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October 2019

NEWSLETTER OF THE OTAGO SECTION NZAC



NEW ZEALAND
ALPINE CLUB



**Maria at the top of Ice Cream at
Awakino ski field, near Kurow
Photo: Ryan Thomas**

UPCOMING EVENTS

Club Nights

Club Nights are held at the University Staff Club, Union St. at 7:30pm, usually on the first Wednesday of every month.

Have you been somewhere interesting? Do you have someone you'd like to hear from? Suggestions for speakers are always welcome! [Contact us](#)



October Club Night, Wednesday 2 October 2019

This month's guest speaker is Dermot Mayock from LandSAR (Search and Rescue New Zealand). Dermot will explain how SAR works in New Zealand and share stories from his 30 years in Search and Rescue in New Zealand and the UK. He is also one of LandSAR's dog handlers, and he'll be bringing his canine coworker for a visit.

Bring Koha – we'd like to send this duo away with a healthy donation to LandSAR to help them with their work!

Upcoming Club Nights

On 6 November 2019, Russell Shanks will be speaking about riding the Great Divide bike race across the mountains of Canada and the United States.

Tuesday Night Rock Climbing begins 1 October

Anyone with basic rock climbing experience is welcome, however this is a social event and formal instruction is not provided. You need to have basic skills to safely climb on top rope. Limited numbers of helmets, harnesses and shoes are available to rent (free for NZAC members; \$5 per night for non-members). Please note that if you want to come along you MUST [register](#), EVEN IF you have come along in previous years.

Meet at 5.15pm alongside Logan Park to coordinate transport and aim to be away at 5.30pm sharp. Weather cancellations posted on Facebook.

Intro to Rock Climbing Course on Saturday, October 12

This daylong course is an excellent opportunity for those who want to learn how to climb. Run by Tim Bartholomew, it covers the climbing basics to get you safely out on the cliffs this summer. Note that this course is MANDATORY for inexperienced climbers who want to come out on Tuesday nights.

Numbers are limited, so sign up quickly! Cost is \$20 for members, \$30 for non-members. Email otago.climber@gmail.com (Bad weather back-up Sun, 13 Oct)

Rock Climbing Trip to Castledowns

The Southland Section is organising a rock-climbing meet at Castledowns, one of Southland's best limestone crags, on the first weekend of November (2-3 November). This is an excellent opportunity for Otago members to get beta from the locals! All skill levels are welcome, and a lunchtime BBQ will be provided. You will also need a harness, climbing shoes and helmet (contact the Otago Section if you need to borrow anything – members free, non-members \$5).

Contact Sarah O'Neill for more info and to sign up: sarahrosie@windowslive.com



From the Editor: You may have noticed some changes to the *Otago Climber* this month. With Lindsay larking off to become President, Alex Weller has taken over the newsletter (Hi!). I've taken inspiration from the Wellington Section and made some changes to the format, so if you have any comments or suggestions, please let me know.

I'd include a photo of myself, but I think we can all agree that robins are far more adorable.

Alex

SECTION NEWS & NOTICES

New Guide Books Available

The Section has a new set of up-to-date guidebooks available to members. Priority goes to trip leaders, however these books are far too crisp and new smelling: they need to get out to the mountains and lose their bookstore shine!

Aoraki Tai Poutini, *Rob Frost, 4th ed., 2018*

Backcountry Ski-Touring in New Zealand, *Shane Orchard, 1st ed., 2018*

Barron Saddle – Mount Brewster, *Ross Cullen, 2nd ed., 2002*

Mount Aspiring Region, *Allan Uren and Mark Watson, 4th ed., 2016*

The Otago Southern Alps, *Danilo Hegg & Geoff Spearpoint, 8th ed., 2013*

Queenstown Rock Ice & Boulders, *Guillaume Charton, 3rd ed., 2018*

Rock Deluxe, *Ivan Vostiner and Kate Sinclair, 2nd ed., 2015*

Wanaka Rock, *7th ed., 2014*

Chancellor/Almer Hut fees Increase

After a review of prices for its bookable Serviced Huts and Serviced Alpine Huts, the DOC is increasing the prices to stay at Almer Hut and Chancellor hut in the Westland Tai Poutini National Park. As of 1st October 2019, the adult price per night increases from \$15.00 to \$20.00.

Section Trip Information

Trip Sign Up

Interested in going on Section Trips? [Sign up](#) to our section website and subscribe to receive email notifications when new trips are posted. Members and non-members welcome.

Please note that default settings will not give any notifications: if you want to receive notices about trips you need to set your email preferences.

Trip Leaders Wanted!

We're looking for keen people to volunteer to become section trip leaders. Club trips can be as low-key or go-getter as you want them to be: if you're thinking about going somewhere, chances are somebody else in the Club is interested as well. Why not share the experience?

Leading a trip is not as daunting as it sounds. Anyone can become a section trip leader as long as they are known to be competent and capable in the mountains.

If you're interested in becoming a trip leader, contact us at otago.climber@gmail.com and we'll help guide you through the process.

Gear for Hire

PLBs (Personal Locator Beacons)

The Otago Section has two PLBs (Personal Locator Beacons) for use by Section members. Rental is free for NZAC members and \$5 per day for non-members.

Fill out the [online booking form](#), then contact Keith Moffat or Ryan Thomas to arrange to collect a unit (contact info in Section Contacts).

Avalanche Equipment and Snowshoes

Available for rent from Hunting and Fishing, Dunedin (141 Crawford Street).

Rental for members is \$5 per day for an avalanche set (transceiver, probe and shovel), and \$5 per day for snowshoes. You MUST show your current membership card to receive that rate. Fees for non members are \$10 per day with a \$20 deposit. Members are welcome to collect gear on Friday and return Monday and two day's rental will apply.

If you have any issues with the gear or rentals, please contact the Section. Hunting and Fishing are doing us a huge favour running the rentals: please don't hassle the staff!



Skiing in the back bowl on the Awakino trip
Photo: Ryan Thomas

TRIPS AND EVENTS

When	What
Tues, 1 Oct 2019 5:15pm	Tuesday night climbing begins. Meet 5:15pm beside Logan Park. Every Tuesday night during summer (except in bad weather)
Wed, 2 Oct 2019 7:30pm	Club Night Dermot Mayock shares his experiences in Search and Rescue
Wed, 2 Oct 2019 7:30pm	Section Night book sale continues All new books this month available for a donation. A great chance to get summer inspiration or rainy day hut material!
Sat, 12 Oct 2019 (weather back-up 13 Oct)	Beginner Intro to Rock Climbing Course For anyone wanting to join us on Tuesday night climbing, or just wanting to get into rock climbing.
Fri, 1 Nov 2019 7pm	New Zealand Alpine Club AGM Meeting in Christchurch. All members warmly invited to attend: keep an eye on the events page of the NZAC website for details.
Sat-Sun, 2-3 Nov 2019	Trip to Castledowns Organised by Southland Section to Southland's best limestone crag. All skill levels welcome, and a lunchtime BBQ will be provided. Contact Sarah O'Neill for more information sarahrosie@windowslive.com
Wed, 6 Nov 2019	Club Night Russell Shanks talks about participating in the Great Divide Bike Race in Canada and the United States.
1-8 Feb 2020	National Climbing Camp Organised by the Otago Section held at Ferguson Hut in the Hunter Valley. A great chance to explore a remote corner of the New Zealand Mountains! Check the Alpine Club Event Page for more information.

TRIP REPORTS

Matteo leads a ski touring trip to Awakino!

By Sarah Martyn; Photos by Ryan Thomas



Matteo and Maria skinning up Ice Cream

Four people left Dunedin on 7 September at 7 am to drive to Kurow in North Otago, and they then proceeded up the 4WD road to the ski field where they met Wayne and me as we were staying in the lodge for the weekend. The original plan had been to ski off Mt Kohurau, but Matteo had heard some talk on the street that snow levels could be somewhat limited.

On arrival at the old relic of a ski field there were two threads of snow in the access gullies that were firm and icy but would give an alternate route to the road walk. There had been strong winds overnight and the road had drifted in two corners up from the lodge, halting vehicles until it was cleared by the ski field volunteers. The bulldozer was just getting started but the mountains were calling so we shouldered our packs and started the walk 'till skinning was feasible.

We wound our way up the hill and managed to skin through the glacier basin with some careful route finding to avoid rock hopping. At the base of Ice Cream, we had 5 cm of windblown snow on top of a firm base making for good skinning, although ski crampons were preferable to reduce slippage.

After a steady climb we arrived at a high point with a cool breeze but clear skies across to Mt Cook, Aspiring and the Remarks to the south. Matteo was keen to

shred the back basins as previous trips had proved fruitful, so we skied across the tops to the back gully.

At the lip of it we split into two groups with Matteo, Ryan and Lara opting for a steeper drop in and myself, Wayne and Maria going for a cruisier ski run. We had a meeting point in mind, then we were off. Wayne and I led the way down into a creek which forms a natural halfpipe, and once in that there was no stopping us as there was great coverage and soft smooth snow to glide down. We went well past our meeting point...what took 10 minutes to go down was going to take much longer to come back out.

With Matteo's team reaching the rendezvous point and with us nowhere in sight

they opted to ski down to meet us for a late lunch about 2 pm. They also had a fantastic run down, and we could see their tracks when we were skinning out.

After the cool breeze on the exposed ridges we were glad to have a sheltered spot for lunch. It took us an hour to skin up to the top of the gully and then a little longer to retrace our steps back across the top to Ice Cream for our second well-deserved ski run of the day. There were a couple of spills on the way down to show that people were improving their techniques by challenging themselves and pushing their boundaries.

We were back at the car by 5 pm for the Dunedin crew to travel home.



Lara and Matteo coming down the back bowl

TRIP REPORTS



A Wee Weekend (W)Ramble

By Ryan Thomas; Photos by Ryan Thomas & Alex Weller

We often think that section trips need to have some specific objective or to involve lots of suffering, but they don't have to. Instead, they can be incredibly laid-back affairs, like the trip Steve August organised up the Routeburn on 14-15 September, where the emphasis was more on having fun with good company than on achieving a specific objective. On this trip, five of us (Steve, Janet, Lorena, Alex, and Ryan) met up on Friday night at Steve's classic Kiwi bach in

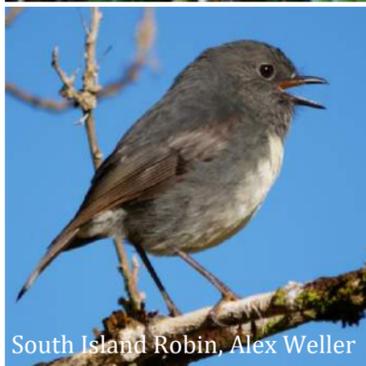


Rifleman, Ryan Thomas

Bannockburn, where Steve plied us with mulled wine and delicious soup while we discussed our plans for the weekend. We decided to not worry too much about an early start the next day and just see how things went.

After a leisurely start the next morning, including gumboot tea and strong coffee, we piled into Steve's venerable van to drive out to Queenstown, where we asked the DOC staff about current conditions and got our hut tickets. From there, we made another stop in Glenorchy for more coffee and food before finally arriving at the Routeburn parking lot where we joined the crack-of-noon hiking club and started walking.

Unlike summer the track was not particularly busy, and we enjoyed a leisurely walk with the robins and rifleman



South Island Robin, Alex Weller

through the forest up to the Flats hut, which was bathed in glorious sunshine. At this point, we decided that we should stay at the Flats hut for the night as it had wood for the fire, and we were expecting (after talking to DOC) quite a few people at the Falls hut. So we left our heavy stuff at the hut and tramped up the track to the Falls hut and then beyond to the basin above. We didn't walk all the way to Harris saddle, as the path around the lake was still covered in snow and we lacked crampons. We did have snowshoes, though, and Lorena managed to actually find some snow to walk around in with them.

We passed a warm, quiet night in the Flats hut as we were the only ones there! In the morning, after being amused by a juvenile kea who had a go at dismantling the hut, Steve took us up the north branch of the Routeburn to show us a secret from his old guiding days. Then it was a walk back down the trail, where we found about six yellow-crowned kākāriki along the trail in addition to rifleman, fantails, and robins. Another stop in Queenstown for some more coffee and then it was back to Bannockburn and then Dunedin.

Thanks to Steve August for organising this trip!



Kea, Ryan Thomas



Kākāriki, Alex Weller



Lorena was determined to try out her snowshoes in the upper basin. Photo: Alex Weller

EDITOR'S NOTE

Some Random History from the Routeburn

By Alex Weller

As we enjoyed the spectacular view in the early morning air on Routeburn Flats, a comment was made about Emily Peak: a mountain obviously named after a woman. Ever the curious historian, I couldn't help but ask, "Who was Emily?" With no ready answer offered, I did some digging.

Emily Peak is named after Emily Pass, and Emily Pass is named for Emily Forsyth (née Fels). Emily grew up in Dunedin and spent most of her life in Otago. Her father ([Willi Fels](#)) was a merchant, and her mother, Sara, was the oldest daughter of Bendix Hallenstein, one of the founders of the New Zealand men's fashion retailer, the Hallenstein Brothers. Willi also strongly supported the Otago Museum, and there is even a wing at the museum named after him (the Fels Wing). Emily took after her father as a benefactor to the museum.

According to the Alpine Club journal, Emily's name became attached to the pass when she first crossed it sometime around 1914 with her brother-in-law (Hyam

Brasch), and Queenstown guide Jock Edgar. If this is true, then the trip was in close proximity to the death of Emily's sister and Hyam's wife, Helene, who passed away in childbirth in June 1914.

Emily died in Wellington at age 92. She was remembered as,

"An enthusiastic climber and walker... She was opposed to the growth of tourism in Queenstown, where she owned a holiday home for forty years. [She] was interested in poetry, music and painting."
(ODT, 25 Sept 1976)

I couldn't find much more information on Emily herself, but her extended family is certainly interesting. Helena Falls, which empties into Doubtful Sound, was named after her older sister, and Helena's son (Emily's nephew) was [Charles Orwell Brasch](#), an influential poet.

Emily Peak itself was first ascended in 1953 from the Routeburn Huts, and was climbed again two years later from the other side via Lake Mackenzie. This second climb is notable (in my opinion) as one of the climbers (Miss S Manning) found the rock too smooth for her leather-soled boots to get any grip, so she took her boots off and proceeded to climb the mountain barefoot.



Mount Emily rising above
Routeburn Flats.
Photo: Alex Weller

A Rare, Mountain Climbing Kiwi

In case you missed it: last month, a rare rowi kiwi made the transition from kiwi trumper to mountain climber, and ended up trapped on a cliff face at 1250m. The kiwi, named Aroha, was one of 27 juvenile rowi released last year near Fox Glacier. Rather than do what was expected of her and stay safely in the lowlands, Aroha went [off on an adventure](#), travelling more than 12 kilometres and more than double the elevation of any previously monitored rowi kiwi. DOC had to call in the Alpine Cliff Rescue team to safely retrieve Aroha from her high perch and return her to the forest. Since then, Aroha has been [off again](#). As of printing, Aroha has travelled 5 kilometres on yet another (as yet unspecified) adventure.

We at the *Otago Climber* are somewhat miffed that Aroha keeps going off on adventures without giving the rest of us the opportunity to join her.

SECTION CONTACTS

2019-20 Otago Section Committee		
Chair	Ryan Thomas	Ryan.j.thomas1@gmail.com 027 311 5723
Treasurer, Equipment	Keith Moffat	Moffat.k172@gmail.com 027 664 4037
Secretary, Rock climbing	Eve O'Brien	eve.j.obrien@gmail.com 027 642 3211
Trips, Banff Film Festival	Danilo Hegg	danilo_hegg@hotmail.com
Instruction	Heather Rhodes	heathermayrhodes@gmail.com 027 258 6534
Newsletter	Alex Weller	alexhweller@gmail.com 027 604 1711
Committee members	Jono Squire	jonosquire@icloud.com 021 326 218
	Alastair Campbell	Alastair.campbell@obhs.school.nz 021 149 6636

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>
Trip info & booking: www.osonzac.org.nz

Wanted: Photos for new "Ōhau-Landsborough" guidebook



This new book is set to replace the Barron Saddle-Mt Brewster guidebook in spring 2020 with more than 100 new climbs.

The authors are requesting colour photographs and information such as new routes, errors and omissions in the current edition, and changes to existing routes, access, huts.

Contact the authors directly:

j.m.thornton@live.com (Landsborough, Hunter/Makarora, West of the Hooker Range, McKerrow Range)

rosscullen.kiwi@gmail.com (Bush Stream, Twin Stream rock and ice climbing)

nina.dickerhof@gmail.com (Dobson, Hopkins, Huxley, Ahuriri, Barrier Rane, Ben Ohau Range)

GO NATIVE



Members get 10% off Go Native foods, a Wellington based company that makes ready-to-eat casseroles and curries (not freeze dried), and natural slow-release energy fruit bars. The Go Native Company will also give 10% commission from all Alpine Club sales to the NZAC Hut Fund. Get your discount code at <http://www.alpineclub.org.nz/company/go-native/>