



Southland Section New Zealand Alpine Club Newsletter

September 2009

MEETING REMINDER

7:30 pm Tuesday 15 September, Invercargill City Library Meeting Room

Dr Stanley's Travels Stan Mulvany has been having more excitement than most earlier this year... sailing half way around the world, organising mutinies, tramping in Sardinia, getting lost in Cairo, kayaking, climbing 32 peaks in 2 weeks including 26 Munros,... While you can read about some of his exploits in this newsletter, seeing his magnificent photos and hearing his Irish lilt is any times more fun. Our section meetings are only once every second month, so don't forget to come.

Section meetings are on the 3rd Tuesday of each month at 7:30pm. To cover room hire and supper, there is a \$3.00 door charge. Non-members are warmly invited to come along and join us.

For more information regarding the New Zealand Alpine Club contact the Section Chairman, Ron McLeod phone 217 6727 r.m.mcleod@xtra.co.nz

Meeting venue

Monthly meetings are held in the Invercargill City Library Meeting Room, which is upstairs in the library building: walk in the front door, go up the escalator and turn around to find the room. Access is via the alley between the Tuatara Backpackers and the Speights Ale House. Parking can be had at the back of the building in Leven Street.

AGM

The Section AGM was held on 28th July. If you wanted a job to help run the section and didn't turn up, just ask. The list of the major protagonists is on the back of this newsletter.

Warren Herrick (1957 – 2009)

Quite a few members will remember Warren Herrick and his memorable exploits, in particular his enthusiasm for all manner of diverse projects when he was a member of the section in the 1980's. With Steve Bruce, in 1981 he traversed the West Coast along The Divide from Milford Sound to the top of the South Island. Other adventures included a 150 day cycle ride the length of New Zealand (including Stewart Island) via the back roads with his ever patient wife Liz delivering New Zealand's sesquicentennial message to schools in 1990. Over the last 20 years he organised quirky Citroen 2CV "Raids",

notably gate crashing the Coast to Coast in 1991 and winning a loyal following from Citroen enthusiasts around New Zealand.

Warren was also a member of the Southland Tramping Club and it was his vision and perseverance that initiated and oversaw the joint Southland Section – Southland Tramping Club effort in 1989 to build the present Esquilant Bivvy.

Warren enjoyed several seasons in Antarctica, including a deep field expedition and later managing the Winter-over Team in 1991. Warren's imaginative and beautifully executed photos were always worth looking at, some of which can be found in his book, "A Year on Ice".

Warren was a careful climber and viewed himself primarily as a mountaineer than a climber. Mainly in the 1980's and 1990's he made a number of good ascents, often with a theme, such as climbing all the peaks in the Polar Range, or trying (unsuccessfully) to traverse the Forbes Mountains. Climbing Zubriggens Route on Mt Cook was particularly satisfying.

Warren was an inveterate practical joker, a pastime in which he was very imaginative. The jokes were all the funnier, at least at a distance, by Warren not much enjoying the inevitable, often equally imaginative reprisals. In this respect, Warren's cherished concrete gnome, Bruce, was a constant source of amusement for his friends as Bruce found his way- at various employers' expense and never with Warren's

prior knowledge- to any manner of exotic locations, ranging from Scott Base to Tokelau.

More recently, Warren, wearing his trademark enormous cheesy smile would turn up on our doorsteps and we would learn of his next plan that was soon to be hatched. Vespa scooters was his last "latest thing".

Tragically, there will be no more such plans and we will miss Warren badly. Our condolences go to Liz and Warren's wider family.

Robin McNeill

Warren Herrick memorial meet

Jackie Knight is organising a weekend at Borland Lodge over the weekend on 3rd – 4th October to remember Warren. Bring slides, photos and stories. For more information and to book accommodation ring Robin McNeill as Jackie is living at Westport.

Robin McNeill 214 4508 r.mcneill@ieee.org

Serpentine Range outing 19/20th September

The Serpentine Range includes those gems seen from Harris Saddle/Tarahaka Whakatipu and the Hollyford Valley/Whakatipu Kā Tuka: Mts Xenicus and Mt Erebus. Yet, with the exception of Mt Xenicus (Rock wren), the area is seldom visited in spite of both these peaks offering "trampers' climbs". The views are superb, even if you don't climb above the tussock line. The plan is to go up to the Routeburn Shelter on Friday night for an early start after a hearty breakfast on Saturday morning, aiming for Harris Saddle/Tarahaka Whakatipu for lunch. It is a pleasant trog along around Lake Harris and then up the valley until below Mt Erebus. Here we plan to make camp. Sunday should see us on top of at least one peak and then back out to the cars before it gets too dark. We won't be home too early, and the coffee shops won't be open when we pass them getting there, all the same. You don't need to know how to use an ice-axe, or crampons to come on the trip, but you will need to bring them, all the same. It will be a lot of fun and will be pretty relaxed. Good food, too. The STC is invited along and they are a good bunch.

Contact Robin McNeill, phone 214 4508, r.mcneill@ieee.org

Alpine and Cliff Rescue

Next outing for the ACR team is an evening at the Police station bar for revision of techniques, 7.30pm Tuesday 6th October.

For a chance to use those techniques on a real cliff in the Catlins on Sunday 11th October, meet at the Police Station 9am.

Anyone, even vaguely interested, is invited to attend.

Contact Ron McLeod 217 6727

Seal Col trip

I'm keen to lead an Alpine Club trip to Seal Col on the Barrier Range for 4 days in Spring. Approach is up the Dart to Daleys Flat. Takes a day to get to in. No choppers! Great variety of climbs from easy glacier climbs to steep ice. Contact Stanley if interested email: eiger@xtra.co.nz or phone 2157263 (h)

Climbing Wall

Section forays to the Stadium Southland climbing wall occur from time to time. Stan is always keen to go and Peter O'Neil has some desperate routes to complete. On months when there is no section meeting, the plan is to turn up at Stadium Southland and climb instead.

News from Stanley

The following is a brief summary of my 6 months sabbatical. I've nearly finished a detailed journal which I kept on my notebook computer and will put it on my website shortly along with photos. The title of my talk at the next SSNZAC meeting is "Dr Stanley's Travels" a 6 months odyssey from India through the Middle East and North East Africa to Europe. I became know on my journey as 'Dr Stanley' as people could not remember my surname so I adopted that title myself. In essence the story is as follows.

I left in January for India visiting Chennai and then flew to Cochin on the Malabar Coast where I joined an Australian yacht called 'Sahula'. An international yacht rally started there called the 'Vasco da Gama' and we were part of that. There were only two of us on the yacht and we sailed 600 NM from Cochin to Panjim (Goa). From there we sailed across Arabian Sea to Salalal in Oman. The voyage turned into a nightmare when our self steering broke down

just as we were leaving Goa and had to hand steer most of way.

It is 1200 NM across and it took us two weeks. With 4 hour watches around the clock it was exhausting work. In addition there were other mechanical problems on board. Off the Omani coast we rescued another yacht in distress and towed them into Salalal. We spent a week in Oman and then gathered in a convoy of 23 yachts to Aden. This itself was quite stressful as we did not run masthead lights, only steaming lights, and sailed close together in formation. Night time was worse as there was a fear of collision and we used radar constantly. Thankfully no pirates! We reached Aden in Yemen safely and there I left the yacht for a week and did a solo trip to Sanaa', the capital in the north where I hired a 4-WD and a driver/minder and took off visiting Wadi Dahr, Kokoban and Manaka in the Haraz Mountains. People were heavily armed. There were numerous road blocks and I was the object of particular scrutiny. But I had a wonderful time all the same and was invited to traditional dancing in Manaka and hired a guide for a walk in the Haraz Mountains. There were almost no tourists there as some had been killed or kidnapped. I found the Yeminis lovely people and made some good friends among them.

Returning to Aden we set sail for Bab El Mandeb Straits (Arabic for 'Gates of Sorrow") at the southern end of the Red Sea in increasingly big seas. I could not steer as I injured my back so the skipper had to do it by himself.

It was very difficult sailing in big seas in pitch black on a wild night.

There was much tension onboard. We sailed through Erithrean Dalak Archipelago. Its a desolate place. We arrived at Ras Therma in Erithrea which looked like a penal colony. We sailed up the Dalaks anchoring off desert islands and sometimes going ashore. On Shumma Island I did a day walk there by myself.

When we reached Suakin in Sudan I left the yacht and made my way to Khartoum. This was interesting to say the least. Sudan is a pariah state because of the Darfur imbroglio. I made my way to Port Sudan and from there to Khartoum. There I was 'rescued' by a wealthy business man from a dodgy situation. I found the more educated Sudanese wonderfully hospitable. From there I flew to Cairo where I met Belinda.

Cairo is a great city and the Cairenes truly wonderful people. We set off for Aswan at the southern end of Egypt and then slowly made our way down Nile by Felluca (sailboat) visiting Abu Simbel, Luxor, valley of Kings and Queens, Karnak, Edfu and Giza. Made some good friends in Egypt.

Then we set off for Nuweiba in Sinai. We climbed Mt Sinai (Jebel Musa) in the dark to see the dawn breaking over the mountains-magnificent country.

From there we went to Jordan where we visited Petra, Dana Nature Reserve, Wadi Mujib, Dead Sea, Mt Nebo and Madaba.

We crossed the King Hussein Bridge to Israel. From there we went to Jerusalem where we spent a week. We stayed in East Jerusalem near Damascus Gate in a Palestinian Hostel. Made some good friends among Palestinians. Our Israeli friends then came and took us to their fortified enclave in West Bank- lovely people too. They took us rockclimbing, paraponting and sea kayaking near Tel Aviv.

In early May we flew to London to stay with my cousin Theresa at Dulwich.

We saw the 'James Caird' (Shackleton's boat) at Dulwich College. From there we flew to Sardinia to go sea kayaking in Maddelena Archipelago. Got storm bound on an island!! From there we caught ferry to Bonifacio and made our way to Vizzavonna and did 4 sections of the GR20 mountain trail. Heaps of snow and reached Castel di Vergio where we jumped onto the Mar a Mar Norde Trail to Albertacce. Then we went to Corte, Ile Rousse and Calvi visiting amazing Genoese citadels. We flew back to London and then Scotland where I went off with my friend Frank and climbed 32 peaks in 2 weeks including 26 Munros. I did some sea kayaking in Skye with Belinda as well.

Then it was back to New Zealand while Belinda carried on to America.

Stanley Mulvany

Mt Brewster - 13 Dec 2008

Southland section members Greg King and Carl Waddick, wanting to increase their alpine experience and skills, needed a suitable objective. The advice we had was that the summer season was well upon us and that it would be best to carry out a climb sooner rather than later before the conditions got too warm

and all the snow disappeared. Mt Brewster had moderate grade routes, good access and a great hut to be based. Mt Brewster it was then. The forecast looked good and we were motivated. Greg travelled and fuelled up on coffee and pies picking up Carl from his temp base at Hawea.

Fantail Falls was the start on SH6. Thankfully the river was low. The steepest part of the climb suddenly loomed, getting out of the riverbed! Thankfully it was quickly despatched without the need to rope up. The climb to Brewster hut continued, it's pretty steep for the first hour and then levels off before the next section to the bushline. Light rain was falling all the way. Out of the bush on the ridgeline, the view opened up. The hut was unoccupied and best of all, TIDY. We set about getting our gear sorted and dried.

The next day we decided that we would not bivvy as planned at 1900m, but had a recce of the route to stretch our legs and stashed our climbing kit on route. We were woken that night by a couple of climbers arriving at 12.00am. After futile attempts to sleep, Carl roused Greg @ 1.00am and we set out in a full moon @ 1.30am up to our stash. We climbed steady and were at the stash @ 3.00am. The rocks had iced up and the snow was firm. Load up and crampons on. The firm snow lasted about 500m, and then it turned to ankle to calf deep, except where we could stand on rock.



Mt Brewster – Looking up South ridge from Col at 2220m. Photo Greg King

At the Col on the south ridge @ 2220m we reassessed our planned route. There had been avalanches up to size 2 on the south and south east faces at elevations above 2000m, some point release, but mainly slabs initiating below rock outcrops on solar aspects.

Alpine and Ski had noted in Brewster Hut Book on 2-Dec-2008, poor snow conditions on the SE face and couloir. A decision was made and we crossed the Makarora glacier to the East Ridge and climbed to the col between the summit and Pt2424 for 60m up a shaded 50degree slope with an ok crust. From there, ridge travel was variable from waist deep to hard crust up to the main buttress where we sidled on the north face to a 15m iced up gully to the summit ridge. The gully was the most technical part of the climb for us. From there it was a 15m ascent to the summit trig.

There was some valley cloud but Mt Cook was very obvious to the North as was Aspiring to the southwest. By now it was 9.00am and we were aware of the rapidly softening conditions. We found and used an insitu sling to rap down the icy gully and then retraced our steps to the col on the East Ridge. It took a while to find a rock that was firmly cemented to anchor our rap sling. We rapp down as far as our 60m rope allowed, where the slope eased off and we could traverse above the shrund and down climb back to the glacier.



The sun was scorching now and there was no wind. It was time to shed some layers, eat and drink; now we felt relatively safe. We retraced our route back to the rock where we had cached our gear, some steps held, most didn't. There were 3 groups on the main Brewster glacier. A group in the middle around some equipment, two people skiing up the glacier and a couple

doing self arrest practise (we hoped) on a snow slope near the glacier.

Our leisurely pace meant we arrived back at the hut at 1430 to the sound that strikes fear into the hearts of those of us who look forward to a peaceful nights sleep!! No, not Ron McLeod, but the voice of a child. We were fairly knackered after our day out. Greg's achillies was playing up and Carl had done something to a calf muscle so we decided to risk it and stay the night. It was great just to chill out and enjoy our success.

The new, (2007) 12bunk Brewster hut is just like a mini French Ridge hut minus a few bunks, radio and wardens quarters. However it has a large west facing deck and with double glazing and insulation it keeps warm overnight. The couple with the child were very considerate and slept in the kitchen/dining area overnight so it all turned out ok.

A good sleep and leisurely start to the day had us leaving late, but gravity assisted us back to Greg's unmolested truck in less than 1 ½ hrs. All that remained was to sign out at Makarora, grab a pie and txt Peter O'Neill the kitchen renovator.

Cheers

Carl and Greg

Wye Creek Ice Climb. 22-23 August.

The section weekend ice climb was attended by none other than Yogi and Booboo.

It was an alpine start for Yogi rising at 5am after a Stags winning performance at rugby park and the festivities that followed. The drive to the Remarks was a non-event, meeting up with Booboo at about 730am at the bottom car-park. The trip up the mountain was a good chance to catch up and have a few laughs. Once there transceiver checks and intensions books were carried out, mainly by Booboo.

Snow shoes on for the long slog over the saddle towards Wye creek. (Not the Wye saddle, the other one). Somewhere near the top of the saddle Yogi decided to remove his jacket, and while doing so manage to lose his car key. Great.

Once over the saddle the gentle walk to the ramp was O.K. the previous travellers of this route have left a firm track to walk on. The ramp was another story, from the top the ice falls looked great. We could see only one other climbing team in residence.

Off with the snow shoes and down some old arvo debris, across to a rock and ice bivi known as the 'the Iron Curtain'. It had taken about 3.5 hrs to get there so it was a good time for a snack. After a quick lunch it was time to get out and amongst it. The area we were to concentrate our climbing is known as Left Hand Side in the guide book.

Some discussion about how we manage the twin rope system and then Booboo suggests 'Try heading up there under that Prow. There should be some bolts there'.

Off Yogi headed wandering all over the place like a mad thing, but up the main approach all the same. Quite an act to watch, I imagine.

'Out to your right there are some bolts and rings to come back down off'.

Which Yogi did and started to remove the gear as he came down.

When at the bottom Booboo mused about why he was not seconding and cleaning the route? Yogi didn't think the route was big enough. So Booboo then led the same route, with a more direct line. Yogi seconded up the climb cleaning the gear as he went.

A simple abseil to the base and on to the next climb, 'Slippery Customer'. An easy route, good for a warm-up. Yogi got it right this time, he led and Booboo followed.

Next was first pitch of 'Dirty rotten Scoundrels'. A very nice led by Booboo with Yogi seconding. A handy 'V' thread that was in place was a good end this climb, and which was used to abseil off and finish the day's climbing. Back to the bivi for a well earned 'Back Country' evening meal ...

Ring home and explain the car key situation, beg for mercy, make promises that one cannot keep and convince beloved to bring spare key up to remarks tomorrow afternoon.

Sunday morning was cool with clag, there had been a light sprinkling of snow overnight. It was nine am by the time we were ready to climb. 'Your turn again Yogi, head up there the full sixty this time'. Off I went, the voice of Uncle Al Walker in my head 'Heals down Laddie', it did help stave off the calf burn that was going on at the time. The other voice was that of Al Uren 'put your pro in when it is easy'. There was nothing easy about this climb, but I managed to put some in anyway. I was pleased I had completed my ablutions before the climb because if I slipped there would be more than one accident. I had 16 screws and used most of

them. 'Keep a couple of screws for the anchor I reminded myself more than once'.

'I don't think I can go much further, how much rope is left. Oh that much, O.K. I'll keep going then.'

Up over the last bench of ice and low and behold a 'V' thread just where I needed one. 'Secure' Build an anchor, quick, Booboo has been down there for ages. 'Your on belay' and up he came, twenty minutes later he was at the top. 'That was a gutsy led Yogi'

'Thanks, let's get out of here. I have to get the car key thing sorted'. The abseil down interesting, the twin 8mm ropes giving quite a bit of stretch, esp. when you are as big as Yogi.

Back at the ice bivi another quick meal, pack and time to head out.

It is a tough haul back up the first slope, a couple of ski tour campers were heading in as we approached the top. Woops one of them has just taken a fall, a good self arrest with his ski pole save more than just his bacon.

Booboo's fitness and lighter pack are a bonus for him as Yogi falls through the snow pack, snow shoes and all.

By the time we reach the ski field base building the cafe is closed, dam. Booboo ditched his pack beside the vehicle and hitched a ride down hill to wait for the arrival of the keys. An hour or so later the wee car roars into life and Yogi is back in business. He has some heavy dues to pay, the first was an evening meal in Queenstown. This did some smoothing of the ways, however there will have to be lots more meals and maybe paint the kitchen or something.

What is Yogi up to the next weekend? Running a snow craft course at the Remarks. Kotare or Kahikatea are driving.

Takitimu Crossing

The weather forecast for Queens Birthday was atrocious with an extraordinarily large snowfall to low levels predicted. Fisch (Thomas Fischer) and I didn't believe that it could be that bad and with that we set off to cross the Cullers Crossing from Wairaki Stream to the Spence Burn in the Takitimu Mountains. Clearly, we took some heed of the forecast as we had originally planned to traverse Mt Titaroa and when we left the car at Pleasant Stream, we left our

crampons behind in the knowledge that they would be of no use in deep snow.

Our cunning shortcut to the start of Wairaki Stream was ill-advised as we unnecessarily climbed 200 metres over an unnecessary hill to get closer to the headwaters. It didn't take us long to realise we were off route, but the look of the scrub to either side made us equally confident that any easier route was going to require some seriously unpleasant scrub bashing. Once in the bush we plugged along a compass course in quite pleasant conditions. About an hour before the top bivvy it started to drizzle and it got dark about ½ hour before the hut, which was when we got into the snow, temporarily lost the track markers and found that my torch wasn't working.

Finally in the hut, we got ready for Hughie to lay on the snow. I also strung out my ham radio aerial (my latest fascination) and made my fingers particularly numb.

The snow in the night was substantially less than the metre or so predicted- more like 5mm. As we progressed up the valley we came to realise that there was an unpleasant crust to the snow and after lunch at the bottom of the pass we found that what little snow that had fallen on the slopes had blown away, leaving just old, hard snow. At this point I was reminded that old fashioned, long, wooden handled Grivel ice-axes can chop steps while new-fangled aluminium ice-axes can only scratch away like a hen. It turned out that as I had the Grivel, I got to keep quite warm spending the afternoon chopping steps up the pass. The weather was overcast with cloud lurking around the tops, but nothing to worry about and we enjoyed ourselves.



Fisch heading up towards the Cullers Crossing (around corner to the right), upper Wairaki Stream.

A straightforward descent to Spence Hut followed, mainly arse-ading for the first part. We did manage to briefly bluff ourselves in a gorgy creek just before the valley floor, just on dusk, which gave a little spice to the trip, but that was soon rectified once I stopped panicking and we got to the hut just on dark. An hour later a couple of keen teenagers, Finn Cox and Whatsisname Belleby turned up. The snow and dark hadn't deterred their fun and enthusiasm, and nor had not finding any deer to shoot. It was refreshing to find keen kids and we were surprised by how well travelled in the Takitimu Mountains they were.

Monday saw us trogging out down the Aparima to the car, stopping for a couple of hours to pass on to the lads some finer points on fire lighting. The weather had by now become near perfect. So much for the weather forecast. And so out to the car on dusk and home to dinner. A nice outing.

Robin McNeill

Section Dinner

The Section Dinner is set for Friday 13th November, at the Cabbage Tree. Make a note in your diary now to make room.

Homer Hut lighting

Ron McLeod and Robin McNeill spent a weekend earlier in May wiring Homer Hut for electrical lighting. Apart from adding comfort to users, it is also hoped that the lights will lessen the use of candles and the risk of burning the hut down. The current battery and solar panel are under-dimensioned and if you leave the lights on for too long, they will go out on their own accord and not light up again until after the sun shines for a while to charge the battery.

It is planned to further upgrade the solar panel and battery and to install a permanent hut radio later in the year.



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