



The
**Auckland
Climber**

June '08

www.aucklandclimber.org.nz

this month

**Winter Trips
Planning Evening**

next month

Sean Waters is back!

Welcome to May's edition of the NZAC Auckland Section's newsletter. The section runs a variety of alpine, climbing and other trips and courses throughout the year and new members are always welcome. The club generally meets on the first Monday of every month at St Luke's Community Centre, Remuera Rd, Newmarket at 7.30 pm, but check the newsletter for exceptions.

Climber Content

Is there anything you would like to see in the newsletter? Do you have a suggestion for improving the newsletter? If so, drop us a line, we're keen to hear from you. Alternatively, we love getting submissions from members – whether they be Trip Reports, Items for Sale or rants. Just send your material to the editor by the 15th of the month

preceding. Call Suzanne Stickney on 486 2024 or email 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
NZAC Auckland Section, PO Box 3036, Auckland

This month's meeting:

Winter Trips Planning Evening

Monday 9th June – 7.30pm

Galbraith's Ale House, Cnr Mt Eden Rd & Symonds St, Newton

Come gather round the real log fire (could be real) at Galbraith's Ale House at the top of Mt Eden Rd in Mt Eden for a night given to the hatching of grand plans. Where do you want to climb this winter? What do you want to do? If you have something in mind, North or South island – extreme or tame – come along with a map and find a few porters/friends to join you. Similarly, if you want to get on some trips with some like-minded folks then come for a pint and a chat. This is a great opportunity to find out about what's on offer. Americans may say that this is a night where dreams are made, but we call it the Winter Planning Night.

Next month's meeting:

Sean Waters is back!

Monday 7th July – 7.30pm

Sean Waters, one half of the irrepressible legendary adventure duo returns to the Auckland section to tell us about his 2007 expedition to the Northern Patagonian Ice Cap. He and adventure buddy Jo Kippax kayaked fjords, navigated glaciers and snuck in a first ascent.

Two years in the planning, once in Chile, things didn't quite go to plan (do they ever?). To whet your appetites, here, in Sean's words, a bit about their expedition.

"We ... had an expedition of extremes – many highs and some pretty deep lows, ... we completed a difficult traverse on the icecap, tested our mental strength, saw places that few people on the planet lay eyes on, survived to tell the tale and are still firm friends!

"It felt like we had to dig pretty deep to pull this one off- more mentally than physically- 25 days of bad weather will do that to you, as you see the trip you have planned for two years slowly slipping away in a windy rain cloud. We were so close to descending and flagging it on day 25 after yet another storm and another bout of watching our industrial size snow wall (our only protection from the legendary Patagonian wind- everything they say about the wind here is true) melt in the driving rain ... but in the end we decided we had to stick it out to the last possible day- if only for our peace of mind and the knowledge that we had done all we could. Next day, after a wild night- the weather cleared and suddenly, unbelievably, we had our fine spell..." **See you there for what has got to be a highlight in the Auckland section calendar!**





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Auckland News

Of Marty Blumen's April Photography Workshop, Catherine Crofts writes...

Having seen Marty's photos at an NZAC Auckland Club meeting, the chance to go on one of his photography workshops sounded really exciting as I have recently taken up photography. Held on Mt Ruapehu, we headed up to the hut stopping frequently to take photos. Marty was only too happy to answer our questions no matter how basic or technical and was enthusiastic about sharing his passion for photography. The next morning we were up at 5am and outside in the frost to take more photos. We all had a fantastic time and I think the pictures tell it all...

Thanks to Marty for running this course.

Banff rocks!

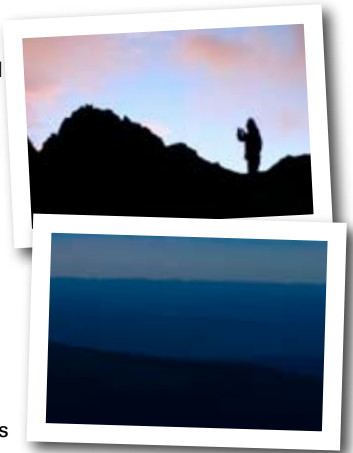
Thanks everyone for supporting the Banff Film Festival this year. We sold out (again!). Proof if ever you needed it that your committee – who are always looking for new help – is onto it! Thanks to Allan and Deryn for organising online sales and thanks to the lovely folks at Bivouac Outdoor and Outdoor Action Takapuna for helping us sell a brilliant 700 tickets.

The section wishes to farewell...

Jack Rattenbury (Dr), an Auckland member for fifty six years, who has passed away aged 90. Jack was an active climber here in the 50s and in Canada before that. Jack was one of two parties of four that made the first ascent via the North-East Ridge of Mount Aspiring and upper part of Coxcomb Ridge (1955 NZAC Journal – his party consisted of R Tornquist, I Pickens, J Rockell and J Rattenbury – 4 January 1955) and was also an Auckland section Chair. Son Mark and daughter-in-law Andy would like to hear from any members who may have memories of times spent with Jack.

Mark and Andy Rattenbury – ratsandyco@clear.net.nz

4 Arun Cr, Southgate, Wellington – home phone: 04 383 8652



Help us take on the big guns of fashion and create the next big thing!

At the last committee meeting, over a few glasses of red wine, the fleece-clad Auckland section committee thought it would be a great idea to get some cool T-shirts made up.

The idea being to sell the T-shirts (at a very good price of course) to raise money for the club.

However, while committee may have their strengths, it quickly emerged that T-shirt design – and indeed fashion in general, aren't two of them.

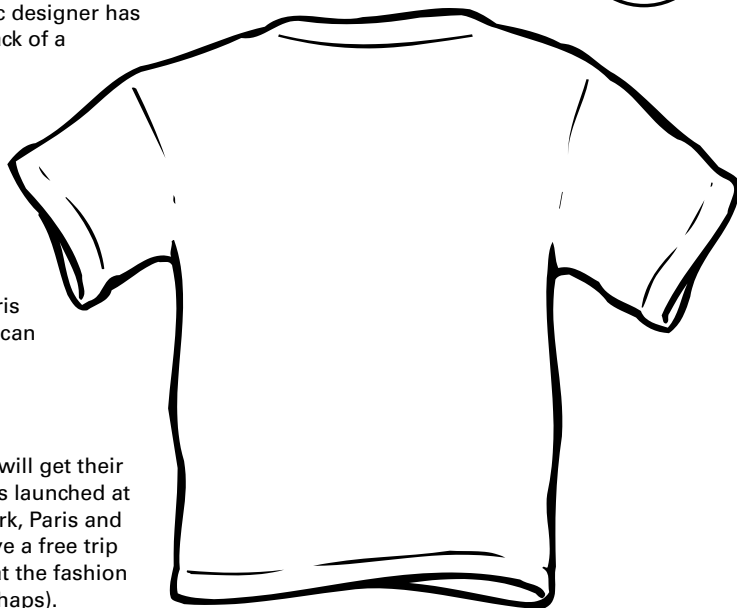
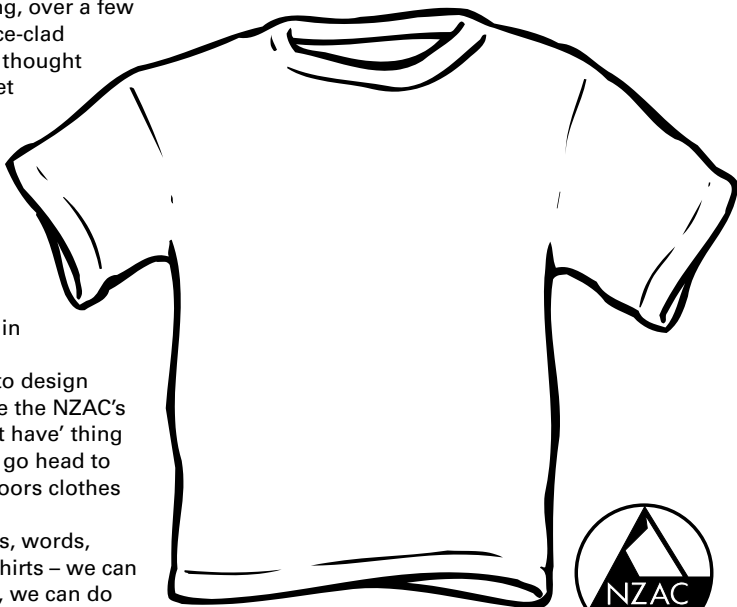
So, we need members help to design some T-shirts to help us make the NZAC's T-shirt line the next big 'must have' thing in the world of fashion. Let's go head to head with those trendy outdoors clothes manufacturers!

Feel free to use photos, logos, words, anything you like on your T-shirts – we can do different designs and yes, we can do different colours too! To help you 'rough out' your design, our graphic designer has cleverly put in a front and back of a T-shirt at the side.

We can even make different T-shirts for specific events – Snowcraft 08 for example. The only criteria is the we have NZAC somewhere on the T-shirts.

When you have an idea of your design call or email Chris Munro, aka 'Georgio', so we can collate designs:
nzacsnowcraft@gmail.com
or 029 238 6230

Designers of printed T-shirts will get their very own T-shirt before it gets launched at the fashion weeks in New York, Paris and London. They will also receive a free trip to the launch of their T-shirt at the fashion week of their choice. (er, perhaps).



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 who you want. You don't need to be the most proficient person on the trip, you are not a guide: it's about car-pooling, collating emergency details and forwarding information to the trip participants. Make your dream trip happen this winter, contact Amanda (Trips Officer) amandafholmes@yahoo.com.au or 0275 488 831. Also email me to obtain updates to this list. Trips marked with "organiser tba" means that we don't have a trips organized allocated and that trip can't go ahead until we find a volunteer to do so.... All suggestions for trips welcome!

June

Rock climbing at Extreme Edge

Wed June 11, 7pm

Come along to a social evening of rock climbing, especially aimed at new members. If you've not climbed before, the harness rental, belay lesson and unlimited climbing is \$18. Unlimited climbing only is \$13.50. Extreme edge have made these special prices for all trip participants, whether members or not. For more information on the indoor climbing venue: www.extremeedge.co.nz

 Amanda Holmes  amandafholmes@yahoo.com.au  0275 488831

Queen's birthday weekend – SnowCraft refresher weekend

June 14-15

If you're wanting to brush up on skills such as crevasse rescue, avalanche transceiver use, snow anchors, maybe a bit of ice climbing, or just getting the feel back for using crampons and ice axe while bagging a peak or two this is an ideal opportunity. You should all be aware that this is not an official instruction course; it is a refresher. Everyone must have already learned the skills that they wish to practise, and you'll need to organise your own climbing gear if you don't currently have any. Once there we will probably be dividing into at least a couple of groups, depending on what people want to do.

Based at the NZ Alpine Club Hut on Whakapapa skifield.

Level Intermediate / Advanced

 Amanda Holmes  amandafholmes@yahoo.com.au  0275 488831

Outdoor First Aid Course

June 17-18




Motu Moana Scout Camp, Blockhouse Bay places available.

 Amanda Holmes  amandafholmes@yahoo.com.au  0275 488831

SnowCraft Instructors theory night

June 24

For previous instructors and experienced mountaineers interested in instructing. If you're keen to be involved contact Chris.

 Chris Munro  NZACSnowCraft@gmail.com  029 2386230

Solstice weekend – mid winter Christmas dinner Ruapehu

June 21/22

Mulled Wine, Christmas pudding, turkey with all the trimmings, Scottish dancing and the chance to explore various peaks on Ruapehu if the weather is good. Partners and non-members are welcome to come and join us for this fun and sociable weekend. It's at the Alpine Club Hut on Ruapehu, and if you are unsure of getting to the hut on Friday night or not comfortable tackling the snow on your own, there'll be a group going up on Saturday morning.




Level Beginner/ Intermediate / Advanced

 TBA  In the meantime email me: Amandafholmes@yahoo.com.au

Two Day Outdoor First Aid Course

June 28-29

This course is relevant to ANYONE who goes into the outdoors where an ambulance is not readily available; outdoor instructors, school teachers, Scout and Guide leaders, organisations as diverse as DoC, kayak clubs and outdoor centres all needing a higher level of expertise in dealing with an emergency, make this their course of choice. For more information: www.pft.co.nz

 Amanda Holmes  amandafholmes@yahoo.com.au  0275 488831

July

Instructor's weekend for SnowCraft course

July 5-6

For previous instructors and experienced mountaineers interested in instructing. Contact Chris for more info.

 Chris Munro  NZACSnowCraft@gmail.com  029 2386230

Basic Snow Climbing and Rope Techniques

5-6 July, *Whakapapa*

You should already know how to use ice axe and crampons, navigate, belay, abseil and tie a few knots. We'll briefly go over alpine anchors then get into leading, leading with two ropes and simulclimbing. If there is any good ice about we'll have some top ropes set up and go over ice climbing techniques. Then it's off to the Pinnacles to put it all into practice, including night climbing for those inclined.

Level *Intermediate/Advanced*

 Glenn Pennycook  mailtothechief@gmail.com

Winter Taster weekend

July 5/6

A beginner's trip, aimed at people who have perhaps never put crampons on before, including budding SnowCraft enthusiasts. This is an easy trip along part of the Tongariro Crossing. Friday night's accommodation at a backpacker's in National Park, then on Saturday morning there will be bus transport, then a 2 km walk to the hut.

Level *Beginner*

 Suzanne Stickney  suzstick@hotmail.com  09 486 1433

Tree planting at Motutapu

July 6

Catch a ferry (\$15) at 9am and arrive back at 4.30pm. Free parking at ParkRight near Tepid Baths – just show parking ticket to organisers. Take your own lunch, but sausage sizzle provided at end of day. There is a 25 minute walk from wharf. For more information <http://www.motutapu.org.nz>. Must book in advance.

 Amanda Holmes  amandafholmes@yahoo.com.au  0275 488831

Advanced Leading

12-13 July, *Whakapapa*

You should already be climbing grade 2 and be comfortable on steepish ground. We'll go over the same rope techniques as for the basic course but focus more on ice screw and piton placements, including how to place gear and set anchors while on your front-points. We'll cover mixed (thin ice and rock) climbing techniques and leashless climbing. We'll then jump on some good practice leads in the Pinnacles. You need to work out your own expenses but the events themselves are free.

Level *Advanced*

 Glenn Pennycook  mailtothechief@gmail.com

Moonlight Tongariro Crossing

July 12-13

Experience the surrealism of a snow-covered Tongariro under a cloudless night sky with the full moon to guide you (that's right the weather will be perfect!) The plan is to depart Auckland late morning on Saturday, returning Sunday early evening, but this may be revised due to weather. Accommodation will be in Mangatepopo Hut. Prior experience using crampons and ice axe (self arrest) is necessary.

Level *Intermediate/Advanced*

 Richard Everitt  reveritt@ihug.co.nz  021 519 736

Rock climbing at Extreme Edge

Wed July 16, 7pm

Come along to a social evening of rock climbing, especially aimed at new members. If you've not climbed before, the harness rental, belay lesson and unlimited climbing is \$18. Unlimited climbing only is \$13.50. Extreme edge have made these special prices for all trip participants, whether members or not. For more information on the indoor climbing venue: www.extremeedge.co.nz

 Amanda Holmes  amandafholmes@yahoo.com.au  0275 488831

Girdlestone

July 19-20

Ascent of Girdlestone and Mitre-Tahurangi traverse starting from Turoa with options of ice climbing. Going for the triple-peak-challenge (Mitre, Tahurangi and Girdlestone)!!! Staying at MUAC hut, just 3km below the skifields. Bring harness, rope, 2 ice tools, snow stakes and ice screws if you have them!

Level *Intermediate/Advanced*

 TBA  In the meantime email me: Amandafholmes@yahoo.com.au

Tree planting at Motutapu

July 20

Details as previously listed.

 Allan MacLachlan  allan_mac@xtra.co.nz  570 8009

SnowCraft Weekend #1

July 26-27

This is an introductory course focused on taking participants new to the alpine environment into the mountains to gain skills, confidence and experience in alpine climbing. Course is now full.

 Chris Munro  NZACSnowCraft@gmail.com  029 2386230

August

MSC Back country avalanche awareness course #1

August 2-3

Run by MSC Taumararui, if this course is anything like the brilliant MSC Avalanche Course, then it will give you a fantastic insight into avalanches and how to keep out of them. Cost is around \$500 for the two weekends but is well worth it for anyone intending on venturing into avalanche prone areas. www.mountainsafety.org.nz

 Peter Panton  panton@xtra.co.nz  07 895 7667

MSC Back country avalanche awareness course #2

August 9-10

Run by MSC Taumararui, if this course is anything like the brilliant MSC Avalanche Course, then it will give you a fantastic insight into avalanches and how to keep out of them. Cost is around \$500 for the two weekends but is well worth it for anyone intending on venturing into avalanche prone areas. www.mountainsafety.org.nz

 Peter Panton  panton@xtra.co.nz  07 895 7667

Winter Climbing Meet at Mt Cook National Park

August 3-13

This event is 1) to introduce climbers to winter climbing in the big mountains and 2) to allow lonely winter alpinists to team up with others. Why go all the way to Alaska or the Himalaya to wade through deep snow in the freezing cold when you can do it in your own back yard? Winter in New Zealand essentially makes the mountains 2000-3000m higher but without the air getting thinner wicker! More info www.mountainz.co.nz

Level Advanced

 Glenn Pennycook  mailtothechief@gmail.com

Intermediate snowcraft weekend

August 11-12

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 Ngauruhoe.

Level Intermediate/Advanced

 TBA  In the meantime email me: Amandafholmes@yahoo.com.au

Rock climbing at Extreme Edge

August 12-13

Details as previously listed.

Level Intermediate/Advanced

 Name  reveritt@ihug.co.nz  021 519 736

NZAC Southland Section Winter Climbing Meet

August 11-12

Homer Hut – Upper Hollyford Valley. As part of the campaign to get Kiwi climbers into the mountains in winter, Al Walker and the Southland Section of the NZAC are running a climbing meet in the Darran Mountains this winter. This means you can roll up to Homer Hut and there will be people to have great winter missions with. The granite Darrans are somewhat legendary for what they provide in winter - snow, ice and frozen turf climbs - most of which are untouched.

Level Advanced

 Al Walker  mealluaine@actrix.co.nz

2008 committee contacts

Chairperson & Section Rep – Deryn Williams

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email: deryn@hyper.net.nz

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Phone: 638 3346
email: 2grant2@gmail.com

Treasurer & Section Rep – Allan MacLachlan

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Trips Organiser – Amanda Holmes

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Hut Managers – Brad White (& Richard Knott)

Phone: 021 918642

Instruction & SnowCraft Organiser – Chris Munro

Phone: 029 238 6230
email: nzacsnowcraft@gmail.com

Meetings Organiser – Matt Robertson

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Membership – John sailisbury

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Email: jmsailsbury@googlemail.com

Ruapehu Hut Bookings – Margaret McMahon

Phone: National Office (03) 377 7595
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Moments in time: Escaping the Balfour

Glenn Pennycook

Excerpt re-printed courtesy of www.mountainz.co.nz: the website for climbing in New Zealand and abroad.

A few years ago Mark Iverson and I had an epic escape from the Balfour. No, not the Balfour Face – just the glacier. The photo is of one of the many obstacles we faced – a schrund that took 4 hours to negotiate.

The trouble really started when we passed the Hidden Face of Tasman where we encountered the largest crevasse I have ever had to deal with. There was no doubt we had to abseil into it and make our way out to the side, but we were fairly convinced our two ropes weren't going to reach the bottom. Without exaggeration, the crevasse could have swallowed several blocks of Queen Street. We had only one option, and that was to abseil at the extreme right edge of the glacier, where the drop was hopefully only 50 metres.

We needed to be quick, because the Hidden Face was collapsing every 10 minutes.

The avalanche debris was pulling up a few metres short each time. The issue was the snow wasn't taking stakes. Mark would dig as deep as he could, place a horizontal stake, and stamp all the snow back in place – and the damn stake would pull out without the least protest. Each time the ice cliffs collapsed we didn't say a word, just watch the approaching debris out of the corner of our eyes, and held our breaths.

Eventually, Mark was able to work some magic and it looked as if the stake had a chance of holding so we just went for it. The abseil was amazing – I can only describe it as vertical ice caving – threading a path through every ice formation imaginable. We both made it down and at that point we had thought all our troubles

were behind us.

Late afternoon on the second day we reached Katie's Col. The relatively uncrevassed Fox N  v   lay before us if only we could find a way past the last major slot. It didn't look hopeful. The bridge across was no more than a metre thick. For sure I would break through the bridge and we would be stranded. But given there was no other option we had to give it a go – at least Mark and I were separated by several crevasses so there was no chance of us both falling down the same hole.

Sometimes a mountain gives you a break and this was to be ours. Looking back I couldn't grasp how the bridge hadn't collapsed. We had escaped the Balfour. We were very aware that we were due back at work the next morning and were debating whether to turn up a day late or mission an all night walk out. We then kicked ourselves for not realizing a much better option, and skipped merrily 30 minutes down to the Big Mac landing strip and hitch-hiked a ride back with a workmate on one of the tourist choppers.

