



NEW ZEALAND
ALPINE CLUB

The Otago Climber

August 2018



Rowan Cox's Photo was the People's Choice winner in this year's Photo Competition - full results and story page 5.



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*The monthly newsletter of the
Otago Section of the New Zealand Alpine Club*



August 2018

Club Night

Wednesday, 1 August 2018

University of Otago Staff Club, 7.30pm

'Writing About Climbing Is Not The Same'

At this month's Section night, Dunedin author and climber Paul Hersey will talk about "the many failures (and few successes) he has had in the mountains, as well as the opportunities they have given him with".

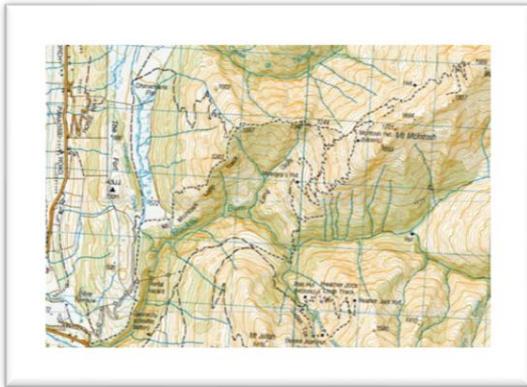
He will also talk about his next climbing expedition to Nepal and his latest book *'To The Mountains'* (there will be copies for sale)



Our September speaker will be Crystal Brindle is an all-around ranger for the Department of Conservation, a passionate landscape photographer, an avid tramper, and a keen trail runner committed to immersing herself in New Zealand's greatest landscapes and sharing the wonder she finds in the natural world. More details in the next newsletter.



Trips and training coming up. . . .



McIntosh Hut and Black Peak, 11-12 Aug

Keith Moffat will be leading a trip to McIntosh Hut from which we can climb Black Peak. This is a grade 1 climb and it envisaged snow shoes will be required; some people may like to bring skis. If you would like more information contact Keith at Moffat.k172@gmail.com and if you're keen to book a place, here's the link to the Booking Form for this trip. <https://goo.gl/forms/NZDdXNhbdqGKk5F13>

Corner Peaks, 25 – 26 August

Danilo is leading a winter trip to climb the Corner Peaks in the Takitimu Range. Although a straightforward peak, it will be full winter conditions for the Saturday night camp, so good equipment will be needed if you want to stay warm. For more information, or to book your place on this trip, email Danilo on [danilo hegg@hotmail.com](mailto:danilo.hegg@hotmail.com)



Snowcraft in September

Dates for this year's Introductory Snowcraft course are planned for Tuesday evening, 11 Sept in Dunedin and the following weekend of 15-16 Sept in the mountains (leaving on Friday evening). The course is planned to give new mountaineers the basic skills they need to get started in the mountains and an appreciation of risks and challenges involved in this wonderful sport. Skills covered include ice axe and crampon use, avalanche avoidance and rescue, camping and navigation. Reasonable fitness is needed, but no prior snow experience is required. Full details – see story on Page 6.

More Ski Touring

Matteo has had few requests to run another ski-touring trip, following the success of the last (see story page 7) and has tentatively suggested a ski touring trip on the 15th of September up Awakino with the objective to ski Mt Kohurau. The trip will be again easy but does requires a moderate level of fitness and off-piste ski ability.

There could be an option to extend the trip to a weekend and spend the second day up Fox Peak. For more information, email Matteo on zuccotn@gmail.com

Editorial comment

For almost as long as I have been involved with the Alpine Club, there have been discussions about how the club is run – some positive and some less so. At last, the NZAC has formally reviewed the questions of how members guide their Club and the review team have developed a range of suggestions to meet the challenges ahead. Now its your turn to have an input into this discussion.

If you want to have your say about how the Alpine Club is organised and operated in the years ahead, NOW is the time to spend a few minutes reading and understanding important changes being suggested.

You should have received an email from our General Manager Karen giving you an outline of the review which has been completed and links to the detailed information behind the changes being proposed. PLEASE – click on the link and read the material. <https://alpineclub.org.nz/governance-vote/>

If you're really busy, and just want to get to the heart of the discussion, try this summary document which explains the issues and answers key questions you might have. https://alpineclub.org.nz/parkside/wp-content/uploads/2018/07/NZAC_Governance-Summary-and-QA_July-2018.pdf

Later in August you will be asked to vote on the proposed changes and, because of the Club's voting rules, if you don't vote you will be effectively voting NO to the changes. This is an important decision point for the Alpine Club and your actions will make a difference to the future, even if you don't bother to vote. Please take a few minutes to be informed, so that you can vote effectively in August.

Lindsay Smith
Otago Section Newsletter Editor

Photo competition great success

The July Club meeting saw almost 50 photographs presented as entries in this year's photo competition. Judge Gary McClintock from the Dunedin Photographic Society gave an entertaining and informative presentation, opening with general comments about outdoor photography, before moving to critique every photo entered in the competition.

A keen tramper himself, and no stranger to ice axe and crampons, Gary's comments considered balancing the requirements of great photography with the practicalities of carting kilos of supporting equipment into the mountains. He asked the most basic question – are you in the mountains as a climber who takes photos or a photographer who



Alex Weller's Section winner Summer on the Routeburn

climbs to get the shot you want? Whatever the answer, the most important factor to consider in any photo is the message you are trying to get across. And he emphasised the value of taking a couple of seconds to think of the story you are trying to tell and suggested a few basic steps which will improve the outcome. "Can you move a pack out of the shot, so it doesn't distract your eye, have you included the climber's feet in the shot and have you excluded stuff which doesn't add to the overall effect?"

He then discussed the rule of thirds before giving examples where the subject may be better placed in the centre of the photo, and his examples clearly showed the value of each option. Gary talked about the more technical aspects of exposure and the value of thoughtful cropping of the final photo to enhance the story being told.

Gary had arranged the entries into a curated presentation and gave useful comments on each of the photos before announcing the results of each section of the competition. And the results were:

Above the bushline – no human element

1st Summer on the Routeburn; Alex Weller

2nd Mt Drummond at Sunset; Ryan Thomas

Above the bushline – human element

1st Pollux; Geoff Collie

2nd Stroll above the bushline; Chris Brinlee Jnr

Below the bushline – no human element

1st Afternoon frosted delight; Chris Brindlee Jnr

2nd Sugarloaf Saddle; David Chandler

Below the bushline – human element

1st Light and dark; Ryan Thomas

2nd Heaphy Mouth; Keith Moffat

Historic

1st A weekend at Esquilant; Keith Moffat

2nd Kea on French Ridge; Keith Moffat

Flora and Fauna

1st Kea in flight; Chris Brinlee Jnr

2nd Rock wren on Mt Barff; Ryan Thomas

The two successful entries in each section will now be forwarded to the national FMC competition, where they will be in to win a great range of prizes.

The evening concluded with everyone voting for their favourite, and the winner by a narrow margin was this month's cover photo "Main Divide" from Rowan Cox who wins a great prize from our local Bivouac store.

“Better-than-expected” skiing in the Remarkables

Ryan Thomas reports on July’s ski-touring Section trip

It is a truth universally acknowledged: no one likes getting up at 4:30 am, especially when one immediately gets into a car and drives for four hours. Give me a thousand-meter ascent any day. But the original ski trip plans had changed from the Old Man Range to Wye Creek due to a reported lack of snow, and, as I had not been skiing in nearly two years, I sucked it up and met with Matteo, Hugh, and Alexander early in the morning to carpool to the Remarkables ski field. To compensate for the early start, I rested my eyelids (as my father would say) for the entire trip.



Matteo shredding the "powder".

We met with the last of our party, Graeme, in Queenstown and drove up to the Remarkables ski field carpark. On parking and

readying our gear, we learned that one of our party had been worrying for the last four hours about whether he had packed his skins. It turned out that he had his skins but had forgotten something far more important: his thermos of tea. After a quick chat with the ski patrol regarding skinning up the field, and a quick snigger at the snow conditions (what is “packed powder”, anyway?), we started up the slope.

We aimed for the Wye Creek col, and after an initial slog in the shade of the mountains, emerged into lovely sunshine beneath a bluebird sky that lasted for nearly the entire day. Resting at the top of the col, we enjoyed outstanding views both into the Wye creek drainage and north where Mount Aspiring was visible. A cup of tea at the top made the view that much sweeter.

While the views were sublime, the snow, alas, was merely passable. Indeed, the common theme of the day was that the skiing was better than expected, even though at first glance the snow was...unremarkable. We bottomed out at the Wye Creek tarns, and after another delicious cup of tea for those of us fortunate to partake in such things, we re-attached the skins and ascended to the saddle between Wye and Doolan's Creeks. At this point, two of our party decided to return to the car, citing the reasons of two previous days of cross-country skiing and ill-fitting ski boots.



Lovely slopes in Doolan's Creek

For those who haven't skied into Doolan's Creek, as I had not, the terrain here is significantly steeper than that found in Wye Creek. Given good snow conditions, the slopes are at the perfect angle for beautiful skiing, and there were some comely slopes that looked particularly inviting. However, the avalanche hazard for the day was rated as "considerable", and, with due abundance of caution, we proceeded to dig a snow pit on a likely aspect. And by "we", I mean Hugh dug the pit: Matteo and I, being immigrants, did not want to steal a job from a hard-working Kiwi.

The snow block barely sustained a gentle tap before collapsing, and we decided to ski a shallower slope rather than risk a news headline calling the alpine club into disrepute. Even though we backed off, another group, entering the slope from another point, decided that the slope looked just fine and roared down the center of the slope. After we (Hugh) dug another pit on a somewhat shallower, sunnier aspect with significantly better stability, we enjoyed a fantastic run down a moderately steep slope with “better-than-expected” snow.

As tempting as another run was, no hazard-free ascent route allowed us to ascend to the saddle and re-ski our chosen slope. Instead, we started up a rib that would take us back to the ski-field. We met up with the

aforementioned group at the same time that a large avalanche came into view. We were told that the avalanche had come down an hour before and that a skier had been



caught in it and lost a ski. This avalanche was on roughly the same aspect as the slope that we declined to ski, which perhaps emphasizes the need for cautious appraisal of slope conditions, especially when the avalanche rating is “considerable.”

We took one more run down a mellow slope before ascending to a saddle overlooking the ski field. Some survival skiing brought us down to the ski field proper, and thence to the lodge and parking lot, where we met up with our other party members. By this time the clouds had started to move in, and the temperature started to drop, making it a good point to end a very nice day skiing in the Remarkables.

A special thanks to Matteo for organizing the trip.

Book now for Snowcraft Course

Dates for this year's Snowcraft course are confirmed (weather dependent) for Tuesday 11 Sept, and the weekend of 14-16th September (Friday evening to get to Queenstown). The course is an intro to using ice axe, crampons, and avalanche rescue gear, so that you can safely move around in snow-covered terrain. If you've never used crampons, you need to do this course before you come on any club trips to snowy peaks. There should be a straightforward trip or two planned for the few months after the course, so doing the course and then a couple of trips would be a good grounding if you're wanting to get into doing more mountaineering.



2014 Snowcraft Course members

We run the course at the Remarkables ski field, where there is some great terrain and there are beautiful places to get to. The course may involve camping at Lake Alta on the Saturday night, but this is to be decided closer to the time - otherwise there will be two day-trips, for which we drive up from where we stay. The course costs \$160, much of which is the cost of two nights at the motor camp in Frankton.

If you are interested in going, please e-mail Heather Rhodes (heathermayrhodes@gmail.com) and Danilo Hegg (danilo.hegg@hotmail.com) to discuss whether the course is suitable for you.

Include details of your outdoor experience, and also what gear (including clothing) you have access to for an overnight trip in the snow (the course fee does include hire of crampons, ice axes and avalanche gear, if needed). We look forward to hearing from you! We have three instructors, with Rowan Cox also, so there is space for 12 participants. NZAC members from other areas are also showing interest, so get in quick.

New Avalanche website now open.

The NZ Avalanche Advisory has now launched their new website. Have a look at the new look and feel at <https://avalanche.net.nz/> In some regions, forecasting has already begun!

New process for PLB hire

The Otago Section has two PLBs for Section members to use when heading outdoors. Rental is free for NZAC members but \$5 per day for non-members. So that we can track the rentals, and respond if something goes wrong, the Section has created an online booking form at <https://goo.gl/forms/TQJrhMZxacHf30qP2>

When the form is completed online the results are automatically loaded into a spreadsheet in the Section's Google Drive, so we have a record of your rental and planned trip details. All that you do then is to arrange to collect a unit from either Keith Moffat Moffat.k172@gmail.com or Riley Smith rileychallis@gmail.com. Further contact details in the newsletter.

Section Safety Gear Rental

Our eight sets of avalanche equipment and eight sets of snowshoes are now available for rent from the new Hunting and Fishing shop, now at 141 Crawford Street, in Dunedin. The new shop is open seven days till 5.30 weekdays, 5pm Saturday and 4pm Sunday. More details at www.huntingandfishing.co.nz.

The rental costs are \$5 per day for an avalanche set of transceiver, probe and shovel and \$5 per day for snowshoes for all Alpine Club members. You MUST show your current membership card to receive that rate. Not a member, or don't have your card? Then the fee is \$10 per day and you will be required to pay a \$20 deposit.



Members are welcome to collect gear on Friday and return Monday and two day's rental will apply. If you wish to make other arrangements, please contact Keith or any of the committee and we will sort things out BEFORE you go into the shop. If you have any issues with the gear or rentals, please don't hassle the staff at Hunting and Fishing as they are doing us a huge favour by running the rental scheme for us

NZAC Photographic Competition

If you learned lots from Gary's comments at last month's Section night, you may be ready to enter this year's NZAC Photo competition, which is now open for entries and closes on the 26th of August.

Enter your photos here: <https://alpineclub.org.nz/photo-competition/> Be sure to check out the recently updated Rules and Information before submitting your entries, in particular, the file naming details. Also as per usual, no more than three images entered in each category. We will be tallying up each sections Acceptance, Honours and Champion points again this year to award the Egmont-Tasman Trophy. The 2017 Section winner was the NZAC - Australia Section!

There some awesome prizes to be won thanks to Therm-a-Rest, MSR, Scarpa NZ, Potton & Burton, Alpine Recreation, Peak Design, Flock Hill Lodge & Restaurant, GU Energy NZ.

Discounts for members

Margaret has just updated the NZAC website with all the latest FMC discounts for 2018-2019 that are now available to members. It's worth Section Members taking the time to check out the updated information. <https://alpineclub.org.nz/membership-benefits/member-discounts/>

And if you are looking for savings the 2018-2019 FMC discount cards were recently sent to members (primary only in a group) attached to FMC Bulletins in issue #104 winter issue of The Climber. Its also useful to remember, that Cactus and Split n2 support the NZAC Expedition and Club Hut Funds by donating a percentage of their annual sales back to the Club.

***NEW* Backcountry Ski-Touring in New Zealand - a guide to New Zealand's best backcountry terrain**

This book is your essential guide to the best backcountry touring and ski mountaineering in New Zealand. Whether you're new to the world of backcountry snow sports, an enthusiast looking for inspiration, or an international traveller sampling what New Zealand has to offer, this guide will help you plan your next adventure. Purchase online (log in for member rates):

<https://alpineclub.org.nz/product/backcountry-ski-touring-in-new-zealand/>

Applications for the 2018 FMC Expedition Scholarships are now open.

FMC is proud to offer Youth Scholarships (age under 30) for the eighth year running, and the Simon Bell Memorial Scholarship (no age restrictions) for the third consecutive year. To enquire email our Executive Officer at eo@fmc.org.nz. Applications close on Friday 14 September 2018.

Nominations are open for the NZAC Volunteer of the Year 2018

NZAC Volunteer of the Year (VOTY) is awarded at each AGM. Individuals and Sections nominate an NZAC volunteer that they think have done great work over the course of the previous year. Please complete the online nomination form no later than Monday 1st October 2018: <https://alpineclub.org.nz/the-nzac/heritage/volunteer-of-the-year-award/>

Was this you?

Steve August is looking for the two Otago NZAC guys he met on top the Carrick range on Queen's Birthday weekend - and asks that they get in touch with him. They were on mountaineering skis, towing a small sledge of firewood to the hut; and Steve was on a pair of white snowshoes coming out. It turns out they didn't spend the night at the Old Woman DOC hut, so he's curious about which hut they did use, for his own future trip planning purposes. If this was you, contact Steve on 0274 463 356.



2017-18 Otago Section Committee			
Chair and Rock Climbing	Riley Smith	027 222 8731	rileychallis@gmail.com
Treasurer, Equipment	Keith Moffat	027 6644037	Moffat.k172@gmail.com
Secretary, Newsletter	Lindsay Smith	027 404 8911	lindsay@plumtree.net.nz
Trips, Banff Film Festival &CCM Rep.	Danilo Hegg		danilo_hegg@hotmail.com
Instruction	Heather Rhodes	027 258 6534	heathermayrhodes@gmail.com
Club Night Speakers	Aidan Braid	021 1165 799	aidanbraid@gmail.com
	Eve O'Brien	0276423211	eve.j.obrien@gmail.com
	Ryan Thomas	0273115723	Ryan.j.thomas1@gmail.com

Section Contact information

Otago Section of the New Zealand Alpine Club
c/o 172 Gladstone Rd, Dalmore, Dunedin 9016

Email: otago.climber@gmail.com

Web: <https://alpineclub.org.nz/region/otago/>
Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/osonzac>