

NZAC Southland Section Newsletter

May – August 2020

As the weather turns warmer it sure feels like the momentum is gathering again. The new climbing wall progress at the YMCA is very exciting and climbing nights on Monday and Wednesday have been very popular. Also, in town was the avalanche awareness evening a big thanks to Roger for this very informative presentation. The avalanche evening was the perfect lead on to our first Snowcraft course was held at the Remarkables, thanks Peter for organizing. There have also been a number of private trips happening over the past few months, in this newsletter we have a trip report from Snowcraft, Stanley and some memories from Ruari from when overseas travel was a thing. Coming up in the next few months we have our AGM (on Monday the 24 August) lots of trips including our second Snowcraft and Conservation trip which are both looking really big. For those heading out on trips into the snow don't forget we have snow gear available for hire. We look forward to seeing you out there!



Southland Snowcraft #1

Peter O'Neill

The snowcraft course for the section was just marvellous. The participants were young and keen and the instructors were fit and able. As per the norms we made plans for the second weekend in August for the course. We made plans for car-pooling, thanks Helen.

Gear was issued on a training night a few days before the course. It's the usual nightmare. Old climbers have plenty of gear and don't need training. Newbies have no gear, not much money, and need lots of training. There has to be some kind of compromise.

On Saturday 8th August we headed up the Remarkables Rd. Where is the snow? I looked around some of my favourite ski runs THIN. I hope things are not going to be too skinny for some of the training. Oh no, the area

we traditionally did our self-arrest practice has been overtake by a new ski run on the Sugar Bowl. Oh well, with the conditions this skinny we are better to go to Lake Alta and play around there.

The theme for the day was crampons on and start walking, getting used to the pointy things on our feet. Well done by the participants, with no one cramponing themselves on this day. After a bit of route selection and general wandering around Helen found a suitable area for self-arrest practice. Everyone but the writer had a bit of fun forming a giant bug or critter and tested the slope. Hoops and hollers for the bug people. After an hour or two of self-arrest practice we headed for the base building. It was packed, thankfully the weather was suitable for sitting outside.

Day two was much of the same with transceiver searches in the morning and a good amount of walking in the afternoon out to Lake Alta then over to Wye saddle over Helicopter Knob and back down to finish off with a wee bit more self-arresting. A nice busy day.

As per normal the course numbers were good, 7 participants, five women and two men which combined with last years' numbers indicate a healthy gender diversity in the section.

I'm looking forward to the next course because this one was such a pleasure to be part of. Thanks to Helen and the participants for a memorable weekend.

Noticeboard

Have Content? Please send us your articles, photos, adds, stories or notices for the next newsletter. Stories from private trips of members are also welcome.

Upcoming Events

Southland section AGM

24 August 2020 ILT Stadium, sports southland rooms
Presentation of the years' activities and election of
2021 committee.

Lake Hauroko

September 5th

Snowcraft Advanced

September 26th & 27th

Ski tour trip

TBC

Wanaka Climbing meet

October 3rd & 4th

Conservation trip

17-18 October Stanley Mulvany

Navigation

November 7th & 8th

Cheese Fondo social trip

November 14th

River Crossing

November 20/21st

Castle downs

5 December

Christmas party

10 December

Tulbot peak

15 -17 January 2021

Borland Climbing Meet

7th February 2021

Long beach Climbing Meet

March 2021

Jane peak

March 2021

Pinnacles Climbing Trip

Easter 2-6th April 2021

French ridge

May 2021

Bee Nevis

July 16-17th 2021

Trip descriptions and sign up details will be published separately.

NZAC Gear Hire

Sarah O'Neill

The Alpine club has gear for hire to club members:

Item	Qty	Cost/wk ¹
Snow Shovel ²	4	\$5
Ice Axe	4	\$5
Crampons	6	\$5
Transceiver	4	Note 2
Probe	4	Note 2
PLB	1	\$10
Trad rack ³	1	\$15

[1] This cost is per weekend (allowing the week to pick up and drop off, you will not be charged extra if you pick up earlier in the week).

[2] Set of transceiver, probe and shovel \$20

[3] Trad rack consists of cams and nuts of several sizes

To arrange hire please contact Sarah 0226433074 or the Southland Section NZAC on Facebook.

Avalanche Evening

Report by Ant Leathart

On a cold Jun night 20-30 people studied the stars and made introductions, when suddenly a key was found giving access to warmth and shelter. After a group activity of find a chair we settled into the real reason for being there.

Roger Hodson lead an informative evening filled with a variety of theory and discussion. Covering a huge amount of information a lot gained from personal experience. Giving different perspectives from a variety of mountain activities.

After covering all aspects of avalanche information, we then covered the use of transceivers and the difference between some of the older models and the modern digital systems.

Thanks to Roger for his giving this informative interesting presentation.

This evening was a good precursor to snowcraft, a course where the theory was put into practice.



Bouldering Wall Renovations

Peter O'Neill

The long-awaited renovations to the bouldering wall are coming to fruition. Newly appointed YMCA General Manager Jason Holland is making inroads into the three-year plan to overhaul the old wall. Jason and Peter Thurlow and several helpers have been really committed to making good change for the Southland bouldering community including SSNZAC members. The old bouldering —well past it's use-by date—has been pulled down. When I last spoke to Jason, he was working on some kind of paint samples. As a section we have also made a contribution towards the wall. So, it's looking good, we are excited and eagerly await to begin climbing on it!



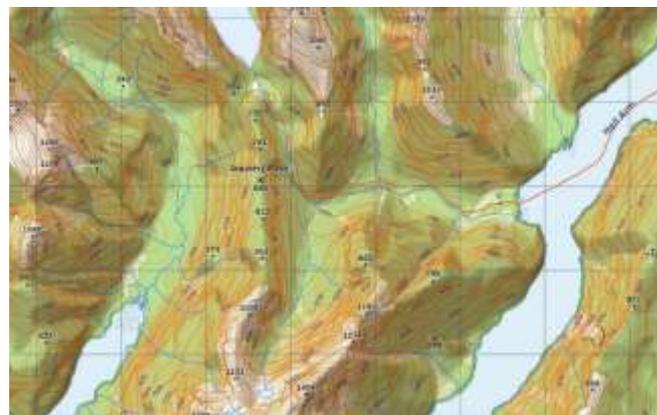
Hall Arm to Jaquery Pass

16-18 July 2020

Stanley Mulvany

In February 2006, Simon and I paddled up Vancouver Arm of Breaksea Sound to camp near the tidal flats, leading to the Jaquery Pass, our intended route. We found that the valley floor was covered in a dense podocarp forest of Pungas, Coprosma, Vines, Crown Ferns and fallen, rotten trees. Too early, we left the valley floor for a rockfall on the right-hand side. Higher up, we planned to sidle leftwards to a slip where we thought there might be deer trails heading over the Jaquery Pass to Hall Arm. However, the going was very steep, and it proved impossible to sidle the face. The going deteriorated into a vertical, vegetated grovel up mossy cliffs, and fallen rotten trees carrying our massive packs and inflatable boat. At 330m we could progress no further, being blocked with a vertical bare rock. After a bewildered look at Simon, and muttering deprecations, we started down to try plan B.

Fast forward to July 2020 and our conservation trip to Deep Cove. The plan was to work on our trap lines for 5-6 days and if the weather held to run a reconnaissance from Hall Arm to the Jaquery. I had intended to flag a route in preparation for a major effort south this coming summer and the crux was the passage to Vancouver Arm.



There were four of us from our trapping team: Sally, David, Gavin, and me. Bob who was the relief caretaker at the hostel, along with Bronwyn, his trainee/assistant, launched the boat and took us on a sunny morning down Deep Cove past Pridham Point into Hall Arm. Bob is a great character and has an encyclopaedic knowledge of the area. Ahead of us was the sentinel Commander Peak and he told me about a fisherman friend who once noticed 2 dots on its summit and looking back at me said "and who do you think they were? ". "Tara and Keith" I replied. Yes, I heard about it – south ridge, a desperate leap on a vertical step to grab a root and a pull-up.

Near the top of Hall Arm, Bob slowed the boat and drifted in towards some rushes in shallow water. Then it over the side into cold water to wade ashore into the damp, frigid bush. With a roar, Bob disappeared back down the sound leaving us in quiet contemplation. We pulled out our packrafts and left them in plastic bags in the bush, then loaded up and set off on ubiquitous deer trails heading up the valley. The bush was quite dense in places and cold as no sunlight entered this deep U-shaped valley, shaded by the surrounding high mountains. About 2 kilometres in, we crossed a large tributary coming in on the TL. Here the valley starts to climb more steeply and the terrain becomes more difficult with tall crown ferns, rotten logs and concealed holes.



Then we started flagging our route. Ahead was a steep spur coming down from the TL and the valley curves around this in a northerly direction. We climbed some cliff lines and found some open slabby leads, which was a relief. This led to a level section but it was very slow going. Somewhere ahead at around 500m altitude and 4 pm, we stumbled on a small open space with enough room to pitch our 3 tents. It was dark at about 5.30 pm and too cold to hang around so it was into the tents for a very long night.

Around 7 am, I jumped up and fired up the stove for a hot drink for Sally and Gavin. Shortly after 8 am, we were off climbing up to the next level where it was a bit more open. This led to a partially frozen lake surrounded by frosted tussock and bog. We initially tried to get around the TL but this led nowhere, so then it was back to the mouth of the lake where we crossed to the TR. About 160 m above, the pass bathed in life-enriching sunlight. Leaving our packs, we moved swiftly up through the bush to arrive on the scrubby saddle. The view was very restricted, though we could identify Vancouver Arm far below us. It looked easy enough down the next 200m or so of bush through the scrubby forest but beyond this there was no view down

to the valley floor. It just seemed to be a herculean struggle to head down this to check out the route so I suggested, we hope for the best next time and retreat.



Then it was back to the packs and off down the valley following our flagging tape. This went mostly well and around 4 pm, we were close to the large tributary on the TL at about 120m. David suggested that we cross the river to a level bushy area on the other side. This was a prescient thought as we immediately found enough open areas to camp again.

On our last day, we reached the sea in 2 hours, launched our packrafts onto a wind still fjord, paddled through rafts of thin sea ice, reached the long-sought sun, and in harmony and good fellowship, paddled back the 8 km to Deep Cove. Hopefully, there will be a sequel to this adventure next summer.



Acknowledgment: My gratitude to Sally, David, and Gavin for joining me on this wee trip and to Alastair, Fleur, and John for continuing the conservation work over in Deep Cove in our absence.

An epic ascent

Ruari Macfarlane shares memories from his climbing mish in Canyonlands National Park, Utah.

“Theres a giant spider in this crack!”. Silence. “It’s coming at me!”. Swipe. “Auughuwaugh! It’s on me!”



This whole process might’ve been even more entertaining, if John were not a body length above his last cam, the only cam keeping him from a 10m whipper into the sandy boulders strewn around the base of the tower. Spider dispatched, pitch sent, I had a moment to take stock of my surroundings as John hauled our pack. Here we were: Monument Basin, immersed in the heart of Canyonlands National Park, Utah. Glowing red rock, tortured dry watercourses, and surreal sandstone fins stood on all sides, waiting silently. Clear blue sky above. The shadow of the giant Jenga tower overhead crept around the basin as a sundial’s would; as it had day after day, year after year. The faintest movement of air caressed my ears, then fell away. Utter silence. A slow, ear-to-ear grin spread across my face. John’s voice drifted down. I turned to the rock, to begin torqueing my hands into the gritty cracks.

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