

# NZOIA Quarterly

Number 23

Newsletter of the New Zealand Outdoor Instructors' Association

December 2002

## THEY'RE AT IT AGAIN !

What could be more fun than spending your summer holidays hoping your mountain tent isn't shredded by shrieking wind and horizontal rain...? Well, this is potentially what NZIOA assessors Graham Charles, Mark Jones and Marcus Waters (the Adventure Philosophy team) have let themselves in for this January and February as they attempt the first return traverse of the Darwin.

### **Cordillera (Tierra Del Feugo - South America)**

The idea for this expedition came about by chance. Graham, Jonesy, and Marcus had just returned to Ushuaia (Argentina) from their traverse of the Antarctic Peninsula by Sea Kayak. The crossing of the Drake Passage had been less than comfortable; they were late back and had only 12 hours to spare in Ushuaia before flying back to their homes in New Zealand.

Their sea kayaks needed to get driven by truck up to Buenos Aires unfortunately the trucking company that had originally brought them to Ushuaia had gone bust.... one thing didn't lead to another and they arrived back in New Zealand minus their kayaks.

After a little research they discovered that Ushuaia lies at the eastern end of the Darwin Cordillera, a mountain range explored by Eric Shipton in the early 1960s with very few people having visited it since.

A plan was hatched - the first return traverse of the Darwin Cordillera by foot and sea kayak! The boys will sea kayak west up the Beagle Channel into the Chilean fiords, beach their kayaks, exchange paddle for ice axe and crampons and mountaineer their way back across the Darwin icecap through the broken glaciated terrain to Ushuaia.

It is a round trip of some 700kms and should take around 40 days. The notoriously bad Southern Andes weather will certainly pose one of the biggest challenges! The team has a satellite phone and is planning to update their web site as they go. So...check them out on:

[www.adventurephilosophy.com](http://www.adventurephilosophy.com)

and if the little dot isn't moving maybe they're in the midst of one of those Patagonian storms!

To add to this madness, the team has roped in your President (Jill), and the financial manager (Jim) to help crew the boat that will pick up their kayaks. Although these two have limited sailing knowledge (cruising about the Bay of Islands is about the limit of it), they will be enormously helpful in approving the quality of the South American wine!



**Merry Christmas  
and a  
Happy New Year  
to all  
NZOIA Members**



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www.safeoutside.org

## From the Presidents Wine Glass



Heck its nearly Christmas again, the cellar is getting away from us, so its just as well there'll be an excuse to get it under control.

I had a great time in Australia for a series of orienteering events including the South Australian Champs, Australian Champs, Victorian Champs, and World Masters Championships. In spite of the very dry weather, Jim and I managed to navigate our way around the Barossa and Clare Valleys prior to the competitions, and I reckon we should look at developing a vineyard navigation award which would be international! Pleased to report we visited all the checkpoints planned.

This issue has a number of interesting items. One to mention is an article from Malcolm Anderson on the Qualmark endorsement developed by Tourism New Zealand. This outlines the background to this scheme and how it all works.

John Entwisle has contributed two articles that should be hugely valuable to all rock instructors. The Tech Notes feature is designed to update members on current issues, instruction tips and technical information. If you feel you can contribute to this, please contact us.

The trial Rock Training days were held mostly in October and have proven to be very successful. Feedback has been positive and we have noticed an increase in requests for training. The result of all this is that the Technical Sub committee are meeting in January to set out some criteria for NZOIA endorsed training. The thought is that any current Level 2 award holder can deliver training towards NZOIA awards, or to refresh existing award holders, providing certain criteria are met and so we are looking at ways to establish this for 2003.

Somehow I have managed to get the Assessment Co-ordination job back for a while. Kate and Phil have become parents, and so Kate is taking some time to learn about being a parent and should be back on board before the 2003 assessment courses wind up.

A bonus this issue is the inclusion of the new Outdoor Journal. This is an initiative that has been in the pipeline for some time now, and has finally been picked up by Outdoors NZ. An editorial team headed by Mike Boyes has gathered together the content and it is planned to produce a Journal twice a year. This will be included as part of NZOIA membership. There is a wealth of academic work being produced in NZ, and this is a great opportunity to showcase the results.

Probably the most difficult task the committee has had to face this year has been the accident investigation process. Although NZOIA has investigated accidents in the past, no set procedure had been established. These sorts of situations make us reflect on our processes and how we operate in the industry, so it became important

to do our own investigation because an award holder was involved. A report can be found elsewhere in this issue.

The Committee has met with Ian Nicholson, the new Executive Director of NZ Mountain Safety Council. As some of you will remember, Ian was previously ED of NZOIA before he went to Nepal for two years. Ian and Carol ran the hospital at Kunde (in the Khumbu region) for the Sir Edmund Hillary Trust and Jim and I went to visit them last year. One of Ian's goals is to look for ways of working co-operatively with other outdoor organisations, and we have had some discussions about ways in which this might happen.

Speaking of co-operation, some new EOTC guidelines have been developed by the Ministry of Education and tenders have been called for the delivery of a training package to schools. Outdoors New Zealand has been closely involved with these developments and we hope to have more to report on this in the next issue.

Finally, thank you to all those who have continued to support NZOIA - have a great Christmas with plenty of adventures,

*Jill.*



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**Christian Outdoor Recreation Instructor Programme.**

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**0-9-837 6033** or email [adventurespecialties@xtra.co.nz](mailto:adventurespecialties@xtra.co.nz)

## ACCIDENT INVESTIGATION PROCESS FOR NZOIA

NZOIA members have been called on by the Maritime Safety Association in the past to assist with accident investigations. While we are pleased to be able to provide expertise, there are a number of ways this could be achieved more effectively.

We have recently contacted MSA and asked to have a meeting with them as to how this might develop for the future. It is likely that this meeting will take place in the New Year, and that other interested organisations may be involved.

When one of our award holders was involved on the receiving end of an investigation (Buller River), we realized that NZOIA did not have a policy on accident investigation of its own members and so Ray Button was contracted firstly to develop a policy for NZOIA, and secondly to investigate the accident.

Ray submitted a proposed policy which was subsequently adopted by the committee, with some minor tidying up. (This policy will be on the website in the near future).

Ray then convened a sub-committee to investigate the accident, using the guidelines in the policy. The group then recommended a course of action which has since been endorsed by the committee and the recommendations carried out. While accidents such as this have serious outcomes for all concerned, there is always the opportunity for learning. It is also important to value our awards and, as an organisation, be seen to investigate any accidents that occur involving award holders.

In future, there is an intention to begin NZOIA's investigation sooner, rather than later, and it may well be in conjunction with, or at the same time as the MSA investigation.

It is interesting to see the **NZ Canoeing Spring newsletter produced by NZRCA** also had comment on the front page, and a series of lessons that can be learnt (reproduced below).

- ~ Strainers are a major danger for kayakers.
- ~ A change in river flow (even a reduction) can increase the objective danger.
- ~ If you do not have recent knowledge of a rapid then scout the rapid with caution and ask for direction.
- ~ All members of a group should communicate known hazards (including their own limitations in knowledge and skill) to each other and should be comfortable with advising each other of dangers.
- ~ If you cannot see what is below an obstacle beware: it is dangerous to paddle over it 'blind'.
- ~ Ensure that you can exit your kayak as easily as possible (even if held against an obstacle).
- ~ Ensure your Buoyancy Aid fits so that it will not come off unless you want it to.
- ~ Consider carrying some means of calling for outside help if necessary, for example a cell phone or locator beacon.
- ~ Caution and knowledge (backed up by River Safety and Rescue Skills) are vital to ensuring a safe trip.

### DRAFT FIORDLAND MANAGEMENT PLAN

The Draft Fiordland Management Plan has been released for comment by DoC. It is a very detailed document and can be found (among other places) on the NZ Alpine Club Website at:

[www.alpineclub.org.nz](http://www.alpineclub.org.nz) (under recreation advocacy).

If you access the Fiordland National Park from time to time, it is well worth your reading the draft management plan, to familiarise yourself with what is currently proposed for the park. You may even wish to make a submission if you feel parts of the plan are not in the best interests of you or the other park users with whom you associate.

### NZOIA XMAS Office Closure

The NZOIA office will close:

PM Friday 20th December,  
and re-open  
AM Friday 3rd January.

The office telephone (04 385.6048) will have an answerphone available for brief messages.

Email may be sent to the assessment co-ordinator & administration officer in the usual manner.

# NZOIA COMMITTEE NEWS

The NZOIA committee met in Wellington recently – some happenings for 2003 include:

- A major website upgrade, including revamped database.
- A new marketing plan was presented which includes a project to educate employers on the value of employing NZOIA award holders.
- The design of a new award to be presented at the Risk Conference in December which acknowledges a new instructor who shows great skills, enthusiasm, passion for learning and ability to pass knowledge on to others. This award is being sponsored by NZOIA, but presented by Outdoors NZ on an annual basis. We will be seeking nominations soon.
- Further investigation into insurance packages especially for public liability and loss of income. Work on this has been slow so far.
- A NZOIA Poster and brochure distribution plan.
- Clothing embroidery service.
- Free standing NZOIA display that can be used at conferences, expos, seminars.
- Trade marking the NZOIA logo and byline.

**N.B.** There is a need to compile an extensive database of various groups that we can market to. Some of this information already exists, but we need a 'Worker Ant' to pull it all together. We see this as a small paid contract – anyone interested should contact a Committee member.

**REMEMBER - use you  
NZOIA membership card at**

**BIVOUC**

**- you get a good discount on  
your purchases and NZOIA gets  
a small commission as well.**

## Publications from NZOIA



### NZOIA Logbooks .....

The format is an A5, plastic ringbinder (with standard 2 ring).

**Cost** - single copy: Members \$20, Non-members \$23 (including post & packaging in NZ). A discount is available for orders in multiples of 5 copies - please ask.

### Abseiling for Instructors by Bev Smith

A practical guide on techniques and risk management considerations for instructors when taking Abseiling. Special - 3 for \$10.00. inc postage, (or 1 for \$5, inc. p&p).

*Orders for publications to:  
Administration Officer NZOIA  
PO Box 11-090 Wellington.....with payment.*

**CHRISTMAS  
SPECIAL**

a clearance of

**Kayak Instructors Manuals**

special price

**\$10 per copy**

payment must accompany orders.

## News Briefs ~

**Van Watson**, caver and assessor from Waitomo, has shot off to Borneo for a few weeks. Wonder what he is doing there?

**Wedding bells** sounded for Aidan Tansell (Auckland) last weekend – congratulations to Aidan and Caroline.

**Kayak 2** – people interested in a Kayak 2 assessment should contact [assessment@nzoia.org.nz](mailto:assessment@nzoia.org.nz). The word is that a few people out there are interested, and we can be flexible with the date.

**Potential NEW members ?**

**Congratulations to:** David Bailey & Lou Drage on the arrival of a baby boy, **Jack**, on 11th November, and to: **Kate & Phil Bowes** on the arrival of a baby boy, **Jack**, on 13th November.

## Useful and Interesting Websites !

**nzoia.org.nz** ~ is where you will find the **NZOIA**.  
**outdoorsnz.org.nz** ~ Outdoors New Zealand with many links  
**safeoutside.org** ~ associated with Outdoors New Zealand  
 - Safety in the Outdoors  
**adventurepro.com.au** ~ an Aussie / NZ "outdoors"site  
**climb.co.nz** ~ one for the climbers  
**nzkayakbuyersguide.co.nz** ~ everything for the kayaker  
**watersafety.org.nz** ~ Water Safety New Zealand  
**sparc.org.nz** ~ Sport & Recreation New Zealand  
**sfrito.org.nz** ~ Sport, Fitness & Recreation Industry Training  
**mountainsafety.org.nz** ~ the NZ Mountain Safety Council  
**nzalpine.org.nz** ~ NZ Alpine Club Newsletters  
**acc.co.nz** ~ the ACC site - a good place to check services  
**tourisminfo.govt.nz** ~ the website for Tourism NZ  
**wildernessmag.com** ~ the Wilderness Magazine  
**sunrockice.co.nz/Webcams.htm** ~ weather cams in NZ  
**nzmga.co.nz** ~ NZ Mountain Guides Assn  
**seakayak.org.nz** ~ Sea Kayak Operators Association of NZ  
**nz-rafting.co.nz** ~ NZ Rafting Assn.  
**www.nzunderwater.org.nz** ~ NZ Underwater Assn  
**rivers.org.nz** ~ NZ Recreational Canoeing Assn  
**apnz.ac.nz** ~ Association of Polytechnics in New Zealand and  
 links to at the polytechnics in NZ  
**refdesk.com/instant.html** - the A-Z of everything website

*~ if you have any that you think other members would find useful, please let the Editor know.*

### Web Cameras in the New Zealand mountains that may interest you.

These cameras scroll back 12 - 24 hours, and show pictures of the weather and snow conditions at these locations:

#### North Island

Ruapehu Ski Club, Whakapapa Ski Area, National Park Village, Turoa from Rangataua, and Turoa Ski Area.

#### South Island

Nelson Lakes StArnaud, Hanmer Springs, Mt Olympus Ski Area, Mt Hutt Ski Area, Mt Cook Hooker Valley, Treble Cone Ski Area, Cardrona, Remarkables & Coronet Ski Areas, Lake Whakatipu, and Lake Wanaka.

You can find the link at:

**[www.sunrockice.co.nz/Webcams.htm](http://www.sunrockice.co.nz/Webcams.htm)**

## Congratulations

to the following members who recently obtained NZOIA Instructor Awards

#### **Alpine 1**

Stuart Arnold  
 Garth Crosbie  
 Nicholas Hight  
 Michael Madden  
 Sash Nukada  
 Brigid McKay  
 Geoff Ockwell

#### **Bush 1**

Mike Greenstreet  
 Aidan Tansell

#### **Climbing Wall**

Marama Erueti  
 Hans Wannemacher

#### **Kayak 1**

Ben Jackson  
 Dale Kington  
 Mark Simmons  
 Chris West

#### **Rock 1**

Johathan Beguely  
 Andrew Belcar  
 Wendy Campbell  
 Tony Church  
 Daniel Eastwood  
 Christiaan Filius  
 Megan Ford  
 Victoria Foxwell  
 Daniel Hutchinson  
 Ben Johnston  
 Jennifer Jordan  
 Meagan Kelly  
 Yasna Keys  
 Jackie King  
 Fiona Lyall  
 Jeremy Murray-Orr  
 Steven Parker  
 Sam Rainey  
 Mark Simmons  
 Aidan Tansell  
 Kataraina Wetere  
 Alister White  
 Michael Zandvoort

#### **Rock 2**

Graeme Pringle  
 Holly Thompson  
 Linda Wensley

*(Our thanks to John Entwisle for these two articles & photos. John is a Rock 1 & 2 Assessor, Alpine 1 & 2 Assessor and IFMGA Mountain Guide, as well as being on the NZOIA Technical Sub-Committee. Another of those ageing climbers whose motto is to climb half his age - John spends a fair amount of time in Europe each year trying to achieve this. Luckily he appreciates fine wine as well.)*

## COFFEE, CROISSANTS AND CLARET CONFOUND AGED CLIMBER

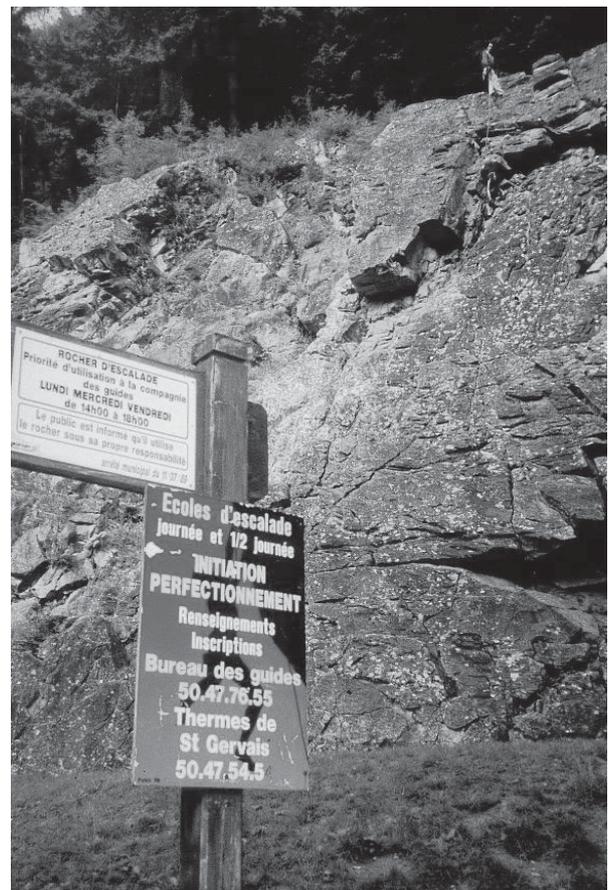
The thin crack slashed diagonally across the "dalle" which I'd translated as slab. Another French "faux pas" as this was a wall. A smooth blank wall. A steep wall without bolts. Neither did the crack sport a rusty piton nor even an over-cammed friend with its bleached sling luring me on. And it was my lead. Who said that European rock was over bolted? The "moderniste" alpine rock routes aren't. The bare slabs and walls have bolts, but be prepared to run it out to them and away from them. And to put your own gear into the cracks. The pre-alp limestone climbs are usually sparingly bolted and the lower crags well bolted.

So what are my holiday stories doing in this earnest professional journal? For a start the editor asked me to write and I also think that we need to get NZ rock climbing in perspective and to develop a philosophy about how we teach it.

The perspective question is easy. NZ is a dot on the horizon. Just the Chamonix area of Europe has more rock than all of NZ. I started part way up an alpine rock route of which there are 2 volumes soon running to a third as more of the mountain crags are explored. This is ignoring the big character building mixed faces and snow and ice routes. I know NZ has alpine rock (I've done a few good ones over 30 years) but in most cases either the rock or the weather doesn't bear thinking about. The Chamonix sub alpine areas have another 2 books and then there are the crags. Which is where I want to start.

Not on any crag but on the "ecole de escalade" which are thoroughly bolted for teaching climbing. Now traditionalists before you grab a shotgun please read on. These crags are often not the best on offer, in fact some are scruffy, so that plenty of rock is left for more daring approaches to climbing. But they do encourage a traditional ethic, namely, starting from the ground. The classes I watched began with a guide taking a rope (or ropes) UP a climb(s). One of the first things a student sees is their instructor leading a climb. How often does that happen in NZ?

"Ecole de escalade" are crags rigged to allow as many students as possible to climb. During the French holiday mornings they swarmed with kids flinging themselves at climbs on top ropes. Later the leaders came out, some of whom were young children.



Great instruction signage, for the locals !

We'd only consider it safe for them to play rugby, not lead on rock. Resting on gear or falling off in the progression towards clean leading doesn't seem to worry the French. But then not much does, as they have a natural "laissez faire" attitude to outdoor pursuits.

How relevant is this to NZ? Take Rock 1. Well frankly I'd like to take it to somewhere remote, like Pitcairn Island, and leave it there. The whole thing is about building anchors at the top. I've never seen a candidate lead on such a course. It's only since it has become part of the scheme that I've spied instructors climbing. The client day still seems to revolve around throwing a few top ropes down, delaying climbing for as long as possible and then the candidates giving instructions on how to climb climbs they haven't done. OK I exaggerate, but not by much.

What NZ needs is a few more “ecole de escalade” so that there is less emphasis on setting up and more on climbing. Slowly this is happening. Around Christchurch, Albert Terrace has been so rigged by the Polytechnic staff after lots of consultation with local climbers. At Wanaka the first slabs of Riverside are similar. I don't know any North Island examples as I mainly go the Bay and that should definitely be left clear of such bolting.

There is no need to grid bolt a whole crag. Often an underused part will do. And again after consultation with the first ascensionists and other crag users. I can think of some sectors of crags which would be excellent teaching areas with a few more bolts. This may keep top ropes off popular leads - like “Escalade” at Castle Rock - to stop them getting excessively polished and also discourage the retro bolting of some sportingly bolted leads.

So far I've not mentioned bouldering and climbing walls which can be seen as end products. If you read the “NZ Climber” then bouldering seems to be it. Burdening oneself with anything like a rope and rack either labels one as some prehistoric alpine monstrosity left over from an ice age or a polytechnic student. They are also fine means of teaching movement so that students have the physical skills to start by leading climbs.



Nick Norgan on 'Motorhead' on Eldorado,  
a 15 pitch slab climb of grade 21.  
It's near Grimsel Pass in Switzerland.

If you don't regard bouldering or sport climbing as the highest evolution of homoclimbus then the next stage of the progression - a common outdoor course one - is to introduce leading on placed pro.

To me, the stultifying way of doing this is have the student leading on a top rope (an oxymoron if ever I heard one) placing pro which the instructor then checks and, often, places more. Usually so much that no holds in the crack are left and the student needs immense static strength to clip it all. Let's assume that the student knows how the pro works and has practised placing it, including doing so while bouldering above the ground. You can launch them cold turkey up some well protected climb within their grade or if you and/or they are more cautious then put a few pieces in the climb so that a ground fall is unlikely. They can fill in the gaps or run it out.

One problem with the above sequence is that there aren't many suitable climbs in NZ. Hence the popularity of Arapiles which is infested with them. So my next suggestion, which will again have the trads reaching for their weapons, is to put the occasional bolt in some suitable underused trad routes to make them safe leads. I know that this is heresy, but honestly there are some indifferent climbs to which this could be done without any damage to the classic fine lines. To put bolts in climbs like “Nudity” at the Tors and “Hangman” etc at Castle Rock would deserve at least hang drawing and quartering. Personally I'd prefer that all the bolts were removed from the Tors and it declared a bolt free crag. Again all of this needs to be done with consultation and a recognition that crags have multiple uses and have become work places.

What then are my pleas? The first one is to go back to the activity. Simply climb. Get students moving on rock, boulders, walls, trees whatever and do it yourself. Transmit your enjoyment of climbing. Having done that get on with lead climbing. Occasional top roping is still fine, but at least put the ropes up yourself on lead. Crag with top access, like Rapaki, should have smooth concrete overhangs placed over them! But better get the students leading preferably on bolts as they don't need so much gear. The less said about gear the better. When students start leading with it don't give them an El Cap rack. The idea is to climb not build anchors. Enough for the climb with a few spares is all they need. So to put it boldly, start every session from the ground. Lead yourself and get the students thinking of always leading up a climb not throwing a rope down it.

What else needs to be done? Well for us industrial users a few more “ecole de escalade” and possibly a bolt or two to make some trad routes accessible. The extra bolting will need a consensus but once it is done it has to be respected by all users.

Angry trad climbers who chop bolts without reference to other users don't help and add to the disfigurement of their supposedly beloved crags.

And what can we do? For a start don't crowd out crags by booking climbs with top ropes and try not to abseil down climbs. Find an unused piece of rock to do this if you must. Next keep pedalling students off routes they stand little chance of doing as some climbs are getting dangerously polished by trainer clad groups flailing on them. "Little Thor" at Arapiles is a slime example. And finally climb like you mean it instead of like its just another job.



Another view of Nick Norgan on 'Motorhead'.

## GETTING OFF: QUICK AND CHEAP ESCAPES

The other day I watched, when I could face it, a student retreating from a sport climb by threading a sling through the eye of the bolt and then the rope through the sling and finally tying one end of the rope to the sling so all could be retrieved. After a little coaching all went well, but I must admit to feeling decidedly nervous during the process.

Hence these thoughts.....

Leaving gear behind is both expensive and unsightly and retreat can be dangerous, so here are a few strategies which may help. Obviously none of this is needed if it is possible to access the top. Often neither easy nor safe on lots of modern crags.

Learning to down climb sounds fine, but if you can, you usually have done so. The same can be said of the voluntary leap. If the climb is on placed pro one can often leap-frog pro downwards as you go. Otherwise it may have to be the cheapest securest piece of gear you can spare.

Retreat from bolted climbs is less expensive. Obviously U bolted climbs pose no problems. On hanger style bolts the method I outlined above can be employed with care. I prefer to knot the sling above joining (knot or sewn) and tie the end of the rope between the joining and my knot. The sling above my knot is threaded through the bolt in the best way to stop it catching. The other end of the rope is now threaded through both loops of the sling which are on either side of the bolt. Make sure the end of the rope and the bow of the loop reach the ground. Now you can abseil off the TWO strands of rope THREADED through the sling.

Get your second to give you a fireman's belay. Pull the rope through the sling down and then the rope tied to the sling. Simple arithmetic indicates that this will get you off from a height equal to a third of the length of your rope. I've never felt relaxed either using or watching this method.

I prefer a simpler approach. Once you have untied thread the rope through the bolt and then on the uphill side of the bolt tie a large knot. You abseil on the down hill rope (single rope style) jamming the knot against the bolt eye. This means that you are not trying to cut the rope over the bolt eye.

If you want to ensure complete safety have your second tie onto the rope that goes through the bolt from below the knot. Then if for some confused reason you abseil on the wrong side of the knot all will not be lost. This method will work for half a rope length up a climb or even longer if you get your second to tie slings on to the knotted side of the rope. (A useful trick to remember if you have to cut a rope on a multi pitch descent.) I have used this method a lot and never noticed any damage to ropes.

Some climbers carry shackles or old biners for quick retreats. Not a bad idea if you are working and may need to get down quickly to help others. But cluttering bolts with unnecessary metal is best avoided.

Getting off the top of NZ bolted climbs must be a whole 101 paper in its own right. The ideal is when you can lower straight off the rapide fixtures. Lowering off fixed gear is OK occasionally and is sometimes the only way to have enough control to retrieve the quick draws.

But if a climb is being used by several students they should be wearing out karabiners not the fixed anchor and, if possible, the last user should abseil.

Next best is if you can thread a loop of rope without untying from the end. This loop can then be knotted (fig 8 or overhand) and then clipped to the hard point of the harness with a locking biner. Now you can untie and be lowered. A tip here is to come tight on your cow's tail before the rope so you can check if all is OK.

As an aside if your belayer is using a Grigri load it by leaping off before he/she starts to lower you. And remember that this method leaves less rope to be lowered with so the dead end should have a knot in it. If the climb ends with chain (or similar small diameter) anchors then you have to clip on, secure the rope (very humiliating if you drop it), untie, thread the chain links and then decide whether to abseil or be lowered. Don't let your second take you off belay until you are both clear about abseiling. Deciding to be lowered when your second has wandered off is not a good idea. If the climb is for multiple use leave quick draws or biners on the chains. Not using the final links can make organising the final rope retrieval easier.

Multi pitch abseils with multiple students have lots of combinations depending on abilities, terrain and lateral thinking so just a few tips rather than a set of methods:-

1. Have someone in charge who can delegate.
2. Look for lowering options as they get ropes down straight and fast.
3. Have some sacrificial gear and a knife at the ready.
4. Have a checking system. Mine is three A's, namely; anchor, attachments and harness.

5. If you have 9 mm+ ropes then a person can abseil on a single rope.

6. Only knot the ends of ropes if they are going down a very steep smooth wall into space. Knots are great for jamming in cracks and around vegetation. Even better if it is windy.

I only knot the ends if I can see that it is going to be marginal on rope length to the anchor station.

7. Prussiks: only the first person down needs one unless you want to slow down your abseil device on a thin rope. If you are worried about rock fall hitting you then try having your prussik running from the hard point of your harness onto the rope below the abseil device.

This can be achieved by putting your device on a sling or your cow's tail so that the prussik does not jam in it. If you get hit you will remain upright and not slew to one side which is the danger with a prussik on your leg loop.

8. With the above method you can take a reluctant abseiler down with you by clipping them with a sling to your abseil device.

9. Use fireman's belays rather than prussiks when possible.

10. Simultaneous rappelling is OK when you are in charge. To cut the risk put the student (weaker colleague) on the knotted side of the rope and clip them to you so that if they let go or go off the end of the rope you have them - not under control - but at least hanging from you.

No doubt you can think of several more, **but take care on those races against storm or darkness.**

## CASTLE ROCK Backpacker Lodge :: Rock Climbing :: Mountain Biking

Castlerock Adventure is a new associate business member of NZOIA and the following is a short introduction to its facilities. CastleRock is based at Wharepapa South in the central North Island and is famous for its world class single pitch climbing on pocketed volcanic Ignimbrite rock.

CastleRock Adventure Park includes the recently re-bolted Wharepapa South & Froggatt Edge climbing crags, an expanding network of mountain bike trails and 3 campsites. Access to the park costs \$6/day or \$65/year. In the midst of all this activity is CastleRock Lodge & Chalet where you can get a comfortable bed (\$19-\$32pp) and relax beside the fire or in the pool & spa. The Lodge is a great place to watch the action, play tennis or catch a Movie on SKY TV.

CastleRock provides climbing gear hire and instruction, as well as mountain bike hire. There is a series of 4 mountain bike races run over the summer months on the Bicycle SuperCross track.

Riders race four at a time down and over huge jumps and banked corners - exciting to race and spectacular to watch.

Also of interest to NZOIA members is the Company Park year pass for \$300, this allows the company to bring clients and staff to the Park and utilise the camping facilities.

All NZOIA members receive discount members rates at CastleRock Lodge.

For further information and images check out the website at:  
[www.castlerockadventure.co.nz](http://www.castlerockadventure.co.nz)  
 or email: [info@castlerockadventure.co.nz](mailto:info@castlerockadventure.co.nz)

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With this programme you can help

# SAVE LIVES IN RIVERS



On average 48 people drown in rivers each year, many more sustain serious injuries. Most river based incidents could be prevented if people gained a basic understanding of how rivers work and learned simple safety skills.

WSNZ has recently developed a RiverSafe activity manual. This resource focuses on classroom, swimming pool and river based exercises for Year 9 and 10 students with an emphasis on safety and planning. There is a gap in the school system for qualified and professional providers to contract their services to run these activities.

Water Safety New Zealand are now calling for interested people to qualify as RiverSafe trainers.

The ACC RiverSafe Programme Provider Training days will cover the activities in the RiverSafe manual, curriculum links, and the policy and qualifications required to run the ACC RiverSafe programme.

[www.riversafe.org.nz](http://www.riversafe.org.nz)



To find out more, contact: Brendon Ward, Project Manager

Ph 04 – 801 9600, Email: [ward@watersafety.org.nz](mailto:ward@watersafety.org.nz)



## Tourism's new quality endorsement system officially launched Pilot participants give it the thumbs up

them told us afterwards that their businesses would improve as a result of the independent onsite assessment.

“Many of those pilot participants are already signing up for a Qualmark™ licence, so they can demonstrate to customers, i-SITE visitor information centres, travel agents and inbound tour operators that they've met the quality standards defined by the industry.”

Tourism operators are already giving the industry's official quality endorsement system the thumbs up, with nearly all of the businesses that have been part of the pilot programme deciding they want to carry the Qualmark™ quality mark.

The Qualmark™ licensing system is designed to identify professional and trustworthy businesses so that domestic and international visitors can book and buy tourism products and services with confidence. Until now the programme has primarily featured star graded accommodation businesses, but the endorsement system opens the way for all other types of tourism businesses to join, including adventure and visitor transport operators, attractions and activities. Instead of star grades, the businesses participating in the new system will get a quality endorsement as a “visitor activity”, “visitor transport” or “visitor service” operator.

Qualmark chief executive Fiona Luhrs says 33 businesses underwent the pilot programme of the new Qualmark™ endorsement system in August and September. Their feedback was overwhelmingly positive, and many have taken the opportunity to be among the very first non-accommodation businesses to take up the quality endorsement which was officially launched by Tourism New Zealand chief executive, George Hickton, today.

### Feedback from the official pilot programme

The pilot programme included a broad range of businesses from across the country, including well known operations like Kelly Tarltons, the Buried Village, Agrodome and the International Antarctic Centre, and less well known operators like Taupo's Rock'n'River Adventures, Nelson's Ocean River Sea Kayaking, and North Canterbury's Hurunui Horse Treks.

“The feedback from the pilot programme showed that operators relished the opportunity to benchmark their businesses against industry standards,” says Ms Luhrs. “The prospect of an outside assessor coming in to look at the business was daunting for some, but almost all of

Ms Luhrs says common feedback from among pilot participants and other operators involved in the final consultation over the assessment system, was that the endorsement system's quality benchmarks had to be high enough to ensure they had credibility with visitors.

"The initial thresholds we had proposed were 50% on the generic quality scoring criteria and 70% on sector specific criteria. That's been lifted to 60% and 75% which reflects standards that a visitor will see as professional and trustworthy. In other words, if a business is well run and focused on meeting their customers' requirements, they should meet the eligibility criteria for a Qualmark™ endorsement."

Of the 33 pilot participants, 26 met all of the quality benchmarks on the day of the assessment and 4 more have subsequently rectified "minimum requirements" to become eligible, Ms Luhrs says.

"A feature of the system is that if a business doesn't quite reach the necessary thresholds, or certain minimum criteria aren't met, they'll have the opportunity to rectify that and still gain entry to the licensing system.

"Of the 30 pilot programme businesses that are eligible, 28 have already officially joined up, some businesses that were involved in earlier trials have also joined up in the past couple of days. That reflects a recognition of the benefits tourism's quality mark can offer operators through credibility, visibility and profitability."

#### **How the endorsement assessment system works**

All tourism businesses seeking the Qualmark™ endorsement are assessed against standard generic criteria based around customer expectations in six core quality areas.

Some businesses must also be assessed against additional criteria that are specific to their type of operation in order to achieve the Qualmark™ endorsement. These sector specific criteria enable the emphasis of the assessment to be placed on critical aspects of those businesses.

For adventure tourism and transport operators, in particular, this means added emphasis on safety, staff training and facilities & equipment, Ms Luhrs says.

All criteria have been based on work done by industry operators through the Tourism Industry Association (TIA), Adventure Tourism Council, TIA sector committees and operator associations, and have been the subject of extensive trialing and consultation with operators during the development of the assessment systems.

#### **Strong benefits**

Ms Luhrs says the endorsement system will now be taken to industry operators around the country with the message that there are strong benefits to be had from participating in the programme.

"Businesses that seize the opportunities created by the Qualmark™ endorsement will have a more credible position in the market, will be more visible, and can enhance their businesses through increased yield and better utilisation of resources."

"Operators will join the programme because they see that it's going to help them achieve their aspirations to grow or enhance their business, whether they're at the premium or budget ends of the market, whether they're big or small, and regardless of the type of experience they offer."

#### **Annual licence fees**

Ms Luhrs says the initial set up of Qualmark's expanded licensing system has been funded by government, but that it aims to operate on a self funding, not-for-profit basis within four years. For that reason, a lot of focus has gone into keeping annual licence fees at a level that's both sustainable for the Qualmark™ programme, and acceptable for small operators.

The result is a fee schedule that's equivalent to less than \$50 per month (\$595 excl GST per annum) for small operators with up to 3 full time equivalent employees, increasing to around \$83 per month (\$995 excl GST per annum) for operators with between 21 and 30 full time equivalent staff.

"Part of the issue being faced by smaller operators is that they have many confusing and competing demands for their discretionary dollar from publishers, advertisers and web site operators, as well as Qualmark™."

At an equivalent of \$50 per month we can cover most of the costs associated with providing the service, including the on-site assessment, while creating very real and tangible benefits for operators.

Not least of these is the integration of Qualmark™ licences into Tourism New Zealand's international programmes through priority listing on destination New Zealand's official website, [www.purenz.com](http://www.purenz.com), and listings in the Qualmark directory and web site.

There will be ongoing education of international and domestic consumers to ensure awareness, recognition and preference for the official quality mark continues to grow."

For more information please contact:

James Norman  
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09 377 7142  
021 666 115

## THE SOUTHERN TRAVERSE

(Nathan Fa'avae - NZOIA award holder, outdoor instructor and adventure racer.)

The Southern Traverse is regarded as one of the 'big 3' adventure races in the world. The course is always challenging and it's no easy feat completing the race.

With only 4 weeks between Eco Challenge and Southern Traverse this year many international teams had to choose between the two. Since Eco has more prize money it is no surprise that all the top teams chose Eco in Fiji. However, being Kiwis, wanting to support the NZ event and help develop the sport we decided to do both.

It was always going to be a big question mark over how we would recover from Eco and how that would effect the Traverse that followed. Eco turned out to be one of the toughest Adventure Races in the history of the sport, so it was no surprise that 4 days out from Southern Traverse Kristina Strode-Penny wisely withdrew due to a tropical infection she picked up in Fiji.

The boys were in trouble, we needed a female athlete. We wanted to win the race. The choice was obvious. We needed our 2001 team mate Kathy Lynch. Since Kathy is an adventurer we knew she would be strong from a winter of sea kayaking, climbing and skiing. All we had to do was convince her to come and race with us. After a bit of persuasion and mild begging, Kathy agreed to help us out and accepted.

If any of our competition thought we would be a weaker team for losing Kristina, they wouldn't have thought that for long when they heard that Kathy was our substitute.

**Race Briefing:** Kathy was pleased when she saw the course. Lots of kayaking, lots of mountain biking and an enjoyable amount of walking. The course looked good to me, being a local I knew the area well and that was always going to be of benefit. Having won Eco Challenge only 4 weeks prior Jeff, Neil and I were in confidence of a strong race.

Our first impression of the race was that it was a kayakers race. As we studied it more we decided it was a mountain bikers course but as the whole course unfolded we realised it was in fact a very balanced race. The winning team would have to be strong in all disciplines. The first 75% of the course had very little navigational challenge but the last part made up for it. Having all the navigation at the end meant that teams would have to be fresh and strong to be successful. We sensed that this is where the race would be won.

**Race Start:** No one would have predicted the entire field squashed into the Opawa river in downtown Blenheim. Lined up in numerical order, we were near the back. The start for us was lets get our kayaks out of here in one piece. After 20 minutes of floating we were able to start paddling.

**The Mistake:** Not far down the river was where we made our first of two navigational errors in the race. Since we were at the back of the field we opted not to paddle Roses Overflow, a canal that short cuts to the Wairau river. Since many teams had gone down there in front of us we were concerned we would be stuck behind a slower team and that any advantage we stood to gain would be lost. We stayed in the Opawa river and as a result lost possibly 30 minutes to the teams that took the overflow. We wanted to start the race slowly as we know from experience most teams start to fast and by the end of the first day they struggle. We were in the second group paddling down the Opawa river. This suited us fine and we finished the stage at Whites Bay in about 15th place.

**15th to 1st:** The first walk was a short and easy trot over Mount Robertson and Dukeshead into the Waikakaho Valley to a Mountain Bike drop. We picked up all the teams in front and the smart ones followed us to the bike drop.

**The Big Bike:** Fueled with Neils mums "Bacon and egg" pie, we took the lead on this mammoth bike leg and were never really threatened after that. This ride linked two of the regions best back country singletrack rides and we did them both, at night! We arrived into TA3 at Duncan Bay early morning and invested in a 90 minute sleep. Sportzhub.com sacrificed sleep to take the lead for the next stage.

**A great day for a paddle:** The next stage was a 3 hour sea kayak to Crail Bay through Pelorus sound. Feeling refreshed after a rest we regained the lead and headed out onto a long but awesome ride around the outer sounds. The exposure, wind and coastal views on this ride made this one of the highlights of the race. This stage finished with a section on the famous Queen Charlotte track.

**Beddy byes:** Coming to the end of night 2 we opted again for sleep, taking another 90 minutes before the long kayak down Kenepuru sounds and up the Pelorus river. Sportzhub.com joined us again at the TA but were suffering the effects of the no sleep strategy. During this paddle we made our second navigational error, we missed a portage that cost us more time. (despite missing Roses overflow and the portage we still won the prize for fastest kayak time)

A strong kayak and short mountain bike ride got us to the start of the main trek, a 3 mountain traverse. Mount Royal, Fishtail and Richmond. This is was our attacking point of the race. Our aim was to get over Mount Royal to Mount Fishtail before the night set in. This is where the navigation started. We navigated well, stopped for an hour sleep and finished this stage with almost 3 hours lead.

**(The Southern Traverse)**

**Day 4:** The race had changed, we were no longer racing teams, we were racing the clock.

With a 6 hour mountain bike orienteering stage before the river we realised that if it took longer than most predicted times for stages, then we may not get on the river. This would have meant our lead would be reduced to nothing as we would be stuck at the final TA for 9 hours until daylight, in which time it was possible for 4-5 teams to join us. A kayak race to the finish, no thanks, to much stress.

**The MTB time trial:** We got through this stage without problems enjoying the navigation and started the kayaking at 7:30pm. This gave us 90 minutes of paddling time before we had to get off the river until 6am. As we made camp we were not to know that behind us the race for the top 3 spots was developing into an exciting story. Teams were getting lost, falling apart, finishing strong, falling out of kayaks etc. Meanwhile we heated up baked beans by the fire.

**Good Friday:** After a full night of sleep we paddled for a few hours to win the race. Thank you.

**Final placings.**

<b>1st</b>	<b>Seagate</b>
2nd	Merrell/Kathmandu
3rd	Lythgoe

Looking back on the event was very satisfying. We raced a cool and calculated race. Our support crew was incredible. The team raced well. Special thanks to Mike Gane and Pete Braggins for restoring our bikes 100% for each bike leg.

**Good Start:** We signed a contract with our sponsor Seagate to do 4 international races. We won 3. The Traverse was a great way to end our first season with Seagate.

The team will remain the same for 2003 and our unofficial race calendar looks a little like this;

April	Nelson 24 hour
June	Raid Gauloises
July	Gorge Games
Septmeber	Primal Quest
October	Eco Challenge

## NZOIA ASSESSMENT CALENDAR for 2003

Course & Location	COURSE DATE	Closing Date
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**Kayak FW**

Christchurch	March 8-9	February 5
Auckland	November 8-9	October 11

**Kayak 1**

Central NI	February 21-23	January 17
Christchurch	February 21-23	January 17
Murchison	March 21-23	February 17
Christchurch	October 17-19	September 19
Central NI	November 14-16	October 17
Christchurch	November 21-23	October 24

**Kayak 2**

Murchison	March 28-30	February 24
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**Abseil 1**

Auckland	November 22-23	October 24
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**Cave 1**

Waitomo	September 13-14	August 15
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**Cave 2**

On request

**Canoe**

On request

**Indoor Wall**

On request

Course & Location	COURSE DATE	Closing Date
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**Rock 1**

Auckland	March 15-16	February 14
Christchurch	March 15-16	February 14
Christchurch	April 19-20	March 21
Central NI	April 26-27	March 28
Christchurch	Sept 20-21	August 22
Auckland	October 18-19	September 19
Christchurch	Nov. 8-9	October 11

**Rock 2**

Christchurch	March 21-23	February 17
Whanganui Bay	Nov. 14-16	October 18

**Bush 1**

Central North Is.	April 26-28	March 28
South Island	Nov 29-Dec. 1	November 1

**Bush 2**

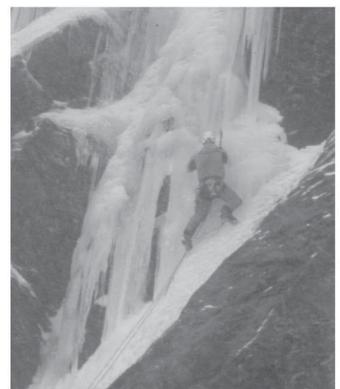
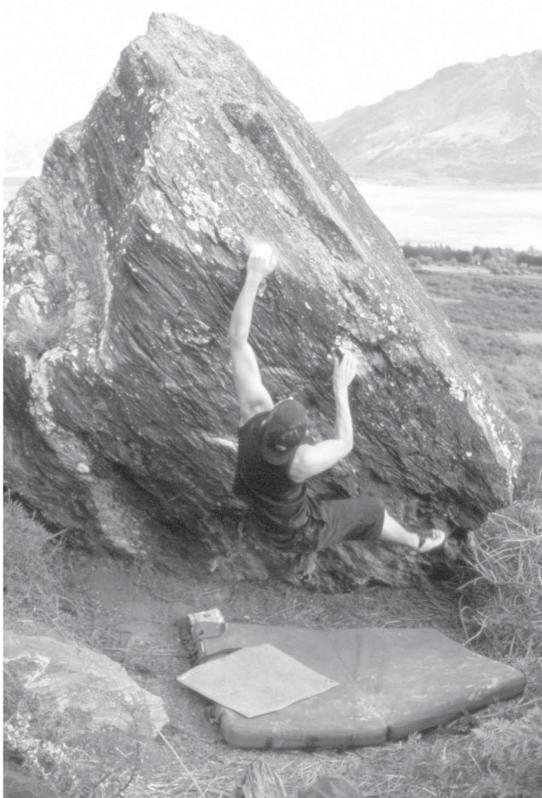
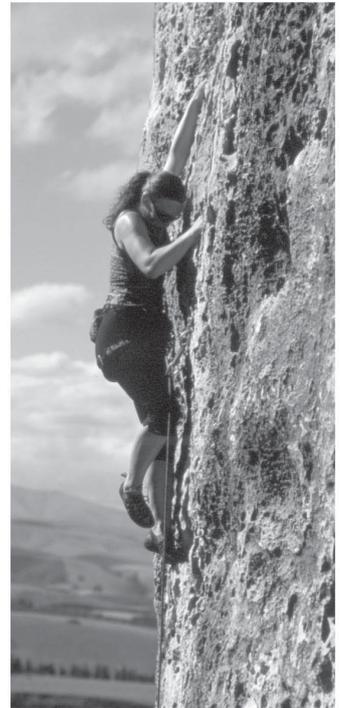
North Island	Nov 7-9	October 11
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**Alpine 1**

North Island	September 6-8	August 8
South Island	Sept 20-22	August 22
South Island	October 18-20	September 19

**Alpine 2**

South Island	October 10-12	September 12
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