



North Otago Section Newsletter



Photo: Hopkins valley from Elcho Hut

WHO'S BEEN WHERE, DOING WHAT:

- A Tramp to Mataketake Hut
- Gordon Range Ascent
- Hugh's Mt Cook Wanderings
- A Snowy Routeburn Trip
- Mountaineering and Avalanche Courses and Lots of Skiing
- A Last Minute Mt Aspiring Ascent
- Plenty of Ski Touring
- Long Beach Update

A Tramp to Mataketake Hut

Murray Judge

Bron and I tramped into the new hut at Mataketake on the tops above Haast. This is a lovely insulated and double glazed 8-10 bunk hut with a log burner but no wood. The hut was funded by a bequest by Andy Dennis and opened a few months ago.

We had perfect weather for the 9 hour walk in after an earlier attempt in April ended with thick fog on the tops and a night in our tent. We followed the Mica Mine track which zigzags gently up to the bush line and then hours across gentle tussock tops with marker poles. The mine track was built in 1944 and had disappeared back into thick bush, Bron and I spent a couple of days clearing it a few years ago.

We had the hut to ourselves and walked out via Maori Saddle and Blowfly hut to our car at the northern carpark of the Haast-Paringa cattle track. The through trip to the southern end of the cattle track is cut off by a huge slip and may take some time to re-open. The cattle track follows the line of the Alpine Fault and is likely to slip away with the next big quake.

Gordon Range Ascent

John Hamilton

On a cold and windy day in the September school holidays, my son in law James and I made an ascent of a minor peak in the Gordon Range, (which parallels the Richmond range) behind Nelson, and looks into the Motueka Left branch headwaters.



Mataketake Hut



Mataketake Hut with Mount Hooker and Mount McCulloch at the head of the Paringa



Ruth Davison at Lake Harris on the Routeburn Track



Ian Davison climbing at Doctor's Point



Hugh's Mt Cook Wanderings

Hugh Woods

I went to Mt Cook for four days and wandered about the Hooker Valley, Tasman riverbed, up to Sealy Tarns, and up to Tasman Lake. The weather was warm and sunny. On the way home I visited the Tekapo Scientific Reserve and did some botanising there. Looking forward to a settled December for more rambles!

A Snowy Routeburn Trip and Other Adventures

Ian Davison

Since the last newsletter I have been doing a lot of day trips including a very sunny walk up to Ball hut, several snowy trips into the Ohau Range and climbing at Elephant Rocks and Sebastapol Bluffs. Alicia Guerra, Antonio Cabrera, Nick Shearer and I have also had some climbing trips to Long Beach, Doctor's Point, Ruth and I also managed a shoulder season trip along the Routeburn. We started at the Glenorchy end and spent the first night at the Falls Hut, arriving in a snow storm. The next day was perfect with good snow banking out the path across the Harris Saddle. There was no snow along the Holliford face but we still took a long time as we were taking so many photos. We had the whole path to ourselves. We spent the night at the Mackenzie Hut before retracing our footsteps all the way back to the start. Once again in perfect weather.

Mountaineering, Avalanche Courses and Lots of Skiing

Elise Blundell

In August I was fortunate enough to go on a 4 day avalanche awareness course in Arthurs Pass and then a 4 day intermediate mountaineering course at Temple Basin. The snow pack was very thin and wet after a lot of rain for the avalanche course, but we got to check out the Porters and Broken River ski fields and Avalanche Peak. It was awesome learning new rope skills on the mountaineering course and realising that it is possible to trust your life with a sling and some rock!

Among the many beautiful powder days on the fields this winter, I managed to pick up some old school Rammerrat ski touring bindings and some new skins and got into the Soho Basin at Cardrona. We had a couple of great late season powder runs there and it was so



The brand new Mintaro Hut on the Milford Track - beautifully built



Elise ready to descend the South East face of Mt Kyeburn



Testing the snow pack at Broken River



Antonio and Jim atop of Mt Aspiring

warm I was skiing in a singlet. I was also stoked to have an epic powder run down the Motutapu chutes at Treble Cone this season - last year they weren't able to open the chutes.

At the end of the Level 3 lockdown my friend Jono More and I walked up the 4WD track to the top of Mt Kyeburn in the Danseys Pass and skied down the South East face on a gorgeous sunny afternoon. In late May I also got to do the Milford Track with a group of 12 friends from Queenstown and a little too much wine. I never considered doing the Milford because it always sounded too touristy, but now I can see why it is that way. We did it the weekend after the track closed for the season and it was pretty magical, and besides a little rain on our first morning, we had clear skies the whole way.

A Last Minute Mt Aspiring Ascent

Antonio Cabrera

Jim Anderson and I climbed Mt. Aspiring on the first weekend of November. We decided to do it just two days before going and left Oamaru on Friday afternoon. We drove directly to Raspberry carpark and rode Jim's parents e-bikes to Aspiring hut with our full packs. From there we walked to French Ridge Hut where we arrived at 10pm in the dark. We had a light dinner and rested from 11pm to 2am in the super busy hut and then left at 2.45am after having a coffee and breakfast. The conditions were perfect, even if it was warm, so we progressed quickly to the Quarterdeck and to the bottom of the SW ridge of Mt. Aspiring, crossing the Bonnar glacier which was very easy to walk through.

The sunrise surprised us on the ridge, which is steeper and steeper when you are climbing, and we continued climbing with no rope until the crux section. The steepest meters were formed in perfect ice, so we put an snowstake as an anchor, climbed putting some ice-screws and enjoyed the pitch. There is an anchor on the rock at the end of this pitch, with two pitons for belaying to the second one safely. Along the next pitch we found a lost nut (very helpful) and placed some more rock gear. We did another roped pitch and after that we put the rope away in our packs and walked to the summit along the easy final meters of the NW ridge.

Amazing views and perfect weather, no wind at all and magnificent visibility everywhere. We spent some minutes on the summit, enjoying the views and the climbing we'd done. After that we began the descent along the NW ridge and the Ramp. It's a very long and uncomfortable way to the Bonnar glacier, but it's shorter than going to Colin Todd



A view from the top - Mt Aspiring



The peak lit up in all its glory



Jim sending it



Antonio and Jim - nearly there!



hut. We had to descend facing the mountain and it's a long traverse. The snow was soft on the surface, but under some centimeters was very frozen.

Finally, we arrived safely to the glacier and went up to the Quarterdeck again with a lot of heat and sun reflection. On the last part, descending the French ridge to the hut, there was very deep snow, as the sun was strong in the afternoon. We thought it would be better to spend the night at the French Ridge hut and we had a really good rest.

On Sunday morning we went down to Aspiring hut and from there, with the e-bikes, to the car. We had our reward at Wanaka, burgers and beers! We arrived to Oamaru almost 48h after we left home. It was an unforgettable trip to one of the most beautiful mountains around the world, even if it's not one of the highest.

I'd like to say thank you to everybody who helped me make this possible: Jim, for the car, bikes and his lovely company. Nick Shearer, John Hamilton and Rob Connolly for the stuff lent and their valuable advice. Ian and Ruth Davison, for helping out with my daughters, his printed maps and his generosity. And of course, to Alicia, without whom it wouldn't have been possible.

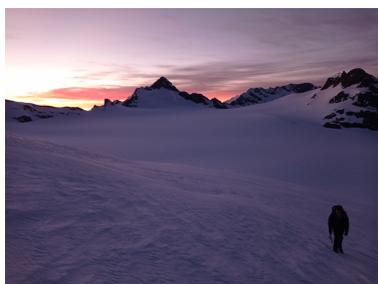
Plenty of Ski Touring

Antonio Cabrera

In September after the lockdown, Alicia Guerra, Rob Connolly, Nick Shearer and I went ski touring around Mt. Sutton and lake Dumb-bell. Some incredible descents in perfect powder and some interesting gullies for climbing were waiting for us there. Rob Connolly and I were also on Mt. Dobson Area for ski-touring in July. We enjoyed some unforgettable descents with a really good snow and a few tricky ascents with the skins too.

Long Beach Update

There has been more work at Long Beach with the development program and some good climbs emerging from the dirt and dust, a bit of effort to get back to bedrock and solid climbing.





More views from Aspiring



Perfect skinning conditions for Nick, Rob, Antonio and Alicia



Fresh tracks around Mt Sutton



Steve Carr on the new grade 19 route 'Rosella' at Long beach

Christmas BBQ, Other Events and News

- **The Christmas BBQ** at Elephant Rocks is scheduled for the **8th December 6pm** onwards. Bring your own food, drink and climbing gear. Nick will bring the BBQ. If there is bad weather then it will be postponed until 15th December and announced on the NZAC North Otago Section Facebook page. www.facebook.com/groups/northotagonzac

- **The NZAC AGM** was held in Christchurch on October the 29th. Nick and Dara Shearer attended and watched Clare Kearney take over as President for the next two years. Congratulations again Clare! The NZAC 2020 Annual Report is available here:

<https://alpineclub.org.nz/sites/default/files/2020-11/NZAC-Annual-Report-2020-web-final.pdf>

- **The Aotearoa Climbing Access Trust (ACAT)** is an organization that is working to improve access to rock climbing and bouldering areas around New Zealand. For more info or to get involved in their mission, check out the website here: www.acat.org.nz

- **Bolting Fund Grant Application:** NZAC is now taking applications for bolting/crag development funding grants. Priority will be given to rebolting of existing routes that have substandard fixed protection and routes that have the potential for a high use rate. The fund also supports the provision of crag development (toilets, signs etc). Apply for the grant online here: alpineclub.org.nz/bolting-fund-grant-application

- **Monthly meet up:** First Monday of every month we'll meet at The Criterion at 7pm for a drink or two. Check on the NZAC North Otago Section Facebook page for the next one.

www.facebook.com/groups/northotagonzac

- **Rock wall** and bouldering room open **5pm-6.30pm Tuesdays** and **8pm - 9.30pm Thursdays**.

- **Elephant Rocks Bouldering:** Most **Wednesdays** departing from Weston 4 Square at **about 5pm**. Check with Murray Judge or Sam Henehan to go along.

Thanks all for your input with photos and stories. Feel free to email me over the summer with your adventures for the next newsletter:

info.acupunctureoamaru@gmail.com

Have a great summer, hopefully we'll see each other on a hill or rock somewhere!

Cheers, Elise.