahurangi, Girdlestone, Mitre Peak, Cathedral Rocks and Paretetaitonga, Dome, Whangaehu *Intermediate/advanced*

All Ruapehu peaks in 24 hours starting and beginning at Ruapehu Hut. Plan is to drive up on Friday night, get up at 4am on Saturday morning, bag lots of peaks until we drop and then find the energy to get back to the hut 14-15 hours later, taking advantage of the longer spring days. This is excellent training for mountaineering in the summer. You have to be crazy to do this one in a weekend! Support crew is also required to drive us down to the mountain, for those wanting to do a normal day's walk up the mountain. Trip limited to 8 people
Kathleen Lee Tel: 09 630 6265 Kwt_lee@yahoo.co.nz

November 21 Abseiling Trip to Mercer Bay, Waitakeres *Int/Adv*

Back by popular demand. Plan is to abseil 100m down the blowhole at Mercer Bay at low tide and then complete a waist-deep wade to shore. Limited to 8 participants. Ability to abseil and prusik is a must. Bring your helmet.
Alexander Scherbakov Tel:021 160 9217 AlexanderS@datacom.co.nz

November 27 Round Taupo Cycle Challenge

If you are looking for a group of people to do this with, either in a relay or by yourself then get in touch with me.
Kathleen Lee Tel: 09 630 6265 Kwt_lee@yahoo.co.nz

Trip Reports from Members

Alpine to Whangaehu Hut, 21st and 22nd August

Participants: Steve, Rosemary, Eric, Emma and Greg

Conditions were perfect - bright sun, blue sky, crisp crampon-friendly snow and not a breath of wind. Leaving the Alpine Hut Saturday morning we headed straight for Whangaehu. After de-icing the hut and outhouse doors we played on a nearby slope practising snow anchors, belaying and escaping the system.

Late afternoon the cold drove us into the small shabby hut reminiscent of mountaineering days before drying rooms and microwaves; the doors didn't shut properly, there was no tap and everything was covered in a good layer of grime.

Eric lit candles and assured us in no time at all it would be as cosy as a Turkish brothel, and I must concede, as the sun went down and in the glow of candlelight all the grime vanished and it became quite homely.

The bad weather forecast for Sunday afternoon shook the hut in the early hours of Sunday morning. We woke to open doors and a dusting of snow on the floor. Planning to return the same way, via the Whakapapa Glacier, then onto the Alpine Hut and back to our cars at the Top of the Bruce, we started climbing the slope immediately in front of the hut. The wind whipping across made it hard going but when it gusted and blew me off my feet, we decided to rethink our plan. It was decided unanimously to head east and exit through the Tukino ski fields. It was a good decision. The wind increased in velocity and ferocity during the day and visibility was frequently poor.

At Tukino, the kind folks at the ski club took us into their warm lodge, feed us and drove us back to our cars at Whakapapa. They were accustomed to helping climbers or, as they cynically put it, pitiful creatures who haven't learnt why roads were built.

Snowcraft Course Weekend Two, August 27th to 29th

Participants: 20 keen students and lots of instructors, article written by Nic Roderick, photos by Jane Kennedy

How does one find themselves huddled down for the night, squashed amongst six others under a pile of bivvy bags, plastic sleeping sacs, zed sacs, sleeping bags and all the clothes one could muster, under a roof of snow? That's a question outsiders fail to understand, but as we went out for that final evening toilet break, after a few too many wines, we were blown side-to-side, buffeted by an ugly, cold, snowy night and were quite glad to get tucked up inside, amongst our new-found mountaineering buddies.

This was weekend two of our snow-craft course. Time to practice skills learnt in the first weekend and to get out there and have some new adventures. After another "great" dinner at Tiffany's we ditched the vans, donned crampons and headed up amongst the lights of the lodge village and into the eerie world of snow ploughs and an almost full moon. First lesson to be learnt was "Don't let go of your gloves whilst standing on a 45° slope, even for a photo opportunity" – luckily I had a spare pair in the back.



After a cold night in the hut and brekkie we shuffled out into the wilderness to practice avalanche survival tactics. Our avalanche transceiver deciphering techniques still have a lot to be desired and we ended up zigzagging back and forward for about 15 minutes. Unfortunately I don't think our avalanche victim survived, fortunately the chocolate with the transceiver did. The wind chills picked up- not quite the picture perfect weekend from last time –so we moved behind a sheltered bank to practice rope techniques.

After lunch in the hut we headed out again to build shelters in the snow. There were a lot of ice layers around and it wasn't until 4 pm, on our third attempt that we got down to ditching all ideas of snow caves and began work

on our snow mound. Forty five minutes later we'd shovelled enough snow on our packs to start digging it out again and building a home for ourselves. Gloves were freezing and we were thinking this would not be the preferred option of house building in a blizzard. We made it inside just after dark and slept pretty well after our four-course dinner. We woke to find Jane buried in snow – no wonder her teeth were chattering all night. Seems like all groups had varying success in different cave building methods. The igloo team got 10/10 for the most beautiful shelter – I wonder if it'll still be there next time we head back?



It took a while to get warmed up, hyped up and to wake up one particular group leader to head back out after warm brekkie in the hut. But Sunday proved to be a spectacular day. I think most groups started feeling a little like real mountaineers, belaying up and abseiling down steeper slopes. A few groups played around the Pinnacles and got a great view looking down the other side of Ruapehu. We began to realise that this is why we climb – the challenges and the feeling of seeing parts of the world that others don't know are there. I guess you just get used to the cold finger and toe syndrome. You seem to easily forget the bad and remember the good.

We had a great bum slide back to the car park – nice navigating guys! Back to the bus, back to Tiffany's "the best food in King Country?" and back to the Big Smoke. It's a weird feeling to go back to the city after a weekend in the mountains - they're worlds away from each other and it feels like we've been gone for weeks. Bring on Weekend Number Three!!!!

Tongariro Crossing, September 10th to 12th

Participants: Kathleen, Andrew, Jane, Rosemary, Joseph, Andrew, Matt, John, Marita and Suresh.

Three carloads of keen participants left Auckland and after the usual wrestling match with traffic, a meal stop at Tiffany's and conversations that included abusing fat people, real estates agents and lawyers we met at Mangatepopo hut. Following a good night's sleep Andrew and Jane left the hut to act as the advance party while the rest of us enjoyed a leisurely breakfast. Finally after a considerable amount of planning we were finally on our way to South Crater.



By the time we reached it the weather had deteriorated, after all it was the weekend, and those in the party that had not been to this park before took some convincing that there was actually a volcano behind the mist. Presenting the photo on the cover of the park map soon silenced the doubters amongst us. There was a quick lesson on how to use an ice axe and crampons and we continued towards Red Crater. Andrew and Jane appeared out of the mist, they had turned back due to the poor conditions.

After a short struggle against the wind and the gradient we were on top of Red Crater and again we had to show the doubters the cover of the park map to

persuade them that they were standing on the edge of an active volcanic crater. The trip down to Ketatahi Hut was largely uneventful and the topic of the conversation was the best strategy to consume the large quantity of food and alcohol we had with us.

Ketatahi hut was empty and soon our stoves were operating at full speed to cook all the food we had with us. We considered it an achievement to polish off the food and wine and hit the sack.

Sunday morning saw an impromptu church service, as we all felt guilty that we were missing church. Breakfast included bacon, eggs, sausages, porridge and cereal and we were soon packed up ready to walk to the Ketatahi road end when one person realised it was time for morning tea, so the coffee and cake were next on the menu. We arrived at the road end and were left with the problem of the drivers having to get back to the start of the track to retrieve the cars. However by some strange coincidence our transport problem was solved by a police car being at hand with the constable's destination the Mangatepopo road end. This would have absolutely nothing to do with the fact that the National Park Policeman is a member of the club and the Ruapehu Hut Manager! Six hours after leaving the hut we were safely back in Auckland planning the next trip.

Thanks to Kathleen for organising the trip and policeman Geoff for your help.

Climber Content

Deadline for each issue is the 20th of the month preceding. Send any content for the climber to the Editor, Deryn Williams, PO Box 4043, Auckland or deryn@hyper.net.nz. Send any photos for inclusion as a jpeg or tiff image, 300dpi at print size (up to 200mmx150mm/8"x6").

Change of Address

For any change of address, email your new details to NZAC headquarters. subscriptions@alpineclub.org.nz

New Zealand Alpine Club
Auckland Section
PO Box 3036, Auckland

