

The Bulletin

RUAPEHU SKI CLUB

Volume 88, No. 2

June 2023



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RSC's wonderful mountain museum Glacier Hut, built 100 years ago in 1923. It was the first hut built above Chateau level and was the first dedicated ski club hut built anywhere in NZ. Members can visit the hut. There is a key in the Lodge.

PRESIDENT'S COLUMN

As I write we have just had our first snow fall at Ruapehu.

As the saying goes “Snow in May never does stay” – but it is a good start and gets everyone thinking and preparing for the coming season.

Fortunately La Nina (which gave us the warm wet winter last year) ended in March and we are now in ENSO (El Nino Southern Oscillation) which is neutral conditions according to NIWA.

If El Nino conditions arrive for winter we will have cooler temps and potentially good snow falls for this year's ski season.

Hopefully by the time you read this there will be plans in place for an operator/s to run the skifields.

The administration process has not been a simple one and has become very complicated, with MBIE (the Ministry of Business Innovation and Employment) getting overly involved with it all.

The watershed meeting that was supposed to be held on May 9th was moved forward by PwC, the administrator, to June 13th, hoping that new operators could be in place by the beginning of the ski season.

As the concessions to operate in the National Park, they cannot be transferred from RAL, and will take some time to go through the consultation process before being granted to a new operator.

Eleven members of the Committee attended the RMCA (Ruapehu Mountain Clubs Association) meeting in May where we were hoping to hear from the RAL administrators PwC, along with RSSA (Ruapehu Ski fields Stakeholders Association), Frank Risk Management about insurance, and DOC.

PwC did not turn up and put in their apology which was disappointing.

RSSA shared their plans to advocate on behalf of the members in matters relating to ownership, governance and management

of Whakapapa and Turoa ski fields.

They explained as much of their offer as they could to crowdfund the fields. Non-disclosure agreements prevented them from telling us all the details. They are concerned about the major involvement of MBIE in the administration process.

To find out more about RSSA go to their website www.savemtruapehu.org.nz. For \$10 you can join the association and you can sign up to their newsletters.

The latest RMCA newsletter is on our website on the noticeboard.

The following day after the meeting the Committee met to make a plan for the season. It was difficult to make a plan not knowing who would be operating the skifields, but still it was felt we needed a plan.

Last year the Club made a significant loss, as you will see in the AGM financial reports.

This was due to having cooks in all buildings and low use of the Club facilities by our members.

There was no snow coverage on the lower mountain for most of the season. However, there was good skiing and boarding on the upper mountain.

With this in mind the Committee have decided for 2023 to have a cook only in the Lodge, and self catering with custodians in the Chalet and Turoa. The Hut will be closed. We will not have a Swiss instructor this season.

It was great to celebrate the 100 years of Glacier Hut at the end of April, with a 1920s party.

I hope we will be able to have some other events to celebrate it during the season.

Work parties have been small but have accomplished a lot. Thank you to all those members that have attended one.

Hope to catch up with many of you at the AGM and at the buildings during the ski season.

Catherine Gafa
RSC President



RSC Lodge on May 13th. A good snow base is already in place. Photo: Carl Burling.

THROUGH THE LODGE WINDOW

The 2023 ski season at Ruapehu is likely to go ahead.

Final details were awaited as this Bulletin went to print, so RSC members should check the Club's Facebook page for updates.

*** See Page 5 of this Bulletin..

Ceana Priest ended her term as RSC Administration Officer, as from the end of April. We thank her for all her excellent work for the Club.

Paula Cooper has taken over for the season.

A new 288 square metre headquarters is being erected in National Park Village for the Ruapehu Emergency Services Charitable Trust.

The new Ruapehu Emergency Centre will be the first time that Ruapehu Alpine Rescue Organisation (RARO), alongside Ruapehu LandSAR, will have a home.

Daniel Thomas posted on Facebook a lively video of his skiing visit to Hokkaido during February with fellow clubbies Sonia Quinn, Ron Bonfrer and Nina Thomas.

They visited 10 different fields over eight days with amazing conditions and an epic host, a former custodian from another club.

Young Adult membership: We want to keep our university aged members from leaving the Club, so we have a membership option just for them.

The Young Adult membership is for anyone between 17 and 21 years old (as of January 1, 2023) and costs \$103.50 per year.

For Associate members, send us an email if you want to switch to the Young Adult membership

Veteran membership: *Are you keen to become a veteran member of our Club?*

If you are 60 years or older and have been a Senior or Associate member for at least 25 years, then you are eligible for our veteran membership type. The annual cost of this membership is \$103.50.

**THE
RUAPEHU SKI CLUB**

(inc) Founded 1913

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President: Catherine Gafa

Vice-Presidents: Carl Burling,
Liza Fitzsimmons, Damon Forsyth,
Marion Quinn, Donald Webster

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Treasurer: Sonia Quinn

Immediate Past President:

Phill Thomass

Captain: Simon Hunt

Vice-Captain: Paula Cooper

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Drew Blair, Ron Bonfrer,
Nichola Crouch, Denise Ditchburn,
Sam Hood, Fiona Lovelock,
Kevin Schluter

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Patroness: Barbara Scelly

Auditors: Hart and Co

Admin Officer: Paula Cooper

Heritage Fund Guardians:

Robin Dallas, Bernard Smith,
Catherine Gafa, Phill Thomass

Fund Treasurer: Mike Wardle

Glacier Hut Custodian:

Bernard Smith

There is a new weed in town and it's deceptively pretty. Viper's bugloss (*Echium vulgare*) was spotted in Iwikau Village and Scoria Flat in March.

It is a blue flowering weed that is not wanted in the area but likely hitched a ride in tyre treads or on a pair of shoes with a visitor to Tongariro National Park.

Local rangers are targeting and will continue to remove Vipers bugloss from the park.

The plant is covered in dense cylindrical spikes that are as fine as hair. They pierce skin and break off in your fingers, so gloves are a must!

This year's Kaimanawa horse muster near Ruapehu was cancelled due to the effects of Cyclone Gabrielle.

Each April a muster takes place to control the population of wild horses. A recent population count revealed there were 450 horses in the range.

So it was planned to take out 170 of which 60 would receive a contraception vaccination before being released and the rest would be up for rehoming.

Then Cyclone Gabrielle brought road closures, feed shortages and transport logistics.

Manganui on Mt Taranaki was the first NZ skifield to open this season when it turned on its T-bar on May 12th.

The skifield is operated by Stratford Mountain Club. Last year it almost did not open at all, due to a lack of snow, but it finally managed some late-season skiing in November.

The deadline for the September Bulletin will be Friday August 18th.

All items should be with the Editor in Wellington by then.

THE BULLETIN

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RUAPEHU SKI SEASON LIKELY TO GO AHEAD

The 2023 ski season at Ruapehu is likely to go ahead. Final details were awaited as this Bulletin went to print, so RSC members should check the Club's Facebook page for updates.

There were four bids to run the skifields. News media reports said that major creditor the Government department MBIE had decided that two private entities would each take over one skifield.

Pure Turoa, backed by property developer Cameron Robertson and Ohakune business couple Christine and Greg Hickman, would operate Turoa.

This meant that rival bidder Turoa Alpine Ltd, backed by Auckland business John Sandford, was out of luck.

At Whakapapa operations would be taken over by a group including RAL's former manager Dave Mazey and. South Island Office, a Christchurch-based investment group led by ski industry veteran Tom Elworthy, plus investors James Stringer, Sam Rofe and Rob Farrell.

This meant the Ruapehu Skifields Stakeholders Association (RSSA), which wanted to crowdfund for both fields, misses out.

The RSSA expressed dissatisfaction at the way the two successful bidders were chosen, saying the process was frustrating and opaque.

Meanwhile, PwC has been in full recruitment mode employing staff to kick off the 2023 winter season.

Details of the two successful operations had not been published when this Bulletin went to print, so the fate of season passes and life member passes was unclear.

RAL, which ran both Whakapapa and Turoa, went into voluntary administration

in October last year carrying \$45 million in debt. Accounting firm (PwC) was appointed as voluntary administrator and was tasked to save the business.

NEWS FOR RSC MEMBERS

The Committee has made a fiscally conservative plan to cater only the Lodge this season.

At this stage we plan for the Hut to be closed and we will have non paid custodians in our lower mountain buildings which will not be catered this year.

The date of the RSC AGM is Wednesday June 14th in the Commodore Room at the Royal NZ Yacht Squadron which is slightly smaller than our usual room.

We are hoping to live stream it for those who cannot attend. Links will be advised in a newsletter prior to the day.

Meet at 6.30pm for Happy Hour, and a cash bar will be open. The meeting will start at 7.30pm.

We are currently looking for a Secretary and a Club Captain. Please contact Admin if you would like to contribute to the running of our fine Club.

Raffle: We will be running a raffle at the AGM and selling tickets throughout the season. It will be drawn at the Club champs. The prize is a 65 inch Sony TV with sound bar.

\$10 a ticket, so please bring some cash to support the Club raffle. You can also purchase tickets by emailing Paula at admin@rsc.org.nz.

New member: We welcome the following new Junior member: Jake Shearer (Auckland).

SHIFFRIN FOR NORWAY

Mikaela Shiffrin (US), the most successful alpine ski racer of all time, will race for Norway from 2023-24 after her secret wedding to Norway's ski racer Aleksander Aamodt Kilde.

The 28-year-old American and 30-year-old Norwegian were married in Mexico in April after dating for two years.

Mikaela's new coach Karin Harjo, who is of Finnish descent, will follow her to Norway, where she will work also with Norwegian skiers Ragnhild Mowinkel and Thea Louise Stjernesund.

Shiffrin recently won her 88th alpine World Cup ski race, passing the women's record of 82 wins and the men's record of 86 wins.

Kilde is the world No 2 in men's alpine ski racing, trailing only Marco Odermatt (Swiss). He is the world No 1 in downhill and No 2 in super-g.

Shiffrin does best in the slower more technical events slalom and giant slalom, but has also had success in speed racing. Kilde stars in the speed events downhill and super-g.

Norway, population 5.5 million (the same as us), is a major snow sports country. They won an amazing 36 medals at last year's Olympic Winter Games.

See also photos on page 11 and our ski racing report on page 15.

LAKE IS COOLING

Te Wai ā-moe (Crater Lake) has slowly cooled from 32°C to 21°C since January 2023.

GEONET reported that other monitoring indicators also remain within normal ranges and the level of volcanic unrest remains low.

The volcanic alert level remains at

Level 1.

In the short term, the lake level has fluctuated with episodes of snow melt and heavy rainfall and as usual, continues to flow into the Whangaehu River headwaters.

** Mt Ruapehu is an active volcano and has the potential to erupt with little or no warning when in a state of minor volcanic unrest.

WORLD OF SKIFIELDS

Did you know that there are an estimated 5764 ski areas in the world?

The majority of that mind boggling number are mom and pop ski areas, with just one or two lifts.

If we cut down that number to include only those ski areas with more than four ski lifts in order to qualify as a ski resort, we still have 1945 ski resorts globally.

Only a small proportion of these generate the majority of skier visits.

The vast majority of these major resorts are located in the European Alps. Out of the 52 largest ski resorts by visitor numbers, 79 percent are located in the Alps.

FANNY GETS HER MEDAL

Fanny Smith (Switzerland) has been presented with her Olympic Winter Games bronze medal, 14 months after the women's ski cross final at the Beijing 2022 Olympics.

Smith originally finished third but the bronze was awarded to Daniela Meier (Germany) who fell in a collision with Smith.

There was then a legal dispute over the placement of the two athletes, after which the IOC decided to award two bronze medals.

ID TOURS BID FAILS

ID Tours has failed in its bid to get the charge it faces in the wake of the Whakaari (White Island) eruption dismissed.

At a hearing in Whakatāne District Court, ID Tours lawyer David Neutze argued the WorkSafe charge was “flawed”, and that ID Tours was a “conduit” between overseas and NZ-based tour operators and had no direct connection to White Island Tours.

Judge Evengelos Thomas declined to remove the charge.

”When a tour operator deals directly with customers it has all the health and safety duties under the Health and Safety at Work Act 2015,” he said.

“It must keep workers and other people safe at the activity. It must ensure that all the right information gets to customers when they are buying a tour. It must make sure that everything is safe for them while they are transporting them to their activity site, and so on.”

Judge Thomas said that to dismiss the charge, he must be satisfied there is no case for them to answer.

“That is a different test from a trial. It is not about whether ID Tours is guilty or not guilty of the charge that it faces,” he said.

Whakaari, which an active offshore stratovolcano island in the Bay of Plenty region, explosively erupted in 2019.

Of the 47 tourists and guides on the island at the time, 22 were killed and the others were badly injured.

CORONET PEAK CASE

A judge has reserved his decision in a case which arose after Queenstown

woman Anita Graf died in a skiing accident at Coronet Peak in 2019 when she hit an exposed fence post.

The former ski instructor, aged 60, skied into an unprotected post of a double-height deer fence, at the bottom of one of the skifield’s runs.

WorkSafe alleged the company should have carried out an adequate risk assessment of the fence and installed safety catch net fencing along its full length.

One witness for the defence said 1 million skiers have passed past this point without another serious or fatal incident.

Other witnesses said the internal chest injuries were unusually severe given descriptions of Graf’s slow speed at the time of the crash.

RAL PLEADS GUILTY

RAL has pleaded guilty to charges it faced over a bus crash that killed an 11-year-old schoolgirl on Mt Ruapehu almost five years ago.

It was operating the shuttle bus that crashed on the Ohakune Mountain Road in July 2018, fatally injuring one girl and badly injuring three people.

A coroner’s inquest in 2021 found the bus brakes used an air-over-hydraulic brake system that was old technology and the driver made critical errors that led to the brakes failing.

RAL will be sentenced in August at Waitākere District Court.

No charges were laid by police or WorkSafe at the time of crash, but the coroner’s findings restarted the ability of WorkSafe to lay charges after the original timeframe for doing so had lapsed.



Snow sports at Whakapapa. Photos: RAL.

RSC SUMMER PARTY 2023

On the first Saturday in April, 15 members attended a Summer Party at the Lodge to commemorate the 100th year anniversary of the building of Glacier Hut.

Members dressed to a 1920s theme and looked very fine. We were served a beautiful meal of apricot chicken cooked by Louise Blair and helpers, accompanied by a punch cocktail, enjoyed against a background of 20's music hits.

Jim Mutch was there and told stories of earlier days in the Club. He came as himself, a 1920s baby!

Earlier in the day Tim Sharp led an expedition of hikers to explore the southwestern flank of the maunga beyond the club huts lining the ridge above the Bruce Road.

If there ever was a choice which direction to turn, Tim always suggested uphill. On the way back we met a couple of deerstalkers carrying a red deer destined for the freezer.

On the Sunday morning after a traditional RSC cooked breakfast, members convened at Glacier Hut for a good look around inside and out.

There were many comments about the tiny stove and small bunks, and the cramped conditions early (and hardy) members would have had to endure.

We agreed it would be good to host another Summer Party again next year. Look out for it in January 2024.

It would be great if we could include other clubs in the event and create a mini festival celebrating club life on Ruapehu.

Drew Blair

CHAIRLIFT IS OPPOSED

Plans to install a new chairlift at the Remarkables Ski Area near Queenstown have been opposed by a variety of objectors

including Ngāi Tahu, Forest and Bird and Federated Mountain Clubs.

Some are concerned about the 40 year length of the proposed concession, which operator NZSki says is needed to justify the \$15 million investment, while others have concerns about ecology and the environment.

NZSki says a 32 year-old chairlift must be replaced and proposed changes will improve safety and access.

It has proposed a longer and slightly altered route to give long runs and is seeking a 40 year concession. The proposal would also increase chairlift capacity from 1500 people per hour to 2400.

Objectors say the new chairlift would create danger by funnelling skiers into conservation land used by campers and climbers.

One group said the area is a popular spot for snow caving, ski touring, people using show shoes and climbing.

There had been a sharp increase in the number of users in the last 10 years because of the area's peacefulness, they said.

Another issue is light pollution that would be generated by the new chairlift as snow guns and other equipment are used at night.

MATTERHORN ZAPPED

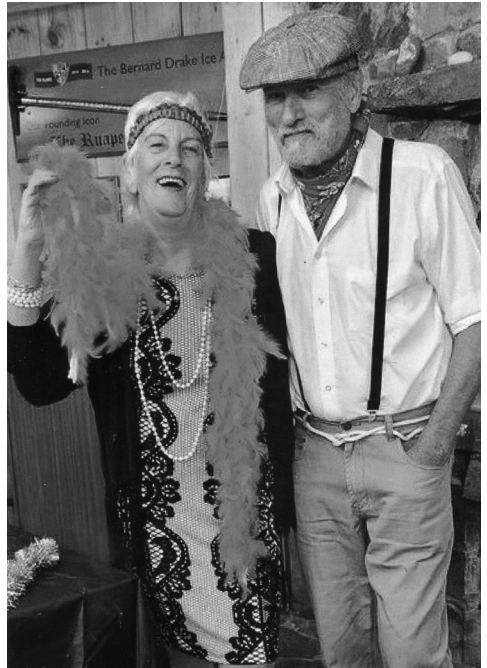
Swiss chocolate bar maker Toblerone has been told it can no longer use the image of the Matterhorn on its packaging.

National symbols such as the Matterhorn or the white federal cross, can only be used on milk-based products that have been made exclusively in Switzerland.

With increased demand for the luxury chocolate, parent company Mondelez is now opening a factory in Slovenia. Mondelez said they will to replace the peak with a "generic" alpine mountain.



Members held a small ceremony to mark 100 years since Glacier Hut was built. Our pictures show the crew jammed inside the hut and Tim Sharp in the entrance.



RSC held a 1920s theme party at the Lodge to mark 100 years since Glacier Hut was built in 1923.



Upper: Dinner time at an RSC summer work party. Photo: Catherine Gafa. **Lower:** Our Swiss connection man in Davos, Hanspeter Angerer, and his wife Claudia, on holiday in the Bay of Islands with RSC President Catherine Gafa. Photo: Damon Forsyth.

ZOI BRANCHES OUT

Zoi Sadowski-Synnott (NZ) branched out into freeride to win an extreme snowboard event, the Natural Selection Tour competition at Revelstoke in Canada.

The competition was held in some of the most dynamic and challenging terrain in snowboard competition history, located in the Selkirk Mountains, British Columbia.

Sadowski-Synnott was up against Hailey Langland (US) in the semifinals, taking the win and advancing to the final against Elena Hight (US). Again she came out on top.

“I feel super honoured and privileged to be able to compete in this competition because it has the best backcountry riders in the world, riding the best snow in the most psycho terrain,” she said.

“I haven’t ridden a lot of pillows in my life, so to come here and ride this definitely was a learning curve and I’m super stoked. I feel like I pushed myself and everyone rode some insanely sick lines!”

Have a look if you can at the video of Zoi’s winning run. She makes some amazing jumps and takes outrageous lines in deep snow.

ZOI DOES IT AGAIN

The Natural Selection Tour for snowboarders ended its season in April by visiting Valdez in Alaska where massive freeride lines were on offer, stretching 1200 metres to the sea with endless couloirs, natural halfpipes and wide glaciers.

Zoi Sadowski-Synnott (NZ) won the women’s gold medal, defeating Elena Hight (US) by 88 points to 87 in a very close final.

This was extreme freeride skiing at its very best and YouTube viewers in NZ were able to watch as the 22 year-old from Wanaka won the title.

Drones equipped with GoPro cameras followed the snowboarders down the very steep and spectacular slopes as they performed their tricks and tried not to crash.

This win marked Sadowski-Synnott’s 25th consecutive podium finish across all disciplines, achieved over the last three years.

Earlier, Zoi beat Hailey Langland (US) in their semifinal.

The competitors had two runs in each matchup, with their best score to count. They were judged on their choice of line, plus their performance.

Travis Rice (US) beat Mikkel Bang (Norway) in the men’s final.

GU STUDIES PHYSICS

When Ailing Eileen Gu (China) is flying through the air during her freestyle skiing routines, it often seems like she is challenging the laws of gravity.

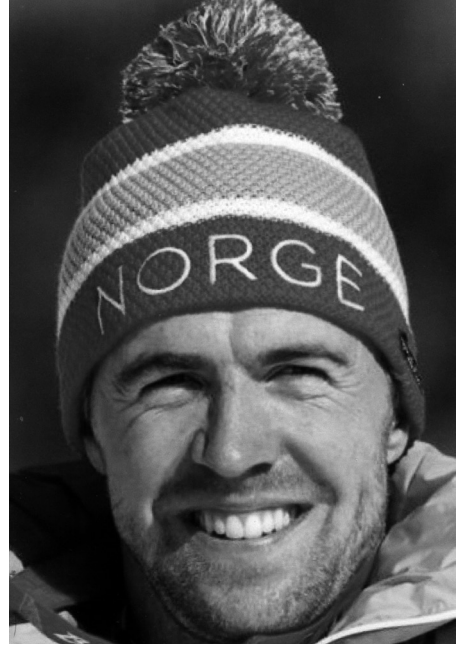
It is fitting, therefore, that the double Olympic champion from Beijing 2022 studies quantum physics at Stanford University in the United States.

“Outside of skiing I am a huge nerd,” she said.

“I really like to learn and to stretch my mind. That is what I really love about quantum physics. It is very conceptual and it makes you question the nature of reality.

“That’s very fascinating to me because in my own way, when I’m skiing, I guess I’m bending the laws of what is possible in the first place.”

Gu lives in California but skis for China which is her mother’s country. She has several times skied in NZ freestyle



WORLD SNOW SPORTS STARS: Mikaela Shiffrin (US), Aleksander Kilde (Norway), Mia Brookes (GB), Marco Odermatt (Switzerland).

SNOWY SCOREBOARD

MOONLIT IN GEORGIA

The world championships for snowboard and freeski were held in March at Bakuriani (Georgia).

SNOWBOARD WOMEN'S SLOPESTYLE.

Zoi Sadowski-Synnott (NZ) won the world championship silver medal, losing to **Mia Brookes (Gt Britain)** aged 16 who became the youngest world champion in snowboarding history.

Zoi was in the lead after one run but Brookes landed the first Cab 1440 double grab in a women's event to claim gold.

Mia scored 91.38 and Zoi 88.78. Miyabi Onitsuka (Japan) was third on 83.05.

SNOWBOARD MEN'S SLOPESTYLE.

Lyon Farrell (NZ) made the final and finished ninth. The winner was Marcus Kleveland (Norway).

FREESKI WOMEN'S SLOPESTYLE.

Ruby Andrews (NZ), the current world junior champion, made the final and finished sixth. The winner was the Olympic champion Mathilde Gremaud (Switzerland).

FREESKI MEN'S SLOPESTYLE.

Ben Barclay (NZ) made the final and finished ninth. The winner was Birk Ruud (Norway).

FREESKI MEN'S HALFPIPE.

Ben Harrington (NZ) made the final and finished fifth. **Nico Porteous (NZ)** was still recovering from knee surgery and did not compete. The winner was Brendan Mackay (Canada).

FREESKI MEN'S BIG AIR.

Luca Harrington (NZ) made the final and finished fifth. The winner was Troy Podmilsak (US).

SHIFFRIN WINS AGAIN

Mikaela Shiffrin (US) has now won **88 alpine skiing World Cup races, a record for women and better than the men's record of 86 wins set by Ingemar Stenmark (Sweden) in the 1970s and 1980s.**

Mikaela Shiffrin (US) dominated the latest alpine ski racing World Cup season, posting 18 podium finishes, including 14 victories, in 29 races.

Shiffrin thus won the overall alpine skiing World Cup, based on all races in 2022-23.

Her tally of five overall World Cup titles equals Marc Girardelli (Luxembourg) and trails only Annemarie Moeser-Proll (Austria) who won six overall titles and Marcel Hirscher (Austria) who won eight men's titles.

WORLD CUP POINTS 2022-23

WOMEN

Mikaela Shiffrin (US)	2206
Lara Gut-Bergami (Switz)	1217
Petra Vlhova (Slovakia)	1125

MEN

Marco Odermatt (Switz)	2042
Aleksander Kilde (Norway)	1340
H Kristoffersen (Norway)	1154

ROBINSON'S RACES

NZ alpine ski racer Alice Robinson contested World Cup events in March.

11th in downhill at Crans Montana (Switzerland).

21st in super-g at Kvitfjell (Norway).

22nd in downhill at Kvitfjell (Norway).

DNF in super-g at Kvitfjell (Norway).

7th in GS at Are (Sweden).

DNF super-g at Soldeu (Andorra).

7th in GS at Soldeu (Andorra).

LEADING NZ SNOW SPORTS STARS



Ruby Andrews



Gustav Legnavski



Jack Adams



Ben Barclay



Alice Robinson



Piera Hudson



Ben Harrington



Mikayla Smyth



Luca Harrington

RSC CALENDAR OF EVENTS

May 2023	27-28	Working parties
June 2023	14	RSC AGM at Auckland
July 2023	??	Whakapapa opens
	??	Turoa opens
	1-16	School holidays
Aug 2023	27-Sept 8	World junior freeski champs at Cardrona
	12 or 26	Christiania Derby
	19	Haensli Cup (RSC) provisional
Sept 2023	2	Rangatira Trophy
	9	Tongariro Juniors
	16	Ngauruhoe Trophy
	22- Oct 8	School holidays
	??	RSC Club champs
October 2023	??	Turoa and Whakapapa close.

BUY A GONDOLA

Skyline Queenstown has offered the public the opportunity to buy one of the four-seat gondolas that have carried millions of visitors up Bob’s Peak for a view of Queenstown for 36 years.

They are being replaced by 36 new 10-seat Doppelmayr gondolas from Austria, which will triple capacity from 1000 visitors an hour to 3000.

One third of the new gondola cabins will be able to carry mountain bikes to the popular trails on the hill, and they feature flush loading systems which are more accessible for wheelchairs or strollers.

The redevelopment project was originally announced in 2016 when it was expected to cost \$60 million. By 2019 the total cost grew to “north of \$150 million.”

Construction of the new top terminal has begun while the gondola replacement is under way, and will take 18 months to complete.

Once it is finished, the old top terminal will be destroyed and replaced with another building, which will eventually be joined to the new terminal.

Construction is under way on a 400-space car park, due to be completed in about a year.

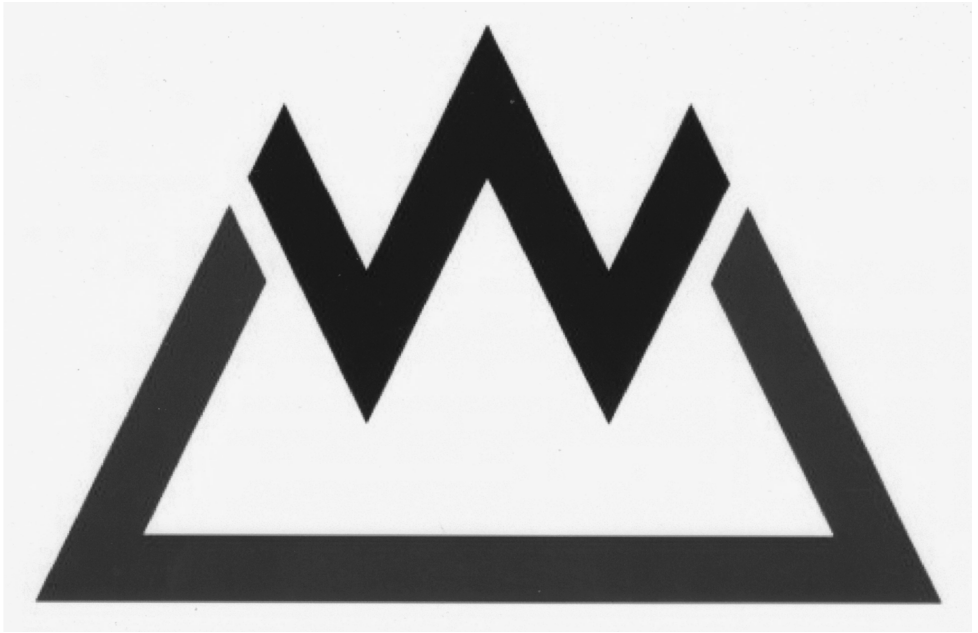
The gondolas were installed in 1987, replacing the original bubble gondolas that operated after the facility was built in 1967.

JUNIOR SKI PATROL

Ski Patrol of Sweden has introduced its Junior Ski Patrol programme designed to teach children snow sports safety.

At each event children from the local town are invited to their nearest resort and given a full day of snow sports safety.

It covers the FIS 10 rules for the conduct of skiers and snowboarders, how to act in case of accident, respecting and reading avalanche warnings, use of the transceivers and use of safety equipment.



WHAKAPAPA'S LOGO

Do you know the meaning behind the Whakapapa skifield logo?

The three upper peaks represent the three main peaks of Mt Ruapehu.

They are Paretetaitonga, Tahurangi (high peak) and Te Heuheu.

The three white peaks represent the three main skiing locations: Te Heuheu Valley, the Knoll and the National Downhill.

RAL says Whakapapa has 550 hectares of ski and snowboarding terrain, made up of beginner 30 percent, intermediate 45 percent and advanced 25 percent.

It has everything from cruisy groomers to exhilarating chutes, bumps and drops, made all the more exciting by the natural volcanic terrain.

Whakapapa's highest lifted point is 2320 metres and its vertical descent is 690 metres.

Whakapapa has one gondola, one quad express, two quad fixed chairs, one double fixed chair, three T-bars, one elevator and four carpet lifts.

There are four licensed cafés, two rental outlets, a retail store, a ski and ride school, a workshop and an urgent care clinic.

Did you know that Ruapehu is a lady?

Ruapehu, the beautiful maid, was married to Taranaki. One day, while her husband was away hunting, she was wooed and won by Tongariro.

When Taranaki returned at the end of the day he surprised the guilty pair.

A titanic battle ensued in which Taranaki was defeated. He retreated towards the west coast, carving out the course of the Whanganui River as he went.



Tough conditions during an RSC summer activity ride along the 42nd Traverse track which was badly damaged by Cyclone Gabrielle. Photos: Will Geddes.

BIG US SNOWFALL

Several California ski resorts have announced they have received so much snow that they plan to stay open until well into the summer months.

Mammoth Mountain said it would be open for skiing at least until the end of July. The resort had broken its season snowfall record of 668 inches.

Palisades Tahoe announced it would continue to operate the alpine portion of the resort until the July 4th weekend, after its second snowiest winter on record.

California faced dramatic weather conditions in March when the state was racked by powerful atmospheric river storms that brought a deluge of rain and snow.

Elsewhere, Deer Valley Resort and Park City Mountain Resort (Utah) as well as Aspen Mountain, Aspen Highlands, Steamboat and Copper Mountain (Colorado) have all lengthened their seasons.

ANDREW GRIMWADE

Sir Andrew Grimwade, one of the men involved in the building of Tūroa skifield, has died in Australia, aged 92.

He was on the board of Alex Harvey Industries Board (AHI) in the 1970s when a proposal was put forward by the-the Tongariro National Park Board that a skifield be developed to take pressure of Whakapapa.

Andrew, being a very keen skier, convinced the AHI board that investing in developing a skifield would be a better idea than investing in the development of luxury golf courses, the other option at the time.

Eventually Tūroa was bought out by Ski Field Investments, which was controlled by the Grimwade family.

This went very well in the early 1990s until the Ruapehu eruptions of 1995 and 1996.

Turoa was forced into receivership and the company was acquired by RAL.

Andrew skied into his 70s, joining his grandsons when the opportunity arose. He had a long corporate career and was also a farmer on a property at Mansfield (Victoria) near the Mt Buller skifield. Andrew was a donor to the arts and was a dedicated AFL footy fan.

NZ SKIFIELDS CUT PASSES

Complaints over queues for chairlifts and car parks have forced the operators of the Cardrona and Treble Cone skifields in Otago to cut the number of skiers and snowboarders allowed on the mountain.

Limiting the number of day passes available will see 1000 fewer users on the mountain on peak days during the upcoming winter than in 2022.

It is the first time a New Zealand ski area has restricted pass sales to limit the number of users, but car parks are often closed when ski areas hit capacity.

Laura Hedley, general manager of experience at Cardrona and Treble Cone, said users on busy days would generally understand there was a wait, but once you get past the 25-minute mark you are really starting to annoy people.”

During the season the number and cost of single-day and multi-day passes would be limited according to demand.

Similar pricing models were used to manage numbers at mountains overseas, but this was a first for New Zealand, she said.



Tawny Wagstaff has broken the NZ speed skiing record. Photo: Snow Sports NZ.

SPEED SKI RECORD

Methven speed skier Tawny Wagstaff set a New Zealand record of 248.61 km/h at the world championships at Vars in southern France.

Wagstaff, aged 42, has been competing on the international speed skiing circuit since 2016. He is in the top echelon of racers and has been training in France.

In March he finished sixth in the world championships at Vars with his record run.

The winner was Simon Billy (France) with a world record of 255.50 km/h. There were 34 starters.

There has been a recent revival in speed skiing in New Zealand on the back of Wagstaff's international presence.

Two events were held in the 2022 season at Mt Hutt and Craigieburn and four events are planned for the 2023 season.

Speed skiing courses are 1km long. The first 300m or 400m are used to gain speed, with the top speed measured in the next 100m with the last 500m used for slowing down.

Speed skiers wear dense foam fairings on their lower legs, aerodynamic helmets and air-tight latex suits to increase streamlining.

Wagstaff has been trying for four years to break first the NZ record and then one day the world record. "There's not really any money in it. There's no prize money of any value. It's for love," he says.

The Methven man is a stonemason by trade and he trains at nearby Mt Hutt when he can. His coach is Graeme Goodwin, a former downhill skier.

The sport of speed skiing dates to the 1800s when Norwegian goldminers in California timed each other on 12-foot-long planks of wood.

The first official record was set at St Moritz in Switzerland in 1932 when Leo Gasperi broke 143 km/h.

American skier Steve McKinney was the first person to go faster than 200 km/h, a feat he achieved at Portillo in Chile in 1978.

The old NZ men's record was held by Chris Gebbie with a 232.859 km/h run at Les Arcs in France. The NZ women's record is 209.95 km/h by Lisa Powell.



Upper: The RSC centenary ball at The Chateau in 2013. **Lower:** A 1950s advert for The Chateau. The duo on the right are Bulletin editors Fitzie and Jock Graham. They were not golfers but were good friends of a Government photographer.

CHATEAU MEMORIES

I first stayed in The Chateau when I was 9 in 1950.

In the basement I handed over my shoes and was in turn given a pair of ski boots that contained a number on a small aluminium tag.

We then went outside and caught a Goat, an ex-US Army six-wheel drive truck that packed skiers like sardines into the back and ploughed its way up the muddy road to the Top O' The Bruce.

Then I went to an A-frame building where I was handed a pair of skis bearing the same number as the tag on my boots.

Next it was upwards via the Rockgarden to the 1936 RSC tin Hut where I had my first ski lesson with the legendary instructor Shorty Clearkin.

At lunchtime I was pleased to chew upon a tasty packed lunch provided by The Chateau.

Dinner was at the Ruapehu Room at The Chateau. It was a formal show with a high dress standard.

RSC moved its Winter Party into The Chateau as soon as it was built in 1929, sometimes having to share a week with the Tararua Tramping Club.

Dancing was popular most evenings, to the tunes of a three-piece combo.

The hotel was lavishly appointed, with panoramic window views, hot and cold running water in every room and custom-made high-quality furniture. Most of the staff were recruited from overseas.

Construction included a garage and a golf course, and a lawn bowling green.

The golf course was designed by an architect serving a prison sentence and was built by prison labour. For a while the first fairway served as a runway for light aircraft.

In 1932 the hotel title was transferred to the Department of Tourist and Health Resorts, which owned and ran the hotel

for the next 26 years.

The numbers of skiing tourists declined during World War II so in 1942 The Chateau was commandeered by the Health Department as an asylum when the Wairarapa earthquakes damaged the Porirua Psychiatric Institution

In late 1945 Ruapehu erupted over a 10 month period and the heavy showers of ash disrupted The Chateau's power and water supply, so the patients were evacuated.

The Chateau then served as a rest and recuperation centre for Air Force personnel returning from service in World War II.

After the War was a boom time for Whakapapa skifield, with the installation of ski tows, chairlifts and new facilities. In August 1948, the newly renovated Chateau Tongariro reopened and skiing resumed.

From the 1930s until RAL took over, The Chateau ran the ski hire, ski school, ski tows and cafeterias, and the Chateau manager was the skifield manager.

Power to the complex was initially provided by a 100kW hydro station in the Whakapapanui Stream, which provided power for lighting and cooking.

In 1955 the King Country Electric Power Board provided a 15km overhead 11 kV transmission line. This not only supplied power to The Chateau but also to the Whakapapa skifield and to mountain huts.

In 1990, during a period of Government privatisation of assets, The Chateau was sold to Kah New Zealand Limited, a subsidiary of Oriental Holdings Berhad (OHB), a Malaysian-based conglomerate owned by the Loh family.

In 2005 a new five-storey wing costing \$NZ6 million and containing 40 rooms and replicating the style of the original building was opened.



Upper: Skiing at Turoa. **Lower:** Snowboard racing.



Upper: The heir to the Crown in Belgium is Princess Elizabeth, aged 21. **Lower:** Sir Edmund Hillary skiing on the Ball Glacier at Mt Cook.

SNOWBOARDING HISTORY

By **Max Ufberg**

Long before the term snowboarding existed—and at least 80 years before it was an Olympic phenomenon—people were zipping like surfers down snow-covered hills.

The first known instance came in 1917, when 13-year-old Vern Wicklund stood on a modified sled that he rode down his parents' backyard in Cloquet, Minnesota.

Wicklund patented the idea nearly two decades later but produced only a handful of models.

The sport picked up speed in 1965 when Michigan's Sherman Poppen created the Snurfer by cross-bracing two skis and adding a string at the front for steering. Poppen sold close to one million units by 1970.

The real breakthrough happened when Dimitrije Milovich, a Cornell University dropout, founded Winterstick, the first modern snowboard company, in 1972.

With steel edges, laminated fiberglass and, most crucially, nylon straps for one's feet, Winterstick boards allowed riders to fly through more treacherous topography than its predecessors had.

Snowboarding went mainstream soon thereafter amid a fierce rivalry between Jake Burton Carpenter and Tom Sims.

Sims, a New Jersey-raised professional skateboarder more interested in aerial stunts than in speed, founded Sims Snowboarding in 1976.

Carpenter, a race enthusiast from Long Island who is credited with inventing modern snowboarding, created Burton Boards one year later.

As snowboarding grew in popularity, so did its reputation as a pastime for screwballs, a counterculture to skiing's establishment vibe.

In the 1980s, most North American ski resorts banned snowboarding, citing insurance liability and the rudeness of too many riders. The sport was more accepted in Europe, particularly in France.

By the 1990s, though, almost every resort in North America allowed riding.

The advent of the Pipe Dragon, a machine to cut halfpipes through snow, enabled new aerial stunts, and when snowboarding debuted at the 1998 Olympics, the halfpipe was the sport's biggest draw.

Some of snowboarding's first-generation innovators are now gone, but as Carpenter's widow Donna said recently, "What Jake tapped into is that humans need to play, even when they're adults."

THE BUNKER

In 1917 a grandfather of snowboarding emerged in the States.

Vern Wicklund, at the age of 13, fashioned a sled in Cloquet, Minnesota. He called the modified sled a "bunker".

"Standing sideways we would secure our rear foot under a leather strap that looks like a belt buckle and accommodated different sizes of shoes.

"Our forward foot was placed behind a piece of wood fastened to the board.

"The front of the board had a rope that we would hold with one hand. This rope would help us slow down the board and served as a brake.

"Our other hand would hold a stick that had a hole with a piece of rope we'd put around our wrist. This helped us with balance.

"The entire board was made of oak and was bent slightly to a concave shape. It weighed at least 15 pounds, maybe more."



Skiing at Whakapapa. Photos: RAL.

JURY BACKS ACTRESS

A civil court jury in Utah (US) has acquitted actress **Gwyneth Paltrow** of causing a ski collision at Deer Valley Resort in 2016 that left retired optometrist Terry Sanderson with broken ribs and concussion.

He sued her for \$US300,000. She counter sued for \$1, claiming he caused the collision. The jury found he was 100 percent responsible for the crash and awarded her \$1.

Sanderson said the 46-year-old actor left him injured on the mountain and didn't send for help. Paltrow's attorney said she did offer to help but was told by her instructor and others to ski away.

In her counterclaim, she said Sanderson apologised to her and said he was fine.

The verdict followed eight days of courtroom testimony that made the case a pop culture fixation. Worldwide audiences followed the celebrity trial as if it were episodic television.

Attorneys focused on the skiing code of conduct that stipulates that the skier who is downhill or ahead on the slope has the right of way.

***Princess Beatrix**, the 85-year-old former Dutch queen, has undergone surgery after breaking her wrist in a skiing accident.*

The Royal House said she was otherwise in good health and recovered at home.

Beatrix reigned for 33 years until abdicating in favour of her son, Willem-Alexander, who was crowned in 2013.

The name Egmont is gone for good and the mountain is now Taranaki Maunga.

Hundreds of people gathered at Aotearoa Pā in South Taranaki to witness the initialling of Te Ruruku Pūtakerongoa, a Treaty of Waitangi settlement.

The national park's peaks, regarded as

tūpuna by Māori, will jointly become a legal person named Te Kāhui Tupua.

The mountain was taken in 1865 as part of the confiscation of 1.2 million hectares of Māori land for the "rebellion" of the Taranaki Wars.

The national park will also have a new name, **Te Papakura o Taranaki**, meaning the highly regarded and treasured lands of Taranaki, and a new governance structure.

***Otto Ross (US)** celebrated his 97th birthday by going skiing and giving a lesson as an instructor.*

He took a ride Mission Ridge (Washington State) ski resort on the Ottobahn Magic Carpet, a conveyor belt ski lift named in his honour.

Now in his 72nd year working as a ski instructor, he teaches beginner skiers, who range in age from young children to octogenarians.

Herb Oedel (US) aged 97 has announced his retirement from skiing after 90 years in the sport.

Oedel first hit the slopes when he was 7 and has been skiing at Bradford Ski Area (New England) for the past 30 years.

Herb's wife Ginny who is 100 is not a skier but has usually gone with him on his visits to the snow.

***Valentino Guseli (Australia) aged 17** made history as the first snowboarder to make a World Cup podium in three disciplines: big air, slopestyle and halfpipe.*

The Canberra-born young star had six podium finishes across different disciplines, including one gold, four silver and one bronze.

***Josie Baff (Australia) aged 20** has emerged as a star of snowboard cross.*

She won the final World Cup event of the season at Mont-Sainte-Anne (Canada) and won four other medals on the World Cup circuit plus a silver medal at the world championships.



Upper: Lovely colours at Lake Taupo. **Lower:** Ski ballet at Madonna Di Campiglio (Italy).

ACROSS THE SKIING WORLD

NZ alpine ski racer Alice Robinson suffered a huge crash in a women's World Cup super-g in Norway.

Blizzard like conditions caused mayhem at Kvitfjell and Robinson, 21, who was the third skier to take on the mountain, crashed towards the end of her run.

She went head first into the safety fence but eventually stood up, collected her skis, put them on and skied down the mountain.

*** Alice Robinson and her head coach Chris Knight have ended their partnership, after four years. The first appointment to her new coaching team is 2010 Winter Olympian Tim Cafe, who was her coach through her teenage years.

Two Minnesota skiers completed North America's largest cross-country ski race the 55km Birkebeiner on just one pair of skis.

Chris Parr and Joe Dubay bought the longest pair of skis they could find and had them mounted with two sets of bindings. They took four-and-half hours to make the finish.

Boeing engineer Brian Geppert turns old ski gear into useful household items.

He has made 50 different products, everything from paper towel holders to plungers, coat racks, bottle openers and Christmas decorations, while ski boots find new purpose as birdhouses. He has made 2000 sales.

Skis are made from combinations of materials, chiefly wood, metal, fibreglass and plastic. These give the skis strength, but also make them difficult to disassemble and recycle.

Geppert got creative. He uses an abrasive blade to sand his way through the layered skis, and also employs a drill press, chop saw, electric screwdriver and a grinding stone.

Swiss skier Andri Ragettli earned himself a new world record by landing nine backflips in 30 seconds on set of little jumps on the lower slopes of Laax.

After working for four hours with a couple of buddies putting together the jump line, Ragettli got to work getting upside down, stomping flip after flip, and even skating between jumps to keep his speed up and maximize the airs in the short time allowed.

British high school students on a ski trip to the US were stranded in New York after their hotel shredded their 44 passports

The students and teachers from Barr Beacon High School in Walsall had to apply for emergency travel documents, delaying their return to the UK by five days. They had been skiing at Lincoln (New Hampshire).

Carrick O'Neill aged 10 skied at seven different ski areas in one day. Six were in Minnesota and one in Wisconsin.

He and his dad began 9:45am and hit their seventh skifield for night skiing at 7.30pm. He was able to use a special pass which gives access to 15 Minnesota ski areas.

Zurich-based company Ostloong has designed and developed the Sirius smart goggles that bring smartphone notifications, slope details and other vital information right in front of the skier's eyes without impacting their field of view.

The smart goggles are now available starting at \$US650 for the standard model or \$US1100 for the Pro model.

Afriski Mountain Resort, based in Lesotho, will not be open for skiing this coming winter.

One of two skifields in Africa, it said it is the first time since 2009 that it cannot open.

It did not say why it will not open but told skiers "we cannot guarantee a safe

and enjoyable experience for our guests and staff due to various challenges and risks this year.”

Luke Hetzel has been appointed as General Manager High Performance (GM High Performance) at Snow Sports NZ, based at Wanaka.

This is new role and replaces the High Performance Director (HPD) role that has served well over the past 14 years.

Since joining Snow Sports NZ in 2017 as the Park, Pipe and Freeride Manager, Luke has held various roles and of late his leadership as the High Performance Manager has set him up to succeed as GM High Performance.

The longest downhill ski tunnel in the world is found at Silvretta Montafon Ski Area in Austria. The Hochjoch tunnel is 476 metres long.

It is quite wide and well lit. The tunnel is part of the longest run in the Austrian state of Vorarlberg, totalling 12km.

Taos Ski Valley (New Mexico) has announced plans to transition its staff's snowmobile fleet from combustible to electric engines.

The electric snowmobiles are not cheap at \$20,000 but Taos Ski Valley aims to cut down on its CO2 output.

Taos Ski Valley has 1100 metres vertical with 14 lifts and 119 trails.

Colorado from next season will be enforcing a mandatory ski lesson for all skiers and snowboarders regardless of ability.

The bold move will ensure that everyone on the hill is familiar with the skier code and what trails they should be skiing on.

Some skiers are applauding the move, while others feel it's a cash grab by the ski areas.

Utah is to set up sobriety checkpoints on its ski slopes, starting next season.

These checkpoints will be primarily focused on detecting the presence of any form of intoxication in skiers and will involve a series of manoeuvres to evaluate their sobriety level.

A police chief said the execution of straightforward tasks, such as standing on one ski while touching one's nose, will enable law enforcement officers to ascertain the sobriety of skiers in a prompt and efficient manner.

Kansas which has no mountains will soon have its first ski resort. The plan is to use heavy machinery, such as excavators and bulldozers, to move an estimated 1.5 billion cubic feet to construct a peak standing at 6000 ft.

Cloud seeding, natural snowfall and snow making equipment will create a snow base for a skifield called High Plains.

Swiss rescuers pulled 16 people out of the snow after an avalanche tore down the Saas-Fee ski resort. Police said the survivors were extremely lucky.

All 16 people were rescued without suffering serious injuries. The avalanche was 200 metres wide and occurred when they were ski touring outside the designated skifield boundary.

Eight helicopters, avalanche rescue dogs and firefighting personnel from Zermatt and Saas-Fee were used in the rescue mission.

Plans have been announced to build a £300 million leisure resort in Merthyr Tydfil (Wales) including the UK's largest indoor ski slope.

The centre would have an indoor and outdoor adventure centre with accommodation including woodland lodges and a resort hotel.

It would be the official home and training headquarters for the Welsh and GB national, Olympic and Paralympic snow sports teams.



CLUB ITEMS & SERVICES FOR SALE

RSC Administration Office, P.O. Box 8064, Newmarket, Auckland 1149

Website: www.rsc.org.nz

email: admin@rsc.org.nz

Lockers

Ski and gear lockers are available in the Hut, Lodge and Turoa buildings.

Please email admin@rsc.org.nz for current availability.

Annual Locker Rental Rates:

Charged at the date of allocation.

Ski Locker \$63.25

Gear Locker \$32.62

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

Attend two working parties.

Joining fee senior and young adult \$99

Junior \$49

Annual senior subscription \$285

Annual sub young adult, junior, associate, veteran \$103.50

ACCOMMODATION FEES

Buildings	Lodge Catered	Turoa & Chalet Self Cater
Senior	\$63.00	\$45.00
Young Adult 18-21	\$63.00	\$45.00
Teen Member	\$54.00	\$39.00
Junior Member	\$41.00	\$30.00
Members Child	\$32.00	\$24.00
Non-member rates		
Senior Non-Member	\$114.00	\$80.00
Junior Non-member	\$76.00	\$54.00