

OTAGO CLIMBER

New Zealand Alpine Club - Otago Section Newsletter

October 2024

Section Night

Vanlife vs Living with the Locals

Come and share some yarns, kai, and hear about this amazing trip!



Wednesday
7th November
7-9pm

The Dish Cafe - Petridish,
(Stafford St, Ōtepoti)

Yummy dinner and snack options are available, as well as a great selection of cold drinks!

[RSVP through this link to our Facebook event!](#)

This year Claudia Babirat travelled in two very different ways through Patagonia, and in Oregon and Alaska. She explores the highs and challenges of wanting to climb every mountain while tripping in a van with her alpine-challenged partner, and striking out on her own (sort of) in Oregon and Alaska.



DECEMBER QUIZ NIGHT



Wednesday
4th December
7:30pm

The Dish Cafe - Petridish,
(Stafford St, Ōtepoti)

Join us for our last meeting of the year and a social time with good company.

Light food will be provided by the club. The questions will test your knowledge of the local geography along with some general knowledge.

You will be allocated to a team on the night.

ROCK INSTRUCTION COURSES NOVEMBER 2024

We have two rock-climbing instruction courses coming up in November. Both courses are being run by professional instructor Tim Bartholomew from Dunedin Adventures Ltd and will be held at local Dunedin crags.

Intro Rock Climbing Course (1 day) - Sat 2nd November

This course is for beginners looking to get into outdoor rock climbing and covers climbing and belaying on top-rope. All gear provided. \$65 pp

Sport Lead Climbing Course (2 days) – Sat 30th November and Sun 1st December.

This course is for climbers wanting to transition from top-rope climbing to lead climbing covers lead climbing and belaying on sport (bolted) routes, as well as cleaning anchors. \$200 pp.

For more information and to register – see the registration links posted on our Facebook page (posted 8 Oct) or email Otago.climber@gmail.com to be sent a registration link.

UPCOMING TRIPS

WANAKA ROCK CLIMBING 16 -17TH NOVEMBER

We are running a club rock-climbing trip to Wanaka on 16th-17th November. Wanaka is a fantastic climbing destination with a huge range of crags and climbs of all grades, all set in a stunning location! There will be a crew of us coming from Dunedin and we are planning to stay at the Glendhu Bay camping ground. However, locals from Central are also welcome to join up with us and we have also extended an invitation to the Canterbury-Westland Section if any of their members wish to take advantage of their long weekend (Show Weekend) to come down. To register – see the link on our Facebook page or go to the [OSONZAC website](#).



ANNETTE PLATEAU TRIP 29TH NOV - 1ST DEC

Ben Nicholson is running a mountaineering trip to the Annette Plateau on the last weekend in November. The plan is to meet at Mt Cook on the Friday evening, and to head up to the plateau on Saturday via the Mueller hut track. Further details, prerequisites and a sign-up form can be found on the [OSONZAC website](#).

REPORT ON NORTH OTAGO SECTION DOINGS AND ADVENTURES AROUND OAMARU

Heather Rhodes

As a committee member, I was recently afforded an excellent undercover opportunity to informally assess the performance of the North Otago section. Working as a House Officer at the hospital there provided a watertight explanation for my presence for three months. I believe the NOS committee remain none-the-wiser, and hope Dunedin members value the extent to which your committee goes to ensure neighbouring sections are remaining on the alpine straight and narrow 😊! I'm pleased to report excellent patronage of

- Twice-weekly indoor climbing nights at the Oamaru Recreation Centre
- Monthly drinks and catch-up sessions at a local bar, and
- Frequent (if not weekly) weekend trips, both skiing and mountaineering.

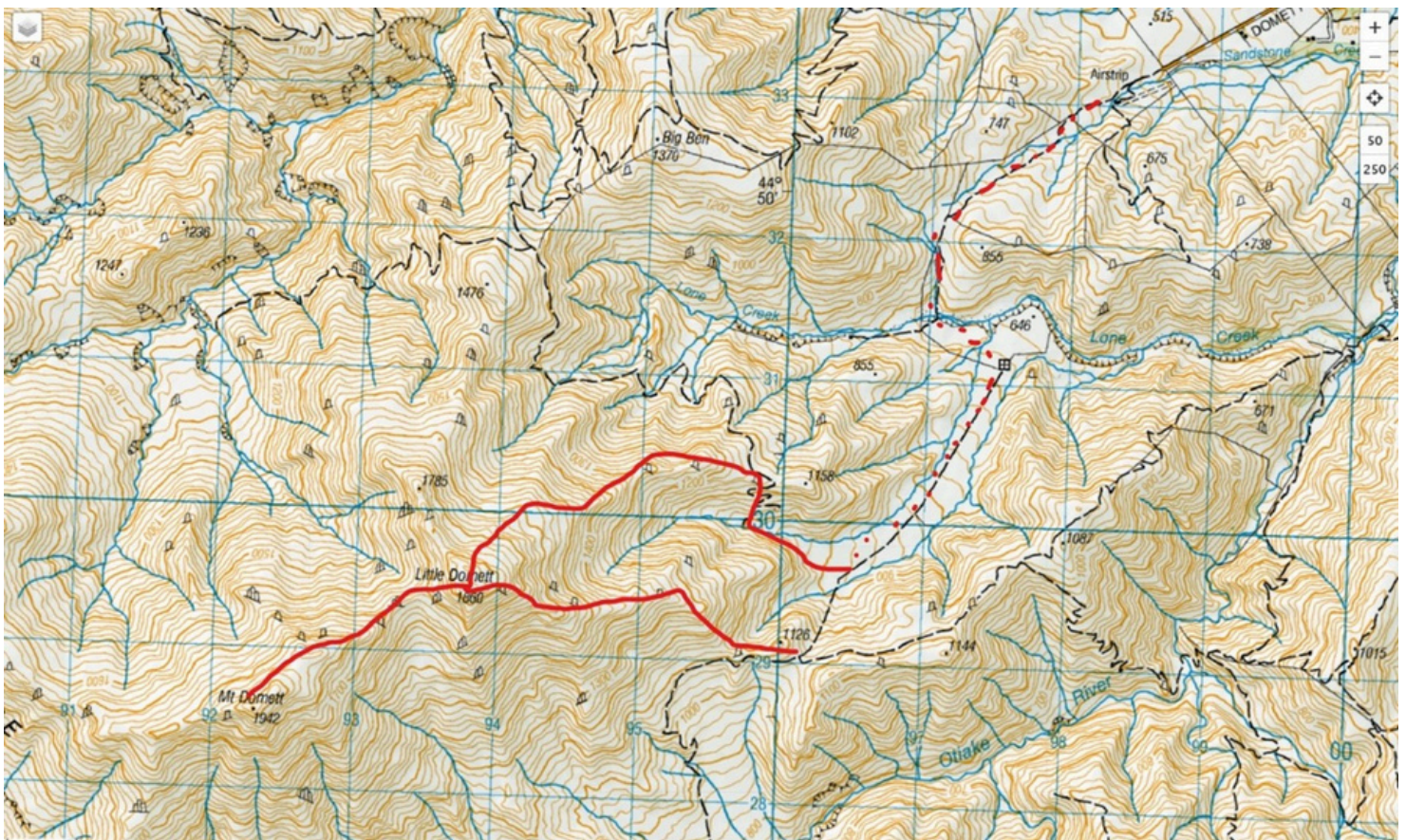
It was a pleasure to turn up to a new town, in which I knew no one, and readily find friends and acquaintances through climbing.



Localised powder on SE aspects to the north of Old Man Peak (photo: Jonathan Falconer)

Skiing-wise I did no trips with the club, but did enjoy a weekend at Awakino. I consider the ski field essentially a location for touring (or trampers / snow shoeing!) as the tows do not often run. Even if the tows are running, it's essential that any skiers carry, and are practised with, full avalanche kit. The hut is affordable and cosy – it's one of the most rustic club field huts left in the country. Online cams allow assessment of snow conditions prior to going up; you do need to stay up-to-date with the club's plans to open the hut, online, as it's rarely open. I also enjoyed an amazing day ski-touring from the highway near Lindis Pass, with a friend, just after a huge dump of snow to low elevations in September. Poor cover on the roadward side of Old Man Peak left us anticipating a day of walking on skis, but we found some amazing localised patches of powder on the eastern slopes (with a good selection of sharks...). However, rapidly melting snow did mean we had to walk rather than tour for about the last 6km back to the car, and the trip did necessitate a subsequent visit to Beggs for ski repair...!

Walking-wise I did two trips into the St Mary's Range. Firstly, a day-trip with a friend up Mt Kyeburn, on a day which was too windy for anything else! We had snow only for the last 50m or so of vertical, and glorious views whilst being buffeted by a building norwester. Finally, I was pleased to join the North Otago Section on a day-trip up Mt Domett in the last weekend of September. Seven of us climbed Little Domett together, with 3 of us continuing to Domett itself. It's been a season requiring good judgement for avalanche risk, but we were far enough east to find minimal snow, and what was present was essentially a late-season, well-bonded snowpack - unlike that in the Main Divide at the time! We'd had route info, shown below and described by Nick Shearer (co-author of the new Aspiring Region guidebook) which was an encouraging way to start the trip; as it turned out, the area does very much allow for a follow-your-nose kind of a trip. We came in from the northern aspect, up the Otiake, which allowed for a day-trip, but does require permission from the farmer, and a 4WD/AWD to cross a lot of farmland (high clearance not required, but access can be muddy). Thanks to Jon Bielby for leading the trip!



Map of trip as provided by Nick Shearer (ascent via NE ridge to Little Dommet. We actually did a lovely ~600m scree descent directly into the stream between the two ridges, rather than completing the circuit). Access from this side is across Domett Downs – ph Janine Slee 027 246 8696 for permission. To go in from the Dansey's Pass side, staying at Chinaman's Hut, contact Tony Bayley 03 431 1881.



View NW from just below Little Domett, with Jon Beilby and Lizzie Hillman

One of the biggest things I took away from my interactions with NOSNZAC, other than the pleasure of finding other like-minded souls, was seeing how much they use WhatsApp chat groups to arrange events. Apparently this is a very new thing, born from the section not managing many organised trips – and in fact it is not an official NZAC thing at all. It was simply started by a group of friends, some of whom are alpine club members, who wanted to keep in touch and make events happen, and it's proving to be excellent for this purpose. I think the club's responsibility of managing safety is reduced, because it's simply friends who are doing things together (and so have the usual responsibility that one would expect any group of friends to have for each other when on a trip). I have the impression that managing safety has been a significant barrier to running trips, for alpine clubs. Personally, I am all for facilitating others' adventures. An online chat system might not work in Dunedin, with our bigger population and large numbers of students (who are likely to have less experience), but experiencing the (unofficial) Oamaru version has provided food for thought. For me, it's an interesting idea for our committee to discuss.

My other big takeaway was that there are plenty of adventures to be had in the hills close to Dunedin! It's very nice to not start and finish a weekend with a long drive... And better not to burn so much fossil fuel. So do bear the Kakanui / St Mary Range, Rock and Pillars or the Garvies in mind!

And thanks to the North Otago Section for their warmth and hospitality 😊.

CLIMBING LIMESTONE IN SOUTHERN TURKEY

Recently I had the pleasure of a trip to Turkey, a place I had wanted to travel to since the 1980s. I was able to combine this with a trip to visit our children who are currently living in the UK. I had noted that there was plenty of limestone in Turkey and there was a chance that I could combine tourism with a spot of climbing. A quick google search showed that there was a plethora of climbing to be had in a place in the hills (500m above sea level) just outside the resort city of Antalya at Geyikbayiri. Another google search gave us places to stay. Our choice was the JosiTo camp run by a German and Turkish couple. An incredibly well-run camp with chalets of various sizes and camping also. The communal kitchen was very well stocked with pots and pans and everything else you needed.



JosiTo Campsite

Early to mid-October is still fairly warm and climbing in the shade is necessary. The climbing area we went to has over 1000 climbs ranging from 4- to 8C (I think). We only visited two of the climbing sectors due to needing easier grades and due to the sun.

The area is well bolted with glue in bolts, generally well-spaced, although a couple of routes were more sporty than others. You are also not very far from the coast and a swim in the Mediterranean Sea is a great break from steep limestone. Generally, we would climb in the morning and relax in the afternoon either reading or visiting the local swimming hole.

One day we ventured down to Olympos Beach for a swim and a look at some Roman ruins. There is also quite a bit of climbing on the limestone around Olympos Beach however it was too hot to do more than just swim.



Dinner at the campsite restaurant



Climbing in the shade - Beth

When we arrived at the camp around the 10th October it wasn't very busy however a week later and it had almost tripled in the number of people staying there. Predominantly Europeans who had taken a short two hour flight and then a one hour drive from the airport to get there. We didn't sample very much of the climbing that was on offer however a longer stay in cooler conditions would mean more of the climbing areas would have been available. In mid October the rock was too hot in the sun.

The area is very user friendly and Turkey is a great place to travel to. It is a long way from New Zealand however well worth the effort. At 500m above sea level it gets you away from the humidity of the coast and there is an even higher crag that is a lot cooler only 30 minutes' drive away. However, if you don't want to drive then most of the crags are only a 15-30 minute walk from the campsite that we stayed in and this is just one of many climbing camps in the immediate vicinity. The local stream is a favourite picnic spot of the local Turks, being a cool place to hang out on a hot day. There is also a very refreshing swimming hole after a hard day on the crag.



7A sporty 5C+ - John on lead



Kirsten in action



Ruins above Olympus Beach



Limestone crack on the last day - John

I have the guidebook if anyone is thinking of heading that way. I did buy a 70m rope however some of the routes need an 80m. For the routes that we did a 60m rope would be adequate if limiting for the longer routes once you got above 6a (French grade).

I shared the adventure with my wife Kirsten and daughter Beth.

John Goulstone

RICHARD O'NEILL-DEAN

We are immensely saddened to report the death of Richard O'Neill-Dean, who recently fell from D'Archiac, having successfully summited the mountain on a solo trip. Richard, 70 years old, was an accomplished mountaineer, and important in the lives of a number of Dunedinites as their psychotherapist.

Originally from Ireland, Richard had emigrated to New Zealand in 1987 after a fruitful climbing career putting up new routes in Ireland, the European Alps, the Indian Himalaya and Patagonia. His new route in the Torres del Paine National Park in Patagonia has since become the most popular route in the Park. In 1993, he was a member of the first Irish expedition to Sagarmatha/Everest, and known for his reassuring presence. In New Zealand in 1991, he and two others established 'Voyage of the Dawn Treader', a 3-pitch Grade 23 traverse of the Main Cliff at Long Beach.

More recently, Richard conceived of and executed the 'Prelude on Skis' (Rangitata to Godley through the Two Thumb and Sibbald ranges) and 'Ski Rhapsody' – an east-west traverse of the Southern Alps, a variant of the Symphony on Skis.

Richard has spoken to the Otago Section on two occasions in the last few years. We have valued his poetry describing his exploits, especially because this is an unusual way of communication for mountaineers. Richard was able to beautifully use poetry to bring his audience with him on his adventures

Following a recent hip replacement, Richard was thrilled to have found a new lease of life in the mountains. After a committed rehabilitation regime he was again able to ski and mountaineer. He had long dreamed of an ascent of Mt D'Archiac, and had made several attempts with friends. Unable to find companions free, he climbed alone two weekends ago. After sending elated messages to friends and family from the summit on Sunday 20th October, he failed to return that evening. Search parties later ascertained that he had fallen through a cornice near the summit.

Richard was cremated privately in the weekend following his fall, and a public memorial service was held in Dunedin the following Thursday.

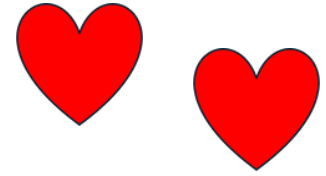
The mountain community will miss Richard's zest for life, fun and philosophical nature, marmalade, and inclusivity in the outdoors. His psychotherapy clients, which have included a number of mountaineers, will no doubt miss his valuable input to their thinking and perception. Most of all, our thoughts and support go to his wife Frida, and Richard's daughters and granddaughters. We wish them all the very best as they adjust to living life without Richard, and celebrate with them in his life very well-lived.



LOVE OUR HUTS



Mid King bivvy. Photo: Neville Palmer



The love our huts campaign began as a Federated Mountain Clubs (FMC) initiative but has quickly grown to involve many groups and individuals. These include FMC member clubs and supporters, NZ Alpine Club, NZ Deerstalkers Association, Fish and Game, and the Back Country Trust. We also have great support from DOC.

Our backcountry huts and tracks are a key part of connecting Kiwis with our amazing places. They're part of a legacy built up over many years. Many of our huts play a part in conservation activities as bases for the trapping programs that run along many of our tracks. They're also vital in keeping everyone safe and providing 'shelter from the storm'.

It is aimed to have over 900 public huts visited this November to give them a spring clean and health check, including the bridges and tracks along the way. If we want the whole network covered, we need as many of you on board as possible!

The hut health-check reports, which you – volunteers – will produce, will form the basis of a draft strategy reporting on the current state of our public network of huts, tracks and bridges, and the options on how we can together protect and strengthen this network. A workshop mid next year will bring together those involved in maintaining, protecting and managing the backcountry network to consider these options and chart a path forward. The Department of Conservation, Backcountry Trust, Permolat and other organizations are all supporting this campaign.

So, if there's a hut you always wanted to visit, but never got to? Or the one that holds a special place in your heart? Now is the time to do it. This is once in a lifetime opportunity to join hundreds of Kiwis and together give back to something that nourishes you.

Click [here](#) for a link to the sign up page.

GEAR HIRE - DUNEDIN

PLBs (Personal Locator Beacons)

The Otago Section has one PLB 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 \$10 per day for members and \$15 per day for non-members.

Avalanche equipment rental is \$10 per day for members and \$20 per day for nonmembers. 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.

The following books are available:

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 - QUEENSTOWN, WANAKA

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 is 2 days
- When hiring the avalanche set (transceiver, shovel, probe), please supply your own 1xAA 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, message conzac@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 the non-member prices.

PLEASE NOTE:

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

GEAR AVAILABLE

Avalanche set:
transceiver, shovel, probe
Walking ice axes
crampons
helmets

Member 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 pick-up
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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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 (currently via zoom).

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