



**OTAGO CLIMBER APRIL 08**

# Otago Climber

Newsletter of the Otago Section, New Zealand Alpine Club

**APRIL 2008**

*With four stunning days over Easter there was little excuse for not getting to the top of a pointy hill somewhere. If you did manage to do something interesting then please send all your news and stories to [otagoclimber@ihug.co.nz](mailto:otagoclimber@ihug.co.nz) by the 20<sup>th</sup> of the month, – ta, Kyle.*

## **News & Views from the Otago Section . . .**

NZAC member Doug Ball from New Plymouth, is turning 80 in August this year and is a very accomplished alpinist, having climbed Mt Cook, Mt Tasman and many other peaks earlier in his life but never Mt Aspiring. So end of 2005 he came down South and had a go at it, first with Pete James and then with IFMGA mountain guide Gary Dickson. On the third attempt Doug and Gary together with Cameron Sigley also from Wanaka got half way up but an incoming storm drove them off the mountain.

Beginning of March this year, Gary and Doug flew up to Bevan Col and the weather gods this time were kind enough to give them a break just long enough. The team climbed the Ship Owner and full NW ridge route on 4<sup>th</sup> of March and their day took only 12.5 hours, an amazing achievement for Doug who is quite likely the oldest climber to have summited Mt Aspiring. After a well deserved rest day, they made their way over to Bevan Col where Charlie Ewing from Aspiring Helicopters was able to pick them up. Then another storm arrived in the park... but

the team was back in Wanaka and celebrating at the Alpinism & Ski base. After a few more rest days they headed to the West Coast for more mountaineering from Centennial Hut. This hut never existed in Doug's earlier climbing days. He thoroughly approves of the excellent position for a hut.

Doug is back up North and will continue his training with climbing Mt Taranaki, which he climbed probably around 200 times he reckons. He has another date for some alpinism adventures with Gary in Europe again later this year. – Go Doug, you are an inspiration to all of us!"

### **Darrens Trip**

How blase we sometimes become. Facing our third slog in the lower Gertrude Valley in a single weekend, we stumbled on an Australian who said: "This must be the most beautiful day walk in the world." After being spoilt by the weather and the views, that last 45 minutes down the valley and back to Homer Hut can seem to drag for us but did not for her.

Keith Moffat, on the March 15 and 16 club trip (delayed a week by poor weather), first led us up to Homer Saddle and via Talbot Ladder to McPherson. The late

summer snowfields across to Traverse Pass and down to Gertrude Saddle were heavily crevassed and icy, and transitions between rock and snow were not always entirely straightforward. At the pass, Reece Geursen's thoughts of carrying up the ridge to the top of Talbot itself lapsed for want of a seconder. Just enough mist soon rolled in to confirm the wisdom of carrying on down.

Metvuw's predictions proved spot on and it rained overnight as a weak front came through. The subsequent bright clear morning banished plans for a lazy Sunday and, while Reece took advantage of a day's rock climbing at the Chasm before he shifts to Wellington, the rest of the crew trooped up the good-old Gertrude. Laimonis Kavaliers knees were complaining enough for him to pull out at the saddle, leaving Keith, Peter Tomkinson and I to climb up and then sidle around the slabs towards Barrier.

A band of hard, steep ice with a poor run out encouraged a retreat to a rock route to the ridge. From there, we feasted on sparkling views into Moraine Creek where Lakes Adelaide and Little South America shimmered. Ridge travel was slowish, and we reached a precipitous piece about 100 vertical metres from the summit at our turn-around time. While it looked as though it could be by-passed via a lower ledge, we decided to save the top for another day and return to Dunedin at a civilised hour.

After meeting the Australian, I felt better later that afternoon about a third successive walk in the lower Gertrude. After all, the impressive cliffs of Crosscut loom on one side and the bluffs of Belle straight ahead. And immediately behind us were memories of two days high in the Darrans

- surely one of the most beautiful places anywhere.

### **Banff Film Festival**

The festival may have a shiny new home but we've kept ticket prices to \$15 and a absolute bargain \$10 if you buy them on a club night!



*The following news comes from Jo Prince.*

Headed up to explore the climbs on Glen Lyon with Craig Clark. Stunning campsite, beautiful views and reasonably decent alpine rock. Plenty of thar around too, for those who also like to hunt.

## OSONZAC MEETINGS

### Wednesday, 2nd APRIL

First Ascents in the Western Tibet:  
**Brian Alder** joins a multi-national group searching for untrodden summits in the vastness of Tibet, and comes up trumps

### Wednesday, 7th MAY

The **section AGM** with **Jo Prince** filling us in on her latest adventures once formalities are over.

OTMC CLUBROOMS,  
YOUNG STREET  
SOUTH DUNEDIN, 8PM.

Caught another high pressure system courtesy of La Nina over Easter and climbed the Nth Buttress of Aspiring with Karen Jackson. Walked into Colin Todd in a clearing Southerly which made the slabs and routefinding a decent challenge. Spent a morning weaving through the Therma and then climbed all afternoon on good (for NZ!) alpine rock. Bivvied at about 2800m with a full moon and no wind. Completed the last few pitches and up to the summit the next day after non-alpine start. Descended the full NW Ridge back to Colin Todd and shocked and disgusted to look up and see a chopper land on the summit, very close to the other party on the mountain, not long after we'd left. Walked out in developing winds and thickening cloud, having gotten exactly the weather we'd ordered :)

Ciao, Jo

## Entries now open for sixth annual New Zealand Mountain Film Festival

Organisers of the New Zealand Mountain Film Festival are calling all outdoor film makers to submit entries into the festival's film competition which carries the theme "Adventurous Sports and Lifestyles".

The festival (formerly the Wanaka Mountain Film Festival) attracts work from filmmakers around the world and plays to sellout audiences keen to experience alternative views of the great outdoors. Over 100 movies are submitted to the festival with the top 30 making it to the final programme. With subject matter ranging from base jumping to high-altitude mountaineering, mountain biking to environmental issues, the films provide a fascinating insight into the minds of some of the world's best, and lesser, known adventurers and the risks they take as they pursue their passion for the more adventurous side of the great outdoors.

"The festival provides an ideal platform for filmmakers to showcase their work," said organizer, Mark Sedon. "We get entries from all over the globe, some from well established filmmakers and others from those just starting out. The judging process takes over a month and one of the main observations we've made over the years is it's better to make a great short film than an OK long one!"

A prize pool of \$2,000 is on offer with a Grand Prize of \$1,000 and another \$1,000 for the best New Zealand made film. The deadline is set for June 4 so now is the time to start editing! Entry is free and all films should be sent accompanied by an official entry form that is available from [www.mountainfilm.net.nz](http://www.mountainfilm.net.nz).

## TRIPS

### Unwin Hut, Mt Cook NP 26-27th April

Rock climbing on Sebastapol Bluffs, a stomp up Edgar Thompson, a traverse of Ball Pass or the whole day spent in the pub, the possibilities are endless!

For more information email Kyle Beggs at [kyle.beggs@ihug.co.nz](mailto:kyle.beggs@ihug.co.nz) or call him on 4822733.

## News from other places...

### NZAC Southland Section Winter Climbing Meet

#### Homer Hut – Upper Hollyford Valley 15th – 24th August 2008

As part of the campaign to get Kiwi climbers into the mountains in winter, Al Walker and the Southland Section of the NZAC are running a climbing meet in the Darran Mountains this winter. This means you can roll up to Homer Hut and there will be people to have great winter missions with. The granite Darrans are somewhat legendary for what they provide in winter - snow, ice and frozen turf climbs - most of which are untouched. A visiting climber once exclaimed there were 10,000 new routes to be done. Very few of the general mountaineering routes have even been attempted in winter. Perhaps this is because the Darrans are also



known for their avalanches. But undoubtedly, the Darrans are a tremendous mountaineering resource we have barely tapped.

While waterfall ice climbing, and to a lesser extent modern M type winter climbing, is enjoying some popularity at present, there are relatively few active climbers on the more traditional type of winter route in the mountains, and fewer still exploring. This is possibly partly to do with the way most climbers come into the sport now, through walls and bolted cragging routes. But there is something a wee bit special about the trust built between climbers when they have a 60m rope all run out, no gear, and the next possible place for the leader to stop is still a good 10 metres away..... There are climbers who want to get involved in this.

It can be very difficult for newcomers to this rather esoteric branch of mountaineering to get started, to meet other climbers who might be able to pass on advice and techniques, to find out which

routes are best worth doing - especially in the lower and mid grades - and to form new partnerships. For many of us, there is no sense of a winter climbing scene or community. We would like to try to help change this, and if it leads to an increase in standards and overall competence in winter, so much the better.

The meet will be organised by active winter climbers from the Southland Section of the NZAC. Some of the group will be in attendance at all times. They may even climb.....but are equally at home sitting

round the fire with a bottle of something nice and talking rubbish.

We aim to provide a venue where climbers can get together socially, climb with new partners, possibly climb in an area they have never visited, exchange views and ideas on technique and ethics, and get some great climbing done.

Going to Homer Hut is a natural choice. Apart from being right beside the road, big and comfy, there are climbs of all standards right on the doorstep. And the boys from the south rather enjoy climbing in the Darrans – it's nearly like Scotland (yes, conditions can be just as awful), but it's twice as big! Despite the awesome reputation of the place, there are places that can be accessed and climbed on with a lower risk of having the mountain drop on your head. Places with turf almost as good as in the Southern Highlands. Going for later on in the winter should also mean that there's a better chance of the big icy routes being well formed up, and for those of us who have trouble getting up in the morning, there's more daylight too.

We envisage that the meet would mainly be for people who already have at least a basic grounding in winter climbing techniques such that they are self sufficient, and the event will not be a climbing school but rather a setting in which climbers can get together. We would like to see a real mix of climbers attend, from those climbing grade 2, right through to those poking out new lines at grade 7. Those climbing at more modest grades can gain from the encouragement and advice the harder climbers can give, and the harder climbers should feel that there are others coming along snapping at their heels to keep them on their game.

August is still many months away, and it is probably wishful thinking that we'll come anywhere near filling the Homer, but we would appreciate an indication of interest in the meet as soon as possible.

Contact for the Southland Section  
Alastair Walker  
E-Mail: [mealluaine@actrix.co.nz](mailto:mealluaine@actrix.co.nz)

### **Home of Mountaineering Display**

The NZAC National Office is currently working on a display idea in conjunction with the Canterbury Museum. We are hoping to have items on show in the Reference Library that are changed every six months. This notice is to ask members to send us their ideas on what they would like to see displayed. Given that planning would need to be made well in advance, please include any upcoming anniversaries that you may know of, even if they are years away, e.g. it could be celebrating a first ascent – 100 years since: Freda du Faur 1<sup>st</sup> women to climb Mt Cook 1913, 1<sup>st</sup> ascent of Mt Aspiring 1909, or about topics – rock climbing, women climbing, equipment used 100 years ago, Section anniversaries, famous climbers, etc. The more ideas I receive, the more there will be to work with. Also, for those that cannot make it to see a display in person, an article and photograph of the display can be placed on the website. Please send your suggestions as soon as possible to Margaret at the National Office, PO Box 786, ChCh 8140, or email Margaret (at) [alpineclub.org.nz](mailto:alpineclub.org.nz) so that they can be organised in time for the draft proposal.



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171 George Street. Phone: 477 3679.

## 15% Discount to Otago Section members

Come into the store with your NZAC ID to obtain your 15% discount of any purchase at any time.

Discount is off RRP, not to be used in conjunction with any other offer or discounts.

### **GEAR – BUY, SELL and EXCHANGE**

*Please e-mail details of any gear you wish to buy or sell to [otagoclimber@ihug.co.nz](mailto:otagoclimber@ihug.co.nz).  
All ads will be run only once unless a relist is requested. Thanks – Kyle.*

#### **For Sale**

Old style wooden handled ice axes (2). Straight adzes, 85cm hickory shafts, stamped with "Cornelius, Whitehouse and sons Ltd, England, 1944", used and antique looking but generally good condition. Suit ornamental use only. \$200 each + postage (\$11-30 to Nth Island). The North Otago Section are selling these and replacing them with modern axes for hiring out. Email for photos.

Contact Nick Shearer, [shearer@es.co.nz](mailto:shearer@es.co.nz)

Scarpa Manta size 10 (44) mens trekking/climbing boots. These boots are virtually brand new (i wore them for half an hour before deciding they were a size small). Retail at around \$550, am selling these for \$350 ono!

Thomas MacTavish - ph: 0273310419  
[macth104@student.otago.ac.nz](mailto:macth104@student.otago.ac.nz)

2 x Petzl Corax Harnesses as new (both worn once). Size 1 (xs-m), Size 2 (m-xl) \$120 each. Call Sam 0274516019 or [sbosshard@xtra.co.nz](mailto:sbosshard@xtra.co.nz)

## NZAC Otago Section Committee 2007-08

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**Cover:** Doug Ball celebrating on the summit of Aspiring, proving it never too late, or too much effort to make your climbing ambitions come true!