

# OTAGO CLIMBER

New Zealand Alpine Club - Otago Section Newsletter

April 2025

## May Section Nights

### BANFF Centre Mountain Film Festival

Wednesday, May 14 | 7pm | St David Complex- Otago University

Tuesday May 20 | 7pm | St David Complex- Otago University



Join us in mid-May for the screening of two exciting programmes from the Banff Centre Mountain Film Festival. The movies showcase adventure, exploration, as well as cultural and environmental stories.

We are screening two different programmes – join us for either or both!

- Wednesday 14th May, 7pm - [Ruapehu Programme](#)
- Tuesday 20th May, 7pm - [Tasman Programme](#)

#### Ticket Information

- General Admission: \$25.00 each
- NZAC members / Student / Under 18yrs / Cold Card Holders : \$18.00 each

Be sure to purchase your tickets online [here](#), as events tend to sell out quickly.

The St. David Café at the venue offers a selection of alcoholic and non-alcoholic drinks, along with snacks, available for purchase before and during the screening.

# 2025 WINTER SNOWCRAFT COURSES



We're stoked to report that our Otago Section Winter courses are now up for registration! All courses are held at The Remarkables Skifield, with a compulsory pre-course theory evening held in Queenstown. We always book out on these courses, so once you know what one is for you, get onto it and apply now!!

## **BASIC SNOWCRAFT COURSES**

**Course BSC1: 6th and 7th September** (Pre-Course Theory Evening – Thursday 4th September, Queenstown)

**Course BSC2: 9th and 10th September** (shared Pre-Course Theory Evening Thurs 4th Sept, as above)

For experienced trampers and those with a passion for the outdoors who are looking to gain additional skills to travel safely in alpine terrain where snow and ice is often encountered.

**\$250 per person (\$350 for non-members), max 8 people, min 3 people per course.**

[REGISTER HERE](#)

## **INTERMEDIATE SNOWCRAFT COURSES**

**Course ISC1: 20th and 21st September** (Pre-Course Evening – 18th Sept, Queenstown)

**Course ISC2: 23rd and 24th September** (shared pre-Course Evening – 18th Sept, Queenstown)

For those who have completed an NZAC Basic Snowcraft course or similar, have had personal experience on Alpine grade 1 and 1+ mountains, and are looking to go into steeper terrain, where they need to learn snow anchoring and travelling techniques.

**\$350 per person (\$450 for non-members), max 4 people, min 3 people, per course.**

[REGISTER HERE](#)

# CLUB TRIP REPORT MT SHRIMPTON, APRIL 11-13, 2025

MEGHAN DUFFY

Friday afternoon, a team of four departed from Dunedin to make our way towards the Albert Town Campground, with a serendipitous meeting of the other two Dunedin-ites (plus baby!) along the way. After a surprisingly warm night, we met up with the rest of our team at the trailhead, joined by members from Invercargill, Queenstown and Christchurch for a total of 10 hikers. Hitting the trail around 9am, we steadily climbed up the Mount Shrimpton Track surrounded by the lush podocarp and silver beech forest. We emerged from the bush line around 11am, just in time for morning tea with a view of the Makarora Valley.

Following a nice break, we continued our climb up to the ridgeline. The clouds lifted in time for a stunning view of the Mount Shrimpton tarns, with the summit just barely coming in to view between wisps of cloud. Overlooking the tarns, we stopped for lunch out of the wind on the eastern side of the ridge as the sky continued to clear and a few kea were spotted soaring overhead.



Morning tea looking over the Makarora Valley

A group of eight continued to the summit, finding a route across the less-steep western side of the ridge. We reached the summit at 3pm with a clear view of the tarns and surrounding mountains.



Mount Shrimpton tarns



Lunch break overlooking the Mount Shrimpton tarns



Hikers on top of Mt Shrimpton at 3pm - the sun was quite low already.



Back at the start after a successful day



On the ridge moving towards the summit

Saturday night, we camped at the Kidds Bush Reserve Campsite on the shore of Lake Hāwea under the light of a near-full moon. Sunday morning, we did a short “recovery” walk, departing directly from our campsite up the Sawyer Burn track to the observation point just above treeline where we were treated with a sunny view of the lake. After packing up camp, our group reconvened at the Wānaka lakefront, to enjoy a picnic lunch in the sun before heading our separate ways back home.

Thanks to Jildou for organizing a great trip and Susi (and Tobi) for stepping up as trip leader! This was my first trip with the NZ Alpine Club and I heartily encourage any other newcomers to join in.

Sunday morning hike, looking out over Lake Hāwea (L to R: Leo, Tobi, Susi, Anneke, Jesse, Greta, Meghan, Flora, Tom and Phil)



By the time we began our descent, the sky had fully cleared, allowing a view of Mount Aspiring across the Makarora Valley. We observed the shortening of days as winter approaches, finishing the last hour of hiking by torch-light, all arriving to the car park by 7:40pm.



Navigating steeper terrain towards the summit Mount Shrimpton summit emerging from the clouds



Phil, Anneke, Jesse, Bryony, Flora, Susi and Meghan on the summit of Mount Shrimpton

# A SOLO TRIP UP MT LARKINS

**BEN NICOLSON**

When plans fall through sometimes you just gotta pack your bags anyways and head for the hills. On April 12th I decided to try and do a fast and light solo mission in good weather up Mt Larkins. Starting from the Whakaari conservation area carpark I headed up the track towards Heather Jock hut. Some cool old mining sites in the area are worth checking out along the way. With a light bag and no overnight gear I made good time to the hut and kept on trucking skirting along Mt Alaska towards Kelly's hut. There's remnants of an old mining track along the base of Mt Alaska which allowed me to get to the hut in just under 4 hours. After a handful of snacks and a switch from trail runners to boots, an hour of plodding up some loose but enjoyable slopes saw me on the summit after another hour. A few pictures snagged of some of the vistas of Mt Aspiring National Park and I was on my way down. The descent took about 4 hours, back in time for happy hour at the Glenorchy hotel and pub happy hour. Still a few good trips to be had before the winter!



# PEAK 2127, EAST MATUKITUKI VALLEY 15TH FEBRUARY

## JILDOU VAN DER WERF

“An exhilarating approach ridge, a large tarn and a permanent snow field make this a worthwhile excursion”

To take a well-deserved break from studying, but with all my friends having to work, I decided to embark on a little solo mission. The initial plan; from the Wilkin River, over Rabbit Pass, and then re-trace Rob Frost his route over the Volta glacier (Tartarus Icefall, Fastness peak, and down Rainbow Col). However, stronger-than-forecasted wind gusts on Rabbit Pass threw me off the idea of indulging in this rather exciting solo trip. Maybe the bad weather was coming in early? And as the guidebook described, none of the access routes to the Volta Glacier offer an all-weather escape route.

A saver option was to go up Albert Burn Saddle, and see how long the weather would last. After dropping my heavy pack at the saddle, plenty of daylight left saw me up Dragonfly Peak. A fairly straight forward walk, with a spicy finish at the top. The views back to Albert Burn Saddle were incredible, with shiny silver rock everywhere.



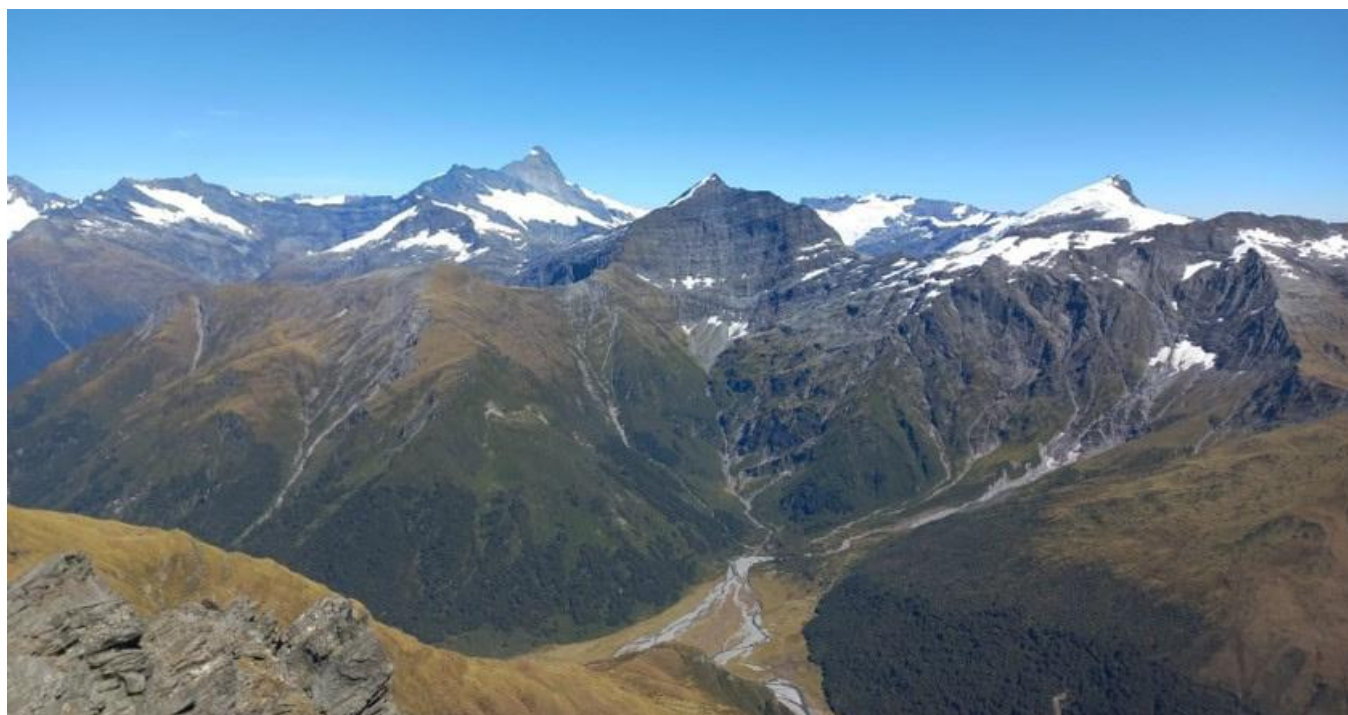
The ridge leading to Peak 2127, looks way more daunting on the photo than it actually is, photo coming down from Dragonfly Peak.

Back at the camp I expected to be walking out the next day, as forecast had predicted strong winds picking up. However, upon waking, it looked like another blue bird day. And the description of Peak 2127 sounded exciting, was it not to find a way to use my crampons and ice axe. Having carried them for five days without any use would be rather painful. With the idea in mind that winds might pick up, I decided to investigate the grounds, and found this beautiful wide ridge with mellow slopes. About 4km of ridge line travel, with welcoming alternations between up- and downhill, and stunning views of the impressive wall of Fastness peak, Aspiring poking out behind.



Gentle snow slopes leading back to the lake

The last section of the climb was exciting, I couldn't see the full path to the summit, so many unknowns hidden behind each corner. Luckily every route seemed to go just fine. There was a bit of rock scrambling involved, but nothing too exposed, just the right kind of thrill. And at last, a snowfield, finally the crampons on! An easy walk to the top, views out far in every direction. Coming down from the summit I sought out a different route, having stayed close to the ridge on my ascent, this time I followed snow fields all the way down to the lake. More excitement (and mainly hope I didn't have to backtrack my steps), I was relieved to find that again everything seemed to go. And before I knew it I was back at my camp.



Fastness peak (middle), Mt Aspiring (left) and Glacier Dome (right)

From the ridge I could see the route of my initial plan well, and was not the last bit disappointed that I didn't try the Volta glacier. Maybe it would have been a bit too much adventure for a solo trip. This peak may sound less appealing because it is unnamed, but definitely a worthwhile excursion for some seeking a slightly less committing trip.





# APRIL SECTION MEETING RECAP: ROB FROST SHARES INSIGHTS ON TRANSALPINE TRAVEL



We were fortunate to host Rob Frost, who made the trip down from Ōtautahi Christchurch to speak to the Otago Section of the New Zealand Alpine Club. Rob delivered an engaging and informative talk covering the art of transalpine journeys, a fresh approach to accessing the Volta Glacier, and thoughtful strategies for risk management in the mountains. It was a fantastic evening with a great turnout—thanks to everyone who came along!

A great takeaway from his talk on group decision-making in the outdoors is the acronym FACTS.

- F - How's everyone FEELING?
- A - What are our AIMS?
- C - What are the CONDITIONS?
- T - What is the TERRAIN like?
- S - What STUFF do we need?

# HELP KEEP THE TITITEA / ASPIRING GUIDEBOOK UP TO DATE



Help Keep the Tititea / Aspiring Guidebook Up to Date!. Chances are you've already got your hands on the new Tititea / Aspiring and the Otago Alps guidebook (even if the Section Library doesn't yet!). But as these things go, it's already out of date—and that's where you come in. If you've been out in the hills and noticed anything new or different, we'd love to hear from you. Specifically, we're keen to know about:

- Any new routes you've completed
- Additional information about existing routes which may of use to the next party
- Any changes in access or climbing routes you have noted
- Mistakes in existing route information

Flick a message to either of us at:

[mckeesloan@gmail.com](mailto:mckeesloan@gmail.com) or [nicholastshearer@gmail.com](mailto:nicholastshearer@gmail.com)

Cheers heaps, Neil & Nick - via NZAC Otago Section

## JOIN OUR COMMITTEE!

Are you passionate about the outdoors and looking for a way to contribute to our club? We are looking for new volunteers to join our committee! The commitment is minimal (just one Zoom meeting per month on a Wednesday night) and you don't need to be based in Dunedin to get involved. If you're interested, reach out via email or speak to one of our committee members at a meeting.

We can find a role that suits your interests and availability. It is up to you to decide how much time you would like to commit. Looking forward to hearing from you!

# INTRODUCING THE COMMITTEE

*Each month we will introduce one of our lovely committee members so you can get to know the faces behind the team.*

## Rob McLaren

### **When did you join the committee and why?**

I first got involved with the club way back in the early 2000's – I learned to rock-climb through the club and also did club snow craft courses that have stood me in good stead for many a transalpine tramping trip. However, I stopped climbing in my early 30's and gradually stopped tramping around the same time. Fast forward a couple of decades – I was 48, had hit a bit of a rough patch in my life, and was struggling with my mental health. I decided that getting back into climbing and tramping again might help, and got involved with the club again in 2021, including attending Tuesday Night Climbing sessions (then ably run by Eve O'Brien).

I began helping out with running these sessions before taking over organising them when Eve left Dunedin in 2023 – I also joined the committee at this time. The club has been a really welcoming and friendly community – and rejoining that community has really helped me rebuild from a tough period in my life. Section trips and events have given me many wonderful experiences and I've have also made many great friends. Having the opportunity to organise the Tues Night Climbing sessions has been a real pleasure and privilege and I'm going to miss it when I move to ChCh later this year!

**What are your main outdoor interests?** I would say my main outdoor interest these days is definitely rock climbing, followed by tramping (particularly a good transalpine mission!) and mountain biking. I also particularly enjoy swimming in the outdoors and love a good dip in an alpine lake or river!

**What is your go-to gear or piece of equipment that you can't live without on a hike or climb?** This is a tough one! I was thinking through my inventory of multiple packs, rain jackets, climbing shoes, belay devices etc – but realised the one piece of gear I always have is my Macpac merino T-shirt! - merino is such a great natural fibre, feels nice against the skin and has wonderful wicking and thermal properties.

**Most memorable outdoor adventure with the club?** A long-weekend rock-climbing trip to Moun Somers organised by Eve O'Brien in 2023. This is probably my favourite places I have ever climbed in – the rock formations there are just incredible and there is an amazing range of climbs. It's a bit of a slog uphill to get there with all your climbing and camping gear but well worth the effort. As always, this trip was memorable not just because of the awesome climbing and environment - but because of the great people I got to meet and hang out with – including attendees from Central Otago who I've since climbed with again on both personal and other club trips.



Rob tramping in the Central Darrans

# 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](mailto: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](mailto: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

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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](mailto:bawood13@gmail.com)

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Wanaka contact  
Email Chris @  
[chris.hogan@gjgardner.co.nz](mailto:chris.hogan@gjgardner.co.nz)



## Otago Section Committee

Riley Smith (chairperson) |  
Rileychallis@gmail.com  
Keith Moffat | Moffat.k172@gmail.com  
Eve O'Brien | eve.j.obrien@gmail.com  
Juliet Meldrum | jmeldrum@doctors.org.uk  
Heather Rhodes | heathermayrhodes@gmail.com  
John Goulstone | johngoul200@gmail.com  
Simon Noble | simonoble@icloud.com  
Susanne Otto | susi92otto@gmail.com

## Section Contact Information

C/o 172 Gladstone Road, Dalmore, Dunedin 9016

Email: [otago.climber@gmail.com](mailto:otago.climber@gmail.com)  
Web: <https://alpineclub.org.nz/region/otago>  
Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/osonzac>  
Instagram:  
<https://www.instagram.com/otago.climber/>  
Trip info & booking: [www.osonzac.org.nz](http://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](mailto:otago.climber@gmail.com)

## NZAC DISCOUNTS

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

Click [here](#) for more details