

# TARANAKI SECTION NEW ZEALAND ALPINE CLUB

Issue 4, April 2018.

## UPCOMING EVENT

### Banff Mountain Film Festival World Tour

The Taranaki section are hosting the Banff Mountain Film Festival again, always are great evening and inspirational for you next adventure. Details below;

**Location;** City West Church,  
62c Popular Grove, New  
Plymouth. (No Food or Drink  
allowed at venue)

**Date & Time;** 25<sup>th</sup> of May 7pm

**Cost:** \$15 NZAC members



*Rupert Gardiner with Mt Glenisla in Background.*

## THE TARANAKI SECTION OF THE NZAC

As summer fades away and we all start to think about winter activities, let's celebrate a successful summer of climbing for our Taranaki section members.

Firstly, as a small section it was great to successfully host a climbing camp based out of Manganui Lodge. Committee members put a lot of effort into sorting the logistics and making this happen in a short time period. We also got the weather gods shining on us that weekend with two great days for climbing. Highlights of the weekend were climbs up east ridge, a new bolted 27 by John Palmer our NZAC president, Fletcher Miles climbing his nemesis "Rope Boy", Dave Brash climbing a host of the classic's and raving how good the rock climbing is on Taranaki, Phill Davies climbing likely a new route on Lion rock with a tricky boulder start and Dave Bolger being able to borrow 2 number 4 Camelot's so he could climb the classic "space invader". Overall a fantastic weekend which we hope will be an annual event.

Other successful South Island trips by section members included Glen Hodges climbing Mt Cook with Adventure Consultants. Will Archibald and Tony Gordon climbing Mt Cook and Tony going on to climb Mt Aspiring again. Fletcher Miles being a worthy recipient of the Andy Harris Trust and completing a mountaineering course with Alpine Guides based out of Tasman Saddle. Dave Bolger received a funding grant by the Taranaki Section and completed an ascent of the classic North West Buttress of Glenisla and other multi pitch rock climbing routes up the north wye (see trip report below). Jeremy Beckers, Sophie Tucker and Alec Helbron spent extensive time in the South Island doing some remote alpine trekking adventures.

## Trip Report Dave Bolger

I was very fortunate to receive funding from the Taranaki section of the New Zealand Alpine club for a South Island climbing trip, I am forever grateful.

After a summer of almost endless great climbing weather in the South Island, I see myself arrive in Queenstown under a heat wave of 35degrees and the approaching cyclone Gida. With the forecast a complete right off for a few days I thought I would take the last fine day for a few days and do a mountain run up Brow Peak. There is a classic spur you can follow from the Saw Pit Gully track from Arrowtown, which is direct with excellent fast height gain. This trip

up onto Brow Peak can be completed from Arrowtown and is an excellent half day or full day trip depending on your fitness. The height gain is just over 1000m and depending on how you complete the trip, I did a complete loop, you are looking at over 20km of distance to travel. Was certainly great exercise to stretch the legs before the incoming weather bomb of cyclone Gida and few days of limited exercise, accept rock climbing in steep deep caves!

My initial plan was to climb the north buttress of Mt Aspiring, however due to a very dry season and discussing conditions with some guide friends, the Therma glacier was unlikely to be passable and the at this stage no possible weather window was available either. With a short weather window of maybe one day and half of ok weather off the main divide it was decided to go up the North Wye Valley to climb a classic multi pitch rock climb called the "Highlander". The route is 5 pitches with a crux grade of 20 and is a mixture of bolts and gear. The North Wye is a special little valley which I have visited a few times and was involved with the first rock climbing route up there trying to establish access to some of the better climbing routes. There is a few bivi rocks up the North Wye, however we stayed in the classic bivi rock called the "Stag Quarters" there is an old stag that resides in one part of the bivi, a friendly chap that hasn't changed much in over 10 years. As our window was short we walked in and climbed the Highlander the first day. Really fun route, well protected and maybe a little soft for the grade, so worth getting on if you are only climbing gear routes in the 18/19 range. The second day with approaching weather we got up early and climbed a two-pitch route. The climbing was ok; however, the anchors were poor for a bolted line (single bolts anchors and unrated old chain) we backed these up for the abseil down, then made a quick exit down valley as the next front was approaching.

The next weather system saw snow down to 1200m therefore any chance of climbing the north buttress were well gone and options were limited with a good-looking climb day on Wednesday before I had to fly out on Thursday. We left for the Hopkins on Monday afternoon with a plan to get to Monument hut. We made it to Monument hut, however the rivers were high and it was still snowing on the tops. Our plan was to mountain bike then walk to the base of the north west buttress of Mt Glenisla from the Hopkins Valley. Tuesday morning dawned clear, however the light snow covering did provide some concern for our climb day on the Wednesday. Luckily the route faces north west and gets a lot of warm sunshine, so we were confident conditions should be ok. We firstly mountain biked up the Hopkins where we could, certainly a challenge with large climbing packs. One of our first river crossing was the Huxley River. The river was just within safety margins, only just especially with a bike. We actually crossed twice as we couldn't cross with a bike and heavy climbing back. River crossings a serious risk on South Island climbing trips and should never be taken lightly. Further river and stream crossings were required until we were left with the one last big crossing, that being the crossing of the Hopkins River to start our trek out of the valley. Again, the crossing was just within safety margins to cross safely. I will say it was a great relief to safely complete these crossings, as we thought we might be unable to cross and our climbing plans would have been foiled before even attempting to climb.

The climb up out of the valley is steep, however we did find a spur which did give great access through the beach forest and into the sub alpine area and the hanging cirque valley. Once in the upper valley we had great view of the north west buttress and north face of Mt Glenisla. We spent the last part of the afternoon hydrating and relaxing, knowing the next day would be long. We had a fantastic place for our open bivi and the weather was perfect. We left our bivi before first light so we could be at the base of the climb at first light. Once at the base of the buttress we started pitching, the routes description said it was 15 pitches'. I said to Rupert my climbing partner I would lead a block of 5 pitches to start us off early in the morning. The climbing was quite straight forward to start with, generally enough gear and sound belays, every pitch we stretched 60m of climbing, and once we did some simul climbing until I could find an adequate anchor. Rupert lead the second block, with pitch 9 being the crux of the route with fantastic exposure and delicate climbing up a small slab fin feature and exposed traverse above the north face. One more traverse lead to easier scrambling and walking to the summit. We managed to solo back down the north side of the mountain and fast decent to our bivi site, arriving just after lunch and well ahead of schedule to make my flight the following day. After a quick fuel up, we descended down to the valley floor to collect mountain bikes and ride down the Hopkins valley with a few river crossings to cool us off on the way home. I would thoroughly recommend the North West Buttress of Glenisla, great access to some great climbing on reasonable quality rock. The route is given a Mt Cook grade of 4 and is likely to be 10 pitches plus with a crux grade of around 16.



*Fletcher Miles on lead – Mt Taranaki.*

I will be giving a presentation about this trip at the AGM later in the year. I will provide a more detail account of this trip then, see you there.

### **Taranaki Section Climbing Grant**

Just a reminder to section members about the climbing grant that can be applied for to support South Island climbing trips. Applications are now open for the grant for the 2018/19 financial year with the closing date being the 28<sup>th</sup> of September 2018. Please contact the secretary Mark Hall for application information.

### **News from the NZAC**

Make sure to check out the NZAC website, certainly a wealth of information, with also the latest news from the club, and some great new books that can be purchased on-line via the on-line shop [alpineclub.org.nz](http://alpineclub.org.nz) .

Updated online via the NZAC website is a list of Ski-fields offer NZAC members a discount for the 2018 season, worth checking out if you are planning a skiing holiday. Also, the NZAC is looking for a volunteer with NZOIA Rock 2 for the NZAC youth climbing camps. This is a great programme for youth, so if you know anyone with NZOIA Rock 2 who could assist please contact [ashlee@alpineclub.org.nz](mailto:ashlee@alpineclub.org.nz)



## **Committee Contacts**

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