

April 2024

Chairman's Pitch

Trip Incidents

We've all heard about accidents and near miss reporting. It's generally accepted that an accident is when something gets damaged - person or equipment. I have also heard a good definition of a near miss which was - when you, or often everyone goes "phew".

Unfortunately in many incident and accident situations in workplaces and clubs there can be a lot of negativity around filling in reports. This can be out of shame, risk to reputation or the perceived inconvenience of dealing with the possible follow up. For the everyday Joe, accident reports and coroners' reports can be very wordy and anything of use to you and me gets lost in translation. I'd like to see a Club culture where people are willing to look at their mistakes and near misses, and learn from them together.

Russell Adams

Section Chair

Incidents and Accidents:

- This report is largely spurred on by a coroner's report that was released in October 2023. Emma Langley passed away caused by hypothermia on 26 September 2020 following a fall while mountaineering on the Whangaehu Glacier on Mt Ruapehu, as part of a BSCC follow up trip.
- The NZAC Head Office report into the Emma Langley accident mentions a Nelson/Marlborough Section trip during the 2023 winter season when a member slipped and fell and was evacuated by helicopter with broken bones and other injuries.
- Nelson/Marlborough Section members also witnessed and assisted a member of another party who slipped and fell on Rome Ridge of Mt Rolleston. The climber had to be evacuated by helicopter and so did the section members due to the change in conditions while assisting.
- My climbing partner slipped and fell on Rome Ridge and fortunately self arrested before hitting more consequential terrain. They continued their climb, but were rattled.

I have highlighted all of these incidents because they all have the same cause. The only variation is the outcome. The reason for the change in outcome is that the person involved was either able to move or was not and when **they all got cold**. Cold is possibly the biggest risk to both patients and those tending to them in winter mountaineering.

What Happened - Causes.

In all cases someone slipped and fell. All incidents were on grade 1 or 2 terrain. In grade 3 or higher terrain it could be assumed that any of these incidents would be fatal.

What Can we Change/Improve

Climbers Don't Fall We always teach students on snowcraft that climbers never fall. While self arresting is an important skill to keep sharp, you should never need to use it in anger. If a party member slips and falls you should take it seriously and regroup immediately to work out why. Potential causes are: gear, snow conditions and people. A lot of people are using ¾ shank boots due to their cost, comfort and versatility. However when combined with hard or variable conditions and steeper (think grade 2 in the guidebook) slopes, it can take a lot of effort to keep your crampons engaged. Beginners especially may not be equipped with the knowledge to identify these conditions, techniques to beat them or have the fitness to kick their way out of trouble. A full shank boot is designed to make a stable platform in all situations and take a 12 point crampon. Use the right gear and observe and test snow conditions as they change through the day.

Prevention of hypothermia - The coroner's Langley report states the cause of death as "hypothermia". This is common in mountaineering accidents. Physical injuries can be quite severe but people often succumb to the elements much faster. In all the other incidents the victims cooled rapidly and required some extent of shelter and warming. Climbers are often underdressed when climbing because they are exerting themselves and want to avoid sweating. Unfortunately this means that if incapacitated, climbers cool down rapidly. I've fallen down a crevasse in a T-shirt, where, you get very wet and very cold all of a sudden. Consider if it's best to lose a layer or to slow your pace down. This is also a

subject that can be countered with education. Hypothermia treatment and prevention is often taught in first aid courses. However this is in the sterile, classroom environment.

NZAC will almost definitely see more hypothermia and emergency shelter work added to snowcraft courses and the NZAC will facilitate 2 day comprehensive outdoor first aid courses. Instructors are often asked what to do if caught in an avalanche? Next time you're out and about or on a course, have a discussion on your first aid, emergency shelters and hypothermia management skills. Closed cell foam provides the lightest and highest insulation value on snow although slightly bulky. One recommendation is to add a short "bivvy mat" to every climber's equipment. This mat is to keep your core, or a victim's, off direct contact with the snow and makes the biggest difference to warmth. Survival bags and blankets are now widely carried. Check their condition regularly, practice with them, and most experienced climbers believe that the bags are superior, especially in windy conditions.

Fast and Light attitudes Climbers with fast and light equipment are often shown in marketing and the media. However these guys are extremely experienced, have different risk tolerances, often have support crews or are climbing in populated areas. When you go out, stop and think. Do I have all the gear? What happens if I have an accident and I don't have extra insulation? What if people can't get to me to help? How much risk am I willing to accept and put rescuers in? Do I have the skills to make up for the gear I'm using that isn't fit for purpose?

Set off a PLB If you have a PLB set it off immediately. This will give you the fastest response time for helicopter assistance. There has been a massive shift in attitudes towards setting these beacons off in recent years. You won't get a hard time for it. In several incidents, people have spent valuable time calling 111. Multiple events have shown that the 111 call centre is well equipped to deal with backcountry rescues. But they often need to relay to the Police and Rescue Coordination Centre (RCCNZ).

Stay Safe.

NB: *I have refrained from bringing weather into this report. While weather is critical to all climbing activities all of the above trips were carried out in reasonable conditions with temperatures and wind levels that should be expected in the alpine environment.*

This report was written by Russell Adams with input from Jim Davidson, Jerome Waldron, Glen Aspin and other experienced climbers.

Don't Miss These Upcoming Section Talks



April

Wednesday 17 April at The Honest Lawyer, Stoke. 7.00pm

Otago Based mountaineer and writer, Paul Hersey will speak about his latest book, 100 of the best NZ climbs for occasional mountaineers.

May

Wednesday 15 May at the Honest Lawyer, Stoke. 7.00pm

Craig Potton. Conservationist, mountaineer, photographer and publisher extraordinaire!



Photo. Mt Richmond dawn. Peter Laurenson.

But Wait.... There is More!

Banff 2024 - Two Programmes for Nelson

Both the Tasman and Ruapehu programmes will be shown in Nelson, offering Banff fans two different and exciting film selections.

Dates for Nelson screenings are: 7-8 June

As last year, the venue will be the Annesbrook Hall.

Check out the programmes on these links.

Tasman Trailer <https://www.banff.nz/programme-listings/#tasman>

Ruapehu Trailer <https://www.banff.nz/programme-listings/#ruapehu>

Spread the word. Tell your friends and plan a night out.
Booking details to be advised soon!

Coordinators for 2024 are: Logan Olausen, Josh Knox
They will welcome volunteers to help manage each screening.

Club Fleece Cover up Request

The Section has written to Club HQ requesting that 100 weight polar fleece jumpers, with a quarter zip and zip pocket and club logo be added to the NZAC online shop. These jumpers are popular sellers for retailers like Macpac, and have been produced for Club instructors. The jumpers would promote the club and comfort chilled climbers.

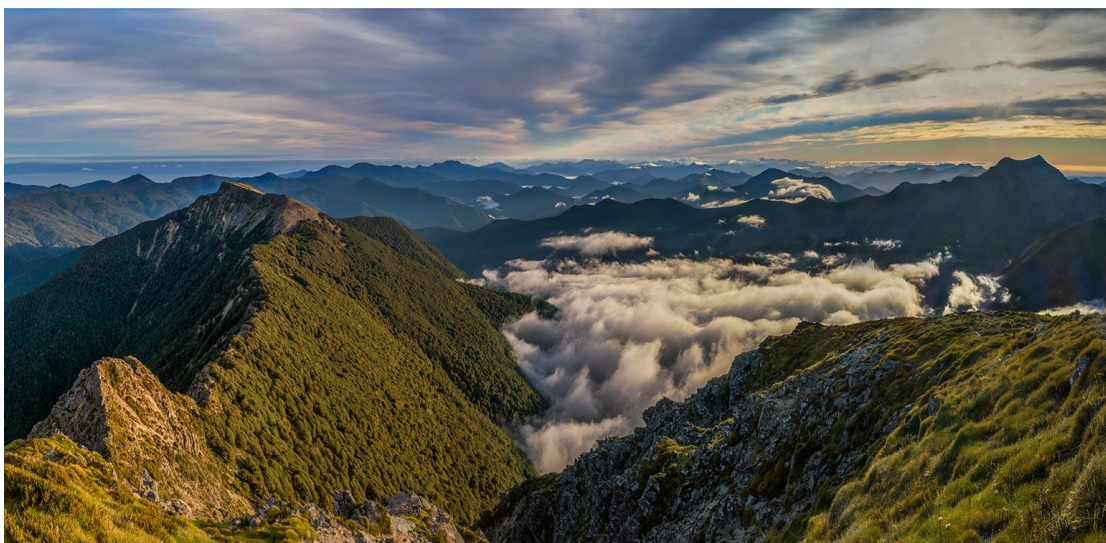


Photo. Richmond Forest Park from Mt Fell. Peter Laurenson.

2024 Instruction Courses

Funding is available to those who can demonstrate a commitment to contributing to the Section Trips. If you are interested, please contact Russell Adams.

Nelson Marlborough Section Basic Snowcraft

9th-11th and 16th-18th August

Details to be confirmed.

Expressions of interest to Russell. nmchairperson@gmail.com

Intermediate Snowcraft

24/25th August,

Arthurs Pass. Run in conjunction with Canterbury/Westland Section.

There is potential for second course Details to be confirmed.

Expressions of interest to Russell. nmchairperson@gmail.com

Section First Aid Course

20-21 June is the weekend for the 2024 the section's Advanced First Aid Outdoor Course

This covers Unit Standards 6401, 6402, 6400, 424

The course will involve 6 hours online work prior to course, and two full days of instruction.

Comprehensive Outdoor First Aid Course open to all –

More information is available from Vicky Shelling.

vashelling@gmail.com

027 542 3533

Basic Instructor Training

13/14 July, Arthurs Pass - Free - for beginner trip leaders and Instructors - Expressions of interest to Russell. nmchairperson@gmail.com

Basic Instructor Refresher

13 July, Arthurs Pass - Free - a refresher for trip leaders and instructors - Expressions of interest to Russell. nmchairperson@gmail.com

Avalanche Safety

Back Country Avalanche Course for Nelson Marlborough Section volunteers

15/16/17/18th July, Arthurs Pass - \$675 - Sign up available via the National

Website. <https://alpineclub.org.nz/courses>

BackCountry Avalanche

20/21/22/23th July, Arthurs Pass - \$675 - Sign up available via the National Website.

<https://alpineclub.org.nz/courses>

BackCountry Avalanche

25/26/27/28th July, Arthurs Pass - \$675 - Sign up available via the National

Website. <https://alpineclub.org.nz/courses>

Technical Ice. High Alpine Courses

August-October

Leading on Technical Ice, Womens Leading on Technical Ice.

Back Country and Glacier Skiing

November/December

High Alpine skills with a walk in option. Aspiring National Park

For website information see:<https://alpineclub.org.nz/courses>

Introduction to Backcountry Skiing, Glacier Skiing.

For website information see: <https://alpineclub.org.nz/courses>

Section Ski Trips

Crimea Range

24/25th August Join Russell to explore the Crimea Range east of the Rainbow Road. Snow conditions, group skill, goals and fitness to dictate trip plan so register interest

now. nmchairperson@gmail.com

In the Pipeline

Basic snowcraft follow up trip (early September).

Trip for previous High Alpine Skills participants to Mt Aspiring or West Coast Glaciers (October).

Into Wall Climbing?

NZAC National Indoor Bouldering Series (NiBS) 2024 is under way. Every round in a dedicated bouldering facility. It will be a great year when we can host an event in Nelson!

These are fun, participation-based climbing events for all abilities and are an incredible spectacle to watch. The 2024 series will include a family friendly morning open only to competitors in the U10, U12, U14, U16 and U18 categories and any parents/caregivers who prefer to climb in the same round as their kids. U16 and U18 climbers can also test out their skills with the adults climbing in the afternoon rounds, of which the best of the best move through to an exciting action-packed final held in the evening. Every entrant has the chance to win prizes! The NZAC National Indoor Bouldering Series is supported by: The North Face, La Sportiva, Climb Craft and Bivouac Outdoors.

Are you up for a race? 2024 registrations are open for events at these locations:

- **4th May, Auckland, Boulder Co**
- **25th May, Christchurch, Uprising**
- **22nd June, Hamilton, Boulder Co**
- **27th July, Wellington, Faultline**

For registration check the NZAC website:

<https://alpineclub.org.nz/event/nzac-national-indoor-bouldering-series-nibs-2024>

Crowding on Mt Fuji

Climbers hoping to ascend Mount Fuji along its most popular route will be charged ¥2,000 (£10.50, \$13.35, A\$20.50) when the climbing season starts in the summer, as local authorities try to ease congestion fuelled by Japan's tourism boom.

Trails leading up Japan's highest mountain – a UNESCO world heritage site since 2013 – are increasingly overcrowded, prompting concern over littering and “bullet ascents”, by which often inexperienced climbers try to scale the 3,776-metre peak without resting.

Local guides say overcrowding is placing unprecedented pressure on the mountain's limited toilet facilities. The number of tourists on the mountain is also increasing the potential for accidents among people who misjudge the effort required to get to the top.

“After Covid restrictions were lifted, we started seeing more people. We want them to dress appropriately for the mountain and be well prepared,” said Toshiaki Kasai, a local government official.

The Yoshida trail is convenient for climbers travelling from Tokyo, with about 60% using the route. It takes an average of five to six hours to reach the summit from the fifth stage, but can take up to 10 hours depending on the conditions and the climbing ability. Hikers will still be able to use three other routes – all in neighbouring Shizuoka prefecture – free of charge

The restrictions on opening hours are expected to deter people from arriving late in the day to begin their ascent to reach the summit in time to watch the sunrise.

Japanese media have reported on poorly equipped climbers who sleep on the trails instead of staying in mountain lodges. Some injure themselves or suffer from altitude sickness.

“Keeping the number of climbers in check is an urgent task as we experience overcrowding,”

Yamanashi's governor, Kotaro Nagasaki, told reporters, according to Kyodo.

More than 220,000 visitors passed the eighth stage of Fuji's 10 stages during the three-month climbing season last year, around the same number recorded before the pandemic.

Source: Agence France-Presse. 6 Mar 2024.

Suggestions for Future Talks Invited

Section Evening Convenor Peter Laurenson welcomes tips for future Section evenings and social activities. You can meet Peter at almost any Section evening, or contact him by:

Email: occasionalclimber@gmail.com

Phone: 021 446 725.

Interesting News, Stories to Share?

Newsletter editor Rob Mitchell is always ready to publish items from Section members.

- Interesting, or epic trips
- Amazing alpine photos.
- Gear recommendations.
- Letters, personal views on alpine issues,

Contact: Rob Mitchell

Email: rmitchl28@gmail.com

NZAC Nelson Marlborough Section Committee 2024				
Role	Committee Member	Assistant	Email Addresses Phone	
Chairman	Russell Adams		nmchairperson@gmail.com 022 097 6336	
Secretary	Maree Holland	Vicky Shelling	mareeholland9@gmail.com 027 333 6947	vashelling@gmail.com 027 542 3533
Treasurer	Liam Sullivan		liam_sullivan@yahoo.com 021 144 3792	
Gear Quartermaster	Liam Sullivan	Vicky Shelling	liam_sullivan@yahoo.com 021 144 3792	vashelling@gmail.com 027 542 3533
Banff Coordinator	Logan Olausen	Josh Knox	loganolausen@hotmail.com	joshknox@yahoo.com 021 169 9905
BSCC Coordinator	Glen Aspin		aspojay@gmail.com	
Section Evening Coordinator	Peter Laurensen	Bruce Davies	occasionalclimber@gmail.com 021 446 725	daviesrobin@yahoo.com 021 238 3733
Newsletter Editor	Rob Mitchell		rmitchl28@gmail.com 027 476 4824	
Section Council Representative	Jim Davidson	Russell Adams	jimdavidson@gmail.com	nmchairperson@gmail.com
Marlborough Representative	Jerome Waldron		jjwaldron@xtra.co.nz 027 572 9214	
Social Media/ Facebook	Forrest Paynter		forrestpaynter@gmail.com	
Trip Coordinator	Forrest Paynter	Russell Adams, Caitlin Palmer	forrestpaynter@gmail.com	nmchairperson@gmail.com 022 097 6336 cepalmer99@gmail.com
Committee	Ronnie Barker		hello@ronniebarker.co.nz	
	Ross Cullen		rosscullen.kiwi@gmail.com 021 294 6819	
	Seb Head		sebastian.head@gmail.com 027 357 0050	
	Brandon Kay		braknn007@gmail.com	
	Hoss Kohestani		olympicfun@xtra.co.nz 027 408 6191	
	Robert McDonald		mcdonald.t.robert@gmail.com	