



# The Auckland Climber

August '06



**CENTRAL KARAKORUM**  
Principal Glaciers, Peaks & Passes



*this month*  
**EAST OF  
EVEREST  
EXPEDITION  
TO TIBET**

*trip report*  
**Girdlestone**



*next month*  
**Alaskan  
Adventure**

*Welcome to August's edition of the NZAC Auckland Section newsletter. The club runs a variety of alpine, climbing & other trips throughout the year & new members are always welcome. The club generally meets on the 1st Monday of every month at St Luke's Community Centre, 130 Remuera Rd, Newmarket – but look out for a few exceptions for Bank Holidays!*

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#### *Climber Content*

Deadline for each issue is the 20th of the month preceding. Send any content for the climber to the editor, Suzanne, at [suzstick@hotmail.com](mailto:suzstick@hotmail.com)

#### *Change of Address*

For any change of address, or to request to receive your newsletter by email (better for us and the environment!) contact: [subscriptions@alpineclub.org.nz](mailto:subscriptions@alpineclub.org.nz)  
NZAC Auckland Section, PO Box 3036, Auckland

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### *This month's meeting:*

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**Monday 7th August 7.15pm**

## THE 2005 NZ EAST OF EVEREST EXPEDITION TO TIBET

PRESENTED BY STUART GRAY

### **Mountain Exploration is not dead.**

It's 70 years since Eric Shipton's 1935 Everest reconnaissance expedition went on a self described "orgy of climbing" in Tibet, making first ascents of no less than twenty 6,000m peaks. Shipton's team included Kiwi climber Dan Bryant, explorer Bill Tilman and 18yr old Tensing Norgay on his first portering job. Last year a group of six Kiwi climbers led by the redoubtable John Nankervis, used old Russian & Chinese maps to follow Shipton's footsteps into the Upper Kharta Valley and then the spectacular Ime Drime Range, making the second ascent of some of Shipton's peaks, plus a few firsts for good measure. Team Member Stuart Grey comes to Auckland NZAC to tell us about this fantastic trip.



### *Next month's meeting:*

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**Monday 4th September 7.15pm**

Brett McGill, Paul Whitfield, Colin Megson & Allan MacLachlan present...

## Alaskan Adventure

In July, 4 Alpine Club members headed to Alaska for a spot of remote kayaking and tramping. Expect an entertaining evening and some awesome pictures as the intrepid four talk about their adventures which included:

**Paddling the Savonoski Loop in Katmai National Park:** camping in a wilderness of lakes and rivers. No company except for Bald Eagles, salmon and a stroppy grizzly bear.

**Hiking the barren wilderness of the 'Valley of 10,000 Smokes'** the site of the largest volcanic eruption of the 20th century.

**One week paddling on Prince William Sound:** cruising up to glaciers and icebergs as well as enjoying the company of seals, sea otters and Bald Eagles.

**A four-day ferry trip along the Aleutian Islands:** sighting many extinct and semi dormant volcanoes, enjoying the company of whales and more of those Bald Eagles..



# News

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## ***Climbing Camp – Bulgaria***

The Federation of the Bulgarian Alpine Clubs is organising the Fifth Rock-Climbing Meeting in the limestone area in the outskirts of the town of Vratsa, Bulgaria from 20th to 24th September 2006.

The Vratsa climbing area is situated on 120 km northward from the capital of Bulgaria – Sofia. The rocks are of different heights (maximum about 400m) and the routes are from one to ten pitches long. Some of the routes are well equipped, including bolts and some are for using

friends, nuts and so on. There are routes for experienced climbers and routes for beginners. NZAC is invited to nominate an unlimited number of participants, but will take the expenses of two representatives of your federation during their stay in Bulgaria to take part in the Vratsa climbing meeting (that includes accommodation and local travel expenses in Bulgaria from Sofia to Vratsa). Participants over the quota should pay a minimal fee of 50 EUR for the mentioned services. The meal in Bulgaria costs approx. 10 EUR per day.

***Email Suzanne on [suzstick@hotmail.com](mailto:suzstick@hotmail.com) for more info and application form.***

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## ***Avalanches***

### **Robyn Gordon, Avalanche Awareness Campaigner with Mountain Safety Tauranga:**

“I would like to tell your members that area that there will be a seminar held at Otumoetai College on Wednesday 26 July 7.30pm. As I read the weekly newsletters from Avalanche.net I see that the first two weeks of the season have already resulted in two involvements whereby the partial burials have been very lucky. The part that I am pushing is knowledge and going online before venturing out to find out the condition of the snow and to make sure that each group realises the self rescue principle by taking the right equipment and knowing how to use it. [www.avalanche.net.nz](http://www.avalanche.net.nz) gives daily reports.

This year I have placed 10 Avalanche Safety packs at Mt Ruapehu. 6 are at Edge to Edge Whakapapa and 4 are at Powderhorn Ohakune.

If people do not have their own Transceiver, Shovel and Probe, they can hire them for the day and learn how to use them and have the opportunity of ensuring that all of the group return each day. They are an insurance policy; only as good as the users and are not a golden ticket to safety in the snow. Studying the snow and listening to the radio, your friends and the snow, will keep people aware that the snow keeps changing.

If any groups want to hire a set of packs for training purposes The James Gordon Avalanche Trust backpacks can be hired for a week or a weekend and are here as an educational resource. [www.snowtime.co.nz](http://www.snowtime.co.nz) is my website and I welcome any feedback.”

## ***Avalanche Courses***

New Zealand Mountain Safety Council is offering a new Backcountry Avalanche course this year for those who have already completed the Avalanche Awareness course.

The Backcountry Avalanche course helps to develop more advanced observation and route finding skills, and covers:

- Characteristics of avalanche phenomenon
- Snowpack factors (layers, crystal ID, basic metamorphosis)
- Observation techniques
- Human factors
- Group travel in avalanche terrain
- Small party search and rescue

### ***The course is provided over two weekends in the following locations:***

WHAKAPAPA

4-6 Aug & 11-13 Aug

Ph Peter Panton: 07 895 7667

METHVEN

18-20 Aug & 25-27 Aug

Ph Stephen Philip: 03 308 0342

WANAKA

18-20 Aug & 25-27 Aug

Ph Heather Thorne: 03 443 7661

QUEENSTOWN

11-13 Aug & 18-20 Aug

Ph Rachael Baylis: 03 441 4312

For more information, please contact the provider listed above.

# Auckland News

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## *Ruapehu Hut Working Bee Report 1-2 July 2006*

A small group of 5 volunteers (Marita Key, Andrew Deville, Brian Lamb, Jane Turner under the leadership of the formidable John Salisbury) headed to the Ruapehu hut on July 1-2 to tackle some hut maintenance and cleaning. Jane and Andrew arrived Friday night and in the morning Andrew whizzed down on his snowboard to meet Marita, John and Brian at the car park. They arrived on the chairlift complete with dehumidifier, microwave, bathroom heater toilet cisterns, toilet paper & brushes, buckets, tea towels & cleaning materials, tools, parts and packs which the team of 5 then hauled across to the hut, attracting some strange looks from the skiers and snowboarders.

John set about on the most difficult job of restoring running water to the hut by fixing the water pump while Brian and Andrew discovered their electrical talents for installing heaters and Jane & Marita assumed the womanly cleaning & tidying duties. By late afternoon, the toilets were again flushable (phew), water didn't have to be bailed directly from the water tank, various odd jobs had been done and a lot of accumulated rubbish and dirt had been removed. John's sterling work continued on Sunday with the installation of the toilet cisterns. Reverse logistics were carried out on Sunday with the removal of the old microwave, empty boxes, rubbish & dirty tea towels.

Many thanks go to John, Marita, Andrew, Brian & Jane, to Jack Woodward, Dave Tapp & Peter Hillary who lent external frame packs for hauling the heavy items (including Sir Ed's pack!), to Suzanne Stickney and Sarah Smellie for assisting in the packing and to Ruapehu Alpine Lifts for their assistance on the chair lifts. And a request goes to all hut users to show their appreciation for this work by helping to maintain the hut in a tidy & clean manner.

## *Trip reports*

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# *Girdlestone*

## **Girdlestone climbing trip – 22-23th July 2006**

### ***Intrepid mountaineers:***

**Eric Major, Rosemary Findley, Greg Virtue, Steve Salmon, Ian Wallace & Sarah Owen**

Following the recent cancellation of a number of club trips due to poor weather, our trip began with high hopes and, for once, an excellent forecast for the weekend.

Saturday was meant to be "the big day" but the high avalanche risk following a few days of heavy snowfalls in Turoa persuaded us to go ice climbing instead and postpone the Girdlestone/Mitre/Tahurangi traverse until the following day. A reasonably early start saw us inching our way slowly up the mountain road in a line of cars as road crews struggled to clear the road of snow and ice. Even at the car park level signs of recent slab avalanche activity were evident and justified our decision not to head into the backcountry just yet.

Once out of the cars the frigid temperatures got us moving promptly and we set off up the hill in eager anticipation. An hour later we were brought to a rude halt at the top of the Movenpick Chairlift by the ski patrol people who advised us that they were about to commence avalanche control "heli-bombing" operations and wouldn't allow us any further up the mountain for at least an hour. Thinking that we were about to be treated to an exciting display of pyrotechnics we accepted the state of affairs and settled down to a late breakfast/early lunch, eyes focussed on the upper mountain. The heli-bombing proved to be a bit of a damp squib and the conversation soon turned to the great powder snow conditions. Sarah was heard muttering about the absence of her snowboard.

When the hour was up we approached the ski patrol again only to be told that there was more bombing to come and no, we could not go up for another hour or more. This was the last straw. The allure of all that powder was too much and Sarah, Steve and Greg headed down the hill to hire gear and hit the ski slopes. Rose, Ian and Eric began a rather optimistic search for ice in areas where a) We wouldn't be avalanched and b) Where we wouldn't be bombed. After some abortive attempts to climb various bits of steepish, unconsolidated powder snow a plumb vertical step of blue water-ice was spotted in the distance. We were not to be disappointed although our enthusiasm did outweigh our abilities somewhat!

Thus ended a day of mixed fortunes. The skiers had a great afternoon and the "ice climbers" at least had some exercise. Nobody got avalanched and nobody got bombed.

Sunday saw us up and away early to give Tahurangi a try and possibly attempt part of the traverse depending on conditions. Frustratingly, the season's weather bogey returned and a freezing, persistent drizzle, icy wind and low visibility welcomed us to the mountain. More out of desperation than with any real hope of an improvement in the conditions we set off up the mountain in two groups, planning to meet in the Giant Café to reassess the situation over a much needed cup of hot chocolate. The two groups didn't quite meet up as planned but both independently arrived at the same conclusion and we arrived back at the car park simultaneously an hour or two later.

Thus ended a rather cold and wet day and our weekend.



# Trips

**Do you have a new trip idea? Perhaps you missed one before and want a repeat? We can only run as many trips as there are organisers. Volunteer to lead just one trip this year and get to do it where, when and with whom you want! You don't need to be the most proficient person on the trip, you are not a guide, its about car-pooling etc. Make your dream trip happen this winter, contact Grant (Trips Officer) grants22@clear.net.nz or Tel: 638-3346**

*Alpine climbing is dangerous! You need to have the appropriate skill for any trip that you wish to attend. Grading Level Beginner means someone who is at least a current snowcraft student, and is competent with the skills covered on the course to that date. Intermediate would be proficient in all the basic alpine skills taught on the course. Advanced would have already gained further alpine experience.*

**You may need to assure the organiser that you have the appropriate skill level before they let you attend.** The best way to do this is to attend the monthly Monday night meeting, introduce yourself to the organiser and tell them what skills and experience you have. This is not just for your safety but for the safety of others on the trip.







## August

### Intermediate snowcraft weekend

August 5-6

You have already done the snowcraft course and want to develop those skills and start putting them into practice. Note, this is not a formal course, but an active participatory forum. Based at **Mangetepopo Hut**.

**Level:** Intermediate / Advanced

 Kathleen Lee  Kwt\_lee@yahoo.co.nz  845-4487  
 Deryn Williams  deryn@hyper.net.nz  021 627 892

### Moonlight Tongariro Crossing on Skis

August 12-13

A shameless copy of the Moonlight Crossing taking place in early July. Although this is a ski touring trip. The plan is similar: meet up at the Mangetepopo road end on Saturday evening (some people might drive down that day, others might prefer to spend the day skiing on the mountain). Spend the night on the Central Plateau. Next morning head up Ngauruhoe then ski out. Itinerary is dependent on snow conditions and may change closer to the time.

**Level:** Intermediate ski ability, basic mountaineering skills

 Ciprian Toader  ctoader@yahoo.com  021 1746 195, 09 307 5999

### Snowcraft course weekend #2

August 19-20

 Chris Munro  munrochris@yahoo.co.nz  021 0386230

### Mt Taranaki

August 19-20

Ascent from Dawson Falls (south side). Possible ice climbing on summit. Drive down Friday night, walk 90 min to hut. Based at Kapuni Lodge which has similar facilities to our Ruapehu Hut plus a real solid fuel stove.

**Level:** Intermediate / Advanced

 Rosemary Findley  rosefindley@xtra.co.nz  585-2287 021-038-3181






### Intermediate snowcraft weekend

August 26-27

Climb Ringatoto from Southeast. Friday night, camp Ohakune, Saturday morning park at Turoa skifield, and traverse eastward, south of Girdlestone at 2,000m and descend to where the track meets the Wahianoa valley, then ascend part way and camp, taking about 9 hrs. Sunday up the Wahianoa to Ringatoto, then over Tahurangi and down to the cars, taking about 7 hrs.

Intermediate level, which has some choosing routes, bring compass and map. There is no steep climbing, possibly one tool is enough, but you may bring rope, stake, sling and harness so we can go the steeper ways. Share cooking gear and tents, or be prepared to make shelters.

**Level:** Intermediate / Advanced

 Bruce Calvert  calvert@math.auckland.ac.nz  378 4840  
 Greg Virtue  greg.virtue@bvo.co.nz


## September

### *Ski touring trip to Ruapehu*

*September 9-10*

With the Tongariro guide book out, there are plenty of ideas to choose from. We'll be based at the Ruapehu Hut and do day trips from there.

**Level:** Intermediate ski ability, basic mountaineering skills

 Ciprian Toader    ctoader@yahoo.com    021 1746 195, 09 307 5999

### *Booked 12 bunks at hut*

*September 16-17*

For a potential trip.

 *Organiser required*

### *Snowcraft course weekend #3*

*September 23-24*

 Chris Munro    munrochris@yahoo.co.nz    021 0386230

## October

### *Booked 12 bunks at hut*

*October 7-8*

For a potential trip.

 *Organiser required*

### *Taranaki [Tahurangi Lodge]*

*October 21-23*

Labour weekend Ice climbing, Alpine ascent of the East Ridge, cold rock climbing.

**Level:** New Snowcraft Graduates/ Intermediate / Advanced


 *Organiser required*

### *Outdoor First Aid Course*

*October 28-29*

An intensive two day course run by Positively First Training see their web site [www.pft.co.nz](http://www.pft.co.nz) for more info.

Kathleen is keen to attend and is probably looking forward to practicing her first aid skills on you!

 Kathleen Lee    Kwt\_lee@yahoo.co.nz    845-4487

## 2006 committee contacts

**Chairperson** – Kathleen Lee

Phone: 845 4487

email: kwt\_lee@yahoo.co.nz

**Vice Chairperson & Chief Instructor**

– Mark Roberts

Phone: 845 4487

email: mark2005roberts@yahoo.co.nz

**Secretary & Section Rep** – Deryn Williams

Phone: 441 3094

email: deryn@hyper.net.nz

**Treasurer & Section Rep** – Allan MacLachlan

Phone: 579 8009

email: allan\_mac@xtra.co.nz

**Newsletter Editor** – Suzanne Stickney

Phone: 845 1433

email: suzstick@hotmail.com

**Membership Secretary & Hut Manager**

– John Salisbury

Phone: 834 6699

email: salisj@xtra.co.nz

**Trips Organiser** – Grant Sutton

Phone: 638 3346

email: grants22@clear.net.nz

**Instruction Organiser & Snowcraft** – Chris Munro

Phone: 021 038 6230

email: munrochris@yahoo.co.nz

**Meetings Organiser** – Matt Robertson

Phone: 523 4419

email: matthewjvroberson@hotmail.com

**Events Organisers** – Sarah Owen

Phone: 0211 276 125

email: Sarahowen99@hotmail.com

**and**

Rob Frost

Phone: 027 244 6709

email: robfrost\_nz@yahoo.co.nz

**Ruapehu Hut Bookings** – Margaret McMahon

Phone: National Office (03) 377 7595

during office hours

email: admin@alpineclub.org.nz



Images from the First SnowCraft weekend.  
*Photos by Brandon Daniell*

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Auckland 1015  
New Zealand

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