

NZAC NELSON MARLBOROUGH SECTION NEWS

October 2024

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Leading, Sharing, Enjoying. Join the Team

Share the satisfaction of working in a friendly group and producing satisfying results: organising successful trips and instruction courses, boosting club funds through the Banff Film Festival, helping programme talks and other social activities, and communicating section news with members and the recreation community

With Russell Adams stepping down from leadership after 4 years as chairman, Hamish Brown, Jerome Waldron and Forest Paynter stepping back from their committee involvement, there are opportunities for others to step up.

Members who would like to contribute and share the fun of shaping section activities should talk to a committee member or email

Section Secretary Maree Holland: mareeholland9@gmail.com

2024 Nelson Marlborough Section NZAC Annual General Meeting

Wednesday 18/09/24 7.00pm Honest Lawyer, Stoke Nelson

Annual Report

Section Membership: 2022 NM - 210 2023 NM - 230 2024 NM - 249 (+8.26%)

National Membership: 2022 NZAC - 4058 2023 NZAC - 4367 2024 NZAC - 4640 (+6.25%)

A big welcome to all new members and those who continue to participate in the club. Our Section membership has risen since last year which reflects the growth in the club as a whole. At national courses and events, we are well represented. This is great in general, but I think it points to two main factors. We are retaining new members who come through the BSCC and climbers are moving to the Top of The South to enjoy the lifestyle on offer here. While the snowpack has been slim for the majority of the winter; the climbing is far from over with the spring season just kicking off. Despite poor weather conditions and limited mountaineering and skiing opportunities I know that many members made the most of rock climbing through the long, dry autumn. A stable and productive early ice climbing season was also enjoyed by some local members. Notable this year have been small tweaks and development to Banff, Snowcraft, Section evenings and the committee which have placed our section on a firm footing going forward.

Russell Adams Chairman

Finance

Liam Sullivan has continued to serve as Section treasurer. An annual financial summary will be available at the AGM. If you wish to receive a copy, please email nmchairperson@gmail.com

Banff Film Festival

The Banff Mountain Film Festival is the main, annual fundraiser for the NZAC. Two Banff screenings were held successfully in Nelson. A massive thanks to Leah Parker who took on coordination of Banff this year under the experienced guidance of Josh Knox our outgoing Banff coordinator. A big thankyou also to Josh for his years as Banff coordinator. Both Leah and Josh have seen Banff succeed recently with improved viewing experiences and increased profits. This year the committee has decided to commit to trialling the screening of the Banff Film Festival at the Trafalgar Centre in 2025.

Russell Adams

Instruction

Two Basic Snowcraft Courses have been run. Course numbers were increased to 12 per course and there were 5 instructors per course giving the courses a busy but friendly and personalised vibe. The first course was run in superb teaching conditions with majority bluebird weather to boot. The second course went ahead in terrible weather which sometimes has to be done to avoid entirely cancelling courses. Despite this both courses were booked out early and had a very high attendance rate.

Vicky, Maree and Ronnie attended the Instructor Development Refresher course this winter which gave Nelson/Marlborough the second strongest contingent of instructors of the South Island sections. If anyone would like to train as an instructor or you are already up to scratch with your fundamental mountaineering skills then please make yourself known. It's a fun and rewarding job to take new climbers out in the hills for a weekend. This year I also attempted to tee in with the CW section Intermediate Course. There was a huge demand for this from both NM and CW members which highlights the need for a course of our own. This year Glen Aspin stepped down as BSCC Coordinator and I took over. This is a role I would like to continue with after I retire as Chairman as I see it as the most important part of our club. Instruction means education, making connections, and growth both personally and as a club. This is something I would like to pursue for our section and intend to in 2025 if enough personnel can be found to operate other committee roles effectively.

Russell Adams

Trips

We have had another difficult year for trips with weather hindering many trips. I am proud of the members who have made a Plan B and gone out to develop team and navigational skills as well as keep their fitness up despite poor weather. It's good to see some young trip leaders who aren't averse to paperwork coming out of the woodwork. We will pair these developing climbers up with experienced members to guide them into becoming excellent trip leaders. The committee is working to appoint a Trip Administrator who can oversee and assist Trip Leaders and facilitate a more active trips calendar.

Russell Adams

Section Evenings

Since the last AGM we have enjoyed solid attendance at our full range of interesting section evening presentations. Attendance has consistently been between 40 and 60, apart from the August Photo Competition evening that attracted about 20.

The start time in 2024 was moved from 7.30pm to 7pm. This seems to have encouraged higher attendance.

Peter Laurenson

Nelson Marlborough NZAC Photo Competition 2024

This was our second year running the photo competition. We secured an excellent range of prizes totalling over \$1,400 in value, but the member participation, both in terms of entries and those compared to the previous year, were disappointing.

Peter Laurenson

Media and Communications

This year Forrest has been keeping an eye on our social media and Rob editing the newsletter. Judging by the applicants for trips and courses, and the turnout at section evenings they are doing a good job of putting us out there.

Section Newsletter

Monthly newsletters were produced for Section members for all months of 2023-24, apart from January. This provided members with information on quality speakers at our monthly meetings, trips, instruction courses, and of course, the annual photo competition.

Thank you to everyone who has helped over the past year. Chairman Russell Adams provided thoughtful monthly overview of key activities. Peter Laurensen and others have provided reports of trips to the local mountains and beyond with wonderful photos.

I also wish to record appreciation for assistance from the staff at Headquarters for the smooth management of Newsletter distribution each month. Thank you, Marie Hessey and Reshmi Pal., In the coming year, Club members are invited to contribute information about their adventures with friends and new climbing routes or expeditions to remote areas. I encourage members to see the Newsletter as forum for an exchange of ideas locally on developments in the world of mountain climbing, and challenges. Tracks, huts and access are topical. So is the impact of climate change on routes. Gear companies are always innovating. Why not contributions evaluating new equipment? Letters on topical subjects – humorous or controversial will be welcome.

Rob Mitchell

Committee/AGM

This year our committee has some exchange and retirement of members which provides both challenges and opportunities. I would like to acknowledge Maree Holland who joined the committee as Secretary last year and has developed a valuable understanding of the club in the past 12 months. Vicky Shelling has stepped in to assist Maree but has also been exceptional contributor in her own right, developing and instructing a First Aid Course tailored to our club. Vicky and Maree have also trained and come a long way as instructors in the last two years. This year we continued with the trend of increasing and upgrading the club equipment. This includes but is not limited to new helmets and transceivers capable of multiple burial searches.

We have also made donations to the Rescue Helicopter and Rainbow Ski Club.

We will be opening all positions for nominations and electing new committee members at this year's AGM. We also accept a number of members without defined roles into the committee. Nominations can be made to nmchairperson@gmail.com.

Russell Adams - Section Chairman

Nelson Marlborough Section, NZAC AGM Minutes

Present: 30 people

Russell Adams, Glen Aspin, Rob Mitchell, Liam Sullivan, Maree Holland, Hoss Kouhestani, Peter Laurensen, Leah Parker, Forrest Paynter, Joshua Knox, Bruce Davies, Tom Parker, Mike McManaway, Pam Henson, Chiara Monti, Jasper Davidson, Luca Bianchi, Immacolata Conte, Saya Creaser, Alistair Mark, Moira Pryde, Ryan Campbell, George Guille, Nick Oien, Catherine Campbell, Kate Alexander plus 3.

Apologies: Richard Pearson, Vicki Shelling

Minutes of Previous Meeting:

Moved the NM Alpine Club AGM Minutes on 18 October 2023 approved. **Moved Russell / Seconded Liam**

Matters Arising:

Chairman's Report: Moved accepted as read **Russell / Liam**

Russell summarised the year by briefly reading his report.

Treasurers Report to 300624: Russell / Liam

Moved that the Treasurers Report was accurate and approved.

Main Committee Roles:

Members selected for roles are:

- Chairman: Vacant position
- Secretary: Maree Holland
- Treasurer: Liam Sullivan
- Gear Quartermaster: Liam Sullivan / Vicki Shelling
- Banff Coordinator: Leah Parker (not to be on the Committee) Josh Knox MC
- Section Evening Coordinator: Peter Laurenson
- Newsletter Editor: Rob Mitchell
- NZAC Council - Section Rep: Jim Davidson
- Social Media, Facebook: Jasper Davidson
- Instruction Coordinator: Russell Adams
- Trip Administrator: Sebastian Head
- Marlborough Rep: Vacant
- Marlborough Banff Coordinator: Vacancy to be advertised
- Leah Parker to consider assistance. Moved: **Russell / Liam**

General Committee Members: Moved: Russell / Liam

Marzi van der Mark, Michelle Heslop, Thomas Schwarzenbach

General Business

Appreciation for Russell Adams' Four Years as Chairman

Rob Mitchell acknowledged the tremendous work Russell has done as Chairman and highlighted the Section's growth under his leadership. A motion of appreciation for Russell Adams dedicated work as Section Chairman over four years was moved by Rob, seconded by Bruce Davies and passed unanimously.

An event is planned for later in the year to express appreciation for Russell's contributions.

Vale Nathan Dahlberg

On a somber note, the Club is saddened by the passing of member Nathan Dalberg while travelling in Asia last month.

Honouring Nathan

A Give a Little page has been set up in his memory.

Link: <https://givealittle.co.nz/search?q=nathan+dahlberg>

On 23 August 2024, Nathan's Dahlberg's family, was notified that he had passed away in the mountains of the Qinghai Prefecture, in China, doing what he loved most - cycling and mountaineering. He is being remembered as a tough, competitive, humble Kiwi with an adventurer's spirit. He passed away in a place where he found his freedom. Unfortunately, he leaves behind a wife, a daughter (15 yrs), a son (14 yrs) as well as three older sons. The Dahlberg extended family have shown their love to Nathan's wife and children by setting up this Give a Little page. Please feel free to share this page with anyone who knew Nathan and, whose life has maybe been touched by his free spirit.

A request was made for a Section member to write his obituary. Any climbing friend willing to do this should contact Russell Adams: nmchairperson@gmail.com



AGM Guest Speaker: Mountaineer and Rock Climber, Alistair Mark.

Alistair discussed exciting climbing opportunities in the Kahurangi National Park: in Fyfe Gorge, Gold Strike and Sanctuary Dome which were all made possible by installing bolts. He also explored the ethics and dilemmas of bolting. There was a wide ranging question and answer session about the NZ grading system, the quality of rock, “ownership” of climbs under development, gardening of new routes, routes suitable for moderately experienced climbers, and environmentally responsible camping and toileting in Fyfe Gorge.

Next Section Meeting Dates

Section Meeting Wednesday 16th October.

7.00pm at the The Honest Lawyer, Stoke. Bruce Davies

Veteran climber and explorer Bruce Davies, will describe highlights of his trips to Iceland, Greenland and Antarctica.

In the 1970’s he spent two years in Antarctica with the British Antarctic Survey, on their field operations base, travelling extensively by dog team and skidoo. In the early 80s he worked two seasons for Cambridge University in Spitzbergen, skippering a small motorboat, taking geologists to areas of interest around the coast.

In 2005 he went to Greenland, firstly working at the National Science Foundation’s science station at the very top of the icecap, and then on the Traverse Team, hauling fuel and cargo

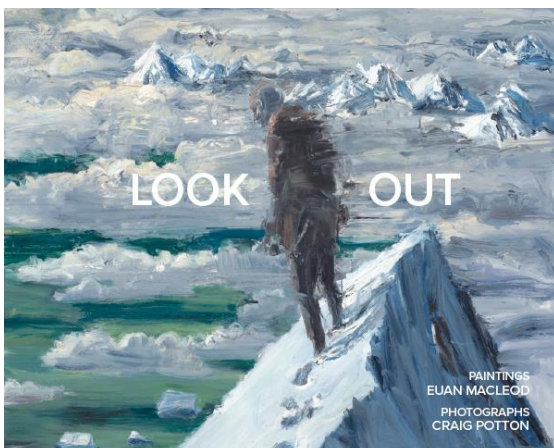
1,000 km from the coast to the top of the icecap. After 18 trips to Greenland covid halted his work there.

In 2017 Bruce went south again to Scott Base, working three seasons on the Ross Ice Shelf Drill Project. Using skills learnt on the Greenland ice cap he helped set up the Scott Base Traverse Team, making the first long distance traverse (1,200km), from Scott Base by Kiwis, since Hillary's 1958 expedition.



**Section Meeting Wednesday 20th November
7.00pm at the The Honest Lawyer, Stoke. Craig Potton.**

NZAC life member, climber and landscape photographer Craig Potton will speak about his new book *Look Out* on climbing at Tasman Saddle. A collaboration with climber and expressionist painter Euan McLeod, who often paints figures in the landscape. Their work is a personal artistic take on the high mountain environment and humans' place in it.



2024 End of Year Trip Programme

26-27 October 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

23-27 November 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

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

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>

Volunteers Welcomed for 2025 Section First Aid Course

We welcome the offers to help with the Section's next First Aid Course from Catherine Campbell and Kate Alexander who are working at Nelson Hospital. Thank you.

Two Recent Mountain Adventures

A Legendary Cupola Fellowship

Our adventure was the stuff legends are made of. One adventure people might spend a lifetime looking for; an adventure where the odds are stacked against success; an amazing time with epic companionship.

On this adventure Reuben told us the 5 things were needed for an adventure. First was summiting Mount Cupola. Second our weather window was slim, and it was unknown if we would summit. Thirdly, we needed passion; the drive to give it our best shot. Mindfulness is fourth, we were all aware that our trip was going to be hard and scary. Lucky last and most important, Companionship. Without this we would not get far as a team and or fully enjoy the adventure.

This trip started out on the *back foot*, a low weather system was shifting towards the *Top of the South*. In the week leading up to D-Day was it was nerve wracking. It looked like it was going to bucket down all weekend. As the week progressed, I conferred multiple times with Glen Aspin as to whether to go or not. On Wednesday evening, the Saturday forecast was for "cloudy. We had an opportunity. Boat rides and carpooling were finalised.

Leah picked up Nick and Jasper and we trundled to meet Reuban at St Arnaud and catch our boat to Coldwater. Nerves were high and we were all bubbling with excitement. It really hit home as we boarded the water taxi, we were doing this! As we sped up the lake, the dark clouds overhead gave us a glimpse of snowcapped peaks. This was a promising sight.

We arrived at Coldwater, put on our packs and set off for the Travers Valley swing bridge, powered by the thought of delicious bagels that Leah had made for the team. Once we arrived at the swing bridge we devoured the lovely bagels. After the break we waltzed up the valley enjoying each other's company and conversation. At John Tait Hut Reuben boiled some hot water and we all had a nice hot drink. But the heavens had opened up and it was bucketing hard. We made the final push to Cupola Hut in some serious rain, which made sections of the Cupola Track slippery and dangerous. For the last stretch we walked under headlamps in wet clothes and were looking forward to a hot meal.

The next morning we rose at 5am, not the traditional alpine start but we wanted enough light to be able to see the weather and make a call as to whether we should go or not. Fate gave us a blue-sky morning and a perfect view of Mt Hopeless with the North Star shining right above it. Cupola Peak dowsed in the dawning sun was a beautiful sight. As we made our approach we started to see signs of fresh snow release. Reuben reassured us that we would be okay and safe. About halfway on our approach through the basin we saw more signs, then to our right some *rollers* came out of a gully. This put the less experienced people on edge. Again, Reuben reassured us and even started videoing. More release happened as the sun's rays touched the north face. Reuben organised a snow pack check. This allowed us to see all the different layers and confirm we had pretty stable snow conditions.

Once things settled down, we kept moving and made it to the bottom of the first gully that would take us most of the way up to the peak. We made our push up the gully with Nick leading the charge. This gully started out nicely and we could zig zag up. A third of the way we had to switch to front pointing and double ice axes. Nick led extremely well, creating steps for us to follow. We popped out at the top of the gully into perfect blue sky - a great spot to take a break and have some food. There were marvellous views of Mt Hopeless, Mt Travers and the surrounding ranges. Next was the crux of the climb, the last chute towards the summit. This was a mixed climbing with rock, ice and snow, and unexpectedly nerve wracking. Reuben convinced us this was within our capacity and sent Jasper into the lead. Reuben guided us up helping each individual with foot and pick placement. Magical views greeted us as we topped the crux and moved along to the summit. With fantastic views surrounding us, hearty congratulations were swapped all round; summit photos taken and Reuben impressed all with a headstand.



Cloud set in around the summit, so we decided to make our move down to take a break. Nick and Leah lead the way down the crux. Reuben set Jasper up on a belay. This helped Jasper feel more comfortable in his abilities to come down. Once Jasper reached the end of his belay he created himself a shelf so he could wait for Reuben to come down and set up the second belay. As Jasper went to turn out and sit down he slipped, and executed a dramatic self-arresting. The rest of the climb down to the basin and Cupola Hut was clear sailing. At the hut we rejoiced, sharing how we felt about the climb of food and hot drinks. A real bond had been created over this day of adventure, providing all 5 essential elements. With the fire cranking, gear dried quickly. As the sun dropped we started making dinners and bedding down for the night.

In the morning we all woke at around 6am to Jasper's alarm. Gear was stowed into packs and somewhat dry gear adorned. It was a relief to make it down the John Tait Hut as this completed the hardest part of the walk out. We pushed along the trail, after some hot drinks and relaxing in the warming sun. Mother Nature had given us a beautiful day. Bush and swamp gave way to golden plains as we approached Lakehead. Jasper felt this was like an ending to the Lord of the Rings. Once we arrived at the jetty congratulations were given all round and packs lowered to the ground. Everyone agreed that this adventure was one for the history books. The stuff of legends!

For his finale, Reuben wanted a dip. To Dip or Not to Dip - that is the question, had been a theme of conversation throughout the trip. So Reuben, being absolutely mad, stripped and threw himself into the deep cool embracing water; leaving the rest of us thinking: *what is he doing?*

After a short wait, our ride home came blasting around the corner, the water taxi, MV Mountaineer. How apt. Next we were off skimming down the lake at max speed.

Trip Participants: Reuben McCormack, Leah Parker, Nick Oien, and Jasper Davidson (Scribe)

Shifting Objectives

Recently I did a short trip south. Mostly to socialise with the distributors who make my business, The Nelson Ski Shop, possible. But also to do a bit of late season skiing or climbing. The business part of my trip was to be centered around Queenstown and Wanaka and I was flying solo this time. My initial plan was to solo ski Mt Aspiring, but with turbulent weather and high avalanche danger, I started looking at other more accessible and lower altitude objectives. The Alpine Club network of huts and lodges is often central to my trip plans as they offer an affordable refuge in the thick of the action, with a social vibe and opportunities to day trip.

After leeching some flash *smokos* and free beers off some of the biggest distributors and retailers in the country, I set out for Unwin Lodge. There I bumped into Gavin Lang and other guides trying to ski or climb with clients. Gavin had a few words of wisdom that helped me develop my plan. My objective changed to Mt Sealy via Mueller Hut, however I was pretty put out with gale force winds and rain outside. My friend Yu was heading from Christchurch to join the adventure. I met Yu as an exchange student at Motueka High School. The love for tramping and the outdoors she developed there, led her to become a backcountry ski and mountain guide in Japan. Last year we skied the West Coast neves together. This year she spent the season ski patrolling in New Zealand. Neither of us having visited the area and red bars on the avalanche forecast made us nervous. So our objective again shifted - get out for a walk and get back safe, maybe going as far as Mueller Hut.

We set off at midday as the weather cleared and made really good time to Sealy Tarns, skinning to the ridge and making our own ski friendly route. The section of ridge where the track normally goes up was corniced and impassable. It was hard to stand up o due to the wind. The snow was deep, soft and wet and too steep to skin in places so it took us almost 2 hours to negotiate the last 50m. We almost turned around but one last little push up found us on the ridge and it was only 10 minutes in the wind to the hut.

We found Mueller Hut almost entirely buried. At one point I had a sinking feeling that we would be snow caving under the hut The door was frozen shut and took full effort shoulder barging even after chipping all the ice off it. Inside was pitch black due to the lack of clear windows. Several vents had been left open (The last hut log book entry was over 20 days ago) and there were large snow drifts through the hut. Without our snow shovels this could have become a serious survival situation.



Mueller Hut almost buried under snow, the Hooker Valley and Aoraki Mt Cook. Photo Russell Adams

We had to use skis to go outside because there was over 3m of unconsolidated snow. I cleared one window and the solar panels to get the radios and hut lights running and built a ice wall around the one toilet that I dug out. Water we melted inside the hut refroze in 3-4 hours. I radioed the Mt Cook Visitor Centre to let them know we had made it in and explain the condition of the hut and was immediately redirected to the SAR base. We were the only 2 people out in the park and had missed the radio schedule the night before due to taking longer than expected and buried solar panels. Glad to hear from us and cautioning us that a ski

patroller had been buried in an avalanche the day before we were left to spend the day reading, keeping warm and eating the copious food we had carried in. It is pretty rare to have Mueller Hut all to yourselves these days.

The next morning was snowing and blowing 100kmh plus. By evening the wind was tolerable so we listened to the weather forecast and avalanche advisory on the radio before skinning part way up Mt Olliver to do snowpack assessments, have a short ski and get warm before bed.

The third day dawned without a breath of wind and we watched the sun rise over Aoraki. We skinned to the summit of Mt Olliver and skied back to the hut. After a thorough team talk on avalanche conditions and tactics we skied all the way down to Sealy Tarns. Yu skied even further down through the tussock, much to the entertainment of the hundred odd tourists walking up and who took photos or talked to us.

News of an avalanche fatality that day had our phones busy with family and friends checking that it wasn't to do with us. I met up with Gavin again back at Unwin Lodge. He had turned back shy of his summit with both he and his client feeling uneasy about the changed snow conditions. With many people absolutely busting to get out in the snow after the poor winter, it's a harsh reminder to think twice; change objectives when need be and make sure you're travelling with people with the right skills and mindset.

Russell Adams

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

Phone: 021 446 725.

Making Section Newsletter a Gripping Read

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.

Move brain into gear. Now crank up your computer!

Email: rmitchl28@gmail.com

Phone: 027 476 4824

Peter Laurenson's Mountain Windows into 2025

Reminder. Your 2025 calendar order will be available late October
To collect your calendar(s) from 14A Faraday Rise, Richmond,
Phone call to confirm pick-up: 021 446 725

