

The Bulletin

RUAPEHU SKI CLUB

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Wonderful skiing at Whakapapa last season. Photo: Liza Fitzsimmons.



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PRESIDENT'S COLUMN

Happy New Year to you all. I hope you have all had great Christmas and New Years festivities and a relaxing break with your loved ones.

As many of you may have heard in the media, Ruapehu Alpine Lifts has proposed the installation of a new gondola.

Alpine gondolas are similar to detachable chairlifts, like the Rangatira chairlift, except that they carry enclosed pods instead of chairs. There is room for up to a dozen people in each pod and, as they are enclosed, they offer complete protection from the weather.

There is said to be a massive financial investment in the project. The main motivation for it is understood to be that the area will attract a greater number of sight-seeing visitors.

The gondola will transform RAL into a year-round operation that is less dependent on the weather conditions.

It is proposed that the path of the gondola will pass from the Top o' the Bruce to the Knoll Ridge Cafe.

The base station is said to lie between the Rangatira Chairlift and the Vertical Ski Shop. The top station is planned to lie immediately adjacent to the western side of the Knoll Ridge Cafe.

As the proposed gondola path passes through Hut Flat, it is planned to run overhead between the Lodge and Hut. The proposed path is more or less parallel with the far western wall of the Lodge. (The wall at the end of the accommodation wing.)

It is further planned that there will be a tower on either side of Hut Flat. One tower would be located some metres to the west of where the old Ski Patrol building used to be. The tower uphill of us would stand on the ridge between Hut Flat and the Staircase Valley.

The plans that have been presented to us so far indicate that the towers will

be around 12 metres high and more or less twice the physical size of the towers serving the Rangatira Chairlift.

The proposed project includes the temporary removal of the Waterfall Express Chairlift as it will impede the path of the gondola as they both approach their respective upper stations.

There are plans to either replace or redeploy or the Waterfall Chairlift so that it runs from the same base station, outside the Lodge, all the way to the top of the Knoll Ridge. The new Knoll Ridge Express will replace the Knoll Ridge T-bar and will be the longest chairlift in the country.

Your Committee is in the final stages of assessing the impact of all aspects of the project on the Club and of forming an official opinion on the matter. Our assessments include safety and icing management, visual impact and privacy and amenability, just to name a few.

At the same time, we are actively negotiating with RAL to mitigate or eliminate any negative impact there could be for RSC.

We will keep you informed on the state of those assessments. Just this week, the resource consent application for the project has been publicly notified. Details of the application may be found on the Ruapehu District Council website. We invite members to visit the website and assess the application for themselves.

We appreciate any feedback from members regarding the project. However, we ask that anyone wishing to participate in the resource consent process approach the RSC Executive instead of seeking direct involvement themselves.

We have the status of affected party and would therefore expect to have a stronger voice than any individuals.

**Richard Nelson
President**



RAL this summer used its snow factory to provide January sledding outside the Top O' the Bruce. RAL snow was also trucked to the beach front at Mt Maunganui. Photo: RAL.

THROUGH THE LODGE WINDOW

RAL Whakapapa mountain manager **Steve McGill** left Ruapehu in December after 36 years on the slopes.

He worked his way up to general manager and credits his career success to strong leadership and inspiration from former Swiss boss Lorenz Rieser and former RAL CEO Dave Mazey.

“We call ourselves the mountain whanau, and it’s true. The local iwi are also great and I also have huge respect for the culture surrounding the mountain.”

Sledding on snow was available outside the Top O’The Bruce at Christmas, thanks to RAL’s snow factory. (See photo above).

The sled run was open daily from 10am to 3pm, weather permitting, at an hourly cost of \$20 for adults, \$15 youth and infants 0-4-years free. Sleds were included with the pass.

RAL is to offer First Tracks at Turoa this year, following its successful introduction at Whakapapa in 2017.

The option is an add-on to a season pass and allows purchasers the right to ride the lifts for an hour before the normal opening.

It allows access to the Movenpick and Nga Wai Heke chairlifts during weekends and some school holiday days, conditions permitting.

The upgrade to 2018 season passes costs \$79 and also offers night skiing at Whakapapa.

Whakapapa chief fire officer Philip Smith was awarded the *Queen’s Service Medal* in the New Year honours.

A park ranger for the Department of Conservation, CFO Smith has served 38 years with the brigade and has been involved in many rescues around Tongariro National Park.

RAL has partnered with **Zermatt in Switzerland** to offer season pass holders reciprocal access to each other’s resorts.

Thus 2018 season pass holders for Mt Ruapehu are eligible for two days at Zermatt for the 2018-19 European winter.

The Zermatt partnership is a two-year deal applying to season passes sold for 2018 and 2019 only. Access is also provided to life pass holders.

Tom van Vollenhoven, one of seven 1956 Springbok rugby players who spent a week at RSC Lodge learning to ski, has

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President: Richard Nelson

Vice-Presidents: John Benn, Liza Fitzsimmons, Marion Quinn, Phill Thomass, Donald Webster

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Lodge Officer: Carl Burling

Hut Officer: John Benn

Chalet Officer: Phill Thomass

Turoa Officer: Donald Webster

Heritage Fund Guardians:

Richard Nelson, Adrian Adriaansen, Robin Dallas, Bernard Smith.

Fund Treasurer: Mike Wardle

Glacier Hut Custodian: Joe Gabriel

died aged 82.

Van Vollenhoven was a dashing wing who had a long career in UK rugby league after his rugby union days were over.

Galatea dairy farmer Sjors Corporaal took out his seventh win in **The Goat mountain run** from Whakapapa to Turoa, in a few seconds under two hours. It was the 15th annual race with 600 competitors setting off from the Top o' The Bruce.

Corporaal also won the **Tussock Traverse run** in 1 hour 51 min 14 sec.

Ruapehu snow made by RAL in its snow factory at Whakapapa was taken to the beach front at Mount Maunganui at Christmas.

A 60-tonne truck travelled 260km to take the snow to the surf. More than 500 turned up to play in the snow which had 25 prizes buried in the snow.

The Skotel Alpine Resort in the Whakapapa village is for sale as a going concern, situated on a Department of Conservation leasehold site.

Said the be New Zealand's highest hotel, at an elevation of 1134m, it has been in the ownership of former Auckland city councillor John Stevens for the last 30 years.

It has been extended several times since the first stage was built in the mid-1960s.

The Desert Road will be closed at time and will be down to one lane for almost three months while the deck is replaced on the Waihohonu Stream bridge which was damaged by a truck crash last year. Drivers can call 0800 4 HIGHWAYS (0800 44 44 49) to speak to the call centre team who can provide them with traffic and travel information.

The deadline for the June Bulletin will be **Friday May 11th.**

All items should be with the Editor by then.

THE BULLETIN

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SKI SEASON BOOKINGS 2018

Your bookings will be confirmed as soon as possible after receiving your request, as long as subscriptions for all those on the booking have been paid and there are sufficient funds in your deposit account to cover the requested accommodation.

The actual bunk authority with bunk numbers will not be sent until 48 hours prior to the first night booked.

This has shown that we can better manage the allocation of bunks, after the cancellations have been processed.

Please ensure you have your bunk authority with you, even if on your mobile device.

Bookings for the 2018 ski season will open on May 1st. Any bookings before then will not be confirmed or processed. As in past years all bookings should be confirmed by the last week in May.

School holiday bookings

Due to the usual high demands for school holiday bookings, preference will be given to members who have completed an extra work party this season.

If the number who have done an extra work party and therefore qualify for a priority exceeds the accommodation available, a ballot may be held. If there are any remaining bunks these may also be balloted.

Any bunks available after June 10th may be booked for shorter stays.

School holiday weeks are for the member families with school aged children.

Bookings may not be for more than seven nights at the upper level and any

extra nights may be re allocated to the Chalet.

Bookings with guests

Our booking rules state that guests (non-members) are not able to have their accommodation confirmed until two weeks prior to staying.

This has meant in some cases that members have not wanted to make bookings with such short lead times.

Where possible these bookings can be confirmed at the Chalet. Then once the two week period comes up and there is space at the upper mountain, we will endeavour to move the booking to the Hut or Lodge.

Winter Party Week

Sunday August 12th to Friday 17th (six nights). This is for Senior members only and no children will be booked at the Hut or Lodge during this time.

Cancellation Policy

All bookings are in effect from noon on the day of the first night of residence until noon of the day following the last night of residence.

Cancellations (online or by email to the Office) must be made 48 hours prior to the first booking date. (eg Friday night cancelled by midday Wednesday prior).

All alterations to bookings incur a \$50 administration fee per person affected, irrespective of the date of alteration.

School Holiday cancellations have a two week cancellation time-as per the booking rules.

Subscriptions

These will again be emailed or posted at the end of March for payment in April. Please remember to contact us if you have changed your email or postal contact.

Sheryl

WHANGANUI RIVER

Whanganui River Adventure - Bridge to Nowhere.

Date: Saturday March 17th.

Where: Book in at RSC Turoa (Ohakune) for \$35 per night.

Cost: Day trip will cost \$160 per person, or \$130 for under-15 years old (but discount for more people).

What to expect:

From RSC Ohakune we will drive to Pipiriki to meet our guides by 10:30 am on Saturday March 17th. They will take us on a jet boat 30 km upriver. This takes about 45 mins and has stops along the way to look at points of interest.

We stop at Mangapuri landing and walk 40 minutes to the Bridge to Nowhere. Here we will stop for lunch (we bring our own!). Tea, coffee and biscuit are provided by our guides.

To return you have two options. Either jet boat back to Pipiriki and drive yourself back to Ohakune. Or you can canoe back downriver (approximately 2 hours).

The canoes are two man Canadian canoes and are extremely stable. We will be given a safety briefing before setting off. This part of the trip is unguided.

What you will need:

Book into the RSC in Ohakune (Friday and Saturday night). You will need linen (sheets and towel) and breakfast for Saturday and Sunday.

I anticipate going into Ohakune for a meal so only snacks and drinks are required for Saturday night.

You will need to pack ingredients or already prepared lunch for Saturday (and a day pack to carry it in).

Sunday is free to return to home or to explore Ohakune. Brunch in town, walk along Old Coach Road, mountain bike

(if you bring your own).

More information and pictures are available on website at www.bridgetonowhere.co.nz

If you are interested please contact me by email liza.fitsimmons@gmail.com

GONDOLA BY 2019

RAL hopes to have its \$25 million gondola ready to operate at Whakapapa by the start of the 2019 ski season. It will replace the 30 year-old Waterfall Express quad.

CEO Ross Copland said the gondola will have 50 cabins, each holding 10 passengers and moving at 6 metres per second.

It will be capable of taking 2400 people every hour and the 1.8km ride will take 5 minutes at full speed.

The gondola will leave a rebuilt Whakapapa base at the Top o' the Bruce and climb to a spot next to the Knoll Ridge Café.

No exact route has been declared but the grapevine (ie Facebook) says it will pass between the RSC Lodge and RSC Hut with no intermediate station.

DOMESHED GOING

The Dome Equipment Shed, more commonly known as the Dome Shelter on the crater rim at Mt Ruapehu, is being removed by the Army.

DOC said the shed has not served as an effective shelter for two decades and, since 2011 the important volcano monitoring equipment has been housed in the purpose-built Matarangi facility at Glacier Knob.

DOC said the shelter can be very hard to spot in a blizzard and its door is usually iced up.

SNOW SQUADS 2018

The RSC Snow Squads are now open for registration.

These squads offer the best value for money lessons on the mountain with selected RAL instructors taking small groups of RSC members for the season.

Squads are tailored for the group's ability. They provide 12 hours of instruction every second weekend over five alternate weekends.

Come and meet other members and make the most of being a member of the best Club on the mountain. They are also the best way of making lifelong skiing friendships.

A squad day's schedule is skiing/boarding for six hours a day, 9am–12pm, lunch for an hour and then 1pm–4pm.

Prices to be confirmed closer to the season's opening. The price does not include accommodation and in the interest of securing your bunk please lodge your bunk booking early when they open on May 1st 2018.

For more details and to register your interest please go to our website: www.rsc.org.nz/skiactivities.

If you would like more information contact our Club Captain at skiactivities@rsc.org.nz or the RSC Office.

Don't miss out! Registrations close on May 1st 2018.

Squad Option One Dates (at Whakapapa).

July 21.

August 4 (Christiania Derby).

August 18 (Haensli Cup).

September 1 (Rangatira Trophy).

September 15 (Ngauruhoe Trophy).

Squad Option Two Dates (at Whakapapa).

July 28.

August 11 (Waimarino Trophy).

August 25.

September 8 (Tongariro Junior Races).

September 22 (RSC Club champs and North Island Masters).

Brent Moffat

CLUB WEEK

This year Club Week is timetabled for August 13-17. Club Week is and always has been a Senior members only occasion.

There are two factors the Committee have to consider when setting this date for the calendar.

One is tying it to either immediately before or immediately after the Haensli Cup which is a big event for the Club.

The other is fitting it around NIPS, the North Island primary school champs, which are similarly timed.

There are some members who have expressed their discontent at this placement and we can only plead the bigger picture.

NIPS brings in school party bookings. We know that they are in the main non-members taking bunks members may want to book.

They are sponsored and accompanied by members. Sheryl has the discretion to put them in the Chalet if we have a lot of member bookings for the Lodge concurrent with NIPS.

We have quite a few school bookings over the season and they bring in a significant amount of revenue which we cannot afford to thumb our nose at.

They are all midweek and to refuse them has the potential of an unwelcome effect on our subs or bunk rates.

Committee

TIDES MAY AFFECT ERUPTIONS

A study of Mt Ruapehu by Brown University (US) suggests that a volcanic system's response to tidal forces could provide a tool for predicting a certain type of eruption

Just before a surprise eruption of Ruapehu volcano in 2007, seismic tremor near its crater became tightly correlated with twice-monthly changes in the strength of tidal forces.

The new research, published in the journal *Scientific Reports*, suggests that signals associated with tidal cycles could potentially provide advanced warning of certain types of volcanic eruptions.

"Looking at data for this volcano spanning about 12 years, we found that this correlation between the amplitude of seismic tremor and tidal cycles developed only in the three months before this eruption," said Tàrsilo Girona, the study's lead author.

The researchers chose to study Ruapehu volcano in part because its activity has been closely monitored for years by GNS Science.

NO 2017 ERUPTIONS

Geonet says 2017 was marked by no eruptions from any of the active volcanoes in New Zealand.

However, we did see some volcanic unrest and the 2017 award for our most restless volcano goes to Mt Ruapehu for 2017.

This was portrayed by an increase in volcanic gas emissions and sustained high lake temperature starting in November and continuing through to December.

The lake temperature ranged 36 degrees to 38 degrees C which is near the top of its usual range and was sustained three months.

JAPANESE ERUPTION

Japanese volcano Mt Kusatsu-Shiranesan erupted on January 23rd, injuring skiers as well as soldiers on a course, and one soldier died. Several skiers were hurt when rocks crashed into gondola cabins, shattering glass.

The blast set off an avalanche at the skifield and four soldiers were pulled out of the debris with broken bones. Skifield staff said 78 skiers took refuge in a ski lift motor house and all were escorted to safety.

Prior to the eruption, only the crater of the volcano were off limits due to minimal levels of volcanic activity. Kusatsu-Shirane last erupted in 1983.

STEEPEST RAILWAY

A funicular railway promoted as the steepest in the world has gone into service up a Swiss mountainside. The line climbs 743 metres over a span of 1738 metres. At one point it has a 48-degree angle.

Passengers are able to keep standing up straight because the hydraulically-controlled floors in the barrel-shaped cars automatically remain level during the four-minute trip.

The Stoosbahn took 14 years to build, two more than scheduled, and cost 52 million Swiss francs (\$NZ75 million).

The operators say the Stoosbahn has taken over as the world's steepest funicular from the nearby Luzerner Hausberg Pilatus which was built in 1889.

Editor's note: I have three times ridden a cable railway at Katoomba in the Blue Mountains near Sydney. This is an old coal mining device which reaches 52 degrees and is marketed as the steepest scenic railway in the world.

AG



Zoi Sadowski-Synnott

ZOI WINS A MEDAL AT THE OLYMPICS

Zoi Sadowski-Synnott of Wanaka won New Zealand's second ever Olympic Winter Games medal with a bronze in women's snowboard big air at PyeongChang (South Korea).

Zoi, aged 16, scored 157.50 for her two best jumps from three attempts. Anna Gasser (Austria) won gold with 185.00 and Jamie Anderson (US) won silver with 177.25.

In a dramatic finish the Austrian won the gold medal with the last jump of the day.

Sadowski-Synnott was born in Sydney but moved to New Zealand with her family when she was six. She took up snowboarding when she was nine.

Until her performance New Zealand's only Winter Olympic medal was 26 years earlier when Annelise Coberger won a silver in alpine slalom skiing.

Earlier in the week Zoi was 13th in her preferred event, the slopestyle, where Jamie Anderson retained her gold medal title.

Her father Sean is a New Zealander while her mother Robin is American. When she's not on snow, Zoi focuses on schoolwork at Mount Aspiring College.



Nico Porteous

NICO ALSO WINS AN OLYMPIC MEDAL

Nico Porteous from Wanaka, aged 16, won the bronze medal in the freeski halfpipe at the Olympic Winter Games.

His best run (of three) was worth 94.40 points. The defending champion David Wise (US) won the gold medal with 97.20 from Alex Ferreira (US) on 96.40.

New Zealand's flag bearer Beau-James Wells was fourth with a run of 91.60, a jump up from his sixth place at the previous Olympics.

Unfortunately his brother Byron Wells was injured in the warm-ups after qualifying in fifth position, while Nico's brother Miguel failed to make the 12 finalists.

Porteous began skiing at the age of four on a family holiday to France. Mum, Dad and older brother Miguel were already keen skiers.

By 13, Porteous had joined Miguel chasing back to back winters, training and competing in Breckenridge in the USA and Cardrona Alpine Resort in NZ, balancing his sports commitments with school work.

HONOUR FOR HEAD

Howard Head, an American who invented and produced the first metal skis, has been inducted into the US National Inventors Hall of Fame in Washington.

An aircraft engineer, the 6 feet 4 inches Head tried skiing in Vermont in 1946 and after a few crashes he decided that hickory skis were not the best.

“If wood were the best material, they’d still be making airplanes out of wood,” he said.

It took Head three years and 40 failed attempts to create the aluminium skis that changed the sport.

“If I had known then that it would take 40 versions before the ski was any good, I might have given it up. But, fortunately, you get trapped into thinking the next design will be it.”

His skis sold well all round the world, but met trouble in New Zealand and especially Ruapehu where the wet snow got in between the layers and caused delamination. The skis had to be glued again.

According to several reports, Head was down to his last \$20 and ready to give up in 1950 when he took yet another version of his metal skis to the snows.

“They worked, in every conceivable snow condition, early morning ice, afternoon crud, everything,” said his tester, Cliff Taylor.

By the end of the 1950s, more than 200,000 pairs of Head skis were in use and by 1955 Head skis were the leading brand in Europe and North America.

When Head discovered they were too soft for racing, he figured out a way to make them stiffer and the Swiss team was on Head skis in 1963.

Other national ski teams quickly followed suit and at the 1964 Winter Olympics in Innsbruck, Billy Kidd (US) won a silver medal in the slalom on Head skis.

In Europe his agent and assistant was the Swiss instructor Walter Haensli who had

spent three years at Whakapapa and co-founded the lift company RAL.

Head also invented an oversized tennis racket that substituted aluminium and later graphite for the wooden frame.

It went on the market in 1976 and within four years more than 700,000 players were using it.

Howard Head died in 1991, aged 76.



JUNIOR CHAMPION

Louis Burling, 2017, the RSC Junior champion.

Louis had an outstanding year, winning the RSC Junior Club champs and coming third place in the Primary School Champs. At the Club champs he even gave the Senior men a run for their money with a third and second on time for the slalom and giant slalom respectively. Watch out Marcel Hirscher!

OBITUARIES

GORDON HOOKINGS

We record the death at Auckland in December aged 97 of Gordon Hookings MBE who was a prominent RSC member in the 1950s, 1960s etc.

Gordon was an active and successful glider pilot. He won a New Zealand championship, broke many records and represented New Zealand at world gliding championships.

His research on the ups and down of atmospheric flow (and in particular on downdrafts maintained by precipitation, and on thermals and plumes) saw him awarded the Sir Henry Wigram Medal by the Royal Aeronautical Society.

Gordon was active in several other sports including tramping and skiing, netball for an office team, cricket and volleyball.

He served 38 years on the teaching staff of Auckland University, specialising in mathematics.

The war years saw Gordon as an optical munitions designer for the DSIR (NZ government science department) and as an aerodynamicist with a British Air Ministry firm.

AG

HOWARD (BILL) SMITH

Howard Smith, also known as Bill, who was a member of RSC from the 1930s until the 1980s, has died aged 103.

Bill served on the RSC Committee during 1970-73 and his skiing evolved from skinning to riding lifts.

He built and owned a series of yachts and launches, first at Wellington and then at Auckland.

In later years Howard and his wife Joan had extensive, long duration travels, predominantly through Europe by caravan. This provided much material for his painting many hundreds of paintings and

watercolours.

His daughter Lindi Miller and her daughters Sophie and Charlotte are current RSC members. We offer our condolences to their family.

PATRICK BELL

William Patrick Leslie (Patrick) Bell, a prominent RSC member for many years, has died at Auckland, aged 85.

Pat served on the RSC Committee during 1981-87. His children Hamish and Sarah have also been Committee members as well as talented ski racers.

Pat himself was never a gun ski racer but the Bulletin records he did win a couple of Veterans races. In one of these he beat Tom Bates which was no mean feat.

One of Pat's major tasks was to organise with the assistance of his offsider Graham Somerville a series of events as part of the Tongariro National Park centennial celebrations in 1987.

Unfortunately most of the races were cancelled due to bad weather, but our Club and Pat were warmly thanked for their work.

Outside of RSC, Pat was a dental surgeon specialising in orthodontics. We extend the Club's condolences to Audrey and the Bell family.

WARREN MILLER

Warren Miller, a prolific outdoor film maker who for decades made homages to the skiing life that he narrated with his own humorous style, has died aged 93.

A World War II veteran, ski racer, surfer and sailor, Miller produced more than 500 films on a variety of outdoor activities.

It was his ski films for which he was most known. His annual movies, which sometimes featured New Zealand scenes, served as informal kickoffs for the ski season for more than 60 years.



*The Schilthorn revolving restaurant at 3000m in the Swiss alps which featured in the James Bond film *On Her Majesty's Secret Service*. The annual Mürren Inferno amateur ski race starts just below this peak. Photo: Alan Graham.*



The Allmendhubel funicular and the Swiss town of Mürren. Photo: Alan Graham.

MURREN INFERNO

The Mürren Inferno downhill ski race is held every January in the Swiss alpine resort of Mürren and is widely recognised as the world's best ski race for amateurs.

Organised for the first time in 1928 by British skiers who converted Mürren from a sleepy farm village into a ski resort, the event has a maximum of 1850 racers and there is a wait list each year.

The course covers 14.9 km of contrasting terrain and topography, and is open to the skiing public at other times of the year.

An unusual feature of the race is that it has some short uphill and flat sections and the skiers are not allowed to take off their skis.

The start is located just below the Schilthorn peak with its famed circular revolving restaurant at 3000m which featured in the James Bond film *On Her Majesty's Secret Service*.

The course runs through the village of Mürren and finishes at the valley floor below in Lauterbrunnen town, a vertical drop of 2170m.

Back in 1928, a tweed-suited Englishman won it with a time of 1 hour 12 minutes. Today this attractive course can be covered by competent skiers in 45 minutes while the winner of the Inferno takes less than 15 minutes.

The race hopefully ends at pub in Lauterbrunnen but in some years there is not enough snow for a full race so the course ends at a pub in Mürren with about half the normal distance covered.

Until 1989, a terrifying upper part of the piste below the summit was included. Organisers decided there were too many casualties being helicoptered off the mountain because of it, so thankfully they lowered the start line.

Marshals are stationed at the tough sections and they wave a yellow flag if the next racer has to avoid a fallen skier.

With the 1800 entrants hurtling down at 12 second intervals, there can be up to 100 racers on the course at any one time and there can be chaos at the narrow sections.

All sorts of skiing ability is seen on the course and anyone who is a confident skier above intermediate level is invited to give it a go. The result is a wonderful community spirit.

Royal sibling Pippa Middleton has competed and rowing legend Sir Steve Redgrave is another finisher.

New Zealand skiers often take part and they are not top ski racers, just keen club members.

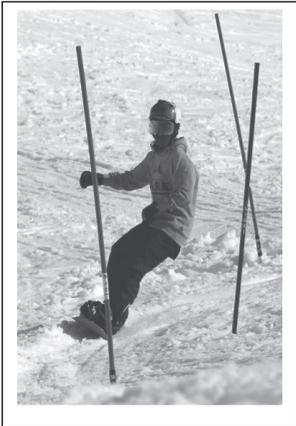
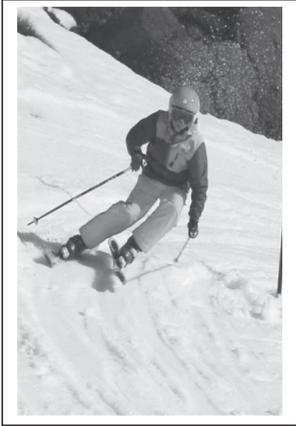
Each year about 60 ordinary skiers start first. The serious racers including ex-Olympians start next, and the final runners get away at 3.30pm.

A timing chip (transponder) is attached to the inside of each racing bib which must be worn so that the transponder is in front of the body.

The night before the race, there is the Devil's Dance. This is a procession of villagers and a band dressed up as devils who walk around the village with flaming torches.

They finally arrive at the ice rink where a great big devil figure is burnt on a stake to give all racers good luck for the following day.

*** This year's race was cut to a short event with a winning time of 2min 48sec after a metre of snow was dumped on the course, and only the middle section was OK for racing. No Kiwis raced this year but there were two Aussies.



Fun racing in the school holidays...Photos: Daniel Thomas



Upper: Late afternoon fun racing during the school holidays. Photo: Daniel Thomas.
Lower: Racing in the North Island primary school ski champs. Photo: NIPSSC.



Upper: Timing the Haensli Cup in Te Heuheu Valley. **Lower:** A digger seen after the big September snowfall. Photos: Stephen Payne.

RSC CALENDAR OF EVENTS

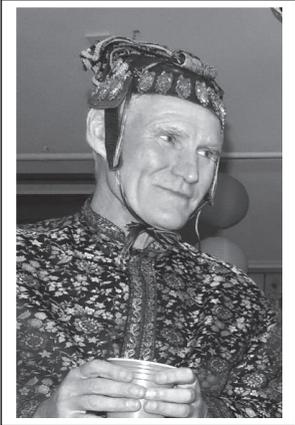
Mar 2018	3-4	Working parties
	7	Whanganui River Adventure, to Bridge to Nowhere
	31-Apr	Working parties (Easter)
Apr 201	14-15	Working parties (truck weekend)
	21	Bike weekend
May 2018	1	RSC winter bookings open
June 2018	QB	Whakapapa ski season opens
July 2018	6-22	School holidays
	21	Snow squads option 1
	28	Snow squads option 2
August 2018	4	Christiania Derby
	4	Snow squads option 1
	11	Snow squads option 2
	11	Waimarino Trophy
	13-17	Winter Party
	18	Haensli Cup
	18	Snow squads option 1
	20-23	NI Primary School skiing (week one) Whakapapa
	25	Snow squads option 2
	27-30	NI Primary School skiing (week two) Whakapapa
Sept 2018	1	Rangatira Trophy
	1	Snow squads option 1
	3-6	NI Primary School snowboards Whakapapa
	8	Tongariro Junior Races
	8	Snow squads option 2
	15	Ngauruhoe Trophy
	15	Snow squads option 1
	?????	NI Secondary School skiing (Turoa)
	22	RSC Club champs
	22	North Island masters
22	Snow squads option 2	
?????	NI Secondary School snowboards (Turoa)	
29-Oct	4	School holidays

NEW MEMBERS

We wish a warm welcome to the following new members:

Natalie Dowd (Auckland)
 Kirsten Gendall (Auckland)
 Nigel McKissock (Wellington)

Sam McKissock (Wellington)
 Nick Muller (Auckland)
 Anna Muller (Auckland)
 Jason Redward (Auckland)
 Rouppe Van Der Voort (Auckland)
 Isaac Stewart (Auckland).



Dress up night during Winter Party. Photos: Peter Otway.



Upper: The Thomas triplets came first, second and third in the Club champs Under-10 race. Remarkably less than a second separated them in a 40-second race. With them is the Club Captain Brent Moffat. Photo Stephen Payne. **Lower:** Asian night during Winter Party. Photo: Peter Otway.

OLYMPIC RESULTS

The Olympic Winter Games were held at PyeonChang (South Korea) in February 2018 with 20 New Zealand skiers, snowboarders and ice skaters taking part.

Some results were:

Men's downhill

Aksel Lund Svindal (Nor)	1.40.25
Kjetil Janstrud (Norway)	1.40.37
Beat Feuz (Switzerland)	1.40.43

Men's super-g

Matthias Mayer (Austria)	1.24.24
Beat Fuez (Switzerland)	1.24.57
Kjetil Janstrud (Norway)	1.24.62

Men's combined

Marcel Hirscher (Austria)	2.06.52
Alexis Pinturault (France)	2.06.75
V Muffat-Jeandet (France)	2.07.54

Men's giant slalom

Marcel Hirscher (Austria)	2.18.04
H Kristoffersen (Norway)	2.19.31
Alexis Pinturault (France)	2.19.35

Men's slalom

Andre Myhrer Sweden)	1.38.99
Ramon Zenhausern (Switz)	1.39.33
Michael Matt (Austria)	1.39.66

Freeski halfpipe men

David Wise (US)	97.20
Alex Ferreira (US)	96.40
Nico Porteous (NZ)	94.80

Beau-James Wells (NZ) fourth 91.60

Freeski slopestyle men

Oystein Braaten (Norway)	95.00
Nick Goepper (US)	93.60
Alex B-Marchand (Canada)	92.40

Skier cross men

Brady Leman (Canada)	1
Marc Bischofberger (Switz)	2
Sergey Ridzic (OAR)	3

Women's downhill

Sofia Goggia (Italy)	1.39.22
Ragnhild Mowinckel (Nor)	1.39.31
Lindsey Vonn (US)	1.39.69

Women's super-g

Ester Ledecka (Czech)	1.21.11
Anna Veith (Austria)	1.12.12
Tina Weirather (Liechtenst)	1.21.22

Women's combined

Michelle Gisin (Switzerland)	2.20.90
Mikaela Shiffrin (US)	2.21.87
Wendy Holdener (Switz)	2.22.34

Women's giant slalom

Mikaela Shiffrin (US)	2.20.02
Ragnhild Mowinckel (Nor)	2.20.41
Frederica Brignone (Italy)	2.20.48

Women's slalom

Frida Hansdotter (Sweden)	1.38.63
Wendy Holdener (Switz)	1.38.68
Kath Gallhuber (Austria)	1.38.95

Freeski halfpipe women

Cassie Sharpe (Canada)	95.80
Marie Martinod (France)	92.60
Brita Sigourney (US)	91.60

Freeski slopestyle women

Sarah Hoefflin (Switz)	91.20
Mathilde Gremaud (Switz)	88.00
Isabel Atkin (GB)	84.60

Skier cross women

Kelsey Serwa (Canada)	1
Brittany Phelan (Canada)	2
Fanny Smith (Switzerland)	3

OAR = Olympic Athlete from Russia

Snowboard results: see page 23

NZ OLYMPIC PLACINGS

The New Zealand team won two bronze medals at the 2018 Olympic Winter Games in PyeonChang (South Korea).

Zoi Sadowski-Synnott was third in the women's snowboard big air and on the same day **Nico Porteous** was third in the men's freeski halfpipe.

Both were aged 16 and are the youngest New Zealanders to win an Olympic medal. The previous youngest was swimmer Danyon Loader.

The medals came after a wait of 26 years since Annalise Coberger won the only other Kiwi medal at the Winter Olympics, a silver in alpine slalom skiing in 1992.

The NZ team at PyeonChang also won three fourth placings and one fifth.

Peter Michael came fourth in the 1500m long track speed skating. He then joined **Reyon Kay** and **Shane Dobbin** to finish fourth in the speed skating team pursuit.

The team's flag bearer **Beau-James Wells** was fourth in Porteous's event while **Carlos Garcia Knight** came fifth in the men's snowboard slopestyle.

NZ OLYMPIC TEAM

FREESKI

Nico Porteous, bronze medal in freeski halfpipe.

Beau-James Wells, fourth in freeski halfpipe.

Byron Wells, 12th in freeski halfpipe.

Miguel Porteous, 17th in freeski

halfpipe.

Finn Bilous, 13th in freeski slopestyle.

Jackson Wells, 25th in freeski slopestyle.

Jossi Wells, withdrew due to injury.

Janina Kuzma, 16th in freeski halfpipe.

Britt Hawes, 21st freeski halfpipe.

Jamie Prebble, eliminated in skier cross.

ALPINE SKIING

Alice Robinson, dnf slalom, 35th in GS.

Adam Barwood, dnf slalom, 34th in GS, 43rd in SG.

Willis Feasey, dnf slalom, 36th in giant slalom, 37th in SG.

SNOWBOARD

Zoi Sadowski-Synnott, bronze medal in big air, 13th in slopestyle.

Rakai Tait, 26th in halfpipe.

Tiarn Collins, withdrew due to injury.

Carlos Garcia Knight, fifth in slopestyle, 11th in big air.

Duncan Campbell, dnf snowboard cross.

SPEED SKATING (LONG TRACK)

Peter Michael, fourth in team pursuit, fourth in 1500m, 14th in 1500m, 15th in mass start.

Reyon Kay, fourth in team pursuit, 26th in 1500m, eliminated in mass start.

Shane Dobbin, fourth in team pursuit.

SKELETON

Rhys Thornbury, 14th in skeleton.

OLYMPIC HIGHLIGHTS

Marcel Hirscher (Austria) missed his chance to become an absolute legend of alpine skiing. He won two gold medals in the giant slalom and alpine combined but then he failed to finish the slalom, which is usually his best event. The slalom gold went to **Andre Myhrer (Sweden)**.

Aksel Lund Svindal (Norway), who has often trained in New Zealand, won the Blue Riband event of men's skiing, the high speed downhill, by a margin of 0.12 sec over Kjetil Janstrud (Norway). **Matthias Mayer (Austria)**, who won the downhill last time, won the super-g this time.

There was an upset in the women's slalom when the hot favourite **Mikaela Shiffrin (US)** came only fourth. The winner was **Frida Hansdotter (Sweden)**. Shiffrin did have some success this time, winning gold in the giant slalom and silver in the alpine combined.

There was an even bigger upset in the women's super-g when unranked **Ester Ledecka (Czech Republic)**, who entered the Games as a world champion snowboarder, borrowed some super-g skis from Shiffrin and won the gold medal by one-hundredth of a second from the defending champion **Anna Veith (Austria)**.

Ester Ledecka went on to win the snowboard parallel slalom, thus becoming the first person to win Winter Olympic medals in two sports at the same Games.

Lindsey Vonn (US), so long the star of women's alpine skiing, and the winner of 77 World Cup races, bowed out of her final Olympics with a bronze in downhill and a fourth in super-g.

The women's downhill was won by **Sofia Goggia (Italy)** while **Michelle Gisin (Switzerland)** won the alpine combined, to match her sister Dominique's win in the downhill at the previous Olympics.

Snowboarder Shaun White entered the top ranks of Olympic history with a third gold medal in four Olympics in the snowboard halfpipe. It came just months after an horrific crash in New Zealand which required 62 stitches in his face and five days in intensive care.

Australia won three medals at the Games, a silver to **Matt Graham** in the freeski moguls, a bronze to **Scotty James** in the snowboard halfpipe and a silver to **Jarryd Hughes** in snowboard cross.

Isabel Atkin became the first British skier to win an Olympic medal when she won bronze in the women's freeski slopestyle.

Japanese ski jumper Noriaki Kasai, aged 45, made history as the first athlete to compete in eight Winter Olympics. He finished 21st in the small hill jumping and helped Japan to sixth in the team jumping event, while insisting that he aims to jump at the next two Winter Olympics.

There appeared to be a tie for second in the **5000m speed skating** in which Kiwi skater Peter Michael was fourth. This was based on timing down to one hundredth of a second. However, it was possible to break the race times down to one thousandth of a second to decide the silver and bronze medals.

German luge rider Natalie Geisenberger took home two gold medals after winning both the women's singles and the team relay. This gave her five gold medals at three Olympics.

Five tropical counties took part in the Olympic Winter Games for the first time.

They were Ecuador, Eritrea, Malaysia, Nigeria and Singapore. Also on debut was Kosovo, giving 92 countries and 3000 athletes.

Canada and Germany tied for the gold medal in the men's two-man bobsleigh. Both clocked 3 min 16.86 sec for four runs down the ice track. Latvia got the bronze medal, finishing 0.05 sec back to complete the closest three-sled finish in Olympic history.

Were the female competitors at the Olympic Winter Games "ladies" or "women"?

They were both. It was up to each sport to choose its name and eight chose "ladies" while six chose "women".

The sports that RSC contests (namely alpine skiing and snowboard) both use "ladies".

Norway topped the medal count with 39 medals (14 gold). **Germany** won 31 medals (14 gold) while **Canada** won 29 medals (11 gold).

Marit Bjørgen (Norway) won five medals in cross-country skiing, giving her 15 medals in her Olympic career (eight gold).

OLYMPIC SNOWBOARD RESULTS

Snowboard slopestyle men

Gerrard Redmond (US)	87.16
Max Parrot (Canada)	86.00
Mark McMorris (Canada)	85.20
Carlos Garcia Knight (NZ) 5th	78.60

Snowboard halfpipe men

Shaun White (US)	97.70
Ayumu Hirano (Japan)	95.25
Scotty James (Australia)	92.00

Snowboard big air men

Sebastien Toutant (Canada)	174.25
Kyle Mack (US)	168.75
Billy Morgan (GB)	158.00

Snowboard cross men

Pierre Vaultier (France)	1
Jarryd Hughes (Australia)	2
Regino Hernandez (Spain)	3

Snowboard parallel slalom men

Nevin Galmarini (Switz)	1
Lee Sangho (Korea)	2
Zan Kosir (Slovenia)	3

Snowboard slopestyle women

Jamie Anderson (US)	83.00
Laurie Blouin (Canada)	76.33
Enni Rukajarvi (Finland)	75.38

Snowboard halfpipe women

Chloe Kim (US)	98.25
Liu Jaiyu (China)	89.75
Arielle Gold (US)	85.75

Snowboard big air women

Anna Gasser (Austria)	185.00
Jamie Anderson (US)	177.25
Zoi Sadowski-Synnott (NZ)	157.50

Snowboard cross women

Michela Moioli (Italy)	1
Julia Mabileau (France)	2
Eva Samkova (Czech)	3

Snowboard parallel slalom women

Ester Ledecka (Czech)	1
Selina Jeorg (Germany)	2
Ramona Hofmeister (Ger)	3



Upper: Damon Forsyth, Catherine Gafa and How Lan Ho hogging the Pinnacle Valley. **Lower:** Skiing for all ages. Tim's young ski buddies were Jim Mutch 88 and Rayce Smith 7. Photos: Tim Sharp.



RSC members Roland Heiniger and Sarah Hamilton won the North Island Masters titles at Whakapapa. Photo: Maja Heiniger.



Left: Margaux Hackett, aged 17, is the daughter of bungy jumping pioneer AJ Hackett and she is an international freeski competitor. She just missed the Winter Olympics team this year but is young enough to have another chance next time. Photo: FIS.



Right: RSC's ace photographer Stephen Payne shot this selfie.



Upper: The Chateau seen after a snowfall last season. Photo Peter Otway. **Lower:** Made it to Hut Flat and almost to the Lodge. Photo: Drew Blair.



A New Zealand rope tow “nutcracker” as commonly used around our skifields, and a US de luxe version which is on display in Colorado.

THE NUTCRACKER

We always thought the “nutcracker” rope tow attachment device was invented in New Zealand by Sir William Hamilton who also invented the jet boat.

Hamilton rope tows were installed all over New Zealand from the 1940s, and some are still in use on club skifields.

RSC members commonly used them on the Rockgarden, Staircase, Waterfall and National Downhill.

But now the Colorado Snowsports Museum at Vail says US skifields going back to the 1930s used nutcrackers.

George Dondero applied to the US Patent Office in 1939 for his aluminium “gripper” device and one month later skier Clare Bousquet filed for a patent on a similar gadget called “Bosquet’s Ski Tow Rope Gripper”.

His device was sold with a belt, which had a pocket to store the hinged handle. Commonly referred to as “the nutcracker,” more than 500,000 were sold over the course of the next 30 years.

The new Colorado Snowsports Museum has a Bosquet Ski Tow Rope Gripper on display.



RSC members wearing nutcracker ski tow belts outside the old RSC Hut in 1949. Photo: RSC archives.



Upper: Riding the second chairlift during a minor eruption in 1966. Photo: Alan Graham **Lower:** Swimming in Crater Lake in 1964. You could swim out about 25 metres before the water was too hot. Photo: RSC archives.



Tawhai Falls near the Chateau. Photo by Dave Allen of NIWA.



A walkway on the ever popular Tongariro Alpine Crossing. Photo: DOC.

ACROSS THE SKIING WORLD

Mt Hutt has been voted New Zealand's best ski resort for the third year in a row at the World Ski Awards

Ski tourism professionals and consumers from around the globe voted in the fifth annual awards which were announced at a gala event in Kitzbuhel in the Austrian Alps.

Mt Hutt ski area manager James McKenzie said the resort's friendly vibe, great customer service and big mountain experience make it a winner.

"The 2017 winter season was massive for us with a record snow base and arguably the best skiing Mt Hutt has ever had to offer," he said.

Val Thorens (France) was voted the best ski resort anywhere at the World Ski Awards.

The citation said: "It's a new world resort that combines the best of skiing with the best of atmospheres."

"With its ever-present pioneering spirit, breath-taking natural environment, remarkable amount of sunshine and exceptional snow conditions, it is both unique and cosmopolitan, boasting a lively, sociable and welcoming atmosphere."

Val Thorens is the highest resort in Europe (2300 metres altitude).

Deer Valley (Utah) was voted the best in USA, Laax was No 1 in Switzerland and Thredbo was the best in Australia.

For \$US42,000 a pair Foil Skis are selling a limited edition ski called Oro-Amaranto.

The skis are endorsed by actor Jackie Chan and are made of Amaranto wood with 14-carat gold plated bindings.

The choice of wood is due to its extremely dense and water-resistant capability. The trees are prized for their heartwood which, when dried, is perfect for the flex of the ski.

Foil Skis were founded by Andreas Pichler and Klaus Heidegger in a small village in

northern Italy.

Every product created through Foil is unique, and they customize their skis for each buyer.

Snow Farm skifield near Cardrona has opened some of its cross-country trails to dogs.

It has introduced dog ski passes for the first time so dogs and their owners can confidently use certain trails, knowing they are allowed to be there.

Until recently, dogs have been confined to the 1km Dog Trail. Dog sleds and multiple dog teams will still be confined to the 1km Dog Trail.

World No 1 alpine ski racer Marcel Hirscher (Austria) won a World Cup night slalom in January after his Norwegian rival Henrik Kristoffersen had snowballs thrown at him by spectators.

None of the projectiles hit Kristoffersen but the Norwegian seemed furious as he reacted with wild arm gestures after crossing the finish.

Hirscher got his ninth win of the season and 54th overall, matching Austrian great Hermann Maier's career total. Only Swedish standout Ingemar Stenmark (86) has won more races.

Veteran NZ snowboarder Christy Prior from Kaukapakapa, resuming after 18 months out due to injury, won a World Cup big air bronze medal at Mönchengladbach.

She then won a World Cup slopestyle gold medal at Snowmass (Colorado) in January, but sadly this came too late for Prior to make the Olympic team.

Austrian downhill mountain biker Max Stockl has become the first to ride the famous and fearsome 3.3km Streif downhill course at Kitzbuhel in winter.

Stockl, 43, reached a top speed of 103.64 km/h. He used 15mm long spikes and a

carbon mudguard but other than that he used his usual downhill biking gear.

Stockl holds two world speed records: 210 km/h over snow in the Chilean Andes and 168 km/h on dirt in the Atacama Desert in Chile.

Thomas Barrack, 70, a billionaire real estate investor and one of President Donald Trump's closest friends, has purchased a \$US15 million palatial home in Aspen (Colorado)

Nestled on four acres only minutes from downtown Aspen, the home encompasses 11,312 square feet of interior living space, featuring five bedrooms, six bathrooms and two half-bathrooms.

French officials said 150 skiers needed to be rescued in the Alps after a gondola lift broke down at **Chamrousse**.

Two helicopters were deployed to lower rescuers onto the roofs of the cars. They opened them up from the top and lowered the stranded skiers to the ground with a rope.

It took less than two hours to rescue all the stranded customers. There were no injuries.

Marty Toomey is moving on this month after six years as CEO of Snow Sports NZ. However, he will not be moving very far, as he is to be the CEO of Winter Games NZ.

Toomey was a former fitness trainer of both the All Blacks and Team NZ, and he has more than 25 years of experience in high performance sport.

British pop singer Pixie Lott, 26, was left in a wheelchair and was flown home after badly wrenching her left knee while skiing at Val d'Isère (France) with her fiancé Oliver Cheshire.

Australian actress and singer Sophie Monk, 38, was injured at Silver Star (Canada) when she fell while trying to ride a T-bar and was hit on the head by a ski. She suffered minor injuries and was treated by the ski patrol.

Lady Louise Windsor, 14, the Queen's

grand-daughter, broke her leg while skiing at St Moritz (Switzerland). She was on holiday with her parents Prince Edward and the Countess of Wessex, and her younger brother Viscount Severn.

The US Marines are to spend \$7 million to replace aging ski equipment for their snow units which mostly are stationed in Norway.

They will purchase 2648 sets of skis, boots and bindings for scout snipers, reconnaissance Marines and infantry Marines.

"No Marine is going to leave here unless they know how to ski," General Robert Neller said.

The Swiss resort town Zermatt was twice closed to all road and rail traffic for three days in January after a series of avalanches cut access.

A temporary helicopter air-bridge was set up between 3-5pm to make hundreds of emergency flights out for tourists whose baggage was carried in a net slung underneath the choppers.

It was estimated that 13,000 tourists were stranded each time, 7000 in hotels and 6000 in holiday apartments

Georgia Simmerling (Canada) broke both her legs in a ski cross World Cup event at Nakiska (Alberta, Canada) in the build-up to the Winter Olympics.

Ranked fourth in the world and a medal hope at the Games, she landed roughly and crashed badly. She had a rod and screws put in her left leg and screws put in her right.

Australian teenager Jade Hameister, 16, has become the youngest person to ski to the South Pole without support, such as a kite.

Jade completed the 600km trek whilst dragging a 100kg sled for 37 days.

She also became the youngest person in history to ski the Polar hat-trick of the North Pole, the Greenland Ice Shelf and the South Pole.



CLUB ITEMS & SERVICES FOR SALE

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

Website: www.rsc.org.nz

email: admin@rsc.org.nz

Lockers

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

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

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

Ski- \$57.50

Gear \$28.75

Club Items

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

Name Badge (free to new members) \$12

PHONE NUMBERS

RSC Office	09-377-3856
RSC Fax	09-377-3859
Lodge	07-892-3824
Hut	07-892-3822
Chalet	07-892-3823
Turoa	06-385-8767

NEW MEMBERS COSTS

Two working parties.

Senior joining fee \$199

Junior joining fee \$99

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

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

ACCOMMODATION FEES (Effective April 1st 2018)

Winter season 2018

Members Senior	18 years and over	\$48
Members Teen	14-17 years	\$42
Members Junior	13 years and under	\$31
Members' Children	7 years and under	\$26
Non-members	14 years and over	\$96
Non-members	13 years and under	\$62
Life members		\$28
School group children		\$60
School group parents		\$80

Off Season Accommodation Fees for Chalet & Turoa

Members Senior and Junior	\$28
Non-members Senior and Junior	\$33

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