

The Bulletin

RUAPEHU SKI CLUB

Volume 85, No. 4



December 2020



The Staircase in 2020. Snowfall this year was well below average. Photo: Liza Fitzsimmons.



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PRESIDENT'S COLUMN

Kia ora koutou, hello everyone.

With Christmas and summer holidays approaching a lot of us will be looking forward to seeing the back of 2020.

While compared to the impact of Covid-19 on New Zealand and the world a loss of opportunities to engage in snow sports may seem of little import. It's certainly been a difficult year for RSC.

Lack of snow at the start of the season added to our woes, and in terms of bookings we've had our worst year since the eruptions in the '90s. That said, some hardy and lucky Club members still got to enjoy the mountain and the Club, and hopefully we'll all be back for a great season next year.

The disrupted season actually meant higher workloads for people, and I'd like say thanks to our chefs for all their hard work in ever-changing conditions, to House Committee who were continually reviewing their planning, and to Committee as a whole.

Because of Committee's work, in spite of very low bookings we hope to end the year in a reasonable financial position.

While managing this year has been a team effort special mention needs to be made of the Covid Sub-committee who developed the plans to navigate the fallout of lockdowns and alert levels.

I'd like to especially acknowledge Damon Forsyth and John Payne for their work on financial planning and cost minimisation that helped us weather what could have been a disastrous year financially.

This summer we'll face a different set of holidays. With no overseas travel we'll be exploring 'our own backyard'. I hope

you include Ruapehu in your plans!

As a teenager I'd look at the mountain and only want it covered in metres of snow, but running the work parties I've come to love Ruapehu most in its summer clothes.

It's amazing how beautiful it is, with even the Pinnacles carpeted with thumbnail-sized flowers of different hues from week to week, so that they appear purple, or white, or green.

I'm hoping to take a group of friends to stay a weekend at Turoa with me at some point, and I hope you'll all choose to visit with friends and family over summer.

We've organised a special rate for you to 'Book a Building' for a group, and our Events Team on Committee has organised a number of weekends for you and your friends to explore the Park and surrounds. See the article elsewhere in this Bulletin, and the website for details.

At our AGM I talked about RSC needing to plan for the future – we're calling this RSC 2030.

Committee is looking at who we are now and where we want to be in 10 years, and developing programmes and strategies to get us there.

Alongside this work we'll be coming to you as members to check we're on track with your opinions. This will include asking you to complete a number of short surveys spread over the coming months.

Please do help us by completing the surveys, they're a real chance for you to help build the base that will determine the direction of the Club in the coming (challenging) decade. I'll be emailing you with more details soon.

Mere Kirihimete, Noho ora mai.

Phill Thomass
RSC President



Happy Valley in October 2020. Photo: Karen Williams.

THROUGH THE LODGE WINDOW

New Zealand, RSC, RAL and DOC have endured a most difficult winter, due to the Covid-19 pandemic and a below average snowfall.

Turoa and Whakapapa both closed on October 26th after a ski season in which health regulations changed many times, making mountain life tricky for skiers and snowboarders.

At times conditions relating to car travel and car parking were described as being a circus, as authorities tried to cope with restrictions imposed by the pandemic.

The Sky Waka gondola will reopen on December 12th for summer sightseeing.

Crater Lake (Te Wai ā-moe) cooled to 12°C in September before rising to 22°C in November.

Volcanic activity at Mt Ruapehu remained low and the Volcanic Alert Level remained at Level 1.

Ruapehu Alpine Lifts is reviewing its sources of capital.

Board chairman Murray Gribben said

that in recent times company profits had not been enough to adequately reinvest in the lift infrastructure.

“While we have made good progress at Whakapapa, we are well behind at Tūroa and we need both skifields to be at a higher standard.”

Footnote: After a challenging winter, RAL looks to a bumper summer season with funding secured through until November 2021.

The bank funding will enable the Sky Waka gondola to remain open through the summer months, providing much-needed revenue for RAL.

Former RSC member Emma Humphries-Priestman is these days the assistant coach of the Liverpool women’s football team in England.

Emma, 34, who grew up in Wellington and represented NZ in taekwondo as well as football, played in the 2007 women’s World Cup but retired early due to a knee injury.

**** Emma’s mother Ann was a longtime member of RSC. Emma’s father and two brothers also joined us.*

New Zealand’s leading outdoor

THE RUAPEHU SKI CLUB

(inc) Founded 1913

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President: Phill Thomass
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Hut Officer: Simon Hunt
Chalet Officer: Nils Johannessen
Turoa Officer: Donald Webster
Heritage Fund Guardians: Robin Dallas, Richard Nelson, Bernard Smith, Phill Thomass
Fund Treasurer: Mike Wardle
Glacier Hut Custodian: Bernard Smith

education provider Hillary Outdoors has appointed a new general manager.

Hillary Campbell is, at 39 years old, the youngest person and only the second woman to hold the leadership role in the organisation's 47-year history.

Annually around 8000 students participate in Hillary Outdoors programmes but this was cut to zero during the Covid-19 lockdown.

Hillary Outdoors Tongariro is located 3km off State Highway 47 on the western side of Tongariro National Park. It has another camp on Great Barrier Island.

Lahar sirens at Whakapapa were triggered on September 27th after a 5.2-magnitude earthquake was recorded at 4.47pm, about 45km southwest of Taumarunui.

Skiers were advised to leave the slopes but DOC soon reported that the alarm was caused by the quake and there was no lahar.

An English woman aged 37, working in Wellington, died while climbing on Mt Ruapehu on September 26th.

She was in a party of nine on the eastern side of the mountain when she slipped and fell near Cathedral Rocks.

Police said some in the group were relatively new climbers but they were well-prepared and when they set off the conditions were suitable for climbing.

The Ruapehu Express off-road run and mountain bike ride at Ohakune will be cancelled in 2021 due to Covid-19.

The full Ring of Fire volcanic run will be cancelled but a 50km event option using part of the Ring of Fire course from Turoa is scheduled for January 30th 2021.

The deadline for the March Bulletin will be **Friday February 19th.**

All items should be with the Editor by then.

THE BULLETIN

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WORK PARTIES 2021

The dates for the 2021 season work parties are as follows:

February 13-14 and 20-21.

March 20-21.

April 3-4 Easter (Truck Weekend).

May 1-2

June 12-13

July 3-4 Cooks Weekend

We really need people to sign up for the early work parties as we have a lot of weather-dependent work to do before next season.

After a disruptive Covid year we cut back on the number of work parties, so the jobs are stacking up. We especially need people for the first work parties on February 13th-14th and 20th-21st.

Haven't done a work party for a while? Why not sign up for one this year? Not only do we get a lot of jobs done that the Club would otherwise struggle with, but we all have a lot of fun as well.

Work parties are a great way to expand your group of friends within the Club and to experience the mountain environment. You get to know the workings of your Club buildings and introduce your children to new skills and the opportunity to work co-operatively with others and to make new friends.

People applying for membership need to complete two work parties and their sponsors should accompany them for one of those. Families wanting to be in the first ballot for school holidays also need to have one parent at least do a work party.

While working parties are a requirement for new members, they are also part of

the lifeblood of the Club, and we need ongoing support from our members at them.

We have continued pressure on fees and bunk rates as the expense of running RSC rises, and the cost of, and need for, maintenance of our buildings increases every year.

As always people with building and other trade skills are sought. If you have these skill sets please let us know by contacting the Office or myself at nilsj@xtra.co.nz.

I look forward to seeing you all at the 2021 work parties.

Nils Johannessen

SUMMER OFFICE HOURS

A note from the Admin Desk

Our Office will be monitored over summer at reduced hours and I plan on attending to emails and correspondence mainly on a Thursday.

If you are planning on using our buildings please book as usual online. I will be keeping an eye on the bookings. I will also have the Office phone with me if anything urgent comes up.

We have had a couple of families BOOK A BUILDING in November – so keep this in mind if you are planning a family catch up or a getaway with a group of friends.. It's really economical and a great use of our buildings.

If you book the whole building it works out at just \$20 a bed. A bargain!

Please email me if you are interested in doing this. There are a few conditions that apply.

Have a lovely summer.

Paula

SKI SEASON 2020

By late November the Covid-19 virus pandemic had infected 57 million people worldwide and killed at least 1.4 million.

In NZ there were 2000 infections, mostly of Kiwis returning home, and 25 deaths. The border remained closed to all but NZ citizens or residents and essential needs people.

New Zealand experienced its warmest winter on record, according to official NIWA climate data.

NIWA records, which began in 1909, showed the 2020 winter was 1.14°C above average, just nudging out winter 2013 from the top spot, which was 1.08°C above average.

All passengers on the Sky Waka gondola at Whakapapa were required to wear masks, as from August 31st.

This Covid-19 pandemic edict applied nationwide to all trains, planes, buses, ferries and gondolas, and was advised for taxis. Masks were later required for chairlifts.

For a while the 10-seater Sky Waka cabins were allowed to take only five passengers and the Rangatira quad chairlift was limited to two passengers per chair. This was later changed for allow for mixed bubbles.

The 2020 winter season at Ruapehu was always going to be limited due to the Covid-19 pandemic and the reduced opportunities for RAL to prepare all its lifts.

However, the season was further reduced by the well below average snowfall caused by the warmest winter on record.

Snowmaking while helpful could not make up the shortfall.

The Alpine Meadow beginner slopes at Turoa did not open, while at Whakapapa the Double Happy, Delta and West Ridge chairs did not run.

RAL in late August advised helpful new rules for uphill foot traffic on the Rangatira chairlift.

If the lift had maintenance and patrol clearance RAL would load Club members from 8.45am to 9am. It would be happy to repeat this with gear and foot passengers from 3.45pm to closing at 4pm.

During other operating times during the day, access would require ski/board passengers only with one bag to be carried by the individual. All guests regardless of times required passes.

On September 2nd the RAL website on the 10am release of bookable car parks was deliberately crashed by an external cyber-attack

The good news was this attack ultimately failed as the parking system was back online within a few minutes.

Similar hackers attacked the Stock Exchange and several other NZ activities.

SKIING IN SYDNEY

A \$200-million Winter Sports World with an indoor ski slope is planned for Penrith in Western Sydney

The centre will include a 300-metre ski slope, an ice skating rink, and both ice and rock climbing walls. A 170-room hotel is included in the proposal.

Sydney's nearest outdoor skifields are five or six hours drive away at Thredbo and Perisher.

PARKING FOR 2021

RAL advised in October:

At this stage bookable parking will be in place at Whakapapa and Turoa between 7am-10am on weekends throughout winter. Life Pass holders **will not** be required to book if arriving between these hours.

If arriving after 10am on weekends, or visiting during the week the usual first in best dressed system is in place and access will be subject to capacity.

Season Pass holders **will** be required to book if arriving between 7am-10am on weekends. Season Pass holders will have early access to book.

Anytime Platinum Pass holders **will not** be required to book and may access the Platinum car park on any day.

Additional details around parking will be released closer to winter.

SEASON PASSES

RAL sold 2021 season passes during October while saying there would be no other earlybird sales.

People buying 2021 season passes would gain some extra benefits.

- A free youth season pass with each adult season pass sold.
- Early access to book parking each week, at no charge.
- Free skiing from purchase until the end of season 2020 (including the November extensions).
- Four anytime buddy passes.
- Discount on food and beverages and retail increased to 15 percent.
- Night skiing at Whakapapa.

MARKETING ASSISTANCE

The RSC Marketing Sub-Committee is interested in hearing from any members with skills in the following area willing to donate their skills in time in helping the sub-committee get set up for the 2021 season supporting various other sub-committees.

In order of importance;

1. AdWords management. The Club has a significant monthly Google AdWords Grant charitable spend allowance, but requires its Google Ad Grants account to be compliant. The set-up has largely been completed.
2. Marketing manager skills. Any strategic advice is welcome, and current plans can be shared.
3. External Comms (PR).
4. Content publishing.

Please contact arranbirchneough@gmail.com / 021 43 88 94

CYCLE TRAIL BOOST

Ruapehu's Mountains to Sea cycle trail has received \$4.6 million for two additional trails.

The money from the Provincial Growth Fund is for shared use trails from Turoa to Ohakune and Horopito to Erua.

Ruapehu Mayor Don Cameron said: "It's looking like it will draw 20,000 to 25,000 people in the first year and building up to 30,000 yearly."

The ultimate aim is to create a continuous path from Mt Ruapehu to Whanganui and the Tasman Sea.

Some existing trails in the region will also be upgraded, improving access to the landscape and World Heritage areas.



GLACIER HUT NEW CUSTODIAN

Glacier Hut, just in front of the Lodge, has a long history. Built in 1923 it is the oldest RSC building on Hut Flat and was constructed by prominent RSC members Bill Salt and Maurice Lennard.

It served the Club well until 1936 when The Hut was built further uphill. From that time on Glacier Hut was used mainly as an overflow building.

For a number of years Glacier Hut was used by the likes of the Auckland University Tramping Club and the Ski Patrol.

RSC eventually cleaned and restored the Hut and affixed a plaque to the front. This work was led by the Graham family, editors of the Bulletin.

In 1989, Barry Winter a Committee member and Vice-President in the 1990s, turned the front of Glacier Hut into a little museum displaying a number skis, poles and other items that were used by the first skiers on Mt Ruapehu.

Barry was also the instigator of having Glacier Hut put on the category one

Historic Places trust list in 1993 after a long battle with the Tongariro National Park Board who wanted to have Glacier Hut removed from the mountain.

Around 2009, Barry asked good friend and former President Joe Gabriel to take over the custodianship and to look after Glacier Hut, which Joe greatly accepted.

Joe made sure that Glacier Hut got the same attention as all the other RSC buildings when it came to work parties.

There was a bit of a scare one year, when a snow groomer backed into the Hut, shaking it on its foundations. RAL made sure that all damage was repaired.

Joe sadly passed away earlier this year and the Committee had been looking for a new custodian.

It is with pleasure we announce that Bernard Smith (a former President) has accepted the role as Glacier Hut Custodian.

Bernard was a great friend of Joe and had also been working with Barry Winter on some of the Glacier Hut projects and has always shown a great interest in the history of the Club.



RSC's milk run. From left: Heather Chao, Catherine Gafa, Damon Forsyth, Sam Hood.

RSC MILK RUN

With the unexpected shortening of the ski season, some of our supplies brought in over truck weekend were excess to requirements in particular the UHT milk, which was due to pass its best before date in December.

With a bit of organisation by Adrian Adriaansen making contact with the local iwi and getting the contact details of the local food bank in Turangi, and the determination of seven members of the committee - Catherine Gafa, Damon Forsyth, Sam Hood, Louise Blair, Sonia Quinn, David Macmillan and Heather Chao, 212 litres of milk was delivered to the food bank.

Thanks to everyone involved especially as the weather was not fantastic. It was raining and wet. Big thumbs up to Sam and Damon, who as well as carrying milk in back packs wheeled a trolley down the Rock Garden with 60 litres of milk on it.

DO SOMETHING NEW AT RUAPEHU

When planning your summer holidays and excursions don't forget that you have access to our two lower mountain buildings

- The Chalet at Whakapapa Village and our Lodge in the Turoa Alpine Village in Ohakune.

Summer rates for these buildings are :- Members \$28, and non-members \$33.

We have some activities planned for the summer, see table below, and there are also a couple of events in the area that are happening over summer.

You can also arrange your own groups to use our buildings, or even book the whole building if your group is big enough.

Jan 31 Tussock Traverse - Run or walk multiple option distances.

Feb 27-28 Tama Lakes walk from RSC Chalet.

Feb 27-28 Mountain to Sea bike ride from RSC Turoa.

Feb 27-28 The Goat Tongariro run from Whakapapa to Turoa on the walking track.

March 13-14 Tongariro Alpine Crossing.

If you are interested in joining any of the RSC organised events please make your bookings online through the website, and contact the Office via email, so we can let you know more information closer to the date about that event.

More updates about other activities and events in the Ruapehu district will be promoted in our Facebook group, so join the group if you haven't already.

RAL ACADEMIES 2020

The season 2020 definitely provided us with many changes on the mountain. However, one thing continued although in a slightly different format: The kids academies.

We had a few families who got involved with an RAL Academy this year and they loved it. Here's what some of them had to say...

From Jim.

"My children Charlotte (10) and Fred (6) have absolutely loved their experience in Whakapapa Academy 2020 Level 3 All Mountain.

"Their instructors, Moana and Shannay have done an incredible job with both children, developing both their technical skiing ability (teaching them to be comfortable skiing backwards) and building on their knowledge of the whole mountain.

"The children's confidence has really grown with each Academy weekend. I'm very impressed with the Academy staff. They all seem to have excellent rapport with children and the overall organisation under Lynsey Slack has been a reassuring and pleasant experience."

From Lauren who has 3 children (Her eldest is 10 and her youngest Rio turned 4 mid-season so they progressed from the Chalet to staying in the Lodge where Rio was able to celebrate turning 4.)!

Skiing has been amazing for our family this winter. It has been life changing, as have the friends we have made at the Lodge, namely in Jim and his kids.

In terms of Academy, it was the only way I could have the kids advance in a cost effective way so that we could ski together, given I had Rio too.

The kids have absolutely loved Academy and can't wait to do it next year. Rio is also hoping to do it (yusss!) so I hope they open

it for levels 1 and 2 as well!

The instructors took the kids on parts of the mountain that I didn't even know about, and gave them skills and experiences that skiing with me would have not exposed them to. It has been a perfect alternative given no overseas travel with Covid."

Turoa Academy, from Paul.

My daughter Lucia came on leaps and bounds in the Turoa Academy this year. She went up to Level 5 by the end of the season.

She made lots of friends, spent a lot of time laughing and having fun, and she loved her instructor, Greg. If the lifts are open they go out, so it does build resilience.

I joined the adult academy mainly to pass time while waiting for Lucia and avoid the lift queues, but in actual fact gained heaps from the tuition with a lot of "unlearning" of bad habits by my instructors Matt and Harry.

The guaranteed parking turned out to be a godsend with the restricted numbers on the mountain.

It was an odd season with Covid and we missed a weekend due to the Auckland lockdown (which they refunded), but we got in a lot more skiing than we had hoped for.

Whilst it seems a lot of money to pay upfront, you essentially get 50 hours of tuition over the season, which worked out as \$14 per hour. I think that's a bargain!

From Mark Fowler.

My son Tom (14) has been in the RAL Ski Academy at Turoa for the last three seasons and the results have been more than I could have ever hoped for. Both on and off the maunga.

Tom has enjoyed his time in Academy. Tom's skiing has improved dramatically over the past few years due to a dedicated and professional team of instructors that work year after year for RAL. From park

to race, the team has got it covered.

After putting Tom in the odd lesson here and there, and coming from an instructor background myself, I understood that Tom needed to be skiing and training more regularly to keep up his skills.

Also, to be skiing with his peers was important as the strive to compete and do better in front of friends is a strong motivator for most kids.

From this, he has now chosen his own path moving from race (which built up his technique) to now riding in freestyle and freeride with his friends all over the mountain.

Tom opted for freeride after having a great time with Joe in the park last season. Due to Covid-19 Joe and other international staff could not come back to NZ this season, but RAL have a top team of instructors that live all over here in NZ anyway (so no problem there).

Tom had Cam this season, one of the top freeriders on the hill. Cam understands (like all instructors) the fine balance between the parents wanting to see improvement over the season, but the kids just wanting to ski, not drill, all the time.

The methodology by instructors has been awesome for Tom, as they get enough free skiing in to keep loving the sport but the parents see and hear about their child's progression throughout the season and are kept up to date, usually on a daily basis.

To think that it was only four short seasons ago that I stood on top of a roll over trying to persuade him for 5 to 10 minutes to drop in, knowing that he could easily achieve this, to watching him drop off cornices and 2 metre faces this season, all checked out by him and his friends, as he has been taught to do by his instructors over the years.

This has made me proud but concerned for how many more years I can keep up with him and his crew of groms (not that

many I think).

Staying at the Turoa lodge for the past few seasons has introduced Tom to a large group of like-minded kids that all have one thing in common: the love of the mountain.

Whether it be board or ski, the snow and the environment is a common theme that resonates with everyone at the end of the day.

This is also the same thing that keep the kids connected with the instructors on the hill. The Ski and Ride Team at RAL all love what they do for a job and want to pass that love on to their group that they teach. Whether beginner or pro shredder, the joy of the mountain connects us all.

Has it been worth it? Hell yes! Even though I only skied with my son a couple of times this season, every penny spent has been worth it. He has found confidence in his skiing and a great group of mates to hang out with on and off the mountain.

He wants to follow his old man into the Ski and Ride School in a couple of years, so who knows, I might get more time on the hill with him to come.

INQUIRIES FOR 2021

Academy options for kids & adults:

<https://www.mtruapehu.com/level-up>

Kids Academy Whakapapa

<https://www.mtruapehu.com/level-up/academy-ski-whakapapa>

<https://www.mtruapehu.com/level-up/academy-ride-whakapapa>

Kids Academy Turoa

<https://www.mtruapehu.com/level-up/academy-ski-turoa>

<https://www.mtruapehu.com/level-up/academy-ride-turoa>

All Adult Programmes

<https://www.mtruapehu.com/level-up/turoa>

<https://www.mtruapehu.com/level-up/whakapapa>



RSC got to host RAL staff for drinks at the Lodge to say thanks to them all for making our season possible in such a difficult year, and to reinforce the ongoing friendship between RAL and RSC. Photos: Phill Thomass.



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Whakapapa scenes 2020. Photos: Lauren Bruce.



Upper: An adult Academy class. Photo: Paul. **Lower:** RSC members in an Academy group. Photo: Mark Fowler

WINTER WONDERLAND

Slowly ascending through the sky looking down to glistening white powder, the Sky Waka gondola carries my mates and I to the snow covered haven that beckons at the top of the ridges.

All of our faces are beaming with excitement, ready to start shredding the morning slopes. Placed in Tongariro National Park is my cloud nine; Mt Ruapehu.

The gem of my existence. It has brought me experiences, memories and a lifelong second family.

I clip into my tall slender skis, lean forward and off I go. The icy wind swirls past me. My skis glide across the crisp morning snow.

My mates and I are entangled in our trails. I feel the curves from the snow press on my skis defining my course.

Already adrenaline floods my veins, feeling on top of the world and it's only 9:30am. The bluebird sky makes the scintillating snow, blinding white. It's the definition of a wonderland.

Hours later, the sun is fully risen and is covering every crevice of the mountain.

The Pinnacles, the peak of my skiing adventures is finally soft and ready for our fresh tracks.

Traversing over The Valley encountering stunning views. Skiers and snowboarders blasting down the slopes and skies stretching for miles.

At the tip of The Pinnacles is a precipitous track. Opening with hard carving and speed the adrenaline kicks in making you feel euphoric. The Pinnacles is where the fun begins.

The sun is slowly gliding on its course west. It's starting to set. The day has gone fast as it's reaching 4pm; the time the mountain shuts.

Thomas and I decide to hike up for a

sensational last run to close a sensational day. We hitch our last ride up on the T-bar and start our trek. My heart rate increases as I tire.

Weight submerges onto my shoulders as my skis are pinned on top of them.

The snow sinks down as my burdensome boots force against it.

Out of breath and exhausted we stop. The sun is slowly sinking down turning the mountain into a dazzling pink utopia.

Our smiles couldn't be swept off our faces. It was time. Throwing my skis into the snow I clip in, lean forward and off I go, into my winter wonderland.

Grace McQuoid
November 2020

OBITUARY DAWN HAMMOND

Dawn Hammond who has died at Greytown (Wairarapa) was a longtime member of RSC who helped build RSC Lodge in 1952.

Dawn was the wife of former RSC Vice-Captain and ski racer the late Joe Hammond and the grandmother of test cricketer Lockie Ferguson.

We extend the condolences of RSC to Dawn's family.

TARANAKI RENOVATIONS

Plans are afoot to refurbish the **Dawson Falls Lodge** in Taranaki, incorporating its Swiss Alpine décor with the local iwi's cultural narrative.

The property dates back to 1885 when Thomas Dawson built a shed by the waterfall.

The iwi which now owns the premises will open up the front of the lodge to improve views of Mt Taranaki. The upgrade is scheduled to be complete at the end of 2021.

RSC CALENDAR OF EVENTS

Dec 2020	12	Sky Waka reopens for sightseeing DOC summer activities
Jan 2021	31	Tussock Traverse – run or walk
Feb 2021	13-14	Working parties
	20-21	Working parties
	27-28	Tama Lakes walk (from RSC Chalet)
	27-28	Mountain to Sea bike ride (from RSC Turoa)
	27-28	Goat run from Whakapapa to Turoa
Mar 2021	13-14	Tongariro Alpine Crossing
	20-21	Working parties
April 2021	3-4	Working parties (Easter, Truck Weekend)
May 2021	1	RSC ski season bookings open
	1-2	Working parties
June 2021	5	Ski/snow season opens at Ruapehu RSC AGM at Auckland
	12-13	Working parties
July 2021	3-4	Working parties (Cooks Weekend)
	10-25	School holidays

NEW MEMBERS

We wish a warm welcome to the following new members:

Senior

Ethan Wood (Wellington).
Regan Wood (Wellington).
Anita Kirby (Wellington).
Sally Tye (Auckland).
Peter Scott Tulloch (Wgtn).
Bettina Neu (Wellington).
Damian Mitchell (Auckland).
Joel Featherstone (Auckland).
Adrian James (Auckland).
Karen James (Auckland).
Michael Ward (Tauranga).
Lance Berriman (Auckland).
Michelle Berriman (Auckland).
Julie Symonds (Hamilton).

Teen

Kate Berriman (Auckland).

Lujke Berriman (Auckland).

Junior

Isabelle James (Auckland).
Luke James (Auckland).
Madeleine Birchenough (Auckland).
James Mitchell (Auckland).
Nicholas Mitchell (Auckland).
Alexandra Charlesworth (Auckland).
Grace Cory-Wright (Auckland).

NEW DOC MINISTER

Kiri Allan, the Labour MP for East Coast, is the Minister of Conservation in the new Government.

She succeeds Eugenie Sage (Green Party).

Kiri is a lawyer who has managed a large agriculture and horticulture company on the East Coast.



La Ventina ski run in Italy, ranked by CNN in 2014 as the third best ski run in the world.

SKIING LA VENTINA

Recent mention in the news of a proposal to hold an alpine World Cup 5km race at Breuil Cervinia in Italy brought back memories of 1972 when Jo and I skied the course.

The proposed race track, twice as long as any existing World Cup race, is part of a ski run called La Ventina which in 2014 was ranked by CNN as the third best ski slope in the world.

La Ventina is in the far north of Italy and starts from the Swiss border at 3480 metres. You can reach this spot from Switzerland by taking a series of lifts up from Zermatt.

The piste runs for 8.5 km while descending 1500m vertical to the town of Breuil Cervinia.

It is not hard to ski and is a red run for most of its length, but the sheer size of it and the majestic Matterhorn towering over it makes La Ventina a bit special.

The route is served directly by a chain of three ski lifts, all aerial trams.

The upper part of the track, being at high altitudes and on a glacier, is accessible for much of the year.

The run featured in a 1972 heist movie called *The Snow Job* in which a ski instructor steals the day's takings at Breuil Cervinia and escapes up the cable cars.

The instructor was played by French skiing superstar Jean-Claude Killy and naturally the movie includes plenty of shots of Killy skiing at speed down La Ventina.

The film also features French actress Daniele Gaubert who was Killy's real-life wife from 1973 until her death from cancer aged 44 in 1987.

La Ventina is groomed these days but in 1972 it was untracked so Jo and I and four friends skied down fluffy new powder snow. Skiing heaven.



Upper: Skiing in Te Heuheu Valley in 2020. Photo: RAL. **Lower:** The Knoll Ridge Café. Photo: Ian Collins.

**Saif Ian Rashid**

NEW CHATEAU MANAGER

Saif Ian Rashid has recently started as the new Hotel Manager for the Chateau Tongariro Hotel.

His career spans 18 years in hospitality, having worked in various roles in hotels across Australasia.

Prior to joining the Chateau, Rashid was Hotel Manager for Auckland's Stamford Plaza where he had worked for two years.

"The clean mountain air of this beautiful region was one of the key things that attracted me to this role.

"My family are loving being part of such a tight knit community in one of New Zealand's most beautiful locations."

*** The Chateau was designed by Timaru-based architect Herbert Hall (1880–1939) who modelled his design on a Canadian Pacific Railway hotel at Lake Louise in Canada. It was officially opened on November 13th 1929.

**Sarah Lewis**

LEWIS IS DISMISSED

Sarah Lewis, a former British ski racer, was on October 9th removed as secretary-general of the International Ski Federation (FIS), following a confidence vote.

The FIS did not say why Lewis was removed but said the decision was based on a complete loss of confidence.

Lewis, aged 55, had been secretary-general since 2000.

She was a member of Britain's alpine ski team from 1982-1988 and competed in the 1987 alpine world ski championships and the 1988 Olympic Winter Games before taking up a role in the FIS in 1994.

Lewis was regarded as a possible President of the FIS to succeed Gian Franco Kasper who has been the President since 1998.

Kasper was due to retire this year but that was postponed twice by the pandemic and an election will now be held next year.

THE RACING SEASON

There were no major races at Whakapapa or Turoa this season, due to the uncertainty caused by the Covid-19 virus and the autumn lockdown.

The RSC Club champs were cancelled. The Haensli Cup race was cancelled, as were the Christie, Rangatira, Ngauruhoe and Tongariro interclub events.

There was no NZ alpine skiing championship this year due to the pandemic.

Some masters, local and junior races were held at South Island venues with only NZ starters due to the closed border.

Olympic medallist Zoi Sadowski-Synnott showed good form in winning one event.

ROBINSON NAMED NO 1

Alpine ski racer Alice Robinson was named Snow Sports NZ Overall Athlete of the Year.

Winners were:

Instructor of the Year – Rowan Pemberton (Queenstown)

Men's Masters Ski Racing Champion – Perry Coulter (Queenstown)

Women's Masters Ski Racing Champion – Bonny Teat (Wanaka)

Breakthrough Season – Margaux Hackett (Wanaka)

Coach of the Year – Chris Knight (Christchurch),

Cross Country Athlete of the Year – Campbell Wright (Wanaka)

Alpine Ski Racer of the Year – Alice Robinson (Queenstown)

Adaptive Snow Sports Athlete of the Year – Corey Peters (New Plymouth)

Snowboarder of the Year – Zoi Sadowski-Synnott (Wanaka)

Freeskier of the Year – Nico Porteous (Wanaka)

Freeride Athlete of the Year – Craig Murray (Wanaka) and Jess Hotter (Ohakune)

ALICE DISAPPOINTS

Alice Robinson (NZ), the defending champion, finished 12th in the first alpine World Cup giant slalom race of the new season at Soelden (Austria) in October.

She was fourth in the first run but fell back on the second run due to a bad mistake on the steep part of the slope.

Marta Bassino (Italy) beat teammate Federica Brignone (Italy) to win by 0.14 seconds. Petra Vlhova (Slovakia) was third.

Mikaela Shiffrin (US), who has won 66 World Cup races in her career, did not start due to a back injury.

*** Reigning alpine ski World Cup champion **Aleksander Aamodt Kilde** tested positive for coronavirus after returning to Norway from the men's season opening race at Soelden.

*** **Jan Shearer** has stepped down as CEO of Snow Sports NZ. An Olympic silver medallist in yachting, she has held the snow post for three years. High Performance director Nic Cavanagh is the acting CEO.

*** The government's Covid-19 recovery package has seen \$400,000 granted towards a new complex at Cardrona, featuring a permanent halfpipe.



Riding the rope tows at the Tukino skifield on Mt Ruapehu. Photos: Tukino skifield.



Skiing at the Tukino skifield on the eastern slopes of Ruapehu. Photos: Tukino skifield.

EPIC LONG JOURNEY

A group may have been the first to journey the length of the Waikato River from its Ruapehu source to the Tasman Sea.

They travelled 450km following the source of the Tongariro River down the slopes of Mt Ruapehu to the shores of Lake Taupo at Tūrangi, before kayaking across the water and down the Waikato River to Port Waikato.

Inquiries showed people have never heard of anyone previously completing the entire journey.

They started on the Summit Plateau above Whakapapa and followed a track from Mead's Wall to the historic Waihohonu Hut, and from there they journeyed to Lake Taupo.

In Turangi the crew picked up Canadian canoes before paddling 33km across Lake Taupo. To reach the coast they portaged around the Huka Falls and various rapids as well as the river's eight hydroelectric dams.

WINTER CLUB PARTY

Is the annual RSC gathering in mid-season Winter Party? Or is it Club Week?

Answer: Both names are in popular use.

Right from our second year of existence in 1914 the week has formally been known as Winter Party.

However in recent years some folk have more often used the term Club Week.

And in the last couple of years Winter Party has been used to describe the dress-up night that has been a feature of

the week.

This night started with the RSC Lodge's 50th birthday bash in 2003 when we all dressed up in gold and black.

This year Club Week was held on September 21-25 with the Winter Party night on September 23.

** Fancy dress has long been an RSC tradition. It was a feature of the Winter Party week at The Chateau in the 1930s to 1950s, and in the Lodge after it was opened in 1953.

** The event in the old days was so popular that a list of prize winners was published in the newspapers.

** One RSC President wanted the week to be renamed September Sojourn. This idea was not adopted.

AG

PINE PEST ERADICATION

Tongariro is included in a nationwide plan to tackle more than 800,000 hectares of wilding pine infestations over the next year. The aim is to generate up 550 new jobs and help prevent future wild fires.

Wilding pines are a pest because they overwhelm native landscapes, killing native plants and forcing out native animals.

The national wilding conifer control programme began in 2016 and aims to contain or eradicate all wilding pine infestations by 2030.

This year's funding includes \$308,000 for work in the Tongariro National Park.

Pinus contorta has been a problem in the area for decades, with the weed tree having spread from experimental blocks planted at Karioi in the 1920s and 1930s.

NORTHERN SKI SEASON

Many European and American ski resorts aim to open for the 2020-21 season.

However, facilities may be limited. Masks must usually be worn on lifts and physical distancing is required in queues and cafes.

Crystal, the UK's leading ski holiday operator, won't operate holidays to any destinations where customers need to quarantine, either when they arrive or when they return home.

The Swiss government decided to go against the trend in Austria, France and Italy and not go into a limited-time lockdown in November.

Some European resorts limited lift tickets to 50 percent of capacity, or allowed only season ticket holders on the slopes. Many limited the numbers of people riding in cable car or gondola cabins.

Italian resorts were forced to close after Cervinia opened, only to be shut down a day later after images of overcrowding went viral and the Italian Government imposed strict new rules.

Japanese ski resorts vary. Some which rely mainly on locals will be open as usual. Others which rely on foreign tourists may open only partially. Four ski jumping World Cup events scheduled for January and February in Sapporo have been cancelled.

Mt Norquay on October 24th was the first Canadian resort to open for the new season. Based on half a metre of new snow, it was the earliest opening in the resort's 95-year history.

Levi ski resort in Finnish Lapland had to shut down all operations in March due to Covid-19. By collecting its snow in huge piles and covering them with foam, it was able to reopen on October 2nd.

Four UK ski tour operators have cancelled all ski holidays in December, including over Christmas. They are Inghams, Esprit, Ski Total and Flexiski.

Lech/Zuers (Austria): Alpine skiing World Cup races planned for November were postponed until later in the season, not because of the pandemic but due to mild temperatures and no snow.

In Norway, World Cup events in cross-country, Nordic combined and ski jumping planned for Lillehammer in December have been postponed to later in the season due to Covid-19.

The International Ski Federation (FIS) announced that the entire 2020-21 men's and women's Alpine World Cup season will remain in Europe rather than moving to the US and Canada, as usual. Markus Waldner, FIS men's chief race director, said travel restrictions and corresponding quarantine regulations in both directions also led to this decision.



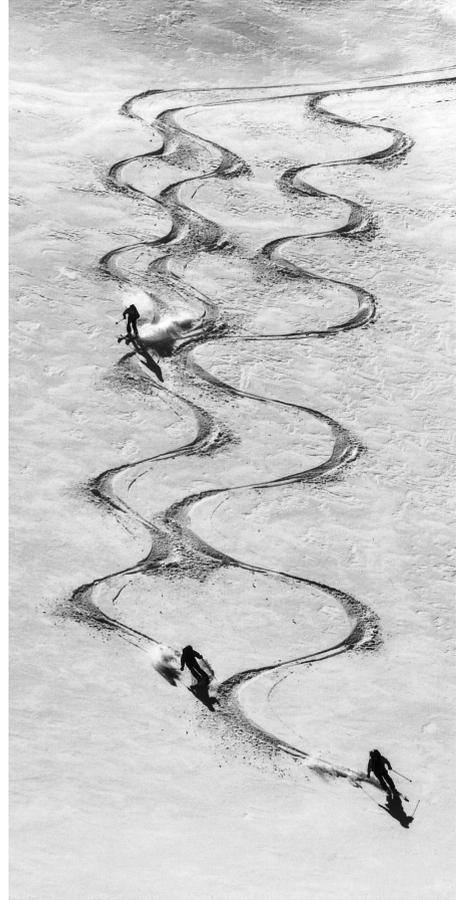
Our plaque listing the names of our visiting instructors has been updated with new engravings. Here it is placed back in the Lodge by Club Captain Catherine Gafa.



Upper: Snow guns in action on Blyth Flat at Turoa: Photo: RAL. **Lower:** Skiing and snowboarding at Turoa in 2020. Photo: Mike Anderson.



Places to visit in summer. Upper: Waihothonu Hut where RSC was founded in 1913. Lower: Te Porete redoubt.



Left: The Heritage Express at Roundhill (Tekapo) is the world's longest (1500m) and steepest rope tow. It has Australasia's biggest vertical drop (783m) and runs at 5m per second on a gradient of 28° to 32°. Photo: Alastair Stewart. **Right:** Coming down. Photo: Roundhill.

NEW SAFETY APP

ACC and the SAANZ, which represents New Zealand's commercial skifield interests, have developed the National Incident Data (NID) app for the ski industry.

It helps record track and respond to near-misses and injuries as soon as possible.

This allows ski area managers to respond and make decisions to improve safety if they see trends developing daily, weekly or seasonally.

It could also help to prevent future injuries, for example, if an operator saw a trend of near misses on a particular run, all by inexperienced skiers, they could revise the rating.



Upper: Upper: Lovely colours on Egmont Ridge near RSC Lodge. Photo: Carla Tonks.
Lower: Lots of happy skiers. Source unknown.

ACROSS THE SKIING WORLD

Mt Hutt skifield will next year open New Zealand's first eight person chairlift.

The Nor'west Express will replace a quad and will take 2 minutes a ride with a capacity of 3000 people an hour.

The lift will have a cable de-icing and night-drive system coupled with fully automated in-terminal chair parking which will drastically improve start-up times on icy mornings.

Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern, on a visit to Cardrona, said she has not learned to ski and was not going to start with so many cameras about.

"On another day perhaps," she added to cheers from a large crowd of onlookers.

New Zealanders are blessed to have such a beautiful backyard, she said.

Mount Cook Ski Planes in October celebrated 65 years since Sir Harry Wigley made his first landing on the Tasman Glacier using home made retractable skis on his Auster.

Visitors on the anniversary weekend took a ski plane or helicopter flight, landing on the Tasman Glacier where they enjoyed refreshments on the snow.

Footnote 1: Your Editor skied the Tasman Glacier in a powder snow 7km run (twice) with these guys in 1965, five years after that first flight.

Footnote 2: Harry's first flight plane, Auster ZK-BDX, has in recent years been on display at Queenstown airport.

Footnote 3: Harry Wigley once tried to land his ski plane on the Summit Plateau at Ruapehu but decided against it as the snow was too bumpy.

Footnote 4: The company launched Skydive Mt Cook from Pukaki Airport in October 2019. This provides a career progression opportunity for budding ski plane pilots to build their hours flying the

Pilatus Porter ski plane aircraft in an alpine environment.

Primoz Roglic of Slovenia, who came second in the cycling classic the Tour de France this year, is a former ski jumping champion.

Roglic was a competitive ski jumper in his teens and won a world junior title before making the switch to road cycling in 2012 following a heavy crash.

Retired champion alpine ski racer Lindsay Vonn (US) says she once considered having a go at Formula One motor racing with the Red Bull team.

She said she turned down the offer of a trial because they wanted her to commit to three years and to agree not to get pregnant.

Vonn added that she once drove a racing car on the Formula One track at Spielberg, in Austria. "I loved it but I had a tendency to go a little too fast in the corners."

Vonn won 82 alpine skiing World Cup races, a record for women.

She was once the partner of golfer Tiger Woods. Now she is engaged to American football (gridiron) player PK Subban.

Thirty-four years after the Tekapo Ski Club's lodge was destroyed by an avalanche, the club has opened a new lodge in Lake Tekapo town.

Following the avalanche the club established a new lodge in Albert Town, in Wanaka, where it has remained until 2020, when the new family style building was ready.

The original A-frame lodge was close to the Roundhill skifield but the club says DOC would not allow a new building on that site.

California's popular Squaw Valley Ski Resort will change its name because the word squaw is a derogatory term for Native American women.

Squaw Valley was the home of the 1960

Olympic Winter Games.

The word squaw is derived from the Algonquin language and may have once simply meant woman. But over generations, the word morphed into a misogynist and racist term.

Work to find a new name will start immediately and is expected to be announced next year.

*** The resort has a run called KT22. Rumour is that an early skier needed 22 kick turns to compete the run.

Former Olympic ski champion Viktoria Rebensburg of Germany retired in September, saying an injury from last season was keeping her from performing at her best.

Rebensburg, aged 30, won the gold medal in giant slalom at the 2010 Vancouver Winter Olympics. She also won an Olympic bronze in giant slalom in 2014 at Sochi.

She won the season-long World Cup giant slalom title in 2011, 2012 and 2018, and won world championship silver in giant slalom in 2015 and 2019.

A skier survived after falling 400 metres while skiing down Mt Aspiring in September.

The skier and another, described as experienced skiers, were beginning their descent on the west face of the mountain when the accident happened.

His partner skied down to him and set off a locator beacon which attracted local rescue organisations. The man was flown to Dunedin hospital.

Locals said skiing down Mt Aspiring is rare and to ski it you first have to climb it, which is in itself a considerable undertaking.

Tom Campbell, aged 27, originally from Ohakune and described as the best snow terrain jump builder in the world, died when his car went over a bridge in South Westland.

Tom was the son of longtime Turoa snow

groomer and supervisor Fred Campbell and real estate agent Kathy Campbell. He recently worked at the Cardrona Alpine Resort.

Sun Valley (Idaho) has been named as North America's top ski resort in the latest annual awards made by SKI Magazine.

The best ski resort needs a perfect mix of powder, terrain, lodging, dining, activities and après ski fun to please locals and traveling skiers and snowboarders.

Previous winners taking the top spot include Whistler/Blackcomb, Aspen, Jackson Hole, Vail and Deer Valley.

Runners-up this year in order were Deer Valley, Whitefish Mountain, Taos, Aspen Snowmass, Telluride, Whistler/Blackcomb, Steamboat, Beaver Creek and Crested Butte.

Saalbach (Austria) has been named as the host of the 2025 world Alpine skiing championships.

It beat rival candidates Crans-Montana (Switzerland) and Garmisch Partenkirchen (Germany).

Trondheim (Norway) will host the 2025 world Nordic skiing championships. It was the only candidate.

It will be the second time both Trondheim (1997) and Saalbach (1991) have hosted the respective world championships.

The Scottish Government has approved plans for the troubled Cairngorm Mountain ski area above Aviemore in the Highlands to receive a £20.5 million cash injection.

The majority of the money (£16m) will go on repairing the centre's funicular railway which gives access the upper mountain as well as being a year-round attraction in its own right. The funicular has been out of action for two years since structural problems.

Plans include two new chairlifts, 30 hectares more of skiable terrain, a zipwire and summer mountain biking trails.



CLUB ITEMS & SERVICES FOR SALE

RSC Administration Office, P.O. Box 8064, Symonds Street, Auckland 1150

Website: www.rsc.org.nz

email: admin@rsc.org.nz

Lockers

Lockers are available for hire in the Hut at Turoa and occasionally in the Lodge.

email - admin@rsc.org.nz to find out what is available.

Annual Locker Rental Rates- applicable from when you are allocated a locker-

Ski- \$57.50

Gear \$28.75

Club Items

(Add \$3 for each order to be posted)

Name Badge (free to new members) \$12

PHONE NUMBERS

RSC Office 09-377-3856

Lodge 07-892-3824

Hut 07-892-3822

Chalet 07-892-3823

Turoa 06-385-8767

NEW MEMBERS COSTS

Two working parties.

Senior joining fee \$199

Junior joining fee \$99

Annual senior subs \$258.75 incl GST (\$225 plus GST)

Annual junior subs \$95 incl GST (\$82.61 plus GST)

ACCOMMODATION FEES (Effective May 1st 2020)

Members Senior	18 years and over	\$54
Members Teen	14-17 years	\$47
Members Junior	13 years and under	\$36
Members' children	7 years and under	\$28
Non-members	14 years and over	\$100
Non-members	13 years and under	\$67
Life Members		\$27
School group children		\$67
School group parents		\$89

Off season rates (Chalet and Turoa)

Members Senior and Junior \$27

Non-members Senior and Junior \$32

**Groups of 20 or more: please apply to Administration Officer for possible discounted rates.
MEMBERS' CHILDREN AGED 8 YEARS AND OVER WHO ARE NOT YET MEMBERS
PAY NON-MEMBER RATES.**