



AUSSIE-MOUNTAINEER

Newsletter of the New Zealand Alpine Club - Australian Section

Winter 2009

Welcome to the new look newsletter of the New Zealand Alpine Club - Australian section.

We thank Martin Jackson and Greg Robinson for their previous contributions in the role as editors.

We openly encourage contributions to the newsletter, and try to publish it each quarter, so if you have ideas for content, or specific requests for future editions, or even a recent trip report.

Please send them to us at:
australia@alpineclub.org.nz

Thanks to Carolina Roman for wearing the NZAC hat in Sydney, including looking after the aussie mountaineers list and attending the CCM.



UPCOMING EVENTS

Social events and presentations

- 15/07 (Wed.): Screening of Philipp Stoelzl's North Face at The Retreat*
- 30/07 (Thur): Lincoln Hall, at The Retreat*
- 13/08 (Thu.): Presentation on Antarctic climbing by Duncan Chessell at The Retreat*
- 17/09 (Thu.): Presenting Stephen Venables. Likely to be at a Melbourne CBD theater
- 18/11 (Wed.): Social meeting (speaker TBA)

Committee meetings

- 19/08 (Wed.): Australian Section committee meeting, The Retreat*
- 21/10 (Wed.): Australian Section committee meeting, The Retreat*
- 16/12 (Wed.): Australian Section committee meeting, The Retreat*

Please email australia@alpineclub.org.zn if you would like to attend a committee meeting.

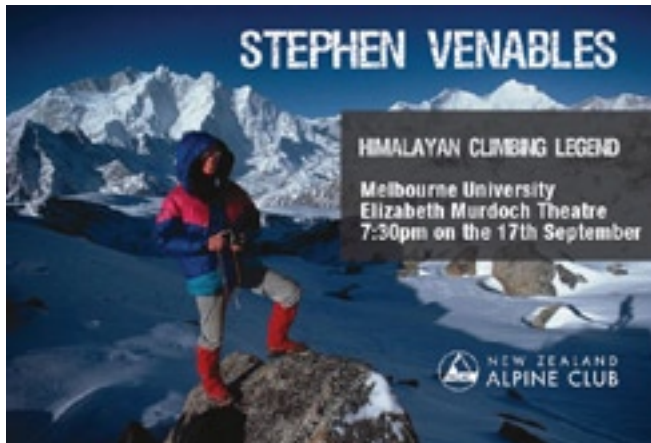
* The Retreat Hotel, 226 Nicholson St, Abbotsford, Vic. (seats up to 40). Unless otherwise stated meetings commence at 7:30 for an 8pm start.

Drop in early for dinner, a drink and a chat

For **TRIP CALENDAR** see page 4

To have your mountaineering photo printed here:
Send image to robertkettels@hotmail.com
Left: Climbing through The Summit Rocks, Aoraki - Mt Cook

SPEAKERS



Stephen Venables to speak in Melbourne

Stephen Venables, British mountaineer, author and public speaker, is one of the most successful climbers of his generation. The first Brit to summit Everest without supplementary oxygen, he began his mountaineering career in the European Alps in the mid sixties.

Stephen's first ascents in the Greater Ranges include extreme new routes on Kishtwar Shivling and Panchuli V (India), and Kusum Kangru (Nepal), and he has enjoyed climbing with many of the worlds best exploratory mountaineers, including Chris Bonnington, Reinhold Messner and Harish Kapadia.

His historic climb of Everest involved reaching the summit alone via a new route on the huge Kangshung Face, then bivouacking in the open at 8,600m and suffering frostbite on descent.

Take the opportunity to hear him speak on his 'Himalayan Odyssey' in Melbourne.

**Melbourne University
Elizabeth Murdoch Theatre
7:30pm on the 17th September**

NZAC / MUMC members - \$10
Other students / Concessions holders - \$15
General Admission - \$20

**Tickets will be available through Bogong
<http://www.bogong.com.au/>**

HOLD THE PRESS!!!

Lincoln Hall to speak in Melbourne

Date: Thursday 30th July

He is in Melbourne to help a charity called The Thin Green Line Foundation, that works to safeguard park rangers who might otherwise be killed in their line of work or by poachers. If the safeguards fail, and rangers die, money is provided for widows and their families.

This year payments have been made to 40 families whose park ranger husbands have died on the job, mostly in Africa. Lincoln has been asked to be an Ambassador for this organisation, raising awareness of the issues and the foundation.

Venue: The Retreat*

Time: 7pm onwards for beers and a bite to eat downstairs, 8pm start for the talk upstairs

Free for members, RSVP requested, Non-RSVPs may not get seating and/or be turned away

RSVP to australia@alpineclub.org.nz.





TRIP CALENDAR 2009

All trips require registration. Please contact:
australia@alpineclub.org.nz

July

03-12 Darrans Winter Climbing Meet

<http://alpineclub.org.nz/default/370>

18-19 BSAR Steep Snow and Ice rescue training at Mount Hotham

- Run by Bush Search and Rescue Victoria, of which the club is a member, the steep snow and ice rescue practice covers the use of avalanche beacons, overnight snow camping and a rescue scenario at Mount Loch. Skis and snow camping equipment along with personal ice climbing gear is required.
- Transport: Bus will be provided, departing 6am Sat 18 July from Green St Northcote.

To register by 8th July contact:
australia@alpineclub.org.nz

August

15-16 (VCC) Mountaineering trip, Mt Buller or Mt Feathertop - depending on conditions

- For experienced winter climbers, objective will be to climb south face of Mt Buller or Avalanche Spur on Mt Feathertop

For further details and bookings contact
australia@alpineclub.org.nz

22-23 (Joint VCC/NZAC) Introduction to Mountaineering at Mt Feathertop

- This is our annual introduction to mountaineering weekend at Mt Feathertop in Victoria and is run in conjunction with the Victorian Climbing Club. This trip aims to give participants a basic introduction to moving safely on snow and ice, self-arrest and anchors.
- Car-pooling, tent and equipment sharing can be arranged once we have a firm idea of attendees.

To register your interest, please email:
australia@alpineclub.org.nz

28-31 Introduction to Mountaineering course, Snowy Mountains

- Run by Snowy Mountains Climbing School, this course aims to introduce the skills required to begin your journey in the mountains.
- Skills include snow travel and camping, climbing techniques, crevasse rescue and emergency shelters.

For further details and bookings contact
snowymtns@bigpond.com

October

24-25 Pre-Alpine Instruction Course, Arapiles

- Dealing with rigging, rope management and improvised rope rescue as well as introducing an alpine approach to rock climbing, encouraging flexibility, terrain analysis and awareness of multiple modes of rope use, this course features a combination of theory and practical elements to introduce and consolidate fundamental climbing skills and set direction for training and preparation to enable participants to arrive in the mountains ready to focus on the key elements of climbing and decision making in an alpine setting. Courses are offered for participants from climbing and non-climbing backgrounds and involve a considerable volume of climbing to practise new skills and strategies.
- To participate in the climber's version of the course, which aims to refine and expand standard rock climbing skills to meet the demands of alpinism, individuals should be able to lead their own multi-pitch climbs on placed protection and manage rappel descents.
- The non-climbers. version of the course aims to introduce and practise rope-handling and climbing skills, including leading, arranging anchors and rappels, to develop adequate skills to attempt to climb basic peaks.

For further details and bookings contact
australia@alpineclub.org.nz

January 2010

Annual climbing camp, Matukituki Valle

Details (TBA)



MEMBERSHIP DISCOUNTS

Arapiles Mountain Shop, Natimuk, VIC:

10% off retail prices

http://www.natimuk.com/arapiles.net/arapiles_mountain_shop.html

Bogong Melbourne CBD, VIC:

10% off retail prices

<http://www.bogong.com.au/>

Cliffhanger Climbing Gym, Altona, VIC:

Concession rate entry for adults

<http://www.cliffhanger.com.au/>

Jindabyne Climbing Centre, Jindabyne, NSW:

NEW

Concession rate entry for adults

<http://www.snowymtns.com/?id=indoorclimbinggymjin>

K2 Basecamp, Brisbane, QLD:

NEW

10-15% discount, access to special offers, sale and promotions as a VIP Client

<http://www.k2basecamp.com.au/>

OutdoorGearStore.com.au:

NEW

15% off retail prices, (use coupon code NZACA)

<http://www.outdoorgearstore.com.au/>

Wilderness Shop, Box Hill, Melbourne, VIC

10% off retail prices, invitations to Mega Buying Nights.

Other New Zealand-specific discounts are detailed at

<http://alpineclub.org.nz/membership/benefits>

If any other retailers around Australia would like to offer our members discounts in exchange for publicity, or if any members are currently claiming discounts at other retailers with their membership:

Please drop us an email to australia@alpineclub.org.nz.

OutdoorGearStore.com.au

is proud to offer NZ Alpine Club, Australian Section, Members a **15% discount** from our new online store, where you will find everything from camping gear to ice climbing, adventure racing even snowboarding gear. Our range is growing daily, with IceBreaker Merino wool clothing coming online this week, and OnePlanet Sleeping Bags and Packs only a week or two away.

Your discount will automatically be calculated before you part with any credit card details. We accept Visa, MasterCard, AMEX and Bank Direct Deposits.

We also charge a flat fee of \$5 delivery - anywhere, any size, within Australia.

Thanks for shopping with us at:
www.outdoorgearstore.com.au

Organized Trips

Vertical World

Climbing and mountaineering in Colombia. We can give you a hand organising the journey of your life! For more info check: www.escaladaencolombia.com

If you need help with the translation contact: Stuart at escalandoando@rocketmail.com or give me a call Leyla 021 02542231

Bushwalking Victoria

The July 2009 issue of Bushwalking News Victoria is now available for you to download from the Bushwalking Victoria web site.

www.bushwalkingvictoria.org.au/forms/BNV0907.pdf

Rock Climbing in the Snowies

by Chris Brown

“Watch me” I shout towards my belayer, even though I know the winds will drown out any sound, I shout anyway. The move is a bit tricky and meagerly protected, cold hands don't help much. I know the belay is a couple of moves above...time to go! Reaching the safety of the belay I pull on a warm jacket and get ready to belay up my partner. The day is moving fast and we still one pitch to go, and the lift closes soon.....

As we revel at making the last lift down, tired and cold, but content, our conversation turns back to our day in the “Black Canyon” and all the scope of things to do in the future! Such is an example of a day out climbing in the Alpine wonderland of the Main Range!

Rock climbing in the granite tors of the “Main Range”, Kosciuszko National Park can provide a myriad of alpine rock climbing adventures from day jaunts to multi day alpine experiences.

The landscape is dotted with many granite batholiths or tors, which range from 2-3mtrs up to 40-50mtrs, and a handful over 50mtrs. One of the challenges about climbing in the main range is that you are above tree line in the alpine zone, which translates into extremely changeable weather in a very short time! This is what makes climbing the granite tors such an adventure. You have to be prepared for all kinds of weather and conditions.

Rock climbing has been going on for many years throughout the main range. From the established routes at Blue Lake to the odd bits and pieces of gear found throughout the range. Climbers have been trying their skills on the granite high above the Thredbo Valley. The granite is of excellent friction quality, however can be very coarse on your hands, especially the thin face climbs! Many types of climbing are available in the region from beginner lead climbs to nice cracks and the hard thin faces. All the climbing in the range is done with gear or by top rope, as a lot of the tors are only very short. Bolting is not allowed in the national park.

Some of the more established areas are located in the Ramshead area, adjacent to Thredbo ski resort. Access can be gained by hiking up from Dead Horse Gap or by chairlift at Thredbo. (The author recommends chairlift...more climbing time!) Tors ranging from 10 – 25 mtrs are within 15mins walk from the top of the



Above: Leading on The 3 Amigos

chairlift. These tors offer a range of grades and styles of climbing. For example, the 3 amigos wall offers 4 outstanding crack lines at about 14mtrs and range from 12 to 20+, Jabba rocks offers some 4 star slab climbing at moderate grades. "Balls to the wall" area, as well as being a popular ski area, has a good concentration of routes, ranging from 15-30 mtrs, which take gear or top rope. It has a bigger percentage of mid to high end climbs.

There are literally hundreds of tors in and around this area with still lots of potential and new discoveries to be made!

There are a handful of peaks more than 50mtrs; the closest is Signature rocks, where adventure routes can be climbed up to 100mtrs. The western faces of the main range provide a mix of long cliff faces and some cliffs extend up to 80mtrs with superb granite.

Climbing in the Main Range is a wonderful experience, however being in an Alpine zone means that you will need to be prepared for any kind of weather, and a lot of the climbs are located off trail. For these reasons climbers need to be prepared to be self sufficient. Always respect the Alpine flora and fauna as this is an alpine environment, many of things take years and years to grow and heavy foot traffic can change this dramatically. Always tread lightly! Snow has been known to fall all times of year and the wind, even on a sunny day can drop the temperature dramatically. Some approaches are a few hours and can be difficult to find, so always carry a map and compass, or seek local knowledge before venturing out to the longer approaches.

As you arrive on top of the chairlift, or emerge from the trees above Deadhorse Gap, you will see the expanse of Tors all around....get out and discover climbing in the snowies!

There currently is no guidebook for this area.

If you would like to get some local info regarding climbs in the area, or are interested in hiring a guide:

*Please contact Snowy Mountains Climbing School on:
0260 769 101 or www.snowymtns.com,
or Chris Brown - 0417 422 198*



Above: Ramshead Tors



Treasurer's Report

TREASURER'S REPORT		\$	\$	\$	\$
NZAC Australian Chapter					
Financial statement as at 28th February 2009¹					
INCOME STATEMENT					
Opening Balance (as at 14th May 2008)					4447.55
Add Income					
NZAC section fees ²	2045.82				
Previous accounts ³	2213.22				
Bank interest	0.47				
	<u>Total Income</u>				4259.51
Less Expenses					
Bushwalking Vic membership ⁴	320.00				
Aust/NZ Transfer fees	19.82				
Promotional caps ⁵	206.96				
Travel expences ⁶ (Damian Gildea)	245.13				
	<u>Total Expenses</u>				791.91
					Net Profit
					3467.60
Balance as at 28 Feb 2009⁷					7915.15

Notes

- 1 In previous years the report has been generated to align with the AGM in May but has now been done to align with our incorporation financial year
- 2 This is only 10 months' section fee allocation. NZAC head-office have changed the months they make the payments.
Last year the section fees were 2,777.14
- 3 This is money retrieved from stagnant bank accounts associated with earlier incarnations of the Aust Section of NZAC
- 4 BV membership allows NZAC members to participate in alpine Bush Search and Rescue searches and training
- 5 Promotional caps will be given to guest speakers - to be stored in Melb and Syd
- 6 Damian was a guest speaker in 2008
- 7 The current balance (20th May) is also \$7,915.15



REAL MOUNTAINS IN AUSTRALIA!



The Crosscut Saw, Alpine National Park, Victoria

Real mountains in Australia!

This new section in the NZAC Australian Section newsletter is to promote, mountains, mountaineering, alpine climbing and backcountry skiing in Australia.

If you love Australian mountains, here is the opportunity to send in your photos and/or stories about your adventures in Australia's alpine zones, to:

australia@alpineclub.org.nz



Above: Rob Kettels solos steep water ice at Blue Lake, Kosciuszko National Park.

Left: Chris Brown in training last winter for a Kyajo Ri expedition



Support The Endangered Hutton's Shearwater

Have you ever dreamed of owning a mountain landscape by the renowned alpine painter, Austen Deans?

Austen's paintings usually sell for many thousands of dollars. Recently Austen completed a painting of the snow covered Seaward Kaikoura Range with the endangered Hutton's Shearwaters in the foreground, commissioned by Geoff Harrow founder/settler of The Hutton's Shearwater Charitable Trust. Austen has signed fifty numbered prints which are for sale at \$250.00 each and all proceeds go to this trust for predator fencing, research and monitoring. If you would like one of these prints, you can contact Geoff Harrow at 9 Alderson Ave, Christchurch 8022 Ph: 03 332 4534 or Lindsay Rowe at lindsay.jan.rowe@xtra.co.nz



*Above: Honours photo, General Alpine category, 2008 NZAC Photography
Photo: Rob Kettels*

NZAC Photographic Competition

It's time to get snapping - entries for the NZAC Photographic Competition have officially opened!

The 2009 NZAC Photographic Competition is proudly sponsored by Marmot, Scarpa and Imagelab who are providing awesome prizes to the value of \$4,200.

The NZAC website has been tweaked this year to enhance the whole online "Photocomp experience". You can now view all the latest online entries for this year, plus winning entries from the last 4 years. You are also able to download the entry form from the NZAC website, and a hard copy of the entry form will be posted to all members as an insert in the next Climber magazine.

The NZAC holds a national photographic competition each year. The objectives of the photocomp are to stimulate interest in mountain and rockclimbing photography and assist members to attain a higher standard of photography. Posters are produced using a selection of winners' images (H418mm x W590mm).

For the first time the competition includes a 'Youth' section, open to all keen young photographers (not just NZAC members) under 19 years on July 31st in the year of the competition.

Applications are now open and close on July 31. Judging will take place on August 13 and the results published in the Spring edition of The Climber.

Details available:

<http://alpineclub.org.nz/photocomp>

<http://alpineclub.org.nz/product/nzac-photocomp-posters>



TRIP REPORT

Ball Pass, Copland Pass and Copland Track to The West Coast – January 2009

John O'Neil and I arrived in Mount Cook village with the intention of completing Ball Pass and Copland Pass as separate walks, however the loss of a day due to bad weather, followed by an (unusual) 4 day period of stable, fine weather convinced us to run these together into a 4 day tramp.

The village is small, with limited facilities (most notably no supermarket for provisioning). The village is dominated by the famous Hermitage 5* Hotel, with various alternative accommodation options including the friendly YHA where we stayed.

We used a day walk up to Meuller Hut (1820 m), a climb of just over 1000 m, as a warm up walk. Good for the heart, legs and lungs but also offering fine views from the spacious, modern hut – Parks Victoria could learn a thing or two!

The next day was lost to watching the lowering clouds scud across the valley as rain streaked the windows of the Y.

As predicted the skies cleared the following day, Mt Cook emerged from its cloud cover to dominate the skyline. It is long (~ 14 km) and dusty walk from the village up the Tasman Glacier to the start of the ridge leading up to Ball Pass and we persuaded a tour operator to give us a lift on his 4WD and trailer with an 8WD all terrain tractor (for a suitable fee of course). Once the going got too rough for the 4WD we decamped into the tractor in order to get to the road head at the foot of the ridge leading up to Ball Pass in the Tasman Valley. This saved 4 hours and a lot of energy that would have added a day to the walk given the challenging ascent of the steep and broken ridge.

The track up from the bench on the top of the moraine wall onto the ridge was confusing, with several earlier versions leading to land slips, rather than the ridge. After a tough hour of scrambling we located a good pad that we followed with some difficulty upward, ever upward, across scree and rockslides until the ridge proper was gained. Reminding ourselves that time spent locating the track was time well spent we puffed our way upward, to an unfolding vista of the Tasman

glacier stretching to the North and the full majesty of Mt Cook's eastern face towering over us. Caroline Hut provided a good spot for a cuppa and water top up. From here we found ourselves moving with a party of Kiwis climbing the ridge and enjoyed some local route finding advice. After a long day scrambling upward, our crampons, ice axes and helmets came out for the descent onto the head of the glacier beneath the pass for the final 200m climb up to some rock ledges just short of the pass, our objective for the day. The locals quickly bagged the limited rock spots; we camped on the snow nearby, with water from a puddle in the rocks and brilliant views in all directions. The 0100 nature call was breathtaking, not just because of the temperature, (-5c), but the setting was magical; a full moon, clear sky with every star at full brilliance and a planet hovering just over the sharply defined peak of Mt Cook – no, unfortunately I didn't have the presence of mind to setup the camera and get a shot – next time!

After enjoying some early morning sunshine to thaw the frost on the tent, we donned crampons and set off for the final climb up to Ball Pass (2121m). The route down headed across exposed scree, rock falls and up, over and down some rough ridge lines – once again emphasising NZ tramping rule 101 – stick to the pad, if you lose it stop and relocate it! The pre walk advice obtained from the Department of Conservation (DOC) in the Village assisted in understanding the broad route to be followed to avoid a series of dangerous bluffs and impassably steeply sided gullies until we found our way into a rough creek bed for the final 500m descent down from an area called the playing fields to the bench and path leading down the Hooker Valley to the village.

However our destination was the Copland Ridge and we continued down an increasingly precariously rough, rocky, dry creek bed to step onto the moraine covered glacier for the 800 m crossing of the Hooker Glacier; a bizarre wasteland of ice, rocks and piles of gravel and the occasional icy grin of the exposed glacier. The creek flowing down the north side of the Copland Ridge provided the best way off the glacier and up the moraine until sufficient height had been gained to access the bench on the side of the glacier, slipping and sliding our way across a loose scree slope. A second, very steep moraine wall rises above this bench and guards the approaches to the foot of the ridge – fortunately we had observed a party coming down the one access chute and battled our way across the steep scree slopes into the chute – what was rule 101



again? The DOC have provided a hand rope to assist in pulling your way up the last 30m of the chute – the loose footing make this essential and still a physical and exciting experience. After assessing our progress and eyeing the steep, rough ridge above us, with less than 4 hours daylight left, we abandoned our plan to climb up to the Copland Shelter. We found a basic camp site on the grass covered bench and wearily erected the tent – water from a nearby puddle (with a pill!). Our evening radio schedule with the Canterbury Mountain Radio network revealed that the good weather would hold for the next 2 days.

We were up and away early, aiming to start the climb of the Copland Ridge in the cooler weather. Again, the initial track had been 'washed' away by rock and scree falls. After some precarious attempts to find a route we located the pad and made better progress upward. Many of the stretches were reminiscent of the Western Arthurs at their best – hands and feet and the occasional need for a scrambling rope to assist. Several false leads ended in vertiginous faces of rock or fresh air – definitely not the place to be in the dark! Progress was slow but steady as we worked our way up to the Copland Shelter – a snug 4 man shelter, shaped like a water tank on its side and heavily secured by wires to the ridge. The shelter is sited 200 m below the pass and was a welcome spot out of the wind for a cuppa and early lunch. Mountain mist covered the pass and a chilly wind tugged at our parkas and over trousers as we strapped on crampons and, ice axes in hand, gingerly worked our way across the bergsgrund onto the snow face leading up to the Pass, applying NZ tramping rule 102 – don't look down! The early afternoon sun had softened the snow nicely, enabling us to plug good footsteps as we carefully made our way upward.

At the top (2150m), in the mist we were greeted by two options for descent from the pass via rock faces; both looked like comfortable abseils – lacking the kit we worked our way gingerly down the southern chute, debouching onto a boulder and scree slope after 50 - 60m. With a sigh of relief and sense of achievement we scrambled down to the head of a creek that in turn lead down to the track 800m below. The 5 Km walk along the valley on a well marked trail was slow going as we scrambled over a number of side creeks and battled our way along an overgrown track. We reached Douglas Rock Hut at 2000 – after a long but satisfying 13 hour day.

The weather held for walk down the Copland track to Welcome Flat Hut for lunch and a luxurious wallow in a thermal pool to ease the aches and pains. This hut is a 'must do' on the international backpackers list and was very busy. Rather than taking the 2 days planned to complete the 24 Km walk out we elected to walk on down the valley, camping 3 Km short of the road head at 2000, for a quieter night. The tranquillity was disturbed by assaults from hordes of sandflies – these were relieved by mosquitoes at sunset – the tent floor littered with dead insects reflected the battle waged against a relentless foe.

The next morning we were up and away early to make the road head in good time for the 0905 bus to Queenstown. We used our mountain radio to confirm the pick up and order a bed in the YHA at Queenstown – having recovered one of the days lost to weather.

This was a very satisfying walk, highly recommended – but not one to be taken lightly, alpine skills and the appropriate kit are essential.

*Peter Briggs
Queenstown,
17 January 2009*
