

# NZAC NELSON MARLBOROUGH SECTION NEWS

September 2024



Jim Davidson heading along the NE ridge of Mt Traverse. On the skyline Kahu left and Cupola right.  
Photo: Peter Laurenson.

Featured in this issue:

- Chairman' s Pitch
- Section AGM. Election of 2025 President, and Committee
- Upcoming Section Meetings
- Photo Competition Results
- Section Trips
- Alpine Skill Courses
- Alpine Calendar Offer

## **Chairman's Pitch:**

Hi All

Spring is usually the season of mountaineering and backcountry skiing in New Zealand. At this early stage it looks like the weather may have other ideas for us.

In August, both Basic Snowcraft Courses went ahead. This year I coordinated the courses as Glen Aspin stepped down, so I had big shoes to fill. Glen has a noticeable passion for guiding new climbers even outside courses. The first, with excellent weather and great learning conditions. The second, quite the opposite.

However, it's been great to see everyone showing up, making the most of their weekends and getting out there together, even if it means changing trips to be much closer to the bushline than we'd like.

Coming up to the AGM and end of the year it's time to have a look at how the Club is doing. My observation is that the Nelson/Marlborough section is punching above its weight and doing really well. Many of our up-and-coming climbers and active members are women or young people which goes against past trends. The Snowcraft Courses are usually a good gauge of who is joining the Club and why. This year we bumped our total number of spaces

on courses from 20 to 24. We had a large number of under 25s and even more teenagers. Some of these even came with trip plans and interest in committee roles.

Running entirely on volunteer energy results in a variable quality of activities from year to year, depending on how critical committee members are influenced by Club and outside pressures. It has been heartening to see the number of emails coming from new and existing members looking to give their time and add something to the Section.

Unfortunately, this month will be my last as Chairman and we are yet to find my replacement. Hopefully a new chair will appear out of the woodwork, giving the committee fresh energy and leadership. If you could be interested in shaping the direction and success of the Club, I hope to see you at the AGM on Wednesday 18th September.

See you out there.

**Russell Adams**

**Nelson/Marlborough Section Chairman**



Jim Davidson descending, Summit Creek left and NE ridge right.

Photo: Peter Laursen



## **September Section Meeting**

Wednesday 18<sup>th</sup> September  
7pm at The Honest Lawyer,  
Stoke.

### **Nelson Marlborough Section of NZAC. Annual General Meeting.**

There will be an opportunity to discuss the activities of the past year and offer your ideas for how the Section should head into 2025.

It will be an opportunity to thank Russell Adams and members of the Committee for all their energy over past years.

Importantly to elect a new committee to carry on their work which has given the Section such a strong foundation.

Think of how you and your friends could contribute to Club activities in the coming year.

Why not become a member of the Committee for 2025?

### **Bonus! A Presentation by highly experienced alpine and rock climber, Alistair Mark.**

Alistair will discuss some great climbing opportunities in the Kahurangi National Park. New climbing routes in Fyfe Gorge, Gold Strike and Sanctuary Dome were all made possible by installing bolts. More controversially, he will also explore the ethics and dilemmas of bolting in our prized National Park.



**Other key dates to mark in your diary**

**Section Meeting Wednesday 16<sup>th</sup> October.**

The Honest Lawyer

Veteran climber and explorer Bruce Davies, will describe highlights of his trips to Iceland, Greenland and Antarctica. This will be illustrated with an enviable collection of images.

**Section Meeting Wednesday 20 November**

The Honest Lawyer

Craig Potton will speak about his new book on Tasman Saddle.



As coordinator and judge of this year’s Section Photo Competition, Peter Laurenson has done an excellent job. At the August Section evening Peter provided valuable feedback to entrants in the five categories and announced the prizewinners. These are listed below.

For the overall winner – or People’s Choice, the vote of the audience went to Bruce Davies for his spectacular shot of a climber on Mt Fell in golden dawn light.

<b>Peoples' Choice Overall Prizewinner</b>	<b>Image caption</b>	<b>Prize</b>
Bruce Davies	Dawn Treader, Mt Fell, Mar 2024	Vulcan gas BBQ compliments of Top Zone Benchtops
<b>Alpine Activity</b>	<b>Image caption</b>	<b>Prize</b>
George Guille	Living the dream, Mt Dixon, Oct 2023	Fenix headlamp + Potton & Burton 2024 Calendar

Jim Davidson	Douglas peak looking west, 2015	Runner up: \$20 Bunnings voucher + Potton & Burton 2024 Calendar
<b>Alpine Landscape</b>		
Bruce Davies	Dawn Treader, Mt Fell, Mar 2024	Fenix headlamp + Potton & Burton 2024 Calendar
Kam Yoong	First Light, Bonar Glacier, Oct 2023	Runner up: \$20 Bunnings voucher + Potton & Burton 2024 Calendar
<b>Alpine Nature</b>		
Ross Cullen	Petite Gentian, Ben Ohau, Feb 2024	Fenix headlamp + Potton & Burton 2024 Calendar
Kam Yoong	The Clown, Cameron Hut, May 2024	Runner up: \$20 Bunnings voucher + Potton & Burton 2024 Calendar
<b>Rock Climbing</b>		
Jim Davidson	South ridge of Haeckel Peak, 2017	\$50 Bunnings vouchers + Potton & Burton 2024 Calendar
Ryan Campbell	KungFu Celebration, Kahurangi NP, May 2021	Runner up: \$20 Bunnings voucher + Potton & Burton 2024 Calendar
<b>Mountain and Climbing Culture</b>		
George Guille	Friends on a rope, North Twin, Kahurangi, Feb 2023	Signed copy of KHUMBU + Potton & Burton 2024 Calendar
Jim Davidson	Escaping ahead of NW storm Hooker valley, 2016	Runner up: \$20 Bunnings voucher + Potton & Burton 2024 Calendar

## **Praise for Section Instruction**

### **Nelson Marlborough Basic Snowcraft Courses 2024:**

#### **Two Weekends of Learning and Adventure**

Leah Parker

It has been a long year waiting for winter and the NZAC Nelson Marlborough Basic Snowcraft Course (BSCC) to roll around, especially after missing out last season.

I joined the Club in 2023, relatively new to the alpine scene, after my son Tom's 's interest was piqued by Russell Adams' presentation at the local section evening. I had always considered myself a trumper, but there's nothing I love more than spending time in the outdoors with my boys. However, a new fear has crept in — of being left behind once Tom's alpine goals exceed my skills. I have no doubt it will happen eventually, but for now, my goal is to keep up with him. I headed into the BSCC weekend very excited.

A couple of weeks earlier, we students had attended an information evening to learn what to expect and to go over gear requirements. I left feeling confident with my kit, pleased that I only needed to borrow avalanche gear. I had made some tweaks to my gear in the months leading up to this, and fortunately, my winter birthday was the perfect opportunity for a “to

me, from me” gift of ¾ shank boots. The information evening was a great chance to address any questions and ensure our kit was ready so that when the course finally arrived, we were all set to go.

THE weekend finally arrived, and on Friday afternoon, we headed to Red Deer Lodge in St Arnaud. There was a sense of high anticipation in the air as we made our introductions and found our bunks. Once settled, we all gathered around the fire and started sorting out our kit, with the issue of any loan equipment we might need. It was impressive to see the range of gear the Section has available for member use, reflecting the club's dedication to providing value through continuous additions and upgrades. After the gear checks were complete, the instructors went over the plan for the weekend, including specifics like timing for Saturday morning. We shared our goals for the weekend. Some of the younger members aimed to advance enough to leave their parents behind—yikes! I couldn't help but think this will be Tom in a few years, and flames of fear fanned within me.

Though I eventually got to sleep, I was wide awake by 5 a.m., excited for the day ahead. We had an awesome group of leaders and students, and best of all, a forecast for great weather!

### Class of '24 High Level Enjoyment



### Great Start on Saturday

By 8 am, after breakfast, we were on our way to the Rainbow Ski Area. We were greeted by friendly keas and crisp snow, which meant we could put on our crampons right from the car park. For some, this was their first time using crampons, and the instructors took the time to ensure everyone had a good, snug fit before heading up the mountain.



After a quick snack, we found a shady, steep area to practice different techniques of ascending and descending. The varied gradients of the terrain provided options to suit everyone's confidence levels. We divided into smaller groups, each led by an experienced instructor. There was also the opportunity to move between groups, which was beneficial as each instructor had different strengths and communication styles

Afterward, we all headed up to the ridge, where we were treated with stunning views of Lake Rotoiti and across to the Robert Ridge. It was the perfect lunch spot. Sunshine and a mere light breeze created lovely conditions for an extended refuelling break before heading down for avalanche training. This is a massive topic, so the BSCC only briefly touches on it, and a more comprehensive course is recommended. I completed an Avalanche Skills Course 1 with Tom last season, which I highly recommend. This session highlighted the need for refreshers, as the mock searches clearly demonstrated I had forgotten some key aspects of using a transceiver. Regular practice and refresher lessons will be crucial to cement these important skills.

With transceiver practice wrapped up, it was time to take a slide — actually, several slides — as we went over the different self-arrest methods. The instructors demonstrated various techniques specific to the orientation of a fall, and we practiced them in a controlled manner, gaining more speed as our confidence grew. Before long, it was time to head back to the car park and return to base.

Once back at the lodge, we set about drying gear, taking showers, and having dinner before settling around the fire for some theory. We covered trip planning, including weather forecasts, and were provided with great resource suggestions. Details of some NZAC resources were also shared, such as the network of huts and lodges available to members. What a big day it had been — from the early start, all the excitement, to the almost overwhelming amount of content generously covered by the amazing volunteer instructors. The challenge, the fun, the sunshine, and the laughter — it's fair to say we were exhausted by the end!

### **Slower on Sunday.....**

We were all a bit slower on Sunday morning, but still excited to get out. The forecast for the day wasn't as good as the previous day, but with sun and snow still on the cards, we set off after consolidating any remaining gear into one bunkroom. Snow conditions were much the same as on Saturday, so we cramponed up right away. We quickly divided into two groups based on confidence, each with a great instructor student ratio and instructors brimming with knowledge to share. Sunday's goal was to use all the skills we learned the day before in more of a day-trip-style journey, but with plenty of opportunities for lessons and guidance along the way.

I joined the advanced group, seeking a challenge, and the day did not disappoint. I spend a lot of time pushing my boys' comfort zones in the outdoors, and I'm extremely passionate about the benefits of this. But now it was my turn! We made our way up towards Mount McRae, checking out the snowpack and trying various gradient terrain along the way. Once on the ridge, we ducked onto the lee side for lunch. From here, we could see the other group further north on the ridge, so we had a brief radio chat and took some photos of them.

On the way down, we sought out even more technical sites to test more advanced skills, some of which required two axes. My comfort zone was pushed, and it was great! It was also awesome to see others pushing theirs and to see how far the group had developed over the weekend. We joked with the instructors that we were probably the best group they'd ever had, and of course, they agreed — so our thank-you gifts must have provided just the right level of bribery. To finish off the day, we had some epic bum slides, further pushing our

speed on self-arrests. The weather turned out better than forecast, making for a great end to a challenging day.

Back at the lodge, the weekend wrapped up with a presentation of certificates and a debrief covering the many highlights of the weekend. The last of the shared baking was distributed, providing the final sugar hit to keep the drivers safe on the journey home. Handshakes and hugs concluded the weekend. My personal highlight was the people—everyone was so supportive, friendly, and gave it their all. We arrived as strangers but departed as friends, and I can't wait to put my new skills into practice alongside members of our epic group of students and instructors.

### **Course Number Two**

The weekend following our course was the second BSCC for the year. That's right — interest is so high a second course was required to meet demand. I was camping at St Arnaud with my family, so Tom and I popped by to say hello on Friday evening and stopped in on Saturday afternoon to light the fire, ready for the group's return. Unfortunately, they weren't quite as fortunate with the weather and didn't get out on Sunday. However, they still maximized the opportunity to learn with a solid theory session by the fire as the rain bucketed down outside.

If you're considering a NZAC BSCC course, do it! My advice is to push yourself so you can get as much out of it as possible—and don't forget to pack treats for the instructors. They give up their time to pass on their hard-earned skills and knowledge for free, and if you're generous enough, you might just be the next "best" class they have!

## **2024 Section Trip Programme**

### **21-22 September. Mt Technical, Lewis Pass**

Leaving Nelson 5am sharp.

Snow camp above 1450m between The Apprentice & Mt Technical. Climb and back on Sunday - Grade 1 - Contact Hoss [olympicfun@xtra.co.nz](mailto:olympicfun@xtra.co.nz)

### **September (Date to be confirmed). Peel Range**

Join Forrest on the now long running quest to traverse the Peel Range. This is an excellent and diverse alpine traverse that will entertain both beginner and experienced trans-alpinists alike. Grade 1 - Contact Forrest [forrestpaynter@gmail.com](mailto:forrestpaynter@gmail.com)

### **26-30 October Mt Lambert via Lambert Tops Route.**

This is likely a fly in, pack raft out trip on the wild West Coast. The terrain is semi-glaciated, and participants will need to be ready for big days, technical terrain, rough weather and adventure. Grade 3 - Contact Hoss [olympicfun@xtra.co.nz](mailto:olympicfun@xtra.co.nz)

### **23-24 November Mt Owen via Lake Bulmer.**

Leaving Nelson 5am sharp, Branch off the Sunrise Peak Route and follow Bulmer Creek to Bulmer Lake, camp, alpine start Sunday morning for the Mt Owen summit, back home Sunday late. A trip for keen trampers, cavers and climbers alike. Spring snow conditions may persist in this steep, southern basin. Grade 1 - Contact Hoss [olympicfun@xtra.co.nz](mailto:olympicfun@xtra.co.nz)

### **Chummies Track and Mt Patriarch, Kahurangi National Park**

New date for this trip is being set. If you are interested, contact the trip leader.

Bruce Davies: [daviesrobin@yahoo.com](mailto:daviesrobin@yahoo.com)

021 238 3733

### **Late Spring. Date to be confirmed). Dog Trip – Mt Starveall or Ben Nevis**

A pioneering trip for club members with K9 companions. Nelson/Marlborough is fortunate to have a large amount of dog friendly conservation land - Grade 1 - Contact Forrest [forrestpaynter@gmail.com](mailto:forrestpaynter@gmail.com)



## **2024 NZAC Instruction Courses**

### **National programme of Technical Ice, High Alpine, Introduction to Backcountry Skiing and Glacier Skiing Courses.**

If you would like to participate in one or more of the Club courses later in the year, you should check the NZAC website: <https://alpineclub.org.nz/courses>

### **Suggestions for Future Talks**

Section Evening Convenor, Peter Laursen 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](mailto:occasionalclimber@gmail.com)

Phone: 021 446 725.

### **Your Next Newsletter**

Newsletter Editor, Rob Mitchell is always ready to publish news from Section members.

- Interesting, or epic trips
- Amazing alpine photos.
- Gear book and video recommendations.
- Letters,
- Personal views on alpine issues.

Email: [rmitchl28@gmail.com](mailto:rmitchl28@gmail.com)

Phone: 027 476 4824



### **Nelson Marlborough Alpine Calendar Offer**

Be inspired by our magnificent alpine tops every day for a whole year with this unique, limited edition, large scale, premium quality, locally printed calendar produced by trapper, occasional climber and accomplished photographer Peter Laurenson

Peter's images aim to capture the essence of the alpine tops at dawn and dusk  
Each month enjoy a full page main image plus a generously sized, full width panoramic image at the base of the day/date page  
The day/date page allows plenty of space to write day notes and includes a next month preview thumb print.  
Open, on-wall dimensions: 42cm wide by 60cm high. Weight 0.44 kg

Price NZ\$25 (including gst, excluding postage)

Postage within New Zealand is via standard NZ Postal service. For orders of 1 to 4 calendars, with bubble wrap and a waterproof envelope, there is flat additional \$15 charge, or \$20 if rural delivery.

Please email your postal address to [occasionalclimber@gmail.com](mailto:occasionalclimber@gmail.com)

Last orders and payment 20 September please, to permit finalisation of print quantity

Payment via internet banking to 15-3971-0056131-10

State your name and 'Nelson' in the reference field.

Calendars available by end October

To collect your calendar(s) from 14A Faraday Rise, Richmond,

Phone call to confirm arrangements: 021 446 725

## Twelve Superb Calendar Images, and an Example of the Page Design







Dawn view from above Pioneer Hut (2,380m) to the main divide, Westland Tai Poutini National Park. From left Mt Alack, Douglas Peak, Mt Holdinger, Grey Peak and Mt Hoast

May 2025

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday																																										
<div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px;"> <p>June 2025</p> <table border="1"> <tr><td>Mon</td><td>Tue</td><td>Wed</td><td>Thu</td><td>Fri</td><td>Sat</td><td>Sun</td></tr> <tr><td>30</td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td>1</td></tr> <tr><td>2</td><td>3</td><td>4</td><td>5</td><td>6</td><td>7</td><td>8</td></tr> <tr><td>9</td><td>10</td><td>11</td><td>12</td><td>13</td><td>14</td><td>15</td></tr> <tr><td>16</td><td>17</td><td>18</td><td>19</td><td>20</td><td>21</td><td>22</td></tr> <tr><td>23</td><td>24</td><td>25</td><td>26</td><td>27</td><td>28</td><td>29</td></tr> </table> </div>	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat	Sun	30						1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29			1	2	3	4
Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat	Sun																																										
30						1																																										
2	3	4	5	6	7	8																																										
9	10	11	12	13	14	15																																										
16	17	18	19	20	21	22																																										
23	24	25	26	27	28	29																																										
5	6	7	8	9	10	11																																										
12	13	14	15	16	17	18 <small>Whitaker's Day</small>																																										
19	20	21	22	23	24	25																																										
26	27	28	29	30	31	<p>A wider view also from above Pioneer Hut, stretching left to Mt Barmocost and right to Lendenfeld Peak and Mt Tasman</p>																																										

Photography by Peter Laurensen  
www.occasionalclimber.co.nz