

The Bulletin

RUAPEHU SKI CLUB

Volume 88, No. 4



December 2023



The Staircase at Whakapapa in September 2023. This was the best snow we have had for several years. Photo: RAL.



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PRESIDENT'S COLUMN

Hello everyone,

The 2023 season was a very mixed bag.

In August we had snow down around Iwikau Village buildings and then in September the warmest temperatures were recorded since records had begun.

This left us with no snow on the Rockgarden and only upper mountain skiing at both fields.

This season we have had some of the best skiing we have had for years though it seems the uncertainty with RAL has had an effect on the numbers of members who have used the buildings.

That coupled with the lack of the usual events like North Island Primary School and Secondary School races, which were cancelled as RAL had no events staff to run them.

. This has meant YTD (as I write) we have had 2800 bunk nights, which is less than the 4000 budgeted for, and a lot less than we would get in a good year which would be around 6000-7500 bunk nights.

This has meant the Committee has had to work hard to manage costs and to come up with innovate ways to get more income for the Club.

We are trialing putting our Ohakune building on Bookabach for the summer months. Last year we only had 18 bunk nights at the Turoa building booked by members in the summer. More details about how this will work are in another article in this issue.

We also have a fund raiser 100 years of Glacier Hut tea towel that can be purchased through the office, details are also in this Bulletin. On a positive note our Treasurer is forecasting a small surplus for the current financial year.

The Committee also have three summer activities for members to participate in.

We have a Summer Party at the Lodge on February 10, a, Bridge to Nowhere/old coach road cycling trips on March 9 and walking the Taupapakuria track on May 4.

I hope you are able join us for some summer fun.

We did manage to have a successful Whakapapa interclub race on September 1, organized by Rangatira, Christiania and ourselves. We had great weather and a good course set in Pinnacle valley.

Over 150 racers participated in the race from many of the Whakapapa clubs. RSC hosted an enjoyable prize giving at the Lodge with lots of spot prizes. The fastest woman o the day was Monique Moss (33.84), and the fastest man was Nick Moss (34.19). Congratulations to Tom Pilkington (RSC) as he was the fastest Junior male (37.50).

Thanks to Carl Burling, for all his work to get the Club Champs happening this year, but sadly the weather was against us and they had to be cancelled again. The snow pack was saturated, and understandably RAL made the call not to put up any race gates for us.

The RAL receivership continues to drag on. MBIE has bought ANZ's debt for \$1 and has installed Calibre Partners as the receivers. It will be interesting to see how things progress when the new government is in place.

I hope you will all have a great family time at Christmas. My extended family will be celebrating at our Ohakune building, and participating in some of the activities in the Ruapehu district this summer.

Wishing you all a Merry Christmas and a happy New Year.

Catherine Gafa
RSC President



Skiers on the Pinnacle Traverse at Whakapapa in August 2023. Photo: Barbara Thomson.

THROUGH THE LODGE WINDOW

Whakapapa and Turoa closed at Labour Weekend after a good snow season.

There was a top one-day attendance this season of 5614 guests at Whakapapa and 3500 at Tūroa.

Due to poor weather, the RSC Club champs were cancelled.

The Tongariro Juniors race was also cancelled.

Members are asked not to post the Club's building door code on Facebook.

The Admin Officer will give the door code out to members who have booked and paid for their stay.

If you need to go to the buildings to get something, please contact Admin on 027-8082163.

After a short heating phase starting mid-July this year, Te Wai ā-moe (Ruapehu Crater Lake) has now cooled back down.

Other monitoring indicators are within

normal ranges for Mt Ruapehu. Volcanic activity remains low and the volcanic alert level remains at level 1.

This year the lake temperature rose from 11°C to 26°C. It has now cooled to around 14°C.

A guest riding beyond the unload spot on the Te Heuheu Valley T-bar on August 26th caused a T to get jammed in the bull wheel which resulted in a derail.

The lift had to be closed for the rest of a sunny Saturday as well as a sunny Sunday and Monday and Tuesday while repairs were made by engineers.

At least the Valley terrain remained open for folk who rode up on the Knoll T-bar.

Two men dressed in jeans and street shoes had to be rescued from the summit of Mt Ngauruhoe in September in what police say was one of the “worst examples” of poor preparation.

At around 4pm on a Saturday, a climbing party summited Ngauruhoe in alpine conditions and were surprised to see the

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RUAPEHU SKI CLUB**

(inc) Founded 1913

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President: Catherine Gafa.

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

Immediate Past President:

Phill Thomass.

Secretary: Michael Webb-Speight.

Treasurer: Sonia Quinn.

Captain: vacant.

Committee: Drew Blair,

Adrian Adriaansen,

Ron Bonfrer, Sam Hood,

Simon Hunt, Fiona Lovelock,

Donald Webster.

Patron: Peter Brady.

Patroness: Barbara Scelly.

Auditors: Hart and Co.

Heritage Fund Guardians:

Robin Dallas, Phill Thomass,

Bernard Smith, Catherine Gafa.

Fund Treasurer: Mike Wardle.

Glacier Hut Custodian:

Bernard Smith.

duo sitting in the snow. The men were frightened and unsure how to descend the mountain.

After feeding them and providing some warm clothing, the climbers rang 111 and police called up a rescue helicopter.

CORRECTION: *Our previous issue contained a report of a landslide at a Swiss village named Brienz. We were not aware that there are two Swiss towns named Brienz, and part of our report referred to the larger town. Apologies.*

CHATEAU TONGARIRO: One news report in October said the maintenance and repair of the empty buildings is costing DoC \$150,000 to \$200,000 a month.

Regional officials are worrying over whether seriously seismic unsound, and whether The Chateau and its attached businesses in local towns can be revived.

More than 130 people took an opportunity offered by Genesis Energy to tour the Tongariro Power Scheme as part of the scheme's 40th anniversary celebrations.

The open day was the scheme's first in 15 years. Tour buses took 136 people aged from 13 to 87 on three hour tours of the Tokaanu and Rangipō power stations.

A new survey has revealed continued growth in the population of kōkako in Pureora Forest.

The Waipapa South kōkako survey, carried out by a team of five surveyors, covered 1250 hectares across 48 surveyor days.

It revealed 124 pairs of kōkako over the survey area, up from 87 pairs in the same area in 2015.

*The deadline for the March issue of The Bulletin will be **Friday February 16th.***

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

THE BULLETIN

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RSC WORK PARTIES

Members and applicants for membership are encourage to go on RSC work parties on the dates set out below.

These are a good chance to meet new friends and learn a bit about how RSC works.

January 20-21 at the Lodge to prepare the roof for painting.

February 17-18.

March 29-30 (Easter).

April 20-21.

May 25-26.

June 15-16.

Note The Easter work party is Friday and Saturday to allow people to get away for Sunday and Monday for the rest of the break.

RSC SUMMER EVENTS

February 10 Summer Party at the Lodge,
March 9 Bike riding, Bridge to Nowhere/
Old Coach Road – Ohakune building,

May 4 Taupapkurua Track – From the Chalet.

To sign up for summer events email admin@rsc.org.nz, and book your bunks in the usual way.

TARANAKI ICE PLAN

An expatriate Canadian and a passionate district councillor have a dream of turning Inglewood (Taranaki) into the ice sports capital of New Zealand.

Bill Bartlett, who has lived in New Zealand for more than 50 years, wants the town of 3500 to have an international-standard ice-skating rink for ice hockey, figure skaters, speed skaters and curlers.

The pair propose to have the rink beside the community outdoor pool on

council land, and to use the rink as a reverse heating system for the pool, just like a heat pump.

There are nine ice rinks across New Zealand but none between Auckland and Wellington. An Olympic rink is 60 metres by 30 metres.

MISCHA IS SELECTED

RSC member Mischa Thomas aged 15 has been selected in the NZ team to take part in the 2024 Winter Youth Olympic Games at Gangwon (South Korea).

She will contest freeski slopestyle and big air.

Mischa explained:“It feels pretty insane to be selected to represent New Zealand at the Winter Youth Olympic Games in January.

“It has been a goal of mine to get selected for the Games for over a year, so I am very excited and super honoured to wear the fern for the first time in my career.”

A record 1900 athletes will take part in the Gangwon 2024 Winter Youth Olympics, up from 1788 at Lausanne 2020.



Mischa Thomas



Upper: This avalanche at Whakapapa this year was started by customers visiting a closed area. **Lower:** Avalanche rescue dogs Sky and Echo take a ride on the Sky Waka. Photos: RAL.



GLACIER HUT TEA TOWEL

How good it is to have creative relatives who can be convinced to help out with a tea towel project!

As a bit of a fund raiser for the Club and to celebrate 100 years of Glacier Hut, we have ordered a supply of 100 percent cotton, printed tea towels.

These are due at the end of the month just in time for Christmas.

For pre orders, please send an email to admin@rsc.org.nz, with your name and address.

Yes, I know we already have these details – but this will make things a bit easier with Mandy not having to look it up, and then ensure the correct money is deposited into your account.

Pricing:

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.

Note: The towel is red and yellow.

TUROA BOOKABACH

At a recent RSC Committee meeting the Committee decided that the Turoa building in Ohakune has been underutilised during the summer months.

Last year we only had 18 bookings by members, and the building sat empty for most of summer.

As the building is outside of the Tongariro National Park we don't have the same restrictions on how we can use and advertise accommodation at this building.

We also noticed that some of the other clubs were doing this with their buildings in Ohakune.

We've looked a several different online accommodation providing websites and settled on Bookabach, as it seemed the best option suited to us.

How it will work.

You will still be able to book to stay at Turoa, this summer, but you will need to get your bookings in early.

If a booking comes in from Bookabach, then that will book the whole building out and no members will have access. But you will still be able to book into the Chalet.

If members book the building, then Mandy, our administrator will block that time out on the Bookabach calendar, and no one via Bookabach will be able to book that time to stay in the building.

The only inconvenient part is that we do ask you to check with admin if you want to drop in on your way past, as I know a few of you like to do this. I think it is a small price to pay to get some much-needed funds.

We are still working on the details, and hope to get this operational for January 2024 – if not before. Please note this is only for the months outside of the ski season.

MORE GOVT CASH

The Government has agreed to provide RAL with a \$4.3 million loan to continue operating both the Tūroa and Whakapapa ski fields, in liquidation, until the end of March 2024.

It would then provide \$3.05 million to the locally-owned start-up company Pure Tūroa to purchase and operate Tūroa for three years, subject to it being granted a DoC concession.

No decision has been announced as to who will operate Whakapapa next winter. Some reports have Whakapapa Holdings as the prime candidate.

We also await news on whether life passes will be honoured in 2024.

*** Meanwhile, Government department MBIE has paid \$1 to buy the \$13 million RAL debt to ANZ Bank and has appointed receivers from Calibre Partners to advance a sale of the ski fields.

Brendon Gibson and Neale Jackson of Calibre have been named as joint receivers and managers.

It is not yet clear how this will impact the liquidation of the company, which John Fisk and Richard Nacey of PwC are handling.

MAZEY DISAPPOINTED

Dave Maze, spokesman for Whakapapa Holdings which is bidding to run Whakapapa, said the latest news is disappointing.

“We still don’t have a clear decision on who the successful bidders will be to run each side of the mountain, so in that sense it’s disappointing.

“It’s great to have a support package

but we could already be out there stimulating demand for next season if decisions had been made.”

He said the process of negotiating licenses and concessions with iwi and DoC could take up to four months.

IWI IS NOT HAPPY

Several iwi have written to ministers demanding a stop to the Ruapehu process, because they say it prejudices the outcome of the Tongariro National Park Treaty settlement.

Te Korowai o Wainuiārua chair Aiden Gilbert said iwi must have oversight or interim management of the ski fields, alongside DoC, rather than handing it to RAL or new private operators.

Government officials have acknowledged long term commercial interests of iwi in Tongariro National Park that must be resolved through the Treaty negotiations but, meanwhile they are seeking an interim solution for the ski fields.

IWI DROPS RAL BID

Ngāti Tūwharetoa has dropped its bid for Ruapehu Alpine Lifts and has reserved its stance under its Treaty claim.

This announcement in September was a change of heart by the iwi which previously was looking at a formal bid to buy RAL.

The iwi says the proposed sale of RAL breaches the 2018 Ngāti Tūwharetoa Claims Settlement Act. It now plans to pursue all avenues available to ensure the rights of the iwi are protected.



Pure Turoa is led by Greg Hickman and Cam Robertson. Photo from Pure Turoa.

PURE TUROA

Pure Tūroa is a company set up by Ohakune brewery owners and tourism operators Greg and Christine Hickman, backed by Taupō-based Cam Robertson.

“This marks an important step in securing the future of Tūroa, creating certainty for surrounding communities and for people who are passionate about the great outdoors,” Hickman said.

“While any decisions remain conditional on further negotiations over the coming months, we will continue to work alongside DoC and iwi partners.”

Later, Hickman said that under the proposal, the Crown will own 25 percent of the company in trust, which would eventually be handed over to Iwi once the Treaty claims over the Tongariro National Park are settled.

Asked about working with Whakapapa Holdings, Cam Robertson said Turoa will work with WHL. He

said they already have plans to offer season pass deals that would include Whakapapa as well as a number of South Island skifields.

RSSA BIDS AGAIN

The Ruapehu Skifields Stakeholders Association (RSSA) is not giving up on its proposal to take over the RAL operations.

In September it submitted a Deed of Administration to the company liquidators and the Ministry of Business Innovation and Employment (MBIE).

It said the deed provides several advantages over the various privatisation proposals as the community-ownership model has endured for 70 years and provides a stable model for operating a skifield in a respectful manner inside a dual world heritage national park.

The treatment of creditor classes under the deed is balanced across secured creditors, trade creditors and life pass holders.



RSC member Mischa Thomas aged 15 (right) won a junior world championship freeski slopestyle bronze medal at Cardrona. Others on the podium are Flora Tabanelli (Italy, second) and Muriel Mohr (Germany, winner). Photo: Winter Games NZ. See also Page 22



Left: Lucia Georgalli (NZ) won a gold medal in the junior world championship snowboard slopestyle event at Cardrona. **Right:** Rocco Jamieson (NZ) won a silver medal in the junior world championship snowboard big air event at Cardrona.



Historic photo. This is the NZ snow sports team who won five of the eight prizes at the annual Halberg sports awards earlier this year. From left: Gustav (emerging talent), Nico (sportsman), Zoi (sportswoman and Supreme award) and Corey (para athlete). Only one award was handed out in person on the original awards night as the others were overseas. This picture was taken recently in Wanaka. Photo: Halberg Foundation.

ZOI WINS AGAIN

Zoi Sadowski-Synnott (Wānaka) was awarded the Snow Sports NZ overall athlete of the year at the national awards ceremony held at Coronet Peak.

Winners were:

- Instructor of the Year - Rebecca Matthew
- Coach of the Year - Hamish McDougall (Wānaka)
- Breakthrough Season - Ruby Star Andrews (Queenstown)
- Freeride Athlete of the Year - Finn Bilous (Wānaka)
- Alpine Ski Racer of the Year - Alice Robinson (Queenstown)
- Snowboarder of the Year - Zoi Sadowski-Synnott (Wānaka)
- Freeskier of the Year - Luca Harrington (Wānaka)
- Adaptive Athlete of the Year - Adam Hall (Dunedin)



Rebecca Mathew, NZ instructor of the year.

RUAPEHU SKI QUIZ

1. Which is higher? (A) Ngauruhoe. (B) Top of Far West T-bar.
2. Which RSC member skied in two Winter Olympics? (A) Bill Hunt. (B) Tim Sharp.
3. How many six-seater chairlifts are at Whakapapa? (A) One. (B) None.
4. Who was Crocky? (A) Long-time Lodge cook Dorothy Crockford. (B) Club ski champ 1950.
5. Crater Lake froze over in 1926? (A) True. (B) False.
6. The Yankee was named after? (A) Barak Obama. (B) A visiting US ski team.
7. Legendary ski champ Jean-Claude Killy visited RSC Lodge. (A) True. (B) False.
8. Some RSC members skied the Giant at Turoa the season before it officially opened? (A) True. (B) False.
9. What was the Kaka? (A) A bird that lived near RSC Chalet. (B) An airliner that crashed into Ruapehu.
10. The Chateau golf course was designed by? (A) Tiger Woods. (B) An architect serving time at a local prison.
11. Shorty Clearkin was famed as? (A) A ski instructor. (B) A liftie.
12. Where did RSC members keep the Hut key? (A) The Chateau. (B) Shorty's house.
13. How many runs did Shorty's son Owen Clearkin have in one day on the Valley Poma? (A) 50 runs. (B) 96 runs.
14. How many runs did Bulletin Editor Alan Graham have in one day on the Valley Poma? (A) 20 runs. (B) 48 runs.
15. The 1960s Ski school director Dec Daly came from? (A) Ireland. (B) USA.
16. Another ski school director John Ball came from? (A) Australia. (B) Canada.
17. NZ jet boat designer Bill Hamilton also designed? (A) A brand of skis. (B) A form of rope tow.
18. RSC Life member Gill Macklin married? (A) An Olympic skier. (B) A Formula One driver.
19. Gill's son Perry Macklin represented NZ at? (A) Freestyle skiing. (B) Ski jumping.
20. How often has skiing's World Cup been raced at Ruapehu? (A) Once. (B) Never.
21. Who came 17th in the 1947 Ngauruhoe Cup? (A) The Governor-General. (B) Ed Hillary.
22. Where did 1950s ski stars Tui Keiha and Dora Davis work? (A) As bus drivers. (B) As Chateau waitresses.
23. What did Governor-General Sir Willoughby Norrie do at Ruapehu? (A) He swam in Crater Lake. (B) He enrolled his children in RSC.
24. A nutcracker was? (A) A ballet performed at RSC Lodge. (B) A device for connecting skiers to a rope tow.
25. An episode of the "It's in the Bag" radio quiz show hosted by Selwyn Toogood was recorded at RSC Lodge. (A) True. (B) False.

ANSWERS; 1 Far West. 2 Bill Hunt. 3 None. 4 Lodge cook. 5 True. 6 US team. 7 True. 8 True. 9 Airliner. 10 Architect. 11 Instructor. 12 Shorty's house. 13 He made 96 runs. 14 He made 48 runs. 15 Ireland. 16 Canada. 17 Rope tow. 18 Racing driver. 19 Freestyle. 20 Never. 21 Hillary. 22 Waitresses. 23 Enrolled. 24 Tow device. 25 True.

THE HOLIDAYS AT RSC

*By Honor and Georgina. Skit Night,
September 2023*

It's the end of Term 3 of our school
educations,
We've got all our gear and our bunk
allocations,
We're checking the forecast and crossing
our fingers,
That the piles of snow and the great
weather lingers.

We're off in the car, dodging traffic and
potholes,
Turn back at Greenlane, we forgot all
the ski poles!
Check the RAL app when we stop for
a drink,
Rangatira's not running, we'll be
walking up, stink!

We've got plans to do lessons and Junior
Club Racing,
But Tawhirimatea's roaring and raging,
Thunderstorms blasting and wrecking
our dreams,
Now we're all stuck inside like a tin of
sardines.

There's Liza and Charlotte, Fred, Jim
and Jake,
David and Harriet, all our ski mates.
The Widdicombes, Gordons, plus
Martin and Jenny
Who brought origami and grandkids
aplenty.

Now there's time to watch movies, play
Uno and ping pong,
Snowball fights outside when the wind
isn't too strong,

The Mums make us lunches and tell us
off non-stop,
While the Dads tell bad jokes and play
games on the laptop.

Then the sun's out! Let's go! Up the Sky
Waka flies,
The Pinnacles bright against shining
blue skies,
And off down the mountain, the joy that
just frees you -
And sometimes you fall, and hope
nobody sees you.

Hike back up to the Club, not allowed
to complain,
Did you do your duty? Not bathrooms
again!
Wear shoes for the fire talk, point out
the exits,
And eat yummy food made by Mandeep
and Jaspreet.

If you're new to the Club or you're part
of a dynasty,
Generations of mountain folk back
through our history,
It's all on for the holidays! We'll
snowboard and ski,
And find friendships and fun here at
RSC.

Editor's notes:

What a lovely poem.

It takes me back to my own school
holiday weeks which began when RSC
Lodge opened in 1953. No Skit Nights
then, but we did have a lively fancy
dress night which served much the same
purpose.

AG



The course in Pinnacle Valley for the Combined Clubs Race 2023. Photo: RSC.

INTERCLUB SKI RACING

When RAL declined to run any races this season due to a lack of staff, the Rangatira, RSC and Christie clubs got together and organised the Combined Clubs Race.

Many different resources were used to get the race away and a huge effort was put in by a small group of volunteers. There were 150 starters.

RSC again presented the women's Haensli Cup to Monique Moss (Rangatira) who won it for the seventh time in succession and the eighth time overall.

Nick Moss (Taupo) won the men's Haensli Cup.

RSC hosted a prizegiving with amazing spot prizes and Rangatira hosted a great after party where a fun time was had by all.

Thanks to Stockman Sports for their assistance in running this race in Pinnacle Valley.

Thank you to all the sponsors: Elan, Head, travel&co, Bidfood, Slalom Lodge, Westmere Butchery, SNOWPLANET, Giro, Momentum Sports, LeBent, Komperdell and TCB Ohakune.

Fastest female: Monique Moss (Rangatira) 33.84

Fastest male: Nick Moss (Taupo) 34.19

Fastest junior female: Zoe Thompson (Rangatira) 32.52

Fastest junior male: Tom Pilkington (RSC) 37.50

Fastest master female: Jemma Brooking (Whakapapa) 37.99

Fastest master male: Paul Wood (Boomerang) 35.53

Fastest snowboard female: Lauren Harrell (UASC) 71.07

Fastest snowboard male: Anthony Stevens (Rangatira) 55.35

Junior teams: Rangatira Rebels 128.57, Taupo A 136.50, Rangatira Rascals 148.37

Open teams: Rangatira Remarkables 109.28, Boomerang Team Two 120.73, Taupo 125.98

Master teams: Boomers 136.66, Taupo 139.64, Rangatira Rusties 154.64

Rangatira Trophy (fastest club on the mountain): Rangatira 188.58, Taupo 199.28, RSC 229.13.



Skiing in the Combined Clubs Race. Photos: Christie and RSC.



Upper: Ryder and Lucca Lawson, Mark and Isaac Stewart, at the crater in September.
Lower: Ryder Lawson skinning up to crater. Photos: Charles Lawson.

RSC CALENDAR OF EVENTS

Jan 2024	?? 20-21	DOC and RSC summer activities Working parties
Feb 2024	10 17-18	Summer Party at the Lodge Working parties
Mar 2024	9 29-30	Bridge to Nowhere/Old Coach Road – Ohakune Building. (Bike riding) Working parties (Easter)
April 2024	20-21	Working parties
May 2024	1 4 25-26	RSC bunk bookings open Taupapkurua Track – From the Chalet Working parties
June 2024	?? 15-16 ??	RSC AGM at Auckland Working parties Ruapehu ski season opens

NEW MEMBERS

We welcome the following new members:

- Nicole Oxenbridge.
- Phoebe Cooling.
- Annika Bennie.
- Ella Bennie.

We also have two new summer members:

- John Plummer.
- Nick Taransky.

QUICKER AID WANTED

A coroner says a woman who died on Mt Ruapehu in 2020 might have survived if she had received timely first-aid and been rescued sooner.

Emma Langley, 37, was on a day-long climb when she slipped while trying to cross an icy slope at Cathedral Rocks.

She was seriously injured as she slid down

the mountain and died of hypothermia, after a long wait for help.

Coroner Matthew Bates said her level 1 training course had not equipped her with the skills to navigate the slope.

“At no time was there any place for novice members of this group to be traversing steep sloping sections of ice where there was fall potential and no safety run-out below,” the coroner said.

Emergency services were alerted just before 1pm, but bad weather prevented the rescue helicopter from reaching the glacier until about 9pm.

Coroner Bates said there should have been an assessment of what first aid or emergency equipment might be required immediately following the accident.

A review by the Mountain Safety Council found trip leaders needed more instruction to understand how to stabilise a victim in an alpine environment, as injured patients were more susceptible to hypothermia.

CROSSING BOOKINGS

Since October, visitors planning to take on the Tongariro Alpine Crossing have been asked to book a spot to ensure they can do the walk.

Bookings this summer were not compulsory. DoC said visitors that turned up without a booking were not penalised, but using the new system was highly encouraged. There is no cost associated with a booking.

People who had a booking for a Tongariro Northern Circuit hut or campsite this season do not need to book through the new system.

Ngāti Hikairo ki Tongariro and DoC want to ensure the experience of walking the crossing protects the fragile environment, is safe, respects the cultural significance of the area, and is sustainable.

A cap in numbers will also be introduced but not until October 2024.

Ngāti Hikairo has suggested a daily cap of 800 people, but a final decision has yet to be made.

In the past season an average of just over 500 people walked the crossing. However, there were nearly 1800 walkers on the track during the busiest day of the season.

Another possible change is to make the track one-way only, starting at Mangatepopo.

Ngāti Hikairo had requested this change to improve safety. The reasoning behind this is that it takes four to five hours to reach Blue Lake if starting from Ketetahi, meaning hikers would be in the higher alpine areas later in the day.

ALICE COMES NINTH

NZ's top alpine ski racer Alice Robinson from Queenstown came ninth

in the opening race of the alpine skiing World Cup circuit at Sölden (Austria).

The winner was Lara Gut-Behrami (Switzerland) with Federica Brignone (Italy) second.

The world No 1 Mikayla Shiffrin (US) was sixth.

*** Ragnhild Mowinckel (Norway) left the finish in tears after becoming the first skier to be disqualified for a forbidden type of wax on her skis.

A rule in effect this season forbids the use of fluorinated wax. The FIS has banned the substance after years of debate about the potential harm fluorinated wax can do.

OBITUARIES

We regret to advise that long-time RSC member Valerie Campbell has died, aged 95. Valerie was the wife of keen skier Graeme Campbell and the daughter in law of former RSC President Archie Campbell.

We also regret to advise the passing of Keith Williamson, a consulting engineer, who was a member of RSC for 70 years.

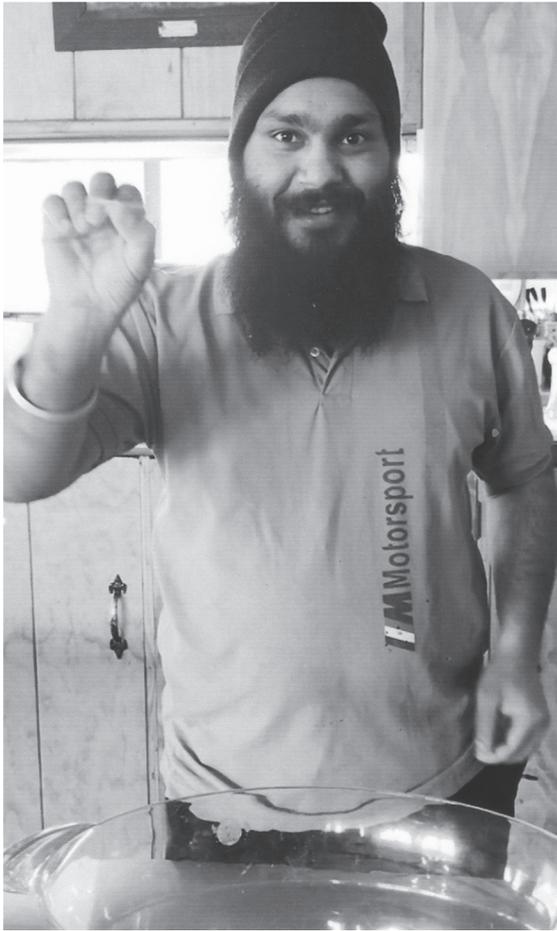
NAME CHANGE LIKELY

A bid by a central North Island iwi to change the name of National Park back to Waimarino has been accepted by Ngā Pou Taunaha o Aotearoa NZ Geographic Board.

The iwi Uenuku has called for the ski and tourist village and its railway station to revert to its previous name.

Waimarino was the original name for the village and railway station until 1926, when the station was renamed National Park Station by NZ Railways.

A three-month public consultation on the name change proposal opened on Tuesday November 7th.



Left: Lodge chef Mandeep draws the RSC raffle. The winner was John Benn. **Right:** Trinity Lawson waiting to race. Photo: Charles Lawson.



Skiing at Turoa in 2023. Photo RAL.



Madonna Harris racing in the 1988 Winter Olympics at Calgary.

AMAZING MADONNA

Have you heard of NZ sports lady Madonna Harris?

No? Well she is quite amazing.

Madonna represented NZ at four sports, won medals at world champs and the Commonwealth Games, and competed in both the summer and winter Olympic Games.

Madonna Mary Harris MBE (née Gilchrist) represented NZ in athletics (400m hurdles) in 1977 and basketball in 1977–78. In 1978 she went on an athletics and basketball scholarship to Utah State University.

Then she took up cross-country skiing and became a professional ski instructor after she married Utah ski instructor John Harris.

At the 1988 Winter Olympics at Calgary she came 40th in the 20km free technique cross-country skiing race. There were 56 starters. Madonna finished in 1h 03.09m.

Next she did not finish in the cycling road race at the 1988 summer Olympics at Seoul but she pushed the leaders until she had to withdraw with a puncture late

in the event.

Seeking more sports challenges, Madonna represented Utah in football (soccer) and competed in triathlons.

At age 28 she slipped on ice while running, and gave up athletic sports apart from cycling.

Her best day came at the 1990 Commonwealth Games in Auckland when Harris won a gold medal in the track cycling 3000m individual pursuit. She also came fourth in the 72km road race.

At the 1990 world cycling championship in Japan, Madonna won a silver medal in the 3000m pursuit.

Harris was on course for selection for the 1992 Barcelona Olympics team when she decided to retire, owing to recurring bronchitis.

Then, after moving to a hobby farm she took up the emerging sport of endurance horse racing.

In this sport aged 53 she finished third in the gruelling 1000km Mongol Derby equestrian race in Mongolia. It was described as the longest and toughest horse race in the world and took eight days to complete the course.

The derby follows the trail set by Genghis Khan across the Mongolian steppes in the 13th century.

Anti-Flamme. This is a herbal relief crème sold widely around NZ and used by sports people and physios, as well as the public.

It was developed 30 years ago by Madonna Harris and herbal chemist and massage therapist Paul Jeffery.

It aims to be suitable for the whole family and caters to the elite sportsperson and the “weekend warrior” through to the sedentary and the mildly active.

*** The only other Kiwi to compete in both the summer and winter Olympics is Chris Nicholson who contested speed skating (ice) and road cycling.



Nice snow for skiing at Whakapapa. Photos: TSC/RAL.



Lake Wanaka and the opening ceremony of Winter Games NZ. It was held on a skateboard park. Photo: WGNZ.

WINTER GAMES NZ

The Winter Games NZ returned to Otago in September with 11 events across alpine, freeride and freestyle (park and pipe) disciplines.

Events included the junior world championships at Cardrona for park and pipe athletes.

Alpine ski racing was at Coronet Peak and freeride extreme skiing was at The Remarkables.

It was a great chance for snow sports in NZ to build on that sensational night earlier in the year when skiers and snowboarders won five of the top eight Halberg awards including the Supreme award.

It also built on the successful co-hosting by NZ of the FIFA women's football World Cup this year.

RSC member Mischa Thomas aged 15 won a bronze medal in the freeski slopestyle event.

Mischa took the lead after the first run, but fell on the second run and did not increase her score, while skiers from Germany and Italy swept by to take the first two placings.

RSC members flocked to Facebook to congratulate Mischa on her fine performance.

Lucia Georgalli aged 16 from Wanaka became the first New Zealander to win a snowboard junior world championship. Georgalli took a convincing lead with her first slopestyle run and beat it with a different routine on her second run.

Rocco Jamieson aged 16 from Wanaka won a silver medal in the snowboard big air world junior world championship.

In the alpine skiing section of the Games, the top NZ ski racer **Alice Robinson** came a close second in two giant slaloms at Coronet Peak. She did not contest the slaloms.

ALPINE SKIING

Men's first GS: Christian Borgnaes (Denmark) 1.42.20, Luis Schulte (Austria) 1.42.58, Adam Zampa (Slovakia) 1.42.60. Best NZ: Willis Feasey 12th.

Men's second GS: Fadri Janutin (Switzerland) 1.43.38, Timon Haugan (Norway) 1.43.55. Andreas Zampa (Slovakia) 1.48.86. Best NZ: Willis Feasey 11th (60 started).

Women's first GS: AJ Hurt (US) 1.45.02, Alice Robinson (NZ) 1.45.07, Nina O'Brien (US) 1.45.20.

Women's second GS: Ava Sunshine (US) 1.46.38, Alice Robinson (NZ) 1.47.06, AJ Hurt (US) 1.47.11.

Men's first slalom: Jimmy Krupka (US) 1.33.13, Sam Maes (Belgium) 1.33.36, Laurie Taylor (GB) 1.33.55. Best NZ: Alec Jackson 30th.

Men's second slalom: Laurie Taylor (GB) 1.33.24, Sam Maes (Belgium) 1.32.94, Joel Luetolf (Switzerland) 1.33.28. Best NZ: Sam Hadley 14th.

Women's first slalom: AJ Hurt (US) 1.34.28, Ava Sunshine (US) 1.35.50, Valentina Pfurtschneller (Austria) 1.36.14. Best NZ: Mikayla Smyth ninth.

Women's second slalom: Nina Astner (Austria) 1.43.30, Valentina Wanner (Austria) 1.44.73, Maria Niederdorfer (Austria) 1.33.28. Best NZ: Mikayla Smyth fifth.

SNOWBOARDING

World junior slopestyle men: Taiga Hasegawa (Japan) 90.25, Cameron Spalding (Canada) 87.25, Yuto Miyamura (Japan) 84.75. Best NZ: Dane Menzies eighth.

World junior slopestyle women: Lucia Georgalli (NZ) 91.00, Fanny Chiesa (Italy) 77.25, Ally Hichman (Australia) 66.50.

World junior big air men: Taiga Hasegawa (Japan) 185.25, Rocco Jamieson (NZ) 162.00, Ian Matteoli (Italy) 157.00.

World junior big air women: Emeraude Maheux (Canada) 169.00, Seoung Yu (Korea) 156.50, Kiara Morii (Japan) 150.00. Best NZ: Lucia Georgalli sixth.

FREESKI

World junior slopestyle men: Charlie Beatty (Canada) 92.2, Fadri Rhymer (Switzerland) 87.50, Leo Landroe (Norway) 85.70. Best NZ: Finley Campbell Ives seventh.

World junior slopestyle women: Muriel Mohr (Germany) 86.25, Flora Tabanelli (Italy) 81.25, Mischa Thomas (NZ) 78.00.

World junior big air men: Leo Landroe (Norway) 189.75, Matthew Lepine (Canada) 176.75, Fadri Rhymer (Switzerland) 163.00. Best NZ: Harrold Luke fifth. This event had 57 starters.

World junior big air women: Flora Tabanelli (Italy) 177.50, Lishan Han (China) 168.75, Ruyi Yang (China) 160.00. Best NZ: Sylvia Trotter sixth. Mischa Thomas did not compete.

FREERIDE

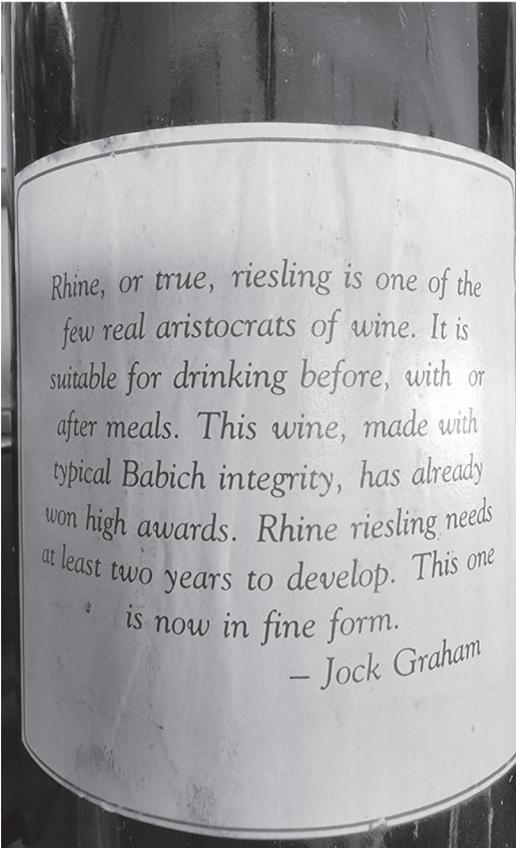
Word tour qualifier.

Women's ski: Jessie Violet (NZ).

Women's snowboard: Equi Noemie (France).

Men's ski: Fynn Powell (NZ).

Men's snowboard: Max King (NZ).



WHEN RSC SOLD WINE

RSC in 1988 celebrated its 75th anniversary with a series of events including the sale to members of a 1985 Rhine riesling wine.

A bottle of the wine created interest when it turned up at RSC Lodge this winter.

Notes for the wine were written by Jock Graham who at the time was both an Editor of the RSC Bulletin and the writer of the Cellar Book weekly wine column in the NZ Herald.

RSC wine glasses engraved with the Club's name were imported from France and sold well. The wine, made by Babich Wines of Henderson, cost \$102

for a case (one dozen bottles).

The main label was designed by RSC member John Osborne who over many years donated much art work to the Club.

Also for sale were a historical video featuring RSC activities from 1913, and an RSC Jubilee sweat shirt.

There was a banquet and ball at the Chateau, a black tie dress up event attended by 300 people. There were 19 Life members and 10 Presidents seated at the top table.

Ahead of the ball, members took part in golf, tennis, fishing and a fun run.

The whole show was produced by "Mr Jubilee" Barry Winter who dreamed up the ball, the wine, the video and the sweat shirts.



Willis Feasey

WILLIS FEASEY RETIRES

Willis Feasey has officially retired from competitive alpine ski racing.

A true legend of ski racing here in NZ, his stellar career includes more than 700 FIS race starts, with his first being in 2007 at Treble Cone.

Willis represented New Zealand at the 2018 PyeongChang Olympic Winter Games, at five FIS World Ski Championships and 32 FIS World Cup races.

He has been crowned the NZ giant slalom national champion eight times, and the slalom national champion and super G national champion three times each.

He has stood on the top of 16 FIS podiums throughout his career and has inspired the next generation of alpine ski racers here in NZ.

Snow Sports NZ thanks Willis for all he has done for ski racing and wish him the very best for his next chapter.



Willis Feasey

WHAKAARI CONVICTED

Whakaari Management Ltd, the company that licensed tour operators enabling them to go on Whakaari/White Island, has been convicted of a health and safety failure.

There were 47 people on the island at the time of the 2019 eruption. All suffered serious injuries and trauma and 22 died.

Judge Evangelos Thomas said WML failed to ensure, as far as reasonably practicable, that a workplace was without health and safety risks.

Its failure to undertake the necessary risk assessments was a significant factor in people being exposed to the risk of death or injury, the judge said.

WML will be sentenced in February.

CHARGES DISMISSED

The three owners of Whakaari White Island have had eruption charges dismissed.

Peter, Andrew and James Buttle were individually charged as directors of Whakaari Management Limited (WML) for health and safety failings ahead of the volcanic eruption in 2019.

Judge Evangelos Thomas said: "There is no evidence in this case of what happened behind the board room door at WML. Without that evidence I cannot assess what a reasonable director would have done."

MORE DISMISSALS

Charges against two tour companies relating to health and safety failings prior to the fatal Whakaari White Island eruption were dismissed.

Judge Evangelos Thomas dismissed the WorkSafe charges against Tauranga Tourism Services Ltd and ID Tours NZ.

Judge Thomas said the organisations did not have workers on the island, and it was not their workplace. They did not direct or influence the tour operators.

BUS FINE FOR RAL

RAL has been fined \$250,000 for endangering the lives of workers and passengers five years ago in a bus crash that killed an 11-year-old schoolgirl on the Ōhakune Mountain Road.

RAL (in liquidation) has avoided paying the fine because the company said it has no ability to pay.

RAL was operating the shuttle bus that crashed beneath Tūroa ski field in July 2018, fatally injuring one girl and seriously injuring many of the 30 others on board, including the driver.

CORONET PEAK FINE

Coronet Peak has to pay \$598,000 in fines and costs over the death of former ski instructor Anita Graf-Russell, aged 60, who died when she skied into an unpadding post in 2019.

The penalty included a fine of \$440,000 and reparation of \$130,000 to be paid to Graf-Russell's family, plus prosecution costs of \$28,000.

CONVICTED DISCHARGED

An Auckland man who used an essential worker pass to take an illegal ski visit to Turoa during the Auckland's lengthy Covid lockdown in 2021 has been convicted and discharged.

He obtained legitimate essential worker pass to leave Auckland to travel to Christchurch for business in September 2021, but checked into Ohakune for two days of skiing.

Police, who were at Turoa on an unrelated matter, were asked by staff to check why the man was skiing.



Fritz Schmutz.



REMEMBERING FRITZ

Fritz Schmutz was a young Swiss engineer who came to Ruapehu in the 1950s to build chairlifts. He joined RSC and won championship ski races with his attacking flair.

His party trick came at the end of the skiing day. When the way was clear, he would take the Staircase straight and make a mighty jump to land near Glacier Hut.

Fritz met his wife Nellie, an Aucklander, while she was working at Ruapehu.

They married in January 1956 and remained in NZ for four years before moving to Flims in Switzerland and then to Boulder (Colorado) where they had four sons.

Nellie died in 2013 aged 79.

Fritz died in Colorado in 2019, aged 88.

Fritz was born at home on the family farm in Canton Bern, in Switzerland. He

attended trade school and received his degree in ski lift engineering.

During his 50-year career, Fritz travelled all over the world installing and maintaining ski lifts and eventually started his own ski lift repair business.

Outside of work, his passion was playing traditional Swiss folk music on the Schwyzerörgeli (Swiss accordion) and he published two EPs of Swiss songs.

In ski racing, Fritz, aged 25, in 1956 won both the NZ giant slalom championship and the slalom championship at Whakapapa when he made a return to competition after a five year break from the sport. There were 72 starters in the GS.

Fritz also won the North Island downhill championship in 1957 and there was talk of him being selected in the NZ team for the Olympic Winter Games in 1960. However, nothing came of that and Fritz and Nellie left NZ.

WORLD SNOW NEWS

While NZ had a good snow year in 2023, Australia recorded its warmest winter on record.

Gum trees, snow melt and strips of astroturf replaced ski runs in NSW, Victoria and Tasmania.

Snow depth was at its lowest in 17 years in elevated areas of the Snowy Mountains and the lowest in 50 years at lower elevations.

Perisher, Blue Cow, Guthega, Ben Lomond, Baw Baw, Selwyn, Hotham, Buller, Falls Creek and Thredbo skifields all closed early.

*** Las Leñas (Argentina) and Portillo (Chile) both reported better than usual snowfalls this winter.

Skiers in NSW (Australia) are complaining about the cost of skiing in their state and are posting on Facebook that it is just about cheaper to have a holiday in New Zealand.

One upset skier said he forked out \$A60 (\$NZ64.80) for two sausage rolls and two beers at Perisher's mid station, while two hot chocolates with schnapps cost \$40.

In the same post, the holiday-maker said one lift and ski tube pass, plus boots rental, totalled over \$400, which combined with food to cost \$500 per day.

Four Australians were caught skiing for free at Cardrona Alpine Resort with lift passes given by a friend working at the skifield.

Two women and two men, all aged in their 30s, used the passes on four days.

Appearing in court at Queenstown they were discharged after paying \$160 a day for the passes and each making a \$180 payment to the Salvation Army.

Reed Hastings, the co-founder of Netflix, has made a \$US100 million

investment in Powder Mountain (Utah) the largest US ski resort by skiable hectares.

Hastings became a minority owner of Powder Mountain in April and ascended to majority owner in September.

Powder Mountain resort extends over 500 hectares. It has 54 trails, nine lifts, two terrain parks and cat skiing.

Ohau Snow Fields on September 23rd received 100 cm of snow. That is, a whole metre of snow in one dump, or 3.2 feet.

What a change since the start of the season when Ohau was short of snow and had to delay its opening. Now it had perfect spring skiing.

Ohau is a small commercial skifield situated near the boundary between Otago and Canterbury. It was originally developed by the Mount Cook and Southern Lakes Tourist Co.

The skifield has a top elevation of 1925 metres. It has one double chairlift, one platter and one magic carpet.

A log cabin at Park City Mountain Resort (Utah, USA) is for sale at \$US26 million. The luxury home is set on 5 acres among the ski slopes.

The main residence is a five-bedroom log cabin that spans 8000 square feet. Loaded with western charm, the five-bedroom house has a dining room, an elevator, a wine cellar and a home theatre.

There are wood-burning fireplaces throughout the home, lofty ceilings, expansive patios, panoramic mountain and down-valley views.

Elsewhere on the property is a one-bedroom guest house, and a 3000 square-foot operation barn, fitted with two bedrooms, two bathrooms, and horse stalls connected to a riding area and pasture.



RSC held the prizegiving for the Combined Clubs Race, with Catherine Gafa presiding. Photos: Josie Adriaansen.

ACROSS THE SKIING WORLD

A new 100 metre suspension bridge to link the Plateau carpark on Taranaki Maunga with the Manganui skifield is being built.

The bridge will be suspended 50 metres above the Manganui River from 22 metre towers and will be part of a \$13.4 million upgrade of 25km of tracks allowing a mix of short walks and longer tramps.

Wind and avalanche modelling have been factored in for the bridge to withstand 210km/h winds and last 100 years.

It will use 850 metres of steel support cables and 2800 metres of handrail infill cables, with 24 rock anchors.

*It was good to see **Simon Wi Rutene** involved as Technical Delegate (top overseer) for the alpine ski racing during the Winter Games NZ at Coronet Peak.*

He is the only NZ skier to compete at four Winter Olympics.

At Treble Cone in Otago, a disgruntled visitor complained that TC threatened to cancel his pass because he was sharing some tips with two friends on the learner slopes. No money changed hands.

Treble Cone chief Laura Hedley said her staff saw someone teaching, which looked like a lesson.

However, no action was taken in this case and TC would never want to stop friends and family teaching.

“We’ve all come up that way,” said s Hedley. “When money changes hands it becomes a problem.”

Rising US alpine ski racing star Ava Sunshine will miss the entire current World Cup season due to an injury sustained in New Zealand.

Sunshine won several races in NZ this winter but then tore the ACL in her right knee during a training session at Coronet Peak.

Sunshine hails from Colorado but currently calls Los Angeles her home.

About 1500 visitors have set a new unofficial world record at The Remarkables at Queenstown for people skiing and snowboarding in their swimsuits

Participants in the second annual Polar Bare stripped down to their summer attire to ride the trails and party to DJs. Most of the participants were Australians.

It was not a race and people were encouraged to take their time getting down the mountain as bare skin landing on snow could be quite painful.

The old record was set in 2016 in Sochi (Russia) with 1008 participants.

La Sambuy, a French town which runs a family skiing destination near Mont Blanc, has decided to dismantle its ski lifts because global warming has shrunk its ski season to just a few weeks.

La Sambuy isn't a huge resort, with just three lifts and a handful of pistes, but it was popular with families seeking a low-key Alps experience and cheap lift passes.

The town will continue to promote itself as a venue for summer sports such as hiking.

Austrian ski legend Heinrich “Heini” Messner, the winner of the very first ski World Cup race in 1967, has died aged 84.

Messner was as versatile as he was elegant as a racer. He was also a successful coach and under his sensitive guidance, Austrian female skiers, led by Annemarie Moser-Pröll and Monika Kaserer, celebrated a series of their greatest triumphs.

The Scottish indoor ski slope known as Braehead is to close permanently, after 17 years of skiing.

Its owners said that keeping 8 million litres of snow and ice at low temperatures is difficult, and the slope is in poor condition.

Braehead, which is in Glasgow, will

continue to offer 10-pin bowling, wall climbing, golf and laser tag.

Construction is under way at **Thredbo (NSW)** of Australia's first alpine coaster. It will provide a year-round all-weather rail-guided toboggan ride.

The coaster will be 1.5 km long with a mix of uphill and downhill tracks, a tunnel, bridges and circles that traverse through the alpine environment.

Passengers will control their speed up to 40 km/h. The Thredbo Alpine Coaster is planned to be in operation for winter 2024.

American singer Jimmy Buffett who died in September aged 76 was a skier who visited Aspen (Colorado) for more than 50 years.

He purchased a house in Old Snowmass (where he was known for hosting wild parties) and learned to ski.

Buffett became friends with all of Aspen's celebrity musicians but he never wrote songs about the mountains. He left that to his friend John Denver, and the two were close.

Terra Incognita is a new ski film project which features skiing in some of the most remote zones in the NZ alpine back country.

It is the work primarily of world ranked NZ extreme freeride skier Craig Murray and prominent ski cameraman Finlay Woods.

The movie just released is called Stampede and is the first part of a trilogy. It was filmed in the Selwyn area of Canterbury high country.

"There we were, starting our ascent at 5 am beneath the moon and returning at 8 pm under the stars," said Murray.

"It was mainly the shared passion for being high on peaks and ridges, cherishing the slight warmth brought by the winter sun as it traversed low across the Southern Alps."

Norwegian alpine skiing star Lucas

Braathen aged 23 has suddenly announced his retirement from the sport.

He addressed a small group of astonished reporters: "I'm done. For the first time in my career, I feel free."

Braathen was ranked No 1 in the world for slalom. He is the son of a Norwegian father and a Brazilian mother and his middle name is Pinheiro, which is Portuguese for pine tree, paying tribute to Brazilian heritage.

Black Mountain ski area in Jackson (New Hampshire) has closed, at least for the current season, after 88 years of operating.

"Due to circumstances beyond our control, including soaring energy costs, unpredictable weather, extreme staffing shortages throughout the region, and many other challenges, we have made the very difficult decision to cease operations," the Fichera Family wrote.

Saint Mary's Glacier Ski Area in Clear Creek County (Colorado), which hasn't operated since the 1980s, is for sale for US\$7 million.

It was a modest ski area, 30km west of the Denver, and it operated from the 1930s.

For the price you will get buildings, old lifts and carved-out ski trails. The top altitude is 3600m.

US skier Gordon Garlock aged 74 has skied at least once every month for 42 years.

A long-time (48 years) ski instructor at Timberline Lodge and Ski Area in Oregon, said he has not finished yet.

His mates sometimes have to cart snow around in spring to make a 200 metre run that he can ski down each month in summer.

Six years ago, Garlock was diagnosed with cancer in his hip and was going through chemotherapy, but still managed to ski.



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

The summer bunk rates are the same as last year:

Senior members \$30

Junior members \$20

Senior non-members \$35

Junior non-members \$25