

# *The Bulletin*

## **RUAPEHU SKI CLUB**

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June 2024



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*Lovely skiing at Whakapapa. Photo: Barbara Thomson.*

## PRESIDENT'S COLUMN

Hi all,

The temperatures are starting cool down, as we approach winter, which I hope bodes well for a good ski season this year.

We have had a successful work party summer season despite low numbers turning up to help out.

A huge effort was made to paint the Lodge roof with almost two coats of paint put on before temperatures got too cold.

Quite a feat in the planning when the weather on the weekend you plan to paint is not always what you had hoped for, and switching to plan B, inside work is the only option.

Thank you to all those involved in painting the Lodge roof. Without members stepping up to do this it would have been a huge cost to the Club.

Special thanks to Carl Burling for all his organisation with the planning of the roof painting. This has been a two year project in the making. The roof now looks wonderful from the Gondola.

On April 6th, after a consultation process, Pure Turoa was granted a 10-year concession to operate the Turoa skifield.

This meant that both fields could now offer season passes for the upcoming season, which they did from April 15th until May 15th.

Whakapapa will still be run by RAL this season and a process is under way to find a new owner for the field. I have heard there are three interested parties.

With this whole process the Life Pass Holders have not been recognised this season, and will need to buy passes.

Both fields offered discounted passes up to May 15th.

It is anyone's guess what this will mean for the Club and the use of our buildings, going forward. We will only know once we have been through this season.

The Committee are well into finalising plans for the 2024 season, with there still being an uncertainty of the ownership.

We have a new cook/custodian Paul McAlister, lined up to start at the Lodge at the beginning of July.

At Turoa we have Grace and Ted staying in a semi-custodial role. They will be working at the skifield and doing weekly building checks for us to replenish supplies.

Members will need to do their duties at Turoa as we do not expect the custodians to be doing them.

At this stage we will not be having a custodian staying at the Chalet, and the Hut will be closed, apart from some big group bookings that we have that will book the whole building out for a number of days at a time. Bookabach will not be operating at Turoa during the ski season.

Sadly, we will also not be hosting a Swiss ski instructor again this year at the Lodge.

Our Davos liaison Hanspeter had two candidates lined up and they both made alternative arrangements for summer before a decision could be made about this opportunity.

Our AGM this year will be on June 12th at a new location the Richmond Yacht Club on Westhaven Drive.

Open at 6.30pm for socializing with a cash bar. Light snack will be provided and our AGM business meeting will start at 7.30pm.

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

**Catherine**



Snow right down to Chateau level in the 2023 ski season. Photo: Jerry Graham.

## THROUGH THE LODGE WINDOW

**Whakapapa skifield** will be operated this season by RAL (in receivership), the same as last year.

**Turoa skifield** will be operated this season by Pure Turoa which has a 10-year concession from DoC.

***The Emerald Lakes near Ruapehu** are weed free following work by Department of Conservation staff.*

*The lakes have been covered by **Juncus bulbosus** or bulbous rush, but DoC staff have worked since 2019 to clear it.*

*The work is part of the Tongariro Alpine Crossing sustainability project, which includes a range of changes to better manage environmental and cultural outcomes.*

*Tongariro water bodies are considered tapu, or sacred, and walkers are asked to avoid swimming in them.*

**Kainga Ora** has scrapped plans for a large housing subdivision in Ohakune, blaming a lack of funding and current economic and market pressures.

The announcement came after the plans for the development were met with strong opposition from a local community group who claimed it was a waste of taxpayer money and not needed in the ski town.

The proposed Teitei Drive mixed housing development was announced three years ago.

The plans involved a total of 131 residential lots on 9.4 hectares of council land near the Ohakune Carrot Adventure Park.

***Two Waimarino Rodeos** were held at Raetihi in the latest summer, one on Saturday and the second on Sunday.*

*There was a record number of entries, with 311 appearances over both days involving 172 individual adults and 57 juniors, many entered in multiple events.*



**THE  
RUAPEHU SKI CLUB  
(inc) Founded 1913**

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**President:** Catherine Gafa.

**Vice-Presidents:** Carl Burling,  
Damon Forsyth, Marion Quinn.

**Immediate Past President:**  
Phill Thomass.

**Secretary:** Michael Webb-Speight.

**Treasurer:** Sonia Quinn.

**Captain:** vacant.

**Committee:** Drew Blair,

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Ron Bonfrer, Sam Hood,

Simon Hunt, Fiona Lovelock,

Donald Webster.

**Patron:** Peter Brady.

**Patroness:** Barbara Scelly.

**Auditors:** Hart and Co.

**Heritage Fund Guardians:**

Robin Dallas, Phill Thomass,

Bernard Smith, Catherine Gafa.

**Fund Treasurer:** Mike Wardle.

**Glacier Hut Custodian:**

Bernard Smith.

Tongariro and Whanganui National Parks have a new combined Search and Rescue/Civil Defence Facility designed to enhance safety for locals and visitors.

The Ruapehu Emergency Services Charitable Trust (RESCT) has raised \$1.2 million to build its state-of-the-art emergency management facility which stands beside National Park School.

The building has advanced computer and electronic communication equipment, close proximity to a multiple-helicopter landing site and ample storage space for search and rescue gear.

**ODDITY:** *NZ's two lady snow sports stars were both born in Sydney.*

*Alice Robinson came to NZ when she was four and Zoi Sadowski-Synnott moved here when she was six.*

A helicopter with thermal technology searched 16,000 hectares of the Tongariro National Park last month in an effort to ensure the World Heritage-listed site is free of feral goats.

DoC said it was the largest-scale surveillance operation it had attempted, and was to ensure the park's Capra hircus or wild goat population was eradicated last year.

A DoC spokesman said wild goats heavily browse native plants, strip bark from trees and devour any new seedlings. They trample and harden soils, so steep countryside is vulnerable to slips.

Originally, the goats acted as an additional food source and cleared weeds on developing land. They also provided fibre for commercial industries.

*The deadline for the September Bulletin will be Friday August 16th.*

*All items should be with the Editor in Wellington by that date.*

**THE BULLETIN**

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## **RSC AGM SOON**

The AGM for RSC will be held at 7:30pm on June 12th at Richmond Yacht Club on Westhaven Drive.

Key issues on our agenda will be the election of new Committee members as two of our long time stalwarts are departing following many years of service to the Club.

With more certainty than last year evident around mountain operations, we trust that a larger crowd will attend our meeting than last year.

We will provide light refreshments and there will be a cash bar available for pre-season socialising before and after the meeting.

We have permission for our members to use any available carpark (yellow or white) on the evening, after 5pm, subject to due consideration for restrictions such as mobility spaces and loading zones.

## **RACING DATES**

The Haensli Cup (RSC interclub race) is provisionally set for August 24th.

The Christiania Derby is set provisionally for August 10th, the Rangatira Trophy provisionally for September 7th and the Tongariro Juniors for September 15th.

These races depend on someone being available to do the timing, as RAL do not have available staff.

The RSC Club champs are racing again this year, on September 28th.

## **HELEN TOBIN**

We note the passing aged 87 of Helen Tobin, wife of the late Christopher.

Helen was a regular RSC skier for many years and often attended Winter Party, staying in the Hut.

Originally from Bulls in the

Manawatu, she was one of a group of town planners from Wellington who joined RSC.

Helen appears in a 1961 photo, printed in the Bulletin, of RSC members at the crater.

## **JULIAN CLAY**

Julian Clay of Auckland, another of RSC's keen skiers for many years, passed away in May.

Julian was on the RSC Committee in 1995-2000 and was Chalet Officer for a while.

He often was around the Club at Winter Party time, in the Lodge or Chalet. His father Dr Bill Clay was also a well known member.

## **DENE O'KANE**

Former champion snooker player Dene O'Kane, described as "the greatest New Zealander to pick up a cue", has died, as the result of an accident at his Waiheke home. He was 61.

Dene joined RSC a few years ago as a Summer member.

O'Kane broke into the world top-20 and made the world championship quarterfinals twice.

He won 10 New Zealand titles, two Australian opens, two Oceania championships and three World Masters Championships.

## **RUTH MINHINNICK**

Right on press time we were advised on the passing of Ruth, who told her family she was taking her skis with her.

A member of four ski clubs at various times, Ruth was the wife of the late Dion who was a Committee member in the 1950s and 1960s and was occasionally a stand-in Bulletin Editor.

## SKI SEASON IS OK

Yes folks. We have a ski season at both Whakapapa and Turoa.

Whakapapa will be operated by RAL (in receivership), aided by a \$7 million golden handshake from the Government.

Turoa will be operated by Pure Turoa which has been granted a 10-year DoC concession.

Conservation Minister Tama Potaka said: “The concession means the public can continue to enjoy the recreational benefits available in the Tongariro National Park, one of the most majestic places in the country, for years to come.

“The 10-year concession allows for outstanding Treaty settlement negotiations to unfold and gives greater protection to iwi and hapū interests and responsibilities, including the future park negotiations, whilst ensuring the continued operation of the skifield.”

The concession includes provisions for DoC to carry out enhanced monitoring and a three-year review to ensure the field is operating effectively.

RAL has surrendered its concession to Pure Turoa while Whakapapa remains under the management of RAL’s receivers.

## CASH FOR WHAKAPAPA FUNDS FOR TUROA

The operator of the Whakapapa skifield has received another Government bailout, but Regional Development Minister Shane Jones insists it is the last one.

Cabinet has agreed to provide \$7 million of financial support to RAL.

It also pledged to provide \$3 million in equity and loans to enable the sale of

the Tūroa skifield assets to Pure Tūroa, a company owned by property developer Cam Robertson and businessman Greg Hickman.

“If no acceptable commercially led solution can be found within the next year, there will be no additional government funding for RAL’s Whakapapa ski operations,” Jones said.

\*\*\* Pure Turoa announced that people who held life passes in RAL could, for a few weeks, buy a discounted three-season multipass. These cost \$999 for three seasons for adults and \$299 for kids.

## BIDDERS RETURN

Two previous potential buyers are bidding to run Whakapapa.

One is ex-RAL chief Dave Mazezy alongside investment partner The South Island Office.

“A number of circumstances have changed since we made a decision pre-Christmas to withdraw our interest,” he said.

“The Pure Turoa process has gone through and Turoa is now covered. We have a better sense of what that licence looks like and we assume a similar one will come up at Whakapapa.”

The other bidder is Auckland businessman John Sandford who is registering an expression of interest in Whakapapa alongside local businesses, some from Auckland, and further afield.

He missed out on buying Turoa last year, but after growing up in Raetihi he is passionate about working with iwi to see Whakapapa thrive again.

\*\*\* There is talk of a third bidder, but no group has come forward so far.

## **RAL LIFE PASSES LIFE HAS ENDED**

RAL life pass holders have been told that for the 2024 season their life pass will not entitle them to free use of the Whakapapa skifield or gondola. Instead they were in April-May offered a discount on season passes.

The receivers of RAL (who are in control of the Whakapapa business) in April-May offered life pass holders a 30 percent discount on all 2024 season pass prices.

Through to May 15th life pass holders could buy adult anytime season passes for the discounted price of \$449 per pass compared with the normal price of \$649 available to all other purchasers, or adult weekday season passes for the discounted price of \$279 per pass compared with \$399.

Life pass holders will no longer have access to the Sky Waka Gondola without a 2024 pass or Sky Waka ticket.

The receivers said they continue to work to secure a future for Whakapapa. A key element of this is demonstrating that Whakapapa will be able to generate sustainable profits over the longer-term.

RAL life pass holders remain unsecured creditors of RAL and will receive any updates on this status directly from the receivers (Calibre Partners) or the liquidators (PWC).

The receivers are funded for the 2024 season and therefore this offer is specific to 2024. Any future offers would be at the discretion of the owners of Whakapapa at the relevant time.

## **RUAPEHU LIFT PRICES**

RAL and Pure Turoa on April 15th published some of their lift prices for 2024.

We do not repeat them as there were many variations, and some of the season pass offers will have expired by the time you read this.

RSC members should keep a watch on the Whakapapa and Pure Turoa websites for updates and details.

\*\*\* Both RAL and Pure Turoa have offered on season passes two free days at the other side.

\*\*\* RAL has announced that the popular North Island Primary and Intermediate School Ski Champs (NIPS) will be held for the first time since 2019.

\*\*\* RAL's website is now [www.Whakapapa.com](http://www.Whakapapa.com).

## **TUROA REPLACEMENT**

The Park Lane and Movenpick chairlifts at Turoa will be replaced by a detachable lift.

A mid-station located at the top of the Wintergarden gives beginners a progressive ski experience. It also provides for mid-station up skiing during spring and low snow seasons.

The high speed at up to 7 metres per second is much improved over the current 2 metres per second.

Chairs are stored under cover at night and the cable can be run to stop ice forming.

This lift opens the possibility of year-round operations catering to the growing sightseeing visitor market.



## WHAKAARI MILLIONS

Millions of dollars are to be paid in reparations to victim families, and in fines, in respect of the fatal eruption of White Island Whakaari volcano in 2019.

Whakaari Management Ltd was fined \$1.045 million and ordered to pay \$4.88 million in reparation.

White Island Tours was fined \$517,000 and ordered to pay \$5 million in reparation.

Volcanic Air Safaris Ltd was fined \$506,000 and ordered to pay \$330,000 in reparation.

Aerius Ltd was fined \$290,000 and Kahu (NZ) was fined \$196,000.

The Government science agency GNS was fined \$54,000.

Judge Thomas discounted the starting fine for GNS of \$90,000 with 20 percent off for a guilty plea and 20 percent off for GNS's previous "flawless health and safety record".

There were 47 people on the volcanic island, 50km off the Bay of Plenty coast, when it erupted with 22 people killed and the others badly injured.

Judge Evangelos Thomas said he adopted an individual reparation sum of \$250,000. That calculation provided a total reparation of \$10.2 million.

Judge Thomas said each of the companies involved had failed in their duties to assess and mitigate risk.

"None of the defendants had any volcanology expertise. They had to get risk assessments done by the appropriately qualified people.

"Failure [to do so] compromised everything else they did. That failure exposed others to risk of serious injury and death."

**\*\*\* White Island Tours said insurance would pay its reparations, but it had no cash nor assets with which to pay the fine, and was likely to fold.**

**\*\*\* The family owners of Whakaari Management said they have apologised unreservedly to all those killed and injured, but said they have no insurance to fund reparations.**

## AUTOMATED MONITORING TONGARIRO NATIONAL PARK

In March, GeoNet took a major step towards automating the monitoring of our active volcanoes by establishing MultiGas systems to collect data at Ngauruhoe and Te Maari Crater, in the Tongariro National Park.

What are MultiGas systems?

Carbon dioxide (CO<sub>2</sub>), sulphur dioxide (SO<sub>2</sub>), and hydrogen sulphide (H<sub>2</sub>S) gases are emitted through gas venting fumaroles on many active volcanoes and provide critical information for our volcano monitoring team.

Building our understanding of the gas emissions helps to detect and confirm eruptions and improves forecasting changes in activity.

MultiGas systems automatically measure the concentrations of these gases around the clock.

Volcanic gases offer a unique view into active volcanoes because they are the only part of the magma that can reach the surface before an eruption.



*Children skiing at Ruapehu. Photos: RAL.*



*Skiing at Whakapapa. Photos: RAL.*





**Left:** World junior champion Txema Mazet-Brown. **Right:** Many NZ winter stars belong to this club.

## WORLD JUNIOR CHAMP

NZ snowboarder Txema Mazet-Brown aged 18 won the world junior snowboard big air championship at Livigno (Italy) with a score of 95.

Elias Lehner (Switzerland) was second with 94.33 and Eli Bouchard (Canada) was third with 91.86.

Fellow Kiwi rider Rocco Jamieson (NZ) was seventh with 87.88. There were 60 starters.

“I put down a cab double corked 1440. It felt great to put it down in the tough conditions with high winds and poor visibility, so I was very happy with that.”

Born on Reunion Island in the Indian Ocean, Txema started to spend his winters in the snow in France (his father’s home country) as soon as he could walk.

When Txema was three years old his family moved to Raglan and would take trips to Mt Ruapehu on the weekends. He

started competing in snowboarding from age 10.

The family moved to Wānaka in 2018 where his dad worked as a Cardrona high performance snowboard coach. His name in Spanish and is pronounced Tema.

\*\*\* **NZ snowboarder Rocco Jamieson** won a bronze medal for third place in the world junior championship slopestyle event at Livigno (Italy).

Jamieson, aged 17, from Wanaka, scored 87. The winner was Brooklyn Depriest (US) with 91 while Roman Allemagne (France) was second with 89.

Txema-Mazet- Brown (NZ) was seventh with 69. There were 60 starters.

\*\*\* **NZ snowboarder Brooke Hansen aged 16** won a silver medal in the snowboard freeride junior world champs at Kappl (Austria). The extreme sports event was won by Teagan Rilee Turner (US).



**Upper:** Interclub racing at Whakapapa. Photo: RSC. **Lower:** Alan's favourite freeride photo. No idea where it is.

## UNUSUAL EARTHQUAKES

Mt Ruapehu has been experiencing an “uncommon style of small earthquakes”, GNS Science said in March.

Crater Lake in March had a drop in temperature and GNS observed minor earthquake activity which it described as quite uncommon for Ruapehu.

The volcanic alert level remained at 1 (on a scale of 0-5).

“The earthquakes are small and were initially difficult to identify without careful examination of the data as they are uncommon at Ruapehu and only the larger examples are detected by our automatic systems,” GNS said.

“Over the last month, we have seen a maximum of six of these earthquakes a day, and on many days none at all.”

GNS said each earthquake consisted of up to about 10 minutes of ground shaking and was composed of similar sub-events.

“While we are able to determine a location for some of the larger examples, the small size and style of the activity means our locations, especially depth, are quite uncertain.

“However, as they are recorded only by monitoring stations on the upper part of the volcano, we speculate that they originate near the summit area of the volcano within a few kilometres depth beneath the surface.”

As the earthquakes did not typically last more than 10 minutes, they didn’t constitute volcanic tremor, GNS said.

The earthquakes were also quite different in appearance from volcanic tremor traditionally seen at Ruapehu.

“While the earthquakes represent something new at Ruapehu, and we are working on understanding the details of

the processes driving them, they are not thought to pose any concerns for eruptive activity.

“Other monitored parameters have shown no recent changes. The temperature of Te Wai ā-moe (Crater Lake) is now relatively stable at about 24C, recent observations of the lake recognised nothing unusual, gas emissions from Ruapehu remain moderate.”

## SKI INDUSTRY WORRY

The US ski industry has lost more than \$5 billion over the past two decades due to human-caused global heating, new research has calculated, due to the increasingly sparse nature of snowfall on mountain ranges.

In many locations precipitation is now coming in the form of rain, rather than snow, due to warming temperatures.

This situation has shortened the average ski season in the US by five to seven days over the past half century, costing the industry an average of \$250 million a year from lost revenue and the rising cost of making snow via machines.

It is no better in Europe where mountains across France, Austria and Bosnia have been left almost entirely bare of snow, forcing ski lifts to judder to a halt and resorts to shut.

Last year was the hottest, globally, ever recorded and 2024 is following this with extraordinary levels of heat that have set new records in January and February.

The shrinkage is set to continue as the world heats up further due to the burning of fossil fuels, with ski seasons set to be reduced by 14 to 33 days by the 2050s, even if the world is able to severely cut planet-heating emissions and develop advanced methods to make snow.





NZ freeride skier Ben Richards. Photo: Freeride tour.

## NZ FREERIDE PODIUMS

**Ben Richards (NZ)** won a gold medal in the Fieberbrunn (Austria) leg of the World Tour freeride skiing event. It was Ben's first podium and first win on the tour.

His run was full of serious airtime, most notably a 360 on top of the ever-impressive Häusl Cliff in his second attempt of the day.

Ben went on to finish third overall on the 2024 tour and was named Rookie of the Year.

Ben was born in California and was on skis from the age of 2, but it wasn't until his family made the move to Wanaka, later in his childhood, that his passion for snow sports began to develop.

**Finn Bilous (NZ)** won third place in the Verbier (Switzerland) stop on the Tour, stomping a 360 off the Hollywood Cliff.

Bilous oozed his trademark style and creativity as he made his way down the face, carrying plenty of speed with him, throwing a massive 360 and stomping a flat 360 to impress the judges.

After his run Bilous said, "I'm stoked, it was a nice surprise to wake up to a few

extra centimetres this morning and it was definitely hard and fast in there, but just like New Zealand, so I felt at home riding here today."

Max Hitzig of Germany took the win, with two-time freeride World Tour champion Kristofer Turdell of Sweden rounding out the podium in third.

Bilous, who was crowned the 2023 Snow Sports NZ freeride athlete of the year, made the transition from freeski big air and slopestyle to freeride after the Beijing 2022 Olympic Winter Games.

**Jess Hotter (NZ)** won the women's ski category in a freeride event at Silverton Mountain (Colorado, US), while **Fynn Powell (NZ)** won second place in the men's ski category.

Jess, from Ohakune, has been No 1 in the world for women's freeride for some seasons now.

Freeride is an extreme sport which allows skiers and snowboarders to choose their own route down steep slopes.

It is not an Olympic Games sport but may be one soon.



**Upper:** Painting the Lodge roof in February 2024. **Lower:** Firewood stored at RSC Turoa. Photos: Catherine Gafa.





*Louise Windsor, aged 20, who is 16th in line to the British throne, skiing at St Moritz (Switzerland) this year.*

## FATAL AVALANCHE

Two New Zealanders were killed by an avalanche while backcountry skiing in Hokkaido (Japan).

A group of six foreigners were skiing on Mt Yotei when they were struck by the avalanche. A third person, also from NZ, was injured but survived.

One of the NZ victims was **Isabella Bolton, aged 21**. She worked on skifields

in Canada, Tekapo and Wānaka, and in November 2023 travelled to Niseko, Japan, to work as a ski guide.

Another victim was **Joshua Sellens, aged 33**, who was also a ski guide and was the co-founder of Japan-based adventure company Niseko Zen. Originally from Nelson, he worked as a ski instructor in NZ.

The injured person was NZ national **Lars Meier Blattner, aged 21**.



RSC CALENDAR OF EVENTS		
May 2024	1	RSC bunk bookings open
	25-26	Working parties
June 2024	1	Whakapapa opens for Sky Waka and sledding
	12	RSC AGM at Auckland
	15-16	Working parties
	27	Happy Valley opens
	28	Pure Turoa ski season opens (provisional)
July 2024	12	The rest of Whakapapa opens
August 2024	10	Christie Derby (provisional)
	24	Haensli Cup RSC (provisional)
	24-27	NIPS intermediate
	31-Sept 3	NIPS primary
Sept 2024	7	Rangatira Trophy (provisional)
	15	Tongariro Juniors (provisional)
	28	RSC Club champs
Oct 2024	13	Happy Valley closes
	27	Whakapapa closes (subject to snow levels)

**BIGGEST SOUTHERN SKI RESORT**

Where is the biggest ski area in the Southern Hemisphere?

Surprise. For now, anyway, it is in Chile.

Mountain Capital Partners of Colorado has taken over La Parva Ski Resort in Chile, combining it with the Valle Nevado ski area.

Together, these two resorts offer a combined total of 5000 acres of lift served terrain and an additional 200,000 acres of backcountry heliskiing.

\*\*\* The accolade may not last long. Here in NZ both Cardrona and The Remarkables are planning massive increases in their skiable snowfields.

**481 SUBMISSIONS**

DoC received 481 submissions from the public on the bid by Pure Turoa to operate the Turoa skifield.

There were 148 submissions opposing the bid with 319 in support and 14 neutral submissions.

Many of the submissions were from individuals, as well as several from groups and organisations representing local people such as iwi and businesses.

DoC invited submitters to appear in person at hearings in February.

\*\*\* A similar procedure is likely for Whakapapa if a buyer is found.

# SNOWY SCOREBOARD

## SKIING WORLD CUP

Swiss duo Marco Odermatt and Lara Gut-Behrami won the overall Golden Globes for alpine skiing World Cup races in 2023-24.

Points are awarded for placings 1-30 in season wide races. This year 151 men and 124 women scored points.

Odermatt was first in downhill, giant slalom and super-G as well as overall, making him the first man to win four titles in a single season since Hermann Maier (Austria) in 2001. Pirmin Zurbriggen (Swiss) and Jean-Claude Killy (France) are also in this exclusive club.

### MEN:

M Odermatt (Swiss)	1947
L Meillard (Swiss)	1078
M Feller (Austria)	952

### WOMEN:

L Gut (Swiss)	1716
F Brignone (Italy)	1581
M Shiffrin (US)	1409

Alice Robinson (NZ) finished 12th with 650 points, an excellent result considering she does not race slalom.

Alice scored 492 points in giant slalom, 135 points in super-G and 23 points in downhill.

No other Kiwis (men or women) gained points this season.

## ALICE FOURTH SILVER

**Alice Robinson (NZ)** resumed, after her four alpine World Cup giant slalom medals which were reported in the last Bulletin, by coming 14th and ninth in super-G races and an excellent 14th in a downhill at Saalbach (Austria).

These are her second and third best disciplines and she is still at age 22 learning the art of high speed racing.

She won her fourth giant slalom silver medal of the World Cup season to go with one bronze, when she was second in a giant slalom at Saalbach (Austria).

The race was won by 1.36 sec by Federica Brignone (Italy).

## WORLD CUP RESULTS

World Cup top 10 results by NZ competitors, in addition to all those fine performances recorded in the March Bulletin, were:

### ALPINE SKI RACING

Alice Robinson ninth in super-G at Kvitjell (Norway).

Alice Robinson **SILVER MEDAL** in giant slalom at Saalbach (Austria).

### FREESTYLE SKIING

Finley Melville-Ives fourth in halfpipe at Calgary (Canada).

Ruby Star Andrews seventh in slopestyle at Tignes (France).

Luca Harrington ninth in big air at Tignes (France).

Luca Harrington **BRONZE MEDAL** in slopestyle at Silvaplana (Switzerland).

Ruby Star Andrews fourth in slopestyle at Silvaplana (Switzerland).

### PARA SKIING

Adam Hall **BRONZE MEDAL** in slalom World Cup at Sapporo (Japan). Also two fourth placings.

### SNOWBOARDS

Tiarn Collins fourth in slopestyle at Silvaplana (Switzerland).

### SPEED SKIING

Tawny Wagstaff fifth in World champs at Vars (France).

Tawny Wagstaff fifth in World Cup event at Vars (France).



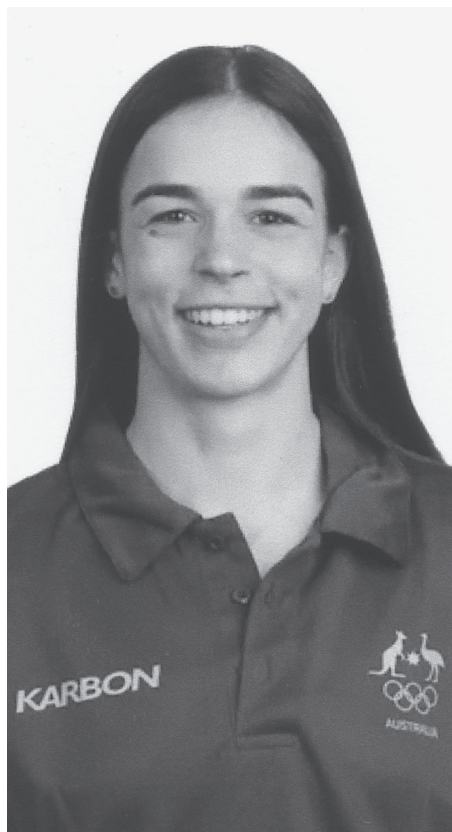
**Upper:** Marco Odermatt. **Lower:** Lara Gut-Behrami and Alice Robinson.





**Upper:** Champion skier Mikaela Shiffrin (US) practising her starts at Coronet Peak in 2013. **Lower:** Tawny Wagstaff (NZ) in speed skiing at Vars (France) this year. He holds the NZ speed record on skis at 248.62 km/h.





*Jakara Anthony*

## CHAMPION AUSSIE

**Jakara Anthony** aged 25 is an Australian freestyle skier who is taking the World Cup tour apart in the event called moguls.

This involves skiing down a 300 metre slope of bumps with two jumps. Competitors are judged for time, bumps skills and their jumps.

Jakara came fourth in the 2018 Olympic Winter Games in Korea and upgraded this to a gold medal at Beijing in 2022.

She is currently studying for a Bachelor of Exercise and Sport Science at Deakin University in Melbourne.

In the recently completed ski season



*Down under*

she won eight World Cup singles titles from nine starts and added six dual team victories. For 14 wins in all.

Born in Queensland but now hailing from the small coastal town of Barwon Heads in Victoria, Jakara started skiing at age four on her family's trips to the Victorian skifields.

As a teenager she was an interschool sport participant and discovered mogul skiing there.

Asked what is her favourite sporting moment, she replied: "Watching Aussie gold medallist Lydia Larissa throw down a quad twisting triple at the Sochi Olympics in 2014. It was the hardest trick ever completed by a woman."

## WHAKAPAPA DEEP

In all my 60 years of skiing at Whakapapa, I only once encountered truly deep and fluffy powder snow.

It was in 1968 and we awoke on a Monday when all the Aucklanders had gone home to find 60cm (two feet) of new powder snow from the top of the Knoll down to the Lodge, with some 30cm on the Rockgarden.

Five of us immediately engaged the resident Swiss instructor Martin Monsch and asked him to show us how to ski this stuff.

Martin did that for an hour. Top of the Knoll, down the Valley into Broken Leg Gully, down to the second chair and up again.

Two things, said Martin. Exaggerate your up-down and do not edge as you make your turn.

It was heaven. Real knee-deep powder at Whakapapa.

Jock Nesbitt missed his turn and disappeared totally into a snow drift.

“Visibility not too good in there Jock?” said Martin.

Lesson over we then had four more runs from the top to the bottom, sometimes going down via the Waterfalls.

By about 2pm we were exhausted and the snow was melting into the usual Ruapehu spring variety.

**Alan Graham**

## SKI LINGO CONFUSION

Research by Crystal Ski holidays shows that while 81 percent of British people dream of taking to the snow-covered mountains, almost a third have confessed they are confused by the lingo.

Less than half (46 percent) are familiar with the term piste, while only 5 percent

understand that fresh dump refers to a huge fall of new snow.

Of the 2000 adults polled on behalf of Crystal, the UK largest ski tour operator, just 2 percent knew that liftie is the nickname for the person who operates a ski lift.

Only 26 percent knew what is the traditional melted cheese dish of fondue, and 41 percent realised that après-ski is the time spent relaxing in a bar or spa after a day's skiing or snowboarding.

Crystal has published an A-B-Ski guide to give people confidence to take that first step when it comes to giving skiing a go.

It says skiing has borrowed words from multiple different languages and cultures.

Ski is a Norwegian word related to a Viking word *skið*, meaning a long snowshoe.

Toboggan meanwhile, is rooted in the Algonquian language of the Mi'kmaq people of Canada, which now has fewer than 8000 speakers.

## KAIMANAWA HORSES

The Department of Conservation and Kaimanawa Heritage Horses (KHH) are calling for experienced horse owners to rehome some wild horses from east of Ruapehu.

DoC manages the Kaimanawa herd at the sustainable level of 300 horses to protect the fragile ecosystems and keep the wild horses healthy, but the level now may be 200 too many.

Re-homing is co-ordinated by the dedicated not-for-profit group Kaimanawa Heritage Horses, but the group has received very few applications for horses this year.

It may be necessary to control the herd by way of contraception and possibly euthanasia.

## RAL'S LIFE HISTORY

RAL life membership passes have served their day, and have been abolished now that Whakapapa and Turoa are under separate managements.

RAL was initially financed by crowdfunding in 1953 after the Government declined RAL's request to pay for NZ's first chairlift on the Rockgarden.

Swiss instructor Walter Haensli and his fellow RAL directors, most of them RSC members, persuaded many skiers to pay \$2 a company share plus \$20 a debenture (loan).

The first life passes followed in approx 1958 and were exceptional value at \$200 each.

It has been estimated that the average club skier over 50-60 years gained 100 times value for this purchase, as against buying season or day passes, and racing skiers gained a whole lot more.

Initially the life passes did not sell well and only RAL directors and a handful of keen or racing skiers bought them.

The big change came in 1962 when the first Pomalift was installed in Te Heuheu Valley.

There were no day passes or season passes then and the Poma churned through single ride tickets at high speed and great expense.

There was a small ski-in shop in the valley where you could buy more tickets, along with pies and drinks.

Suddenly the life passes sold quickly to variety of skiers.

Another feature was that a Poma ride in those days took off with a mighty jerk.

If you had a life ticket, you could wave it at the liftie from 8 metres back which allowed the liftie to put you on the wire while you were moving. No jerk. No handing over of paper tickets.



*An RAL life member pass (1958) belonging to RSC President and RAL Director Douglas Naish.*

The life passes continued to be sold from time to time, often at quite high prices.

Some confusion arose in 2000 when RAL took over Turoa. Would the Whakapapa life passes be valid at Turoa?

RAL decided that they would be valid, provided holders paid a \$250 top up fee. Some RSC members objected to this, but most happily agreed.

At the same RAL offered a free life member pass to any baby born on the day when RAL took over Turoa. From this 140 babies got their life tickets.

RAL today has 14,000 life pass holders who are listed as creditors.

It has been estimated that many holders are elderly, are ill or are living overseas. Thus only 50 percent of holders have been active in recent years, and only 10 percent of folk on the slopes on any given day recently were life pass holders.





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

## SKIING AT TUKINO

With long term skiing at Whakapapa in some doubt, new attention has gone to the small Tukino skifield on the eastern slopes of Ruapehu.

On one hand, skiers may welcome a different place to ski, but while Tukino is open to the public, one wonders if the clubs which make it quiet and boutique will welcome new crowds.

Tukino currently on its website announces itself as a friendly club skifield which offers you the chance to avoid the crowds of Whakapapa or Turoa,

“Get away from the hectic and commercial based skifields and really explore the slopes. We specialise in being a very family friendly skifield with heaps of activities for everyone.

“This is what skiing used to be like before hectic lifestyles and commercial interests took over!

“Visit Tukino and enjoy the scenery and camaraderie of others in our little spot of paradise.

“The Tukino slopes are sheltered from the prevailing westerly winds and the field is often operating in clear weather when the rest of the mountain is blanketed in cloud.

“Typically there are more stable weather and snow conditions than on the western side of Mt Ruapehu.”

It says Tukino offers:

Downhill skiing and boarding

Ski and snowboard lessons

Ski touring

Ice climbing

Ticket office

Mountain education courses

Volunteer ski patrol

A ski development squad

Club races and social events

**There are three ski clubs with modern ski lodges in the Tukino Village and you can ski right to your door.**

**The clubs are Aorangi, Desert Alpine and Tukino Alpine Sports.**

RSC once had a tiny hut at Tukino. It was the Storeroom which was built in 1927 just above The Chateau as emergency accommodation for members and as a photo developing dark room.

It was moved to Tukino in 1964 after RSC Chalet was built, but it blew away in a blizzard.

Tukino skifield has three nutcracker rope tows in operation and nutcracker belts are supplied free as part of your lift pass.

Cat skiing from the top of the field using a snow groomer is sometimes available.

An RSC member recently called the access road gnarly, but added that you can often be picked up by shuttle from the 2WD car park which is 7km in from the Desert Road.

The Tukino Mountain Road is a 4WD alpine road rising up from 1000 metres on the Desert Road to 1700 metres at the Tukino Village.

From time to time especially early in the season, the road may be totally impassable due to snow drifts, even to 4WD vehicles fitted with chains.

The road is closed in summer with a locked gate, but you can arrange to get a key to open the gate.

Tukino offers a 340 metre vertical drop and 170 hectares of skiable area. Its terrain is 35 percent beginner, 30 percent intermediate and 35 percent advanced.

Lessons are available but there is no gear hire.



**Upper:** Lady Greta Raeburn, a Kandahar member, skiing at Mürren in the 1920s, with the Eiger visible behind. **Lower:** Viscount Knebworth, circa 1925 at Murren. He was a Kandahar member and a ski racer.





Modern Murren. Photo: Alan Graham.

## KANDAHAR CENTENARY

The Kandahar Ski Club of Great Britain which skis at Murren in Switzerland has celebrated its 100th anniversary of ski racing.

Murren was a sleepy farming village until the British showed up in 1912 and within a few years, under the leadership of Sir Arnold Lunn, they invented the modern slalom race.

Murren today is a carless town of 450 people whose population expands to 2500 in the ski season when the tourist hotels fill up.

The club was said in fiction to be James Bond's ski club, and the 1959 Bond movie *On Her Majesty's Secret Service* was filmed there.

Murren sits in a hanging valley above the scenic town of Lauterbrunnen and is reached from the valley floor by two different 60-passenger cable cars.

It also has a natty mountain railway which links the two cable cars.

Above one cable car are more lifts which take skiers and tourists up to the much photographed revolving restaurant on the

Schilthorn.

The town and its skifields have spectacular views across the valley to the trio of majestic mountains the Eiger, the Mönch and the Jungfrau.

Sir Arnold Lunn was a mountaineer and skier and author whose family business had sponsored ski visits to the Alps from approx 1900. He fought a successful battle to have skiing becoming an Olympic sport.

One club member was Sandy Irvine who disappeared in 1924 while trying to climb Mt Everest.

Irvine and George Mallory were seen near the summit but no one knows if they made the top. Mallory's body has been found but Irvine's has not. Their camera has not been found.

A century on from its founding in 1924, the club with an international membership of 1400 is more active than ever training, sponsoring and supporting young racers; providing race training for adults and bringing members together by organising races and social events in Murren and London.

## WORLD SNOW NEWS

The world's largest recreational cross-country ski race, the Vasaloppet in Sweden, reached its 100th edition in March, with 16,000 participants starting.

The race from Sälen to Mora takes place over a 90-kilometre (56-mile) course and is a big part of Sweden's sporting and cultural history.

Vasaloppet runs along the route Gustav Vasa followed in 1521 as he fled from the soldiers of the Danish king.

Torleif Syrstad (Sweden) won this year's race in a time of 3 hrs 52:43 min.

*It looks as if plans to build a large new airport at **Tarras in Central Otago** have been abandoned, at least for now.*

*The airport would have been of interest to skiers because it would relieve pressure on **Queenstown Airport** and provide a handy landing ground for snow bunnies heading to **Wanaka**.*

**Norwegian ski jumper Silje Opseth** set a women's world record when she flew 230.5 metres down the Monsterbakken big hill jump in Vikersund (Norway).

The 24-year-old jumped 236 metres in a trial run but fell on landing, sustaining bloody injuries to her face. That did not stop Opseth setting a world record with her final jump.

**Emu Klinec of Slovenia** held the previous world record, achieving 226 metres at the same location a year ago.

After a thorough consultation with the athletes, their teams and other stakeholders involved in the event, it has been agreed by FIS and the Swiss and Italian federations not to include **Zermatt/Cervinia** in the alpine skiing calendar 2024-25.

The first cross-border alpine World Cup races were part of the men's and women's calendars in the 2022-23 and 2023-24 seasons but could not make history due

to unfavourable weather conditions in both years.

***Skiers at Lake Louise (Canada)** were treated to a rare encounter with a lynx litter of three, right in the middle of a popular trail.*

*Seeing a lone lynx in the wild, let alone multiple, is a special occurrence. Lynx are known to be elusive night time hunters and are rarely seen in broad daylight.*

*Defined as the size of a very large house cat, lynx don't pose an immediate threat to humans, but caution should be taken if encountered.*

Forestry Com ranks Queenstown (including Wanaka) among its top 12 ski resorts for 2024.

- Whistler Blackcomb, Canada
- Vail, USA
- Chamonix, France
- St Anton, Austria
- Niseko, Japan
- Alpensia, South Korea
- Portillo, Chile
- Queenstown, New Zealand
- Gulmarg, India
- Åre, Sweden
- Zermatt, Switzerland
- Banff and Lake Louise, Canada

It says Queenstown is a gem, offering a vibrant mix of outdoor adventure, stunning landscapes, and a lively après-ski culture.

With access to four major ski areas, Queenstown-Wanaka caters to skiers and snowboarders of all levels, from wide, gentle slopes for beginners to challenging terrain for the pros.

Queenstown itself is a hub of activity, where the energy of the slopes flows into the streets, filled with restaurants, bars, and shops.

It's a place where the thrill of the mountains meets the warmth of New Zealand hospitality.





**Upper:** A field of 16,000 skiers sets out in the Vasaloppet 90km race in Sweden. Photo: FIS. **Lower:** The Northern Explorer passes Mt Ruapehu. Photo: NZ Rail.



## ACROSS THE SKIING WORLD

Prince George's godmother Julia Samuel, a distinguished psychotherapist, was badly injured in a ski accident in the French Alps.

Julia, 64, who was a close friend of Princess Diana, broke her shoulder in a fall while on holiday with her family at Courchevel.

"The first morning of my holiday, I fell over and busted my shoulder. I've got ten pins in it and I can't move."

Prince William is the Royal Patron of Child Bereavement UK, the charity she founded.

*Who is the husband of Swiss alpine skiing star Lara-Gut-Behrami? He is Valon Behrami, aged 38, a retired professional midfielder footballer.*

*Behrami played 82 times for Switzerland including four World Cups.*

*He played 450 matches for 14 clubs in seven countries before retiring in 2018. His clubs included West Ham and Luton in England.*

*\*\*\* Lara's younger brother Ian Gut raced in NZ last season. He has since left the Swiss team to race for neighbouring Liechtenstein, a principality of 37,000 people.*

**Vail Resorts (US)** has officially purchased the Crans-Montana Mountain Resort in Switzerland.

The takeover was provisionally announced in November. The cost has been estimated at \$US 130 million.

Vail also owns Andermatt-Sedrun-Disentis, another Swiss ski resort.

Located in the Valais canton, Crans-Montana Mountain Resort boasts 4593 feet of vertical and 87 miles of trails. It is accessible from five airports and by train.

*Less than five months after retiring from alpine skiing, slalom star **Lucas***

***Pinheiro Braathen** aged 23 of Norway has announced his comeback to the sport.*

*Braathen has chosen to turn out for Brazil, the home country of his mother, following a fallout with the Norwegian Ski Federation.*

*Skiers under the Norwegian Ski Federation do not have control of their marketing or personal image rights, which resulted in a conflict.*

**Japanese skier Ryōyū Kobayashi** has set a new world record for a ski jump of 291 metres from the launch point.

He shattered by 37.5 metres the previous record for ski flying and ski jump world of 253.5 metres held by Stefan Kraft (Austria).

Kobayashi set the record on a new natural snow ski jump which was built for him in Iceland. He said he wants to jump 300 metres.

\*\*\* The FIS has declined to recognise the record as the jump was not fully measured and the competition was open to only one jumper.

***Six skiers, five of them from one family,** died after encountering bad weather on a cross-country ski outing at Zermatt (Switzerland).*

*Police said the six Swiss people, aged between 21 and 58, went missing on the Zermatt to Arolla high route near the Matterhorn.*

*They were caught in a storm raging in the south of the Alps and froze to death.*

**A New Zealander who travelled to Italy for a dream skiing holiday said her trip turned into a horror movie when she was nearly thrown from the chairlift in high winds.**

Stephanie Burt, 48, was in a once-in-a-lifetime holiday at the Cervinia ski resort with her family.

The trip soon became a nightmare for the mother-of-two when 110 km/h winds struck a chairlift she was riding. She was

nearly hit by a swinging empty chair.

One skier fell from the chairlift and was taken to hospital with injuries. After about 20 minutes, resort employees showed up to rescue the skiers.

**French cross-country skier Maurice Manificat** has retired after 20 years on the international circuit.

*He had 258 World Cup starts, 34 podiums, 10 victories, four world championship medals and four Olympic medals.*

A news report said US pop princess Taylor Swift is buying 520 acres of land in Montana on which to build a \$US25 million private ski resort.

Another report said Taylor Swift has taken over the Winter X Games at Aspen and has renamed them.

Both reports were dated April 1st.

Another news report said the Walt Disney Corporation has taken over Vail Resorts and is about to jazz up the ski industry.

Yet another report, complete with a detailed video, said Tesla is marketing an electric ski.

These reports were also dated April 1st.

**A British couple** married on top of a 2600-metre snowy mountain before the bride skied 4km to the bottom of the skifield, in her wedding dress with the groom and friends following.

*Laura Norcott, now aged 31, has skied since she was a tot and began teaching skiing to her now husband Robert Norcott, 34, just three months into their relationship.*

*On the day Laura, Robert and 32 wedding guests took ski lifts up to Hohe Mut Alm mountain hut in Obergurgl, Austria.*

**Steve Hall**, formerly the principal of Wakatipu High School at Queenstown, has been appointed as The Remarkables ski area manager.

Steve worked at The Remarkables in the rental department in 1986. After that he skied in Japan, Canada and Colorado, and mountainbiked the length of New Zealand on Te Araora Trail.

He also led glacier tours, rafting excursions and heliski trips, and served as a field training leader in Antarctica, as well as attending Harvard University in the US.

Steve replaces Ross Lawrence who has been 16 years in the role.

**Alpine Huts Ltd** is building an eight-bunk hut on **Mt Potts** in Canterbury, and aims to have the hut ready for public use this winter for cross-country skiing.

*The move was motivated by demand created by similar alpine huts on Glenmore Station in the Cass Valley, out the back of Lake Tekapo.*

*Mt Potts, once known as Erewhon skifield, has an access road. Its scenery was widely used in the Lord of the Rings movies.*

**Swiss skier Kim Gubser** set a new world record for height on a big air ski jump, soaring 47.9 feet high at the Schilthorn jump in Switzerland.

He broke the old record set by David Wise (US) in 2016 of 46.6 feet.

This was achieved in the Swatch Nines. Unlike most others in freeskiing, the event is not a competition.

Instead, it is a day-long jam session, allowing involved skiers to test the limits of the sport at their own pace.

**Alpine skiing legend Marcel Hirscher** is planning a comeback to competition after five years of retirement, skiing for a mountainless country.

*The unexpected move by the Austrian champion was surprising after it was revealed he would be competing for the Netherlands, his mother's home country, instead of his native Austria.*



## CLUB ITEMS & SERVICES FOR SALE

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

**Website: [www.rsc.org.nz](http://www.rsc.org.nz)**

**email: [admin@rsc.org.nz](mailto:admin@rsc.org.nz)**

### Lockers

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

Please email [admin@rsc.org.nz](mailto: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    \$199

Junior             \$99

Annual senior subscription            \$310

Annual sub young adult, junior,  
associate, veteran                        \$130

## ACCOMMODATION FEES

### 2024 season nightly rates –

	With Cook	Without Cook – Turoa + Chalet
Senior member	\$63.00	\$45.00
Young Adult	\$63.00	\$45.00
Teen member	\$54.00	\$39.00
Junior member	\$41.00	\$30.00
Member's Child	\$32.00	\$24.00
Senior non-Member	\$114.00	\$80.00
Junior non-Member	\$76.00	\$54.00