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DECEMBER EDITION 2021

OTAGO CLIMBER



Bonar Glacier Biv *Photo Adam Sanders*

CLUB NIGHT (SPEAKERS)

TUESDAY CLIMBING

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DECEMBER CLUB NIGHT

The next club night is on **Wednesday 1st December** at the University Staff Club- please remember to bring a face covering and keep socially distanced.

We are very fortunate to have Pete Strang speaking to us about his extensive experience in the mountains.

"MOUNTAIN DREAMING...A PERSONAL ANTHOLOGY, A TRIBUTE TO THE MOUNTAINS"

He has been active in the mountains for years and has contributed a lot to the New Zealand climbing community. We are privileged to have him share some of his thoughts on a life knocking about the mountains.



TUESDAY CLIMBING

Tuesday evening climbing is going strong now that it is staying light later. We have a good group of people to help run the evenings. Thank you to all of you who do this. We carpool from town at 5:15pm meeting on Union Street next to the Logan Park playingfield. See our FB page for updates on crag location for the night and any cancellations.

<https://www.facebook.com/osonzac/>

See our website for more information about Tuesday climbing.

<https://www.osonzac.org.nz/TuesdayRockClimbing.php>

It is essential that you sign up via the form below before attending. Under 18s must seek individual permission from the Otago NZAC section before attending (even with parents present). Just message our FB page or email the section if you have questions or want to bring kids or teens along.

Tuesday climbing is purely a social meet for those who have some climbing experience (at least safely climbing/belaying on top rope). If you are new to climbing we ask that you do an intro climbing course before you come along. See details of upcoming courses below.

<https://forms.gle/YhchwTRCqEcCVW11D7>



ROCK CLIMBING COURSES

There were 6 people who attended the "Intro Rock Climbing Course" on 6th Nov.

There were also 6 who came on the Sport Lead Climbing Course on 20-21st Nov.

The rock/rope skills training nights were appreciated by 9 people to learn safe techniques for leading, cleaning climbs, setting anchors, abseiling and rope rescue.



Thomas Cairncross rappelling after climbing at Long Beach Pinnacles

TRIP REPORT—GENEROUS HILLS

Adam Sanders gives an account of his trip up Mount Aspiring in return for the use of the Section's guidebooks

Day 1: A leisurely approach to French Ridge on Saturday afternoon put Justin and I hut right in thick of a 5-to-7-day weather window. We had planned to make the most of them. Arriving to French Ridge was as if we had arrived at the cosmopolitan capital of Otago. Friendly characters of all sorts, and a good energy about the place. There were no vacancies at French Ridge that night, even the Kea didn't bother to show their curious faces.

Unfortunately for Justin and I we were prioritising sleep over socialising that evening. We brought ice screws and crampons, not six packs of craft beer. Although, I don't think that means we have our priorities straight. Attempting to fall asleep in the kitchen of the hut proved a failure. After an hour, we relocated our bivvies to the outside. We had a quick discussion and decided that tomorrow we would make a later start, ditch our gear at a bivy site, and then, in the late morning jump on Chocolate Fish.

Day 2: A 3 hour trudge up the Quarterdeck and across the Bonar Glacier to 2300m brought us to an ideal wind hollow under a slightly overhung glacial ice block. The view from a wind lip balcony was Mt. Liverpool and Mt. Barff, the South Face of Tititea/Aspiring was just out the back door. After a bite to eat and a gear check we headed up the final 200m vert to the base of Chocolate Fish. Chocolate Fish was first climbed by Allan Uren and Clinton Beavan in the summer of 97'. On the far lookers right of the face is an obvious gully/corner. After 4 or 5 pitches you finish just left of the prominent tower low on the Coxcomb Ridge.

The first pitch was the crux, mainly due to the bergschrund being detached. We got lucky with a narrow snow bridge still providing reasonably secure travel across the void. Justin had to pull off a few tricky mixed moves to get above the schrund (about M4).

Fortunately, the one piece of protection on offer was bomber. After that a 10m step of 80-degree ice got us into the gully/corner system proper. From here I led up a straightforward 60m pitch of moderate snow and ice. Justin then took the lead back and finessed his way up a steep few metres of thin ice. This was the standout pitch of climbing for us, requiring a delicate touch to navigate safely. I then led the last 50m of 70-degree snow and ice to the ridge. A quick descent on v threads ensued. 5 hours from schrund to schrund. A great route with minimal commitment. The ideal way to introduce yourself to the South Face.

Day 3: After a restless night's sleep, we awoke at 4am. A quick snack, a hearty chug of water and we headed up. Above us rose the knife-like Southwest Ridge of Tititea/Aspiring. 700m of beautiful vertical metres. Weaving through the schrund from the South side of the ridge, we were on to the ridge in no time. Off we went, up and away, so psyched on the present it felt almost effortless.

Staying right next to the ridge was the steepest part, but the conditions were perfect for axe and crampon. In our own little worlds we followed our headtorch into early morning sky.

A great sense of fulfillment welled as the morning inversion blew by us on a moderate nor' Wester. When the clouds parted, we were granted amazing views of the surrounding ranges and the knife blade ridge below us. All the senses were being satisfied. Rhythmically we ascended the slopes, making sure to kick a ledge every few hundred steps and smell the roses. After 90 minutes we reached the base of the crux gully. I really wanted this lead, and Justin was happy for me to have it.

A steep 10m up the initial ice step lands you at a stance and easier terrain. Justin started climbing after I had run the full rope length out and we climbed the gully in one 80m pitch. 7 screws plus the pitons*, was (we) felt enough.

Topping out Tititea/Aspiring was a remarkable occasion. A true culmination of 4 years of experience.

Starting indoors back in 2017, I quickly transitioned to the outdoors. Gaining mileage on bolted climbs, I moved on to trad in 2019, and as I have always intended, alpine climbing this year. A background in triathlons, ultra-running, and ski-mountaineering (lived in Canada for 5 years) contributed to a speedy progression. Also, lots of scrambling! Scrambling is a great way to improve your movement efficiency on moderate terrain and train your brain for the exposed whilst ropeless feeling, that the alpine often provides.

We enjoyed the summit from just below and took in the view as deeply as we could. After 10 minutes (of being buffeted by strong winds) we started our descent. A quick rappel down the gully and an hours worth of down climbing and we were back at camp.

Back across the Bonar with a quick side trip up Mt. French had us postholing back down the Quarterdeck by early afternoon. We decided it would be nicer to soak up the sun, the vibe, and the feeling of our achievements by lounging on the deck at French Ridge Hut. Entertained by a local Kea, our afternoon passed quickly (mainly thanks to a solid nap though).

Day 4: Justin and I slept well that night. Rose early and headed back to Raspberry Flats as the rains were due, and we had eaten all my food. A 4 days well spent. Finished off nicely with a thickshake from Black Peak in Wanaka.

All great fun. Zero fuff. Great conditions. No curve balls. The mountains were generous to us (as they always are) and we thank our skills, our partners, and most importantly, the mountains for letting us pass safely in and out of their embrace.

Special thanks for Eve for lending the sections guidebooks, such a valuable resource. One we 21st century mountaineers often take for granted.

*Fortunately (again), for us a ski party a few days before us had left a lot of their gear behind (including a 60m half rope, two pitons and a snow stake). Gratefully we used their pitons (after checking them) as protection and as a rap anchor and used their rope to save weight (they had told us at French Ridge hut that they got their rope stuck when they forgot to take the stopper knots out). It does happen! We invested in karma shares and got the rope back to it's thankful owner in Wanaka.

TRIP REPORT—GENEROUS HILLS



Leading off the 3rd pitch of
Chocolate Fish S. Face Mt Aspiring



Downclimbing SW ridge Mt Aspiring



Summit of Mt Aspiring

UPCOMING TRIPS



Elcho Hut. Photo: Keith Moffat

NZAC Summer National Climbing Camp - Elcho Hut

15 Jan, 2022 11:00 am - 22 Jan,

The camp will run from Saturday 15th January to Saturday 22nd January. There are several peaks within easy reach of Elcho Hut, and it is a great opportunity to explore this corner of the New Zealand Mountains and make new friends in the climbing community.

Campers are expected to be self-contained with their own tent, cooking equipment, fuel, food and personal supplies. We will be providing some basic communal facilities such as a satellite phone and a couple of tent fly shelters.

The camp is suitable for climbers of all levels of experience, but you must be an Alpine Club member to attend. If you do not have a climbing partner at the camp, we will arrange for you to team up with other climbers.

Camp Cost is \$50 per person to cover administration, communal facilities and the transport of food/gear by 4WD to Elcho Hut.

Numbers are limited to 25 so early registration is advised.

For more information and to register [click here](#).

UPCOMING TRIPS



Mount Wakefield Mount Cook Range Photo: Keith Moffat

Mount Wakefield Trip December 11th-12th

Mount Wakefield is a grade 1 climb in the Mount Cook Range. The start of the climb is only about 10mins drive from the NZAC Unwin Lodge. Views of the route are spectacular as you get to look into both the Hooker and Tasman valleys. We will travel to Unwin Lodge on Friday night. We can either do the climb in a day or camp at a basin at about 1700m. The final decision will depend on the weather forecast. Good fitness is required and experience using ice axe and crampons.

Keith Moffat will be leading the trip, contact details are

Ph 027 6644037

email: moffat.k172@gmail.com

You can register for the trip on the OSONZAC trip app here

<https://www.osonzac.org.nz/>

A reminder that you can sign up on the [osonzac.org.nz](https://www.osonzac.org.nz/) website to receive email updates of any trips that are happening! You can even choose what kind of trips you want notifications for e.g. rock climbing, mountaineering or ski touring.

GEAR HIRE

SAFETY FIRST

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 Moffatt 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 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 on 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!

Guide Books Available

The Section has an up-to-date set of guidebooks available to members. Priority goes to trip leaders, however, these are available to all members. Contact us to arrange use

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 Vostinar and Kate Sinclair, 2nd ed., 2015*

Wanaka Rock, *7th ed., 2014*

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WANAKA NEW ZEALAND

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Good Rotations



GEARSHOP



OTAGO SECTION COMMITTEE

Committee member meeting second Wednesday each month. We are always looking for more volunteers to share the load of section leadership. Please get in touch if you'd like to come along to a committee meeting.

Chair: Keith Moffat
moffat.k172@gmail.com
027 664 4037
Also interim Treasurer and Equipment

Secretary, Rock climbing: Eve O'Brien
eve.j.obrien@gmail.com
027 642 3211

Trips, Banff Film Festival: Danilo Hegg
danilo_hegg@hotmail.com
027 339 2688

General Committee Members:
Juliet Meldrum
jmeldrum@doctors.org.uk

Riley Smith
rileychallis@gmail.com
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Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/osonzac>

Instagram: <https://www.instagram.com/otago.climber/>

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