

The Bulletin

RUAPEHU SKI CLUB

Volume 89, No. 4



December 2024



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Skiing on Mt Ruapehu. Photo: Visit Ruapehu.

PRESIDENT'S COLUMN

Hi all,

Sadly, this year, the skifields weren't able to fully open, due to lack of snow.

At Whakapapa, skiing and boarding was mostly on the upper mountain on the Valley and Knoll Ridge T-bars, with no skiing out west at all.

At Turoa it was similar, with most skiing done on the High Noon and Giant lifts.

Snow did come late, but never lasted, and both fields closed on the Thursday before Labour weekend.

The cook and the instructors moved out of the Lodge at the end of September, and a small number of members self-catered there during the school holidays.

All in all, it was not the wonderful ski season we had hoped for, and we had less people using the buildings than we had budgeted for.

I have been reading some of the early Club annual reports and am heartened to find out that the snow conditions have always been variable ever since skiing began on the mountain.

Here is an excerpt from the 1941 annual report about the snow conditions:

"The snow was late in coming again and was never plentiful, but the surface was good and there was really little bad weather.

"Except for a short period in July, and early August, skiing was only obtainable above the Club Hut. Christmas and New Year weather kept up to a fine average of recent years, and the Glacier was in splendid condition for morning skiing."

In October, Damon and I attended a morning tea on behalf of RSC, at the RNZAF Whenuapai Air Base.

It was to thank community groups for their support during the year, and RSC

for the use of the Hut.

It had been a very successful trip for the RNZAF as they had found enough snow to make snow caves so that the participants could pass their cold weather training.

The RNZAF are keen to repeat the exercise next year and are hoping to get the Australians involved and to use the Hut for two weeks during August 2025.

The Committee had a very successful mountain meeting at the Chalet, on November 16-17.

We planned budgets, work parties and marketing. We have lost a few members over the year, so are looking to do some marketing in the New Year.

If you have any friends and family who would be interested in joining, please look out for our joining special, and get them onto their work parties so that they are all ready to go when the ski season starts.

We also have summer memberships for those not interested in the colder outdoor activities. These memberships run from November to April.

Our lower mountain buildings give you access to all the tracks in the Tongariro National Park and bike trails from our Ohakune building, including the newly opened Te Awa Mangawhero section, from Turoa Ski Field to Ohakune.

Our Ohakune building is booked out over Christmas and New Year, with a member group booking and then a Bookabach booking.

We also have several Bookabach bookings in January, so please check with admin if you want to book or are thinking of dropping into the buildings. Please note - Bookabach bookings book out the whole building.

Wishing you all a Happy Christmas and safe traveling over the festive season.

Catherine



Alice Robinson (NZ) racing in the Winter Games NZ giant slalom at Coronet Peak in August.

THROUGH THE LODGE WINDOW

Whakapapa closed its season on Labour Weekend after enduring the worst snowfall for many years.

The Knoll and the Waterfall were open only briefly while the West lifts did not open at all.

RSC Lodge closed on September 24th.

Turoa closed at Labour Weekend after receiving a moderate snowfall, better than Whakapapa but below average.

Manganui skifield on Mt Taranaki was open for only a few days.

South Island skifields in contrast to the North Island mostly had a good snow cover.

Australia was as bad as Whakapapa and many skifields closed a month early.

*** The Sky Waka gondola will operate in summer.

Desert road: State Highway 1 between Tūrangi and Waiouru, the Desert Road, will be shut for around two months for repairs.

The road will be closed from January 6th until the end of February.

"The alpine environment and potential for a cold snap mean we need to do this closure in the peak summer months," an NZTA spokesperson said.

"While the road is closed, we'll be rebuilding or repairing almost 16 lane kilometres."

Winstone Pulp International has permanently shut down both the Karioi Pulpmill and the Tangiwai Sawmill because of crippling electricity prices.

The mills were located at Tangiwai on the foothills of Mt Ruapehu.

WPI was the largest employer in the Ruapehu district and 230 jobs were lost. Most of the workers lived in Ohakune or Raetihi.

Ruapehu mayor Weston Kirton said the district is reeling at the news and locals would face severe economic and social consequences.

He warned the closure was the tip of the iceberg, with other export manufacturers "on the brink" because of similar pressure from unsustainable energy costs.

The Department of Conservation (DoC) has scrapped a plan to seek expressions of interest from parties interested in commercially operating the closed **Chateau Tongariro Hotel**, the NZ Herald reported.

DoC had planned to test investor interest in the hotel but decommissioning is on the table, as the search for new operator is called off.

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

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President: Catherine Gafa.

Vice-Presidents: Carl Burling,
Damon Forsyth, Donald Webster.

Immediate Past President:

Phill Thomass.

Secretary: Michael Webb-Speight.

Treasurer: Sonia Quinn.

Captain: vacant.

Committee: Drew Blair,

Ron Bonfrer, Sam Hood,

Simon Hunt, Pip McNaughton,

Fiona Lovelock.

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.

The report said the Government is paying \$2.2 million a year in maintenance on the hotel.

There will be no cap on bookings for the **Tongariro Alpine Crossing** in the 2024-25 season, the Department of Conservation has announced.

DoC and local iwi Ngāti Hikairo ki Tongariro have been exploring limits for sustainable management of the crossing.

They aim to identify a carrying capacity for the crossing and make recommendations about a potential cap on bookings.

A Ruapehu farmer has discovered a 96 year-old roadman's hut buried underneath thick bush and shrubs.

The hut was built in 1928 and was lived in by returned servicemen while they helped build roads through the area.

Dan Steele says he intends to restore the hut to its former glory.

Following the successful opening of the 11.4 km first stage of **Te Ara Mangawhero**, the newest section of the Mountains to Sea Ngā Ara Tūhono Great Ride, Ruapehu Mayor Weston Kirton is calling on the government to enable Council to complete the entire Mountains to Sea trail network.

The opening of Te Ara Mangawhero by Minister for Conservation and Māori Development Tama Potaka marked a significant milestone in Ruapehu Council's vision for a world-class eco-tourism network of cycling and hiking trails that will help build Ruapehu's economic resilience.

Following the historic Bennett and Punch bush tramway below the Tūroa ski area and crossing the Mangawhero Stream with spectacular views of Maunga Ruapehu, the trail is expected to attract up to 50,000 users annually and generate an estimated \$36 million in economic benefits.

*The deadline for the March Bulletin will be **Friday February 14th.***

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

THE BULLETIN

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BANK CHANGES

Due to bank payment rules tightening, when you pay for your subs or bookings-please make sure the PAYEE Name is Ruapehu Ski Club (Not RSC).

If they do not match, your payment MAY not be processed.

The bank account has NOT changed (12 3013 0876654 01).

WORK PARTIES 2025

Work parties are an important activity for the Club and are necessary to help us keep our buildings in good order for the enjoyment of members.

Because of members coming and assisting at work parties, and carrying out various maintenance tasks, we are able to keep our subscription fees at an affordable level.

They are also a great social time, and provide familiarization for new members with the buildings and how we operate.

For those that are still Provisional Seniors and have not yet completed your work party obligations, please ensure you complete them prior to the ski season starting.

All members are encouraged to come to at least one work per season. No matter what skills you do or don't have, we can always find something for you to do that will improve the Club, so come along and enjoy the camaraderie.

Some of the more specialist skills we require for specific jobs this season include:

Repainting of stonework to fix water leaks into the generator room, sanding and varnishing walls in bathrooms, repairing waste water pipes, replacing shower heads, repairing butynol liners in gutters, general carpentry skills, airless spray painting of roof and exterior walls, paint removal, general electrical work, interior painting, tree felling and

firewood chopping, general mechanical skills.

Dates for 2025 are Jan 18/19, Feb 22/23, March 15/16, April - Easter Fri18/ Sat 19,

May 17/18, June 14/15. So put these in your diary and come along and lend a hand.

DF

TUROA IN SUMMER

Pure Tūroa is in the process of gaining an amendment to its concession to operate lifts for summer sightseeing.

Cam Robertson, director of Pure Tūroa, said it will operate Freddie's Café this summer and would also like to operate the lifts for summer sightseeing.

He rejected news reports that their original concession application was "botched".

Robertson said they were advised by DoC to apply initially for a six-month operation

The winter concession remains and there is no issue with winter season operations for 2025, Robertson said.

PROJECT ANNIVERSARY

Project Tongariro recently celebrated its 40th anniversary with a range of activities around the national park.

It was originally known as Tongariro Natural History Society and was formed as a living legacy to five people including four Tongariro National Park staff who died in the helicopter crash in 1982 near the Ohakune Mountain Road.

The aim is to establish a cooperative network of people who love the national park and are prepared to work alongside park staff, particularly in park interpretation and conservation education.

CRATER VERY COOL

Crater Lake (Te Wai ā-moe) on September 18th registered 6.83C, the coldest temperature in seven decades of monitoring.

Scientists suspect the hydrothermal system beneath the lake is partially sealed, but they think an eruption is still unlikely, with few indicators of “magmatic activity”.

That was the coldest reading since measurements began there in the 1950s and well down on the 31C peak temperature observed in mid-February.

Volcanologists said eruptions are much more likely when we have signs of magma coming close to the surface or more gas being released from depth. Such signs include increased volcanic tremor, high gas emissions and a hot lake.

GeoNet kept Ruapehu’s volcanic alert level above 1, which indicates minor unrest.

WHAKAARI ASH ANNOYS

An eruption on Whakaari/White Island in August caused flight delays on the mainland after volcanic ash blew ashore.

Flights were cancelled or delayed at Tauranga, Rotorua and Gisborne Airports.

The island is 50km offshore but ash reaches the mainland in an easterly wind.

A new vent was detected on Whakaari/White Island and a minor eruption was emitting an increase in volcanic ash.

Air New Zealand said volcanic ash was briefly across the flight path for the airports.

RUAPEHU WIPEOUTS

A wide range of ski and snowboard events at Ruapehu this year were cancelled, some for the fifth year due to the Covid epidemic, company liquidation and now the poor snowfalls.

Cancelled competitions included:

RSC Club champs.

Winter Party.

Haensli Cup.

Christie derby.

Ngauruhoe Trophy.

NIPS (primary and intermediate schools skiing).

NISSSC (secondary skiing).

North Island schools snowboards.

CLIMATE AGREEMENT

Facing a crisis in winter sports because of climate change, the International Ski and Snowboard Federation (FIS) has teamed up with the United Nations weather agency.

The initial five-year partnership between FIS and the World Meteorological Organisation (WMO) aims to help national ski federations, venues and race organisers better understand weather forecasting to manage natural and artificial snow.

“The climate crisis is obviously far bigger than FIS, or sports, for that matter,” its president Johan Eliasch said. “It is a genuine crossroads for mankind.

“It is true, though, that climate change is, simply put, an existential threat to skiing and snowboarding.”

WHAKAPAPA DECISION COMING SOON

Whakapapa Holdings Ltd (WHL) is close to signing off a deal to operate the Whakapapa ski area, director Dave Mazey told Newstalk ZB.

He said the company had been negotiating with receivers Calibre Partners and the Crown “for some time” and it was close to signing off a sale and purchase agreement.

“That agreement will be subject to a number of things, but primarily it’s us being able to gain a licence from the Department of Conservation to run the ski area,” Mazey said.

Tūroa skifield is being operated by the Pure Tūroa company this season after it received a 10-year concession from DoC.

Mazey said at this stage Whakapapa Holdings would also request a 10-year concession. If that was successful, the company would take over ownership on April 1st next year.

“The big thing about it is people are starting to get confidence that it is now probable there’ll be a new operator and Whakapapa will be run by a company that’s committed to it.”

Ruapehu Alpine Lifts (RAL), which operated both the Whakapapa and Tūroa fields, went into voluntary administration in October 2022, owing more than \$40 million. It was officially put into liquidation in June 2023.

“How it was evolving then, it was less palatable as an investment opportunity,” Mazey said. “Following

discussions with a number of key parties we decided to re-engage and make a further offer, and that’s what we’ve been working on.

“We have confidence as a business that the Whakapapa ski area is viable commercially.”

He said they did not plan to build anything new on the mountain in the first 10 years and would review their progress after five seasons.

Dave Mazey, who lives in Taupō, was a park ranger working in Tongariro National Park before taking over RAL in 1986. His father John Mazey was chief ranger at Whakapapa.

“My life has been associated with working and playing around the central North Island. I went to primary school at National Park.

“I do have an understanding of the place and the complexities of the national park, the maunga itself, and the business as complex as it is. That strong background will contribute to a successful outcome.”

Mazey was chief executive of Ruapehu Alpine Lifts (RAL) for 30 years between 1986 and 2016.

He formed Whakapapa Holdings with his business partners Sam Rofe and Tom Elworthy who are directors of the Christchurch-based private equity firm The South Island Office Ltd.

*** Dave said he will be talking to Pure Turoa about passes being valid for use at either field.



What a difference a week makes. The Staircase is pictured on September 12th 2024 and again a week later. Photos: RAL and Chris Woudenberg.

ICY BORDER CHANGED

Switzerland and Italy have redrawn a border as a result of melting glaciers.

The modifications have been made beneath the Matterhorn which sits between Zermatt and the Aosta valley.

“Significant sections of the border are defined by the watershed or ridge lines of glaciers, firn or perpetual snow. These formations are changing due to the melting of glaciers,” the Swiss government said.

Europe is the world’s fastest-warming continent and its glaciers are retreating at an accelerated pace due to climate change.

Swiss glaciers lost 4 percent of their volume in 2023 which was their second biggest annual decline, according to the Swiss Academy of Sciences.

HIGH LEVEL CROSSING

Now operating between Zermatt (Switzerland) and Cervinia (Italy) is the high-speed Matterhorn Alpine Crossing cable car route.

This allows you to travel from one resort to the other, and reach heights of 4000 metres, without setting foot on the pistes.

The connectivity makes crossing between the two far quicker. Previously skiers had to ride six lifts on the Zermatt side to reach the border between the two countries.

Zermatt has a wide variety of ski slopes and is regarded as one of the world’s top resorts.

Cervinia has many skiable slopes including La Ventina, a famous 11km ski run.

Both ski resorts are overseen by the Matterhorn and Monte Cervino is the Italian name for the Matterhorn.

A word of warning. If you are staying at Zermatt and fancy a day of skiing or snowboarding in Cervinia, it pays to keep an eye on the clock and the weather in case the lifts close. It is an expensive six-hour taxi ride home if you miss the Cervinia closure.

NEW MATTERHORN MOVIE

A new movie entitled “Aiming High, A Race Against the Limits” chronicles the ambitious but unsuccessful effort to establish a new downhill classic at the base of the Matterhorn. The film features several current top racers, men and women.

Touted as the world’s first transnational and highest-altitude ski race, the Matterhorn-Cervino downhill race was set to debut in 2022, starting in Zermatt (Switzerland) and finishing in Cervinia (Italy).

First organized in the autumn of 2022, it was cancelled due to insufficient snow.

The following year, facing fast-changing weather conditions, heavy snowfall and winds, it again was again cancelled, dashing the hopes of organizers, sponsors, fans and athletes.

In view of the dangerous conditions of the high-altitude course, the athletes ultimately became united in their opposition to the race.

Despite the failure of the Matterhorn-Cervino race, the Matterhorn continues to lure Switzerland’s ski sector, which is again pushing for a new World Cup race in Zermatt.

The Gornergrat slopes on the eastern side of Zermatt are being considered for a possible comeback.

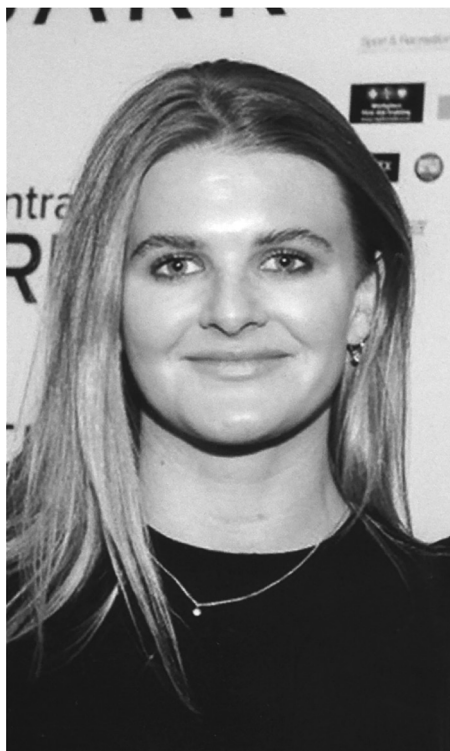
The Gornergrat Derby was one of the most popular ski events in Europe in the 1950s and 1960s.



Emma, Minnie and Archie Gallagher in Happy Valley during the September school holidays.

NZ SNOW AWARDS

Alpine ski racer Alice Robinson from Queenstown was crowned the 2024 Snow Sports NZ overall athlete at the Snow Sports NZ annual awards.



Alice Robinson.

Alice had a phenomenal season, claiming five World Cup giant slalom podiums and an additional five top 10 finishes in World Cup giant slalom and super G.

Instructor of the Year: Frank Wylie.
Masters of the Year: Kerry Trevella-Hall and Geoff Hunt.

Coach of the Year: Nils Coberger and Tim Cafe.

Breakthrough Season: Luke Harrold.

Freeskier of the Year: Nico Porteous.

Alpine Ski Racer of the Year: Alice Robinson.

Snowboarder of the Year: Zoi Sadowski-Synnott.

Adaptive Athlete of the Year: Adam Hall.

Freeride Athlete of the Year: Ben Richards.



Lodge chef Paul Mcalister says this photo, which he took, is of a Lodge icicle that is longer than his skis.



Audrey Kinder.

AUDREY KINDER

Audrey Kinder, who has died aged 93 at Auckland, was a popular ski instructor at Whakapapa in the 1950s.

Audrey and her husband Stan Kinder, who was also an instructor, would spend autumns selling ski gear at Wisemans large sports store in Queen St. They would then move on to Ruapehu.

Your Bulletin Editor has a fond memory of Audrey. She taught Alan, aged 13, how to absorb the mighty jolt given on takeoff by the new T-bar on the Staircase.

For a couple of years Audrey was also a ski racer.

In 1953 she came second in the North Island downhill at Ruapehu, was second in the slalom and was the North Island champion overall.

In 1954 she won the North Island slalom at Mt Taranaki, was second in the downhill and again was champion overall.

She had one shot at the nationals, finishing fourth in the giant slalom and seventh in the slalom at Whakapapa.



Interclub racing at Whakapapa in 2024 was cancelled, due to a lack of snow. Here is a glimpse of the good old days.



Most schools ski racing at Ruapehu was cancelled in 2024. Here is a glimpse of NIPS from the good old days.



The North Island Primary and Secondary School Snowboards at Turoa were cancelled for the fifth year in a row. Here is a glimpse back to the good old days.



Upper: The Australia-NZ Cup snow sports circuit opened in August with a snowboard cross race at Hotham (Victoria). The winner was Liam Michaels (Australia) with Adeljian Hasiter (China) second. **Lower:** To celebrate 10 years in NZ the operators of Uber gave 60 skiers/boarders a free weekend of untracked powder runs at Soho Basin.



Turoa scenes. Photos: Pure Turoa.

RSC CALENDAR OF EVENTS

Dec-Jan 2024 -25 ??	DoC summer programs
Jan 2025 18	The Goat run at Ruapehu
18-19	Working parties
Feb 2025 22-23	Working parties
Mar 2025 15-16	Working parties
April 2025 8-9	Working parties (Easter)
May 2025 1	RSC bunk bookings open
17-18	Working parties
June 2025 ?	RSC AGM at Auckland
?	Ski season opens (lower mountain)
14-15	Working parties
July 2025 ?	Upper mountain opens
Aug 2025 ?	Haensli Cup (RSC)
Sept 2025 ?	RSC Club champs
Oct 2025 ?	Ski season ends

NZ SNOW AWARDS

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Glacier Hut Tea Towels

We still have some tea towels available.

Please contact Mandy, admin@rsc.org.nz

1 Tea Towel - \$20.00 + \$7.00 standard postage

3 Tea Towels - \$50.00 + \$10.00 standard postage

For all rural deliveries please add \$5.00



Bruce Abernethy, speedway legend, Ruapehu showman.

ABO THE GREAT SHOWMAN

Bruce Abernethy (born 1926 died 1999) was a legend of NZ motorcycle speedway.

He was also famed at Ruapehu for taking daredevil ski runs straight at high speeds.

Bruce was the first New Zealand speedway rider to make a real name for himself in Britain when he rode for Wembley Lions in 1948.

Born in Karori, Wellington, he made his debut at the age of 17 as an apprentice mechanic in the New Zealand grass track championships.

He purchased his first motorcycle in 1946 and competed in beach racing and hill climbs before taking up speedway when the Lower Hutt track at Taita opened in December 1947.

Moving to England he was famed for going far too fast for his own good, resulting in some big crashes.

“Bouncing Bruce” Abernethy, from the Land of the Kiwis, was known as a lad with

a heart as big as his broad grin and with pertinacity, courage and determination.

Bruce rode for the Wembley Lions in the 1948 Speedway National League and from 1949 to 1951 he was included in the Wembley team which won three consecutive league titles.

Back home he won the New Zealand speedway championship in 1950 and 1951. Although he didn’t ride in the UK after 1951, he continued to compete in New Zealand until 1959.

In 1964 and 1965 he switched to car racing and drove a Cooper Climax in the Tasman Series.

After that he took up skiing and was a regular at Whakapapa where he performed at high speeds and had some fearful crashes.

Abo was much loved around the slopes as a wonderful showman, with a host of good friends in RSC. As with his speedway days he was distinguished by wearing a long white scarf.

Bruce died in Rotorua Hospital in 1999 after a long illness.



Skiing at Afriski in Lesotho. This is the only skiing in Africa, apart from two small indoor slopes in Egypt. Lesotho is a small country completely surrounded by South Africa.



No one was hurt in this avalanche near the Treble Cone skifield in Otago in September. Photo: Treble Cone.



This is the first modern ski lift in the world which was created more than 100 years ago at the village of Schollach in Germany.

WORLD'S FIRST SKI LIFT

The first ski lift in the world was created more than 100 years ago by a German hotel owner in the village of Schollach in the Black Forest region of Germany.

Robert Winterhalde, manager of the Schneckenhof, wanted to make it easier for hotel guests to access the local hill and created a ski lift which started operation in February 1908.

Construction began in 1906 when Winterhalde and a friend installed five wooden masts on the hill.

The pair spent two years experimenting with the design before opening the ski lift to hotel guests in 1908.

The lift had a continuous circulating overhead cable which was powered by hydropower from a mill wheel.

It was 280 metres long and covered a vertical of 32 metres. Skiers and guests on

sleds used a special clamp with lever arms to hang on to the wire.

Winterhalde filed a patent with the Swiss Patent Office for his ski lift. Albert Einstein worked at the Swiss Patent Office in Berne from 1902-1909, so may have seen the application come across his desk.

Winterhalde had his critics. Some skiers bemoaned that ski lifts would spoil the beautiful landscape tourists came for.

Ultimately it was World War I that put an early end to tourism and Winterhalde's lift which was disassembled to salvage scrap metal in 1914.

The mill exists to this day but Winterhalde died in 1932 and never got to see his idea of ski lifts take hold across the globe.

Two years after his death, Ernst Constam, a Swiss mechanical engineer, built the first J-bar and later the T-bar. These also used a continuous circulating cable much like Winterhalde's design.



Lucas Braathen won five alpine World Cup races for Norway before switching to Brazil, his mother's country. Here he acts as forerunner for the Winter Games NZ giant slalom at Coronet Peak in August 2024. Photo: WGNZ.



The world's largest indoor ski resort has opened at Shanghai in China. The facility has four separate slopes covering 90,000 square metres. Other facilities like shops, hotels and a still-unopened water park extends the resort to 350,000 square metres.

NATIONALS REPORTING

It was my privilege as an NZ Herald reporter to cover the NZ alpine skiing championships three times at Whakapapa in the 1960s.

RSC ran NZ's first skiing race in 1922 and ran the first nationals in 1929.

After that, for a while, the nationals were held at either Whakapapa or Mt Cook.

At Ruapehu the term National Downhill was coined when the downhill race was held there.

Newspaper coverage of these events was minimal, due to the racing being far flung from the main cities.

Racing was suspended during the 1940s due to World War 2 and eruptions. The nationals eventually resumed at Mt Cook and Mt Egmont (Taranaki). Then they switched to alternating between Coronet Peak and Whakapapa.

In 1960 as a young sports reporter on the NZ Herald, I persuaded my boss to let me cover the national champs at Whakapapa.

He not only agreed but booked me into The Chateau for a week, along with a staff photographer and the use of an office car.

He also got the NZ Post Office to install a teleprinter in The Chateau's basement that I could use to file my words.

The car lacked antifreeze so we had to empty the radiator each night and day.

We filled it up each morning for the drive up the Bruce Rd, then emptied it again when we parked. After the day's racing we coasted down the Bruce Rd to The Chateau.

The weather was fine for both the giant slalom and the downhill which were run on excellent courses set by the visiting Austrian alpine skiing maestro Tony Spiss.

TVNZ also sent a cameraman to film the races and as a spectator my picture appeared full face on the screen, twice. My mum sent me a congratulatory telegram.

Sadly there was very misty weather for the slalom and a short course was set on the Staircase. I had a very difficult job trying to write down words on a foggy notebook.

For 1962 I decided to bypass the daily issue with radiator water and asked RSC if it would be OK for me to stay at RSC Lodge and file my reports over the Lodge phone.

The Club was quite happy for this to occur, provided that the phone would have to be vacated if there was an emergency.

In fact there was a minor emergency when at 5pm a search party was setting out to find a couple who were missing and had last been seen at the crater. Suddenly they came happily skiing down the Staircase and the emergency was called off.

The Lodge was the headquarters for the champs in those days and it was good to be right there on the spot.

In 1964 I again covered the champs from the Lodge. This was the year that a five-member team of Olympic skiers from Switzerland, managed by Walter Haensli, stayed at the Lodge and raced in the champs.

Sadly rotten weather prevailed for most of the time and the downhill had to be abandoned with no national combined champion declared for 1964.

That was the end of it for me. By 1966 I had moved to Wellington and I was no longer a sports reporter.

Alan Graham



More than 250 skiers and boarders raced in the Red Bull Homerun at The Remarkables



Willis Feasey

REMARKABLES MAYHEM

More than 250 skiers and snowboarders raced together down The Remarkables skifield at Queenstown in the chaotic Red Bull Homerun.

They had a Le Mans type start when they ran together to collect their skis and boards. Then it was mayhem as they raced to the finish.

Former NZ ski racing champion Willis Feasey was fastest skier down the mountain, in 1min 34sec, while Chelsea Wallace was the fastest female on skis in 2min 18sec.

José Luis Vázquez Tenorio won the snowboard race in 2min 13 sec, with Anna Hiden fastest female snowboarder in 2min 40sec.

World Cup alpine skiing star Alice Robinson of Queenstown and double Olympic Games medallist and halfpipe freeski champ Nico Porteous of Wanaka were on hand to witness the event.



Alisa Camplin-Warner and Steven Bradbury.

DOING A BRADBURY

If an Aussie says “Doing a Bradbury”, this means achieving something that seemed highly unlikely.

It refers to the performance of Aussie ice skater Steven Bradbury who won a gold medal at the 2002 Olympic Winter Games at Salt Lake City (Utah) in short track speed skating.

Racing in a field of five around a course not much bigger than a tennis court, he was hopelessly last going into the final bend.

Miraculously the first four skaters managed to trip one another up, allowing the Aussie to skate on by and win the gold medal.

There was a heap of protests and video analysis but the jury decided the four all caused the crash and upheld Australia’s gold.

Bradbury contested four Olympics, also winning a bronze medal in a relay.

Now 50, he retired after suffering multiple injuries in an ice skating crash.

He was in the news again in 2022 when won a bravery award after he pulled four teenage girls out of the surf.

ALISA IS CHOSEN

Alisa Camplin-Warner will become Australia’s first female Olympic Winter Games team Chef de Mission when she takes that role at Milano-Cortina in 2026.

Camplin-Warner previously was the first Australian woman to win a Winter Olympic gold medal, which she did in aerials skiing at Salt Lake City in 2002. She added a bronze medal at the next Olympics at Turin.

Alisa was Deputy Chef de Mission at the Beijing 2022 Games. She is a director and patron of the Collingwood AFL club. In her younger days she won competitions in sailing.



Upper: Some of the best skiers and snowboarders in the world contested World Cup events at Cardrona in September as part of Winter Games NZ. **Lower:** NZ alpine skiing champion in 2024 was Piera Hudson.

SNOWY SCOREBOARD

WINTER GAMES NZ

The annual Winter Games NZ were held in Otago in August and September, attracting 550 athletes from 35 nations.

Events were:

Freeride world events at The Remarkables.

Alpine ski racing at Coronet Park.

Snowboard and freeskiering at Cardrona.

The Winter Games NZ are said to inject in excess of \$6 million into the local economy.

As the season began, **Piera Hudson (NZ)** won two alpine ski slaloms on her comeback trail after injury. Teenager **Rocco Jamieson (NZ)** beat an international field to win a snowboard slopestyle. **Campbell Melville Ives (NZ)** won an international snowboard halfpipe.

The NZ alpine ski champs were held at Coronet Peak. Winners were:

Women: Piera Hudson.

Junior women: Mathilda Watterson.

Men: Sam Hadley.

Junior men: Jesse Mutton.

Jessie Violet (NZ) won an international freeride event at The Remarkables as part of the Winter Games NZ.

Eight times World Cup alpine ski champ **Marcel Hircher** (now Netherlands), who is on the comeback trail representing his mother's country, decided not to race at Queenstown and left for home after training at Roundhill.

NZ's star alpine ski racer **Alice Robinson** turned out and won a giant slalom as part of Winter Games NZ.

Second was Romy Ertl (Germany).

A large field of 86 men and 39 women representing 16 different nations tackled a Winter Games NZ slalom.

Piera Hudson (NZ) won the women's race, with Franziska Gritsch (Austria) second.

Reto Maechler (Switzerland) won the men's slalom from Joel Luetolf (Switzerland).

RETURN OF ZOI

Triple Olympic medallist Zoi Sadowski Synnott (NZ) returned to competition after a long injury break when she lined up against a class international field in a snowboard World Cup at Cardrona in September.

Unfortunately howling winds prevented any finals and placings were awarded on qualifying runs.

On this basis Zoi came eighth. The winner was Kokomo Murase (Japan) with Mia Brookes (GB) second.

Rocco Jamieson (NZ) won a bronze medal in the men's snowboard with Campbell Melville Ives (NZ) fourth. The winner was Cameron Spalding (Canada) with Mons Roisland (Norway) second.

There were 88 starters (men and women) from 25 countries.

PIPE WORLD CUP

Next up was a freeski World Cup halfpipe at Cardrona, attended by most of the sport's big names.

US-based superstar freeskier Eileen Gu (China) won the women's event. No NZ riders made the final.

Brendan Mackay (Canada) won the

men's contest. Luke Harrold (NZ) in seventh place was the best Kiwi. Fin Melville Ives (NZ) qualified in first place but crashed out in the final.

DOUBLE TROUBLE

Fin Melville Ives (NZ) and Cam Melville Ives (NZ) are twins. One rides snowboards. The other prefers skis.

Now aged 18, the twins were born in Dunedin, but have lived in Wānaka their whole life.

Their parents were snowboard instructors at Cardrona Alpine Resort and they learned to ski when they were just three years old.

TWO KIWI WINNERS

Madeleine Disbrowe (NZ) won an international freeski big air at Cardrona.

Fin Melville Ives (NZ) won an international freeski halfpipe at Cardrona

ROCCO WINS SILVER

Rocco Jamieson (NZ) aged 18 won a silver medal in a snowboard big air World Cup event at Chur (Switzerland) in October.

The winner was Taiga Hasegawa (Japan) aged 17. There were 50 starters.

ALICE SILVER AGAIN

She's done it again. After winning four silver giant slalom medals on the alpine World Cup skiing circuit last season, Alice Robinson (NZ) has won a silver medal in the new season opener at Sölden (Austria).

Alice lost by just 0.17sec to Federica Brignone (Italy) with Julia Scheib (Austria) in third place.

At 34 Brignone became the oldest woman to win an alpine skiing World Cup race.

The sport's superstar Mikaela Shiffrin (US) won the first run but faded to fifth on the second run.

Norway was first, second and third in the men's race.

Former Norwegian Lucas Pinheiro Braathen, now representing Brazil, was quickest on the second run to take fourth. He started in bib 41 as a wild card entry. See photo on page 21.

WORLD CUP RESULTS

World Cup snow sports top 10 results since August by NZ competitors:

SNOWBOARDS

Zoi Sadowski-Synnott eighth in slopestyle at Cardrona.

Rocco Jamieson **BRONZE MEDAL** in slopestyle at Cardrona.

Campbell Melville Ives fourth in slopestyle at Cardrona.

Dane Menzies sixth in slopestyle at Cardrona.

Rocco Jamieson **SILVER MEDAL** in big air at Chur (Switzerland).

Lyon Farrell ninth in big air at Chur (Switzerland).

FREESKI

Luke Harrold seventh in freeski halfpipe at Cardrona.

Finley Melville Ives tenth in halfpipe World Cup at Cardrona.

ALPINE SKIING

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

WORLD SKI NEWS

US skier Anna DeMonte has broken the women's record for skiing up and down the largest mountain in Europe, namely Mt Blanc at Chamonix in France.

Officially she set a fastest known time (FKT) but it amounts to a record.

She skied up and down in 7 hours and 29 minutes. Typically it takes people 2 to 3 days.

DeMonte, now aged 30, originally was a swimmer and tried out for the Olympics. She then tried competitive cycling before taking up skiing.

***Former prime minister Helen Clark** has opened a new \$750,000 base building at Snow Farm near Cardrona, which is New Zealand's only cross-country skifield.*

Clark is a keen cross-country skier and is patron of Snow Farm where she has skied since 1991.

"I've skied across the northern hemisphere, Austria, Switzerland, US, Norway and Finland. This is as good as anything we've got in the world," she said.

Aspiring Canadian ski racer Lily Kunstadt was seriously injured while training at Saas-Fee (Switzerland) in August.

The 13-year-old was hit by a malfunctioning T-bar going down the mountain as she was going up.

This catapulted her into the air. When Kunstadt hit the ground, she broke her back in two places, fractured ribs, sustained second-degree burns to her face and had poor vision in one eye.

She spent a month in hospital before being flown back to Canada.

Plans to build a new skifield in British Columbia (Canada) are being hotly opposed by environmentalists.

They say the proposed Bridal Veil

Mountain Resort would include the home the spotted owl, calling it already the "most endangered bird in Canada" due to logging.

Bridal Veil would have 4000 skiable hectares with an 800 metres vertical drop, plus cross-country skiing, snowshoeing, backcountry skiing, tubing, hiking and mountain biking.

Swiss ski mountaineer Andy Steindl set a new record of 7 hours 45 minutes on what is called the "Spaghetti Tour".

This involves reaching the summits of 18 peaks of 4000 metres or more, in and around Zermatt in Switzerland.

It's named after the Italian huts that typically offer climbers food and accommodation throughout the mountains.

Most experienced mountaineers complete the route in three to five days.

A small Swiss ski area has closed for good due to climate change.

Schratten Flühli, a ski area with two lifts in the canton of Lucerne, has operated in a limited capacity for the past 12 years, due to poor snowfall.

It began operating in 1945 with Lucerne's first T-bar. The ski area closed in 2011 due to financial difficulties, but reopened the following year after a group of enthusiasts took over operations. Now, the ski area is slated for dismantling.

For \$NZ100 million you could buy your new ski home in Deer Valley, Utah.

This seven bedroom, 16 bathroom ski mansion sits on 1.1 hectares and comes with its own private gondola to get to the slopes. For this price you'll hope you get Sven, the Euro ski instructor

There is also a golf simulator, a two lane bowling alley, a climbing wall and a basketball court, plus a cinema, a sauna and a pool.



Upper: Crater Lake (Te Wai a-moe) in summer. Photo: Geonet. **Lower:** Skiing at Turoa. Photo: Pure Turoa.

ACROSS THE SKIING WORLD

To celebrate their 10th birthday in NZ, Uber offered Uber One customers the opportunity to book a full day of alpine activities on the house, including a ride in a snowcat, a day of private skiing and a degustation lunch in a mountain hut.

Of course there was a catch, only 80 spots were available, first in, first served.

Clients got transfers from Queenstown or Wanaka to Soho Basin, soon to be part of the Cardrona Ski Field, espressos and pastries.

Local guides were on hand to make sure folk didn't go completely sideways in the untouched backcountry. See also page 15.

The world's largest indoor skifield, the Shanghai resort in China, has opened to the general public.

The 90,000-square-metre facility features terrain for various ability levels. In comparison, in the US the American Dream is only 16,000 square metres.

The snow facility has 20 attractions including a snow train and a zipline. See page 21.

Two alpine ski racers from Korea and a ski coach were killed in a head-on vehicle crash near Geraldine in Canterbury in August.

The driver of their van and the driver of an opposing 4WD car were seriously injured and were flown to hospital by helicopter.

The deceased, who were candidates for selection in the Korean national team, had been training at Tekapo and were part of a convoy traveling to Queenstown for the Winter Games NZ.

Local reports said the van was ticketed at 130 km/h the day before the crash.

A British man has achieved a world record after jumping off Himalayan mountain Mera Peak.

Joshua Bregmen, 34, performed the world's highest altitude ski-BASE jump by skiing off a 5716-metre high cliff and parachuting to the ground.

He far surpassed the previous record of 4359 metres set by Frenchman Matthias Giraud in 2019.

At the age of 68, legendary alpine skier **Ingemar Stenmark** has found a new way to impress the world, this time in pole vaulting.

The Swedish icon, who dominated alpine skiing with his precision and skill, wowed fans again by clearing 3 metres at the World Masters athletics championship.

Stenmark won a men's record of 86 World Cup wins in alpine skiing. He won one race by 4.06 seconds in 1979, a record that still stands.

Stenmark won two gold medals at the Olympic Winter Games and won five world championship titles.

*Staff at the **Mountain High** ski resort in California saved the skifield equipment by using its snowmaking guns during a savage bushfire.*

The fire exploded in the Wrightwood community on a Tuesday evening in September, growing to 20,000 hectares on Wednesday morning with 0 percent containment.

Staff turned on the snowmaking machinery, keeping the flames at bay on the skifield.

Mountain High has invested millions of dollars in snowmaking equipment and its new taller towers were instrumental in protecting the resort's lifts and buildings.

Warren Miller Entertainment is celebrating 75 years with its all new movie **Warren Miller's 75**.

It features skiers and snowboarders like Shaun White, Zeb Powell, Lexi duPont, Max Hitzig and 15-year-old LJ Henrique, as they take on killer lines from Canada, Colorado, California and Utah to Finland,

Japan, Austria, and New Jersey.

Warren A. Miller (born 1924 died 2018 aged 93) was an American ski and snowboarding filmmaker.

His published works include 750 sports films, several books and hundreds of non-fiction articles. He often shot scenes in NZ.

*A British skier died last season because he ignored signs saying that the black run in the **Portes du Soleil**, seen as the most difficult black run in the Alps, was closed due to icy conditions.*

The 47- year-old Grahame Chapman ignored the sign and fell down the 37 degree slope.

The Swiss Wall is on the border of France and Switzerland. It is exceptionally steep, ungroomed and heavily mogulled.

A 2.4km gondola from the valley floor up to the skifield is proposed for Coronet Peak.

This would bypass the current access road and ease pressure on the skifield carparks.

It would be accompanied by a new village at the foot of the gondola, with 780 houses and a mountain biking hub.

A group of locals is rallying to voice their concerns about the development, saying it will forever change a rural landscape on Queenstown's outskirts.

A high-speed electric passenger lift system linking the Cardrona Valley to the Cardrona Alpine Resort and the new Soho ski areas is among projects announced in the government's fast-track approvals released in October.

The gondola is part of a Blackmans Creek Holdings Ltd project, which lists developer John Darby as the sole director. The project will establish on-mountain visitor accommodation, guest facilities and worker accommodation.

Salomon is marketing the Brigade Index, the first fully recyclable ski helmet.

The company said ski and snowboard helmets are very complex to recycle because they combine many different materials.

Without a way to separate these materials they often end up in landfills or are incinerated.

Salomon searched for a material family that could be used for the entire helmet and settled on polypropylene.

*Thunderstorms caused two streams to overflow as mudslides at the famous Austrian ski town of **St Anton**, leading to cars being swept downstream.*

No one was hurt but the Arlberg highway was closed for two days and the mayor said the clean-up would take three weeks.

A large French Alpine ski resort has announced it is to close, citing a lack of funds to become a year-round destination, as low and medium-altitude mountain areas around Europe struggle with a truncated season due to global heating and declining snowfalls.

Local councillors voted not to reopen **Alpe du Grand Serre** in the Isère this winter, saying they could no longer pay for the mountain lifts or pay to complete a programme to diversify as an all-year tourist destination.

The move will wipe out 200 jobs and hit businesses in the nearby village of La Morte, whose economy and population of 150 people depend on winter sports

*US alpine skiing legend **Lindsey Vonn** is about to make a comeback on the World Cup circuit this year, at the age of 40.*

She was seen to be training in NZ with her coach this winter. Vonn had knee surgery in April and has recovered well.

Vonn in her career had 82 World Cup victories and 137 podium finishes, as well as three Olympic medals (one gold). She raced in NZ as a teenager.



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 \$199

Junior \$99

Annual senior subscription \$310

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

ACCOMMODATION FEES

2024-2025 summer rates

Chalet and Turoa

Members adult	\$35
Members junior	\$20
Non-member adult	\$45
Non-member junior	\$30