



The Auckland Climber

May '09

www.aucklandclimber.org.nz

upcoming event



Hoyts Sylvia Park

Wednesday

17th June 8.00pm

this month

Auckland Section Photo Competition

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 7.15 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:

Auckland Section Photo Competition

Monday May 4th 2009

You have had a year of adventuring and now and then you have taken that shot that makes you think 'Hey, that could be in National Geographic'. Well now is your chance to see how you measure up!

1. All entries must be received by Friday 1 May. Due to the popularity of certain categories, the organisers may have to pre-select which images are accepted for the competition.
2. Choose a category from the list below; you can submit up to three shots per category. We're accepting slides and digital images. Slides must be marked with a conspicuous spot in the lower left-hand corner when held for viewing. Digital images should be sent in jpeg format with a file size between 500kb and 1Mb.

Alpine General (AG) a mountain at sunrise, a hut at sunset, etc.

Alpine Activity (AA) people doing stuff in an alpine environment.

Alpine Nature (AN) e.g a kea or an alpine daisy.

Rock Climbing (RC) rock climbers on a rock.
Humour (HU) something funny in the outdoors.

Photojournalism (PJ) pictures that tell a story in some way or record an event
Adventure General (AV) shots of any outdoor adventure that doesn't involve a mountain or a rock face – mountain biking, kayaking, camel trekking across the Cheviots.

3. Title each photograph with a category abbreviation, title and your name. E.g 'AG Sunrise over Ruapehu Paul Whitfield.jpg'. It would be great to get a few words about the image too, such as where it was taken or anything particularly relevant about the image.

4. Email photos to Paul Whitfield (pdwhit@gmail.com) or mail (on a CD or DVD) to him at 3/11 Whitaker Place, Grafton, Auckland 1010. Include a return address for slides or be sure to grab them at the end of the night. This is a separate event to the club's national competition and is for amateurs only.

Next month's meeting:

Monday June 1st 2009

Details coming soon

BANFF MOUNTAIN FILM FESTIVAL WORLD TOUR

a program of



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Photo: Caroline George
ascending Steam Mountain Falls
© Andrew Bur

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Auckland

Wednesday 17 June, 8.00pm, Hoyts Silvia Park, Mt Wellington

NZAC Members \$15. Non-members \$20 LIMITED TICKETS NO DOOR SALES

Tickets available from: Outdoor Action, Barry's Point Road, Takapuna and Bivouac Stores; Newmarket, Queen st and Sylvia Park
or online at www.aucklandclimber.org.nz

Tickets on sale NOW

A solo traverse Darran Mou in the

by Evan Cameron.

Photos: Mark Watson/Highlux www.highlux.co.nz

My Darrans obsession began in winter 2005. I drove to Homer Hut from Dunedin after work one Friday in June, arriving at 1am as the car thumped across the unseen river bed, which had a foot of snow in it. That weekend was spent dodging avalanches en route to Gertrude Saddle. While driving home, I narrowly avoided hitting a road gate, which had been closed behind me all weekend because of the avalanche hazard. I was keen for more.

The saw-like peaks of Mount Crosscut. The traverse starts by ascending the Crosscut Bluffs to the right of the photo and continues across the permanent snowfield.

At the height of summer in 2006, I find myself with three days off in the middle of the week, a settled weather pattern and no one to climb with. A solo mission is called for.

After spending an hour or two poring over maps and guidebooks, I come up with an ingenious plan – but will it work? I pinch the girlfriend's car from her workplace and hit the road. I arrive at Homer at 2pm and the weather is top-notch, so up the Crosscut bluffs I go. I use my axe out of anger – and for what will be the first and last time on this particular trip – to surmount some particularly steep native bush, and reach the Crosscut snowfields as the sun fades behind Talbot. Bizarrely, I come across a porta-cabin perched high on the mountain, which overlooks the approach to the Homer tunnel. This hut belongs to Works Te Anau, who run the Milford Road avalanche control programme. It is not for public use but it is unlocked and the lure of gas on tap, bunk beds, and lots of warm sleeping bags is hard to resist – being more concerned about weight than comfort, I have brought a feeble sleeping bag rated +8. Feeling like Goldilocks, I spend a very comfortable night watching an awesome sunset over Talbot, courtesy of Works Te Anau. (Mountainz does not recommend climbers use the Works hut or rely on it as an emergency shelter. Even if you have gold ringlets. Ed.)

The next day brings even better weather and I quickly scramble up Crosscut's West Peak, then descend and

sidle across the glacier to the foot of the ridge running up to Barrier. An excellent scramble on huge, rough, granite blocks leads to Barrier Peak, followed by ridge travel to Barrier Knob, with one section of exposed but easy à cheval. I descend to Gertrude Saddle, get in my bivy bag, brew up, and try to sleep – only then realising I've left my headtorch at the Works hut. Works don't seem interested in looking for my headtorch when I phone them a week later.

A cold wind blowing over the saddle defeats all my cunning techniques to stay warm. By 2am, I am packed up and heading towards Talbot, getting a wake-up scare when the ground in front of me appears to shriek and roll down the hillside. I have just stood on someone also bivying on the saddle. Getting onto Talbot's snow slopes, I head right to Traverse Pass, which leads to the McPherson snowfields. At 4am, I am on the ridge between Talbot and McPherson, exposed to a biting wind and waiting for sunrise before descending across

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the glacier to McPherson. I hover over my stove for an hour, then sidle along and make a quick ascent of McPherson before descending to the top of Talbot's Ladder. This is where I think I might get trampled. However, the thin layer of verglas is slippery but manageable without crampons. A few short abseils off the iron rods on Talbot's Ladder brings me to Homer Saddle. (Care needed here, the rods are old. Ed.)

I have a nagging doubt as I reach Homer Hut at 11am. Then I realise – in all my excitement, I have completely forgotten my sinful behaviour. Two days prior, I had told the girlfriend I was going to the Darrans but failed to say I was about to steal her car to get there. I naively assume she will fully understand, given the importance of my brilliantly conceived and executed trip. Alas, however, it isn't all beer and medals on my arrival back in Dunedin.

Nonetheless, I was amazed at having got away with the trip (and, to an extent, my car thievery). As a long high

traverse in the Darrans with little technical difficulty and objective danger, I think it is unparalleled. I reckon it could reasonably be done in 2 days. There is a fair bit of easy angled but exposed glacier travel. Some parties may want a small rack and snowstakes to pitch sections. Depending on how you feel about descending steep bush on the Crosscut bluffs, it could be done in reverse but I reckon anti-clockwise is best. Whichever way you do it, it's an awesome way to see the Darrans and get ideas for future trips.

This is a trip I highly recommend. It involved a 3-day traverse of Mount Crosscut, Barrier Peak, Mount Talbot and Mount McPherson that I would give about a grade 2, and was completed using no more than a single axe, crampons, harness and a 30m rope.

2009 committee contacts

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during office hours

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Auckland News

Auckland section seeks

Newsletter editor

Work with the graphics department to create a newsletter that appeals to and informs members of everything happening in the NZAC and mountaineering. We're looking for someone who can bring a fresh approach to the editorial and can seek out some interesting stories. An understanding of the vagaries of grammar is a must, as is commitment to come to one committee meeting a month (refreshments at discretion of meeting host, sometimes we get wine and beer, sometimes just tea). If interested contact Deryn Williams deryn@hyper.net.nz

National News

Climbing at Diamond Lake and Hospital Flat Conservation Area – Wanaka

"The Wanaka Rock Climbing Club committee must approve all bolting activity, new routes and track cutting. New sites with no prior climbing activity will require further approval from DoC, Ngai Tahu and/or land managers. Reasonable requests will not be declined unless the area in question has significant conservation, cultural values, contrivance or other conflict."

New NZAC Activities Coordinator a familiar face in NZ mountaineering

The NZAC is happy to announce Pat Deavoll as the NZAC's new Activities Coordinator.

An active member of the NZ and international climbing community for many years, Pat's depth of knowledge, experience, and enthusiasm for climbing will be a great asset to the national office and the club. Welcome aboard Pat!

Anyone have contacts in Chile?

Steve Pavarno is part of an MBA International Business class going to Chile in early May. They are preparing a brief to help an iconic NZ outdoor clothing company assess the Chilean / Latin American market with the possibility of launching their products there.

They are looking for contacts in the Chile Adventure Tourism market, specifically outdoor clothing retailers or distributors. Can anyone help?

Please contact Steve via his email address: pavarnos@gmail.com

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 Richard (reveritt@ihug.co.nz) or Magnus (hammarsal@hotmail.com). Also email us to obtain updates to this list. Trips marked with "organiser tba" means that we don't have a trips organised allocated and that trip can't go ahead until we find a volunteer to do so.... All suggestions for trips welcome!

Alpine climbing is dangerous! You need to have the appropriate skill for any trip that you wish to attend.

Grading Levels:

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 and is comfortable on alpine grade 2+ climbs.

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.

May

An evening at Extreme Edge - Mount Wellington

May 6

Come along and meet the NZAC and have a climb. Beginners or more experienced all welcome. Come along and say 'hi' from 6.30pm.

 Magnus Hammarsal  hammarsal@hotmail.com  021 31 44 22

Rock climbing at Wharepapa South/Mangaokewa

May 9-10

Another weekend of Rock Climbing on beautifully pocketed, beginner friendly rock around Wharepapa South. Top roping for beginners and plenty of bolted routes for the experienced climber too. We may venture further afield to Mangaokewa, the 'new' limestone crag down the road a bit too, if there's interest.

 Magnus Hammarsal  hammarsal@hotmail.com  021 31 44 22

Snowcraft Refresher Course

May 30-June 1

Dear ex snowcrafters. Crampons gone rusty, memory of techniques fading? Join us for a weekend at the Ruapehu hut to refresh those skills in time for the start of the winter season.

Level Beginner/Intermediate

 Magnus Hammarsal  hammarsal@hotmail.com  021 31 44 22

June

Winter Solstice

Jun 20-21

Come on one and all, get yourselves to the hut for the winter solstice. Let's get that place rocking to the rafters with some day-time climbing and mountaineering and a slap-up roast dinner in the evening.

 Richard Everitt  reveritt@ihug.co.nz

July

Snowcraft Instructor's Training Weekend

Jul 4-5

If you want to be involved in instructing for the Alpine Instruction Course this winter, this is a must-do weekend. Receive training from qualified alpine instructor assessors. Contact Chris for more details.

 Chris Munro  nzacsnowcraft@gmail.com  029 238 6230

Winter Taster

DATE CHANGE: Jul 24-26

Thinking of joining the snow craft course but want to try it first? Keen to have a go at Alpine Mountaineering but don't know if it's for you? Come and join us on a weekend to the Tongariro National Park where you will get the chance to navigate your way across snowy ground using crampons and ice axe, learn what alpinism is all about and the kit you will need. We stay in National Park and do two day trips above the snow line. The weather will dictate where we go, but rest assured, if there is snow on the mountain, you are very likely to be in it. Places are limited on this popular weekend. To find out more or reserve a place contact Suzanne.

Level Beginner/No experience

 Suzanne Stickney  suzstick@hotmail.com  021 412 001

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SnowCraft '09

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.

Dates:

Weekend 1: 1-2 August

Weekend 2: 29-30 August

Weekend 3: 26-27 September

For more info email Deryn at:

instruction@aucklandclimber.org.nz

