

NOVEMBER 2023

OTAGO CLIMBER

Newsletter of the Otago Section of the New Zealand Alpine Club



John Goulstone's 'impromptu camp' near 5,000m on the Dhaulagiri Circuit, Nepal.

UPCOMING EVENTS



**NZAC
OTAGO
SECTION**

Gemma Wilson gaining height on the SW Ridge of Tititea, Mount Aspiring. JAZ MORRIS

QUIZ NIGHT!

Multi-choice, mountaineering/outdoor theme!

There will be some food provided by the club and drinks available for purchase at the bar. Teams will be formed on the night if you can't gather your mates, and we have the marvellous Philip Somerville as MC. Please RSVP on the Facebook page (QR code).

ALL WELCOME!

RSVP here:

Wednesday 6th December, 7pm Filadelfio's (Gardens) Restaurant, 3 North Road, North East Valley.



Please whanau - if you're coming to the quiz night, bring a pen!:

UPCOMING TRIPS

SOUTHLAND SECTION TRIPS INVITATION

Image sourced from <https://planmywalk.nz/tracks/eldrig-peak-route>

We have been invited by the NZAC Southland Section to join any upcoming trips their team is running. This is a great opportunity to meet new people and explore areas you may not have visited before with some experienced locals. For more information please contact the Southland Section at southland@alpineclub.org.nz or check out their [Facebook page](#)

December

2nd-3rd Spence Peak, Takitimu Traverse



UPCOMING TRIPS

OTAGO SECTION TRIPS

Wye Creek rock climbing trip

December 8 - 10th, 2023

Stay at a local campground at Queenstown or Kingston and enjoy the magnificent climbing and views on offer at Wye Creek. Mostly sport climbing.

Waitangi Weekend Trips, 2024

Probably two different section trips to choose from running to both Mt. Titiroa from North Borland valley and Mt. Liverpool from Cascade Saddle in the West Matukituki valley.



Sign up to our trip tool website to get instant email updates when trip details are confirmed.

All trip details and sign-ups will available closer to the time on our website

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

Otago Section of the New Zealand Alpine Club

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External Links

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[OSONZAC Facebook Page](#)

[Climb NZ](#)



Welcome to the website and online event calendar for the Otago Section of the New Zealand Alpine Club (OSONZAC). The list of upcoming events is below. Most of our events are open to both members and non-members of the New Zealand Alpine Club (NZAC). You don't need to sign up for an account with the site to join most events, but if you want to get email notifications when new events are posted then you [will need an account](#).

If you are a member and are interested in joining or organizing an event, you should [sign up for an account](#). Already have an account? See our [how-to guides](#) if you want to know how to join or organize an event. We welcome members from all sections.

Our calendar displays two types of events:

1. Section events, where the trip organizer is a member of the NZAC who has been [vetted by the section committee](#) as being a trustworthy and competent trip leader.
The section always welcomes new trip leaders!
2. Private member events, where the trip organizer is any member of the NZAC. **The section committee does not review privately organized events.**

This website is a work in progress. If you have any questions, comments, or concerns please email the [webmaster](#).

Notices

There are no notices at this time.

Upcoming Events for the Otago Section of the New Zealand Alpine Club

[Section events](#) [Private member events](#)

Trip reports

Dhaulagiri Circuit, Nepal - John Goulstone

A friend put out the offer of anyone keen on an adventure in Nepal in October 2023, would I like to do the Dhaulagiri circuit? Hard to refuse such an offer! That was the easy part. Booking flights and organising time off were secondary considerations. I did not know much about this trek apart from a brief discussion about it by Lydia Bradey at an Alpine Club meeting a year or two before. It is one that is less travelled and more basic (accommodation wise) than the normal treks in Nepal such as Everest Base Camp.

There is as always a culture shock on arrival in Kathmandu although admittedly the last time I was there was in 1986. We met the owner of Mountain Monarch at the hotel to pay the rest of the money and set the ball rolling. Contrary to what was on the website which was an 18 -20 day trek we were told that we were going to do it in 10. This was partly due to the extension of the roading network n Nepal meaning that rather than starting at Beni we could drive closer and that at the other end it finished in Marpha for a similar reason. The other reason was the weather window.



Dhaulagiri Circuit, Nepal - contd

We started the trek by driving to Beni from Kathmandu over what is best described as one giant roadwork. It would seem that every road in Nepal is either being built or being repaired. This makes for slow travel – 20-30km/hour. The final 10km side road to Beni was barely a goat track however buses and trucks still plied their trade over it. Our minivan did not really have the clearance to avoid scraping the ground at times. The big excitement (apart from the appalling road) was spotting a jungle cat crossing in front of us in the glare of the headlights which the porters were sure was a tiger. It only had a striped tail and was way smaller than a tiger. From Beni we squeezed our 10 member party (2 NZers, guide, cook, and 6 porters) plus the driver into the jeep and headed off to the road end.

Once the road (track) became impassable we assembled the gear and headed off on foot to Muri (1720m) – our first night on the trail. This was only about an hour's walk, so a gentle introduction to the trek. The place we stayed at killed and butchered a goat the next morning so that our porters would have meat with their Dal Bhat, at least for a few days. Quite the process and one where the guts were removed last.

Day two was a long walk through the jungle complete with leeches. Probably our longest day distance wise. Still below 3000m. It was hot and steamy meaning we were well pleased to stop for the day at a place called Bagar (2080m). Day 3 was shorter however started the real ascent. This was the last of the village tea houses (Doban Kharka 2520m). Day 4 saw us climbing higher up the valley to a



*Japanese Base
Camp*

Dhaulagiri Circuit, Nepal - contd



French Pass at 5,320m

tea house at Choriban Khola (3110m). Day 5 took us to the Italian Base Camp (3500m approx.) which is on some very nice grassed bench areas. The walk there was steep and exposed in places. Very spectacular views of the surrounding peaks. We stayed there 2 nights (day 5 and 6) to start the acclimatisation process. It was a nice place to hang out, sunny and still warm. It was also the start of tenting for us due to the end of the tea houses (all basic and more like the tea houses I experienced in 1986).

There was a particular spot where you could still get cell phone coverage and our local crew all spent some time there calling home. From there we headed up to Japanese Base Camp (Day 7) which was on the glacier at around 4200m. Italian Base Camp was a clean and welcoming place. Japanese Base Camp and the detritus of many expeditions marred the landscape. It was in a stunning place under the South face of Dhaulagiri however the rubbish dump feeling let the view down a bit. It was also quite cold after the balmy jungle and I was appreciating my four season sleeping bag unlike my friend who was wearing half his clothes in his three season bag.

We stayed on the glacier as day 8 saw us heading to Dhaulagiri Base Camp at around 4700m. It was here that we were supposed to have another rest

Dhaulagiri Circuit, Nepal - contd

needed to move on the next day. This base camp had a similar vibe to the previous one. Lots of rubbish in a spectacular setting. It is from this base camp that most expeditions base themselves to climb Dhaulagiri, which is the seventh highest peak in the world at 8,167m and apparently, according to my co-trekker Roy the highest mountain situated wholly inside a single country. There were two base camps there of climbers who had been climbing Dhaulagiri. One had gotten all of their climbers to the summit and the other had lost one of their climbers in a fall.

The next day had the most height gain and where we would reach our highest point of our journey, French Pass (5,320m). We had some snow overnight before we set off and it was fairly cool. The stream crossing was icy and a bit unpleasant as we headed up the glacier and then up the moraine wall (steep) to access a ridge that would take us up to the pass. This was pretty heavy going and as we got closer to the pass the snow was a little deeper.

The other side of the pass had knee deep snow which was a challenge for the porters (and us). Generally if there is too much snow then the trek has to turn back at this stage. The campsite for this day was designated as Hidden Valley (5025m) which was a bit of a misnomer as it was an open valley with lots of flat areas mostly covered by snow. A French climber persuaded us to go on another 20 minutes to where his climbing expedition had based themselves for a climb of a local mountain which had better access to water and was more sheltered.

We had more snow that night and the trudge up to the second pass (Thapa Pass 5244m) was once again in calf to knee deep snow. Once we were over this we thought that it was all downhill to Yak Khakha (our last campsite before a real hotel). Alas it was not to be. The snow had buried most of the markers so we followed the line of where the guide thought the trail should be in at times knee deep snow. This carried on until the afternoon snowstorm reduced visibility to 50m and we had no hope of continuing on.

This necessitated an impromptu camp in the snow on what turned out to be the only flat spot for a while. The guide and porters did an excellent job of putting up the tents and ensuring we were all fed. The night was pretty cold with water bottles, boots and the inside of the tent freezing up. We had a stunner of a morning the next day with blue skies, fantastic views looking across to the Annapurna massif and of course deep snow.

Dhaulagiri Circuit, Nepal - contd



The impromptu camp

We continued the step plug around ridge after ridge until we finally came to the ridge that was to take us down. We had been at 5,000m for 3 days (or near abouts) and were all looking forward to warmer climes and thicker air. We had not had a lot of wind up until this point however once we were on the ridge going down we encountered a howling gale that considerable distance.

We had gotten quite spread out at this point and there was some concern that we might not have all made it until we reconvened at Yak Khakha. At this point the guide told us we had a jeep waiting to take us down the final 500 or so vertical meters to Marpha. Cell phone reception is quite wide spread in Nepal these days with only about 4 days of the circuit without it. Marpha was a welcome relief from the cold and rarer air of higher altitude and we had a good celebration with the crew drinking a mixture of strong beer, Khukri rum and Marpha apple brandy before we all went our separate ways.

The above writing does not do justice to a classic transalpine journey that is more than your standard Nepalese trek. I would thoroughly recommend it to anyone who wants to experience how trekking in Nepal used to be before flash tea houses and hundreds of people and who also wants a bit more challenge in their trek than tackling Pun Hill!

Trekkers – John Goulstone and Roy Horn ably assisted by guide Amrit, cook

Timaru Trad Climbing, November 11-12

This trip has become a regular fixture on the Otago Section calendar and this year a small but enthusiastic crew headed to Timaru for the weekend, with four of us (Mathijs, Rob, Nic and John) heading up from Dunedin, and Eve joining us from Cromwell.

The climbing at both crags tends to be dominated by crack climbs – and these test your ability to jam, layback and bridge. Both crags are well worth visiting the trip. Spur Rd has a larger number of climbs, including many at the lower grade end of the spectrum, and makes a good destination for beginner trad climbers or those looking to rebuild their confidence. Mt Horrible has fewer climbs, particularly at the lower grade end, but the quality of the climbing and rock is much better and there are some real gems here – my own favourite being Pareora Corner (18). Access to the climbing here is a little trickier – you need to rap into the base of the crag and then haul your gear back out at the end.

Thanks to Mathijs for organizing this great trip and for taking some great pictures!

Rob McLaren



John and Eve watching on as Nic belays Mathijs (Rob McLaren)



*Eve topping out at
Spur Road.
(Mathijs Van de Ven)*



*John Goulstone nearing
the top of 'Rural
Monkeys', Mt Horrible.
(Nic Lambert)*



*Rob McLaren nears the
top of 'Name of the
Beast'.
(Mathijs Van de Ven)*



*Mathijs climbing
at Spur Rd.
(Rob McLaren)*



*Nic Lambert
placing gear.
(Mathijs Van
de Ven)*

Notices

Are you over 18 years of age?

Are you a mountaineer?

Do you participate in mountaineering in Aotearoa New Zealand?

In alpine areas, human waste can cause considerable environmental and cultural harm, as well as posing a potential risk to human health. We need your help to understand exactly how human waste is currently being managed and identify the drivers of and barriers to some of these actions.

This study is being conducted by an interdisciplinary team from the University of Canterbury | Te Whare Wānanga o Waitaha. The project is funded by Tūpiki Trust, University of Canterbury, New Zealand Alpine Club and Leave No Trace New Zealand.

You can participate in the survey until 4 December here:

[https://canterbury.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_6heluC6dgWOrwCa?](https://canterbury.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_6heluC6dgWOrwCa?fbclid=IwAR0979w1Bf5fQT1VMraQGAccJmI4Ccuw5YpzoE9uOarED0pWi4_3CGIN82I)

[fbclid=IwAR0979w1Bf5fQT1VMraQGAccJmI4Ccuw5YpzoE9uOarED0pWi4_3CGIN82I](https://canterbury.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_6heluC6dgWOrwCa?fbclid=IwAR0979w1Bf5fQT1VMraQGAccJmI4Ccuw5YpzoE9uOarED0pWi4_3CGIN82I)



Beetham Hut

GEAR HIRE DUNEDIN

PLBs (Personal Locator Beacons)

The Otago Section has one PLBs based in Dunedin for use by Otago Section members. Fill out the online booking form [here](#) then contact Keith Moffat to arrange to collect a unit via moffat.k172@gmail.com

Avalanche Equipment and Snowshoes

Available for rent from Hunting and Fishing, Dunedin (141 Crawford Street). Snowshoe rental is \$5 per day for members and \$10 per day for non-members. Avalanche equipment rental is \$10 per day for members and \$20 per day for non-members. Members are welcome to collect the gear on Friday and return on Monday and two day's rental will apply. If you have any issues with rental gear please contact the Section or Keith Moffat as the Hunting and Fishing team are doing us a huge favour running the rentals; please don't hassle the staff!!

Guidebooks....we have a small selection available in Dunedin for members to borrow. Contact Keith Moffat (same email as above) to arrange pick up.

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*

GEAR HIRE CENTRAL OTAGO



NZAC – QUEENSTOWN, WANAKA GEAR HIRE



GEAR HIRE CONDITIONS

- To hire gear and organise pick up/drop off, fill in the form at <https://tiny.cc/gearhire>. You MUST email Chris (Wanaka) or Bryce (Queenstown) to let them know you have requested gear. They will respond with payment and pick-up arrangements.
- Minimum hire is 2 days.
- When hiring the Avalanche set (transceiver, shovel, probe), please supply your own 1 x AA alkaline non-rechargeable battery.
- Gear is hired with the expectation that it will be returned clean and tidy, if gear is lost or damaged, replacement cost will be charged
- Gear can be reserved in advance by paying in full via bank transfer
- All gear must be paid for on booking.

If you have issues with gear or the rental, email cosnzac@gmail.com.

NON-MEMBER GEAR HIRE CONDITIONS

NZAC Members may hire on behalf of non-members joining the same trip knowing that the NZAC member is responsible for any loss or damage. The non-member pays non-member prices.

PLEASE NOTE

The NZAC is not responsible for providing any technical advice regarding the fitting or use of the gear hired; this is solely the renter's responsibility.

GEAR AVAILABLE

Avalanche set:
transceiver, shovel, probe
Walking ice axes
Crampons
Helmets

Members price:
\$10/day – Avalanche set
\$5/day – any other item

Non-members
renting via a member:
\$20/day – Avalanche set
\$10/day – any other item

Payable prior to pickup
No refunds

Current NZAC
Membership card
required at pick up
\$100 bond required in
cash

Gear pick up & drop off

Queenstown contact:

Email Bryce @
bawood13@gmail.com

Wanaka contact:

Email Chris @
chris.hogan@gjgardner.co.nz



Otago Section Committee

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

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

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

Get involved!

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.

To find out more, contact us at
otago.climber@gmail.com

NZAC DISCOUNTS

NZAC members get up
to 50% off selected
shops & activities.

**Click here for more
details**