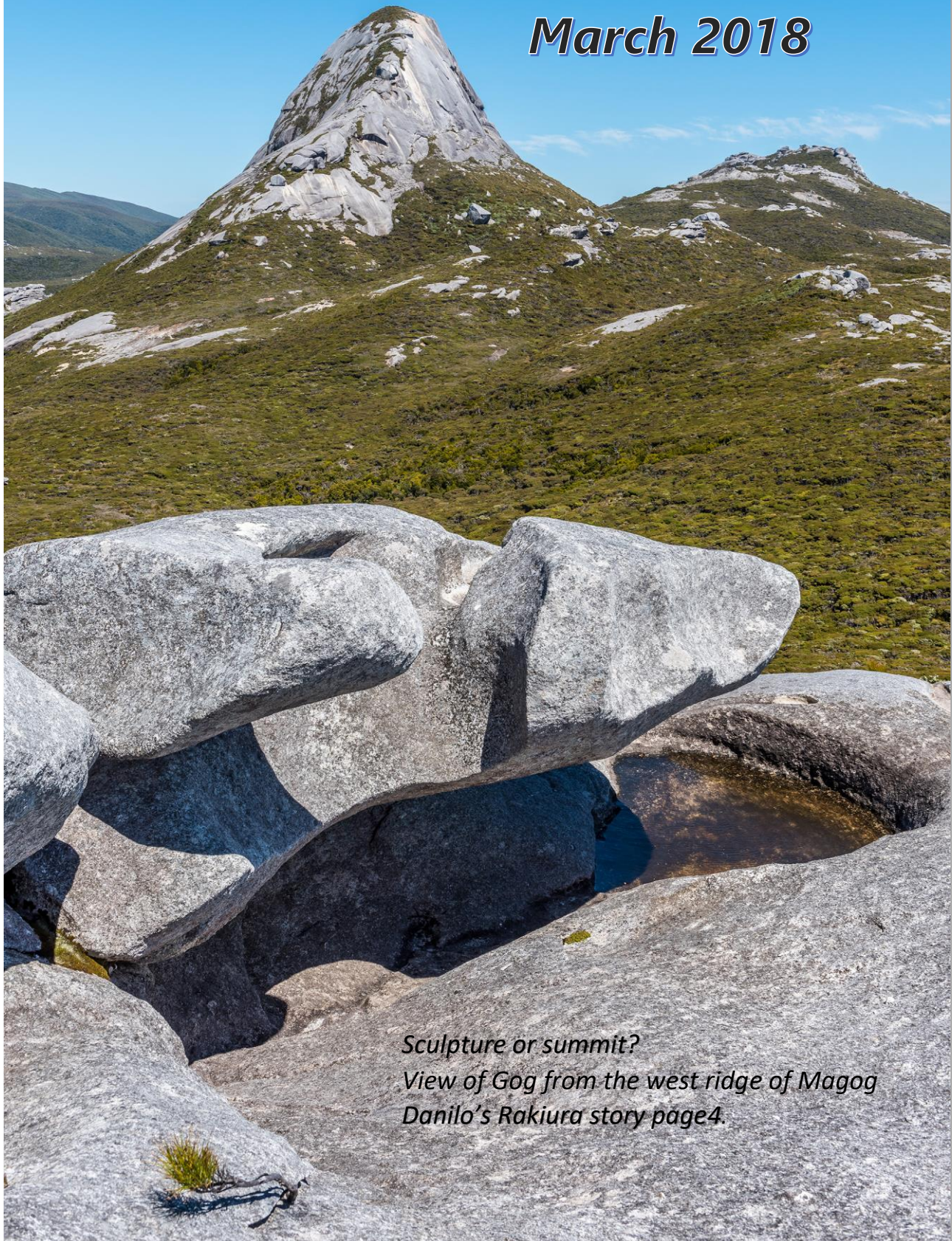




NEW ZEALAND
ALPINE CLUB

The Otago Climber

March 2018



*Sculpture or summit?
View of Gog from the west ridge of Magog
Danilo's Rakiura story page4.*

The Otago Climber

The monthly newsletter of the
Otago Section of the New Zealand Alpine Club

March 2018

Meetings

Wednesday, 7 March 2018

University of Otago Staff Club, 7.30pm

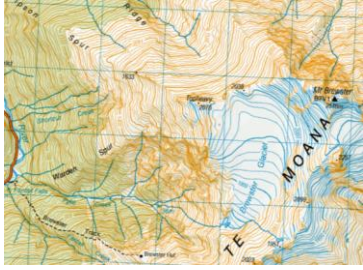




Dr Dick Price will talk about “General Practice on K2”,

The second highest mountain in the world in the Karakoram section of the Himalayas between Pakistan and China, at 8,611 metres K2 is considered harder to climb than Mount Everest. Nicknamed "The Savage Mountain" it has the second-highest fatality rate among the eight-thousand-foot mountains. As of 2011, only 300 people have climbed to the top of the mountain and at least 80 people have died in the attempt.

Dick Price will give us a unique insight into K2

Trips and Training – plenty to pick from this month. . . .

<p>March 3 – 4 Topheavy (2076m)</p> 	<p>There will be a trip to climb Topheavy during the weekend 3-4th March, weather permitting. This is trip should be an easy scramble but will require a reasonable level of fitness. The plan is to leave Dunedin on Friday evening around 6 pm. On Saturday we will walk into a camp site near the bottom of the Brewster Glacier and we will climb Topheavy from there. We will return to Dunedin on Sunday evening. We will be using the new trip enrolment form developed by NZAC. If you wish to go on the trip email Keith Moffat at moffat.k172@gmail.com and Keith will send you a link to the enrolment form.</p>
<p>Sunday March 11 Rock Climbing Course</p>	<p>Local professional instructor Tim Bartholomew will run a one-day course aimed at introducing climbers to rock-climbing in Dunedin. Everything provided – including lunch for the \$40 price. More details later in the newsletter. To book your place, contact Lindsay on otago.climber@gmail.com</p>
<p>Saturday, March 24 Elephant Rocks Day</p>	<p>A one-day trip to expose the Tuesday Rock climbers and Room 14 junkies to real bouldering problems – from simple to testing. If you are interested, email lindsay@plumtree.net.nz for trip details and a sign-on form.</p> 
<p>March 24-25, Rabbiters Peak (2285m).</p> 	<p>A grade 1 scramble from a camp at the head of the North Temple Stream, Ohau. Ice axe and crampons are required since there is a small glacier to negotiate. For more information or to register your interest, contact Danilo at danilo.hegg@hotmail.com</p>
<p>30th March - 2nd April NZAC Unwin Easter Meet-Mt Cook</p>	<p>The meet is a great opportunity for climbers to get together to climb mountains, rocks, socialise, explore and enjoy one of New Zealand's Premier Mountain Landscape Aoraki/ Mt Cook National Park. Cost: \$80 NZAC member and \$110 Non-members for 3 night's accommodation, activities and a barbeque dinner. For more information and to register for the meet click here: https://goo.gl/forms/QTf0rB1g9GB18FYF3</p> <p>Otago Section is happy to coordinate transport from Dunedin – just email Lindsay on lindsay@plumtree.net.nz if you have spare seats or need a ride to Unwin Lodge for the weekend.</p>

Climbing mountains on Rakiura

Danilo Hegg – story and photos

Stewart Island is not famous for its high-quality mountaineering. A prejudice that was reinforced during my first visit to the island, during winter many moons ago, when I stubbornly trudged to its highest point, Mt Anglem. It was cold and the mud was frozen – oh joy – but not hard enough to support my weight. Every step I would break through the ice, which would explode into shards cutting my skin open as I sank into the muddy slush below up to my thighs. A most unpleasant experience, and I had to ask myself, what's the point?

Deep in the south of the island however I heard there are some granite domes that may offer some more gratifying experiences to those able to locate them amidst the dense scrub. The unusually dry start of 2018 provided an opportunity too good to miss, and I embarked on a 15-day solo journey to visit the intriguingly named features of Gog and Magog.

Every good trip ought to be about the journey, not the destination, and I was determined to enjoy every single minute of it. I took fishing gear so I could be independent for twenty days or longer if required, then I set off from Oban, paddling my packraft up Paterson Inlet. Not as fast as a water taxi, but much cheaper, and for seven hours I made close acquaintance with penguins, cormorants and jellyfish. This was simply wonderful.



Leaving South Pegasus: Well that's me departing South Pegasus Hunters Hut. Photo (c) Murray Cullen

At Rakeahua Hut I stashed boat and paddle into my backpack, then it was my boots' turn to do some work while heading south along the Tin Range. A reasonably good track leads all the way from the Rakeahua Valley to Port Pegasus, and scrub was really not an issue. The lack of sheltering vegetation, in fact, is the biggest problem on this thin plateau wedged between the Tasman and the Pacific, where a furious wind is a force to be reckoned with even in good weather. I camped in the most unlikely of all places, three meters below the summit of Mt Allen, listening all night to the steady Jetstream blowing with such force that it shot right over my head, leaving a small gap for me to camp in perfectly calm conditions on the lee side of the ridge.



NEW ZEALAND ALPINE CLUB

From the southern end of the Tin Range I could finally see Gog and Magog – and the 20km of uninterrupted scrub separating me from them. Trying to reach them on foot would be plain masochism, and I was grateful for my little boat that allowed for fast progress on Port Pegasus and up Cook Arm.

Day 6 since leaving Dunedin, and I was blessed with the hottest and sunniest day imaginable for my excursion to the granite domes. Shortly after leaving Cook Inlet I picked the track from South Pegasus Hunters Hut and followed it all the way to the saddle below Hielanman and up Magog. Magog is not

exactly a dome, rather a needle of granite piercing the scrub, offering the most incredible 360° view from its rather small summit. The top fifty meters are made of clean, solid granite, with plenty of climbing potential for those who enjoy vertical and beyond vertical surfaces.

Strangely enough, there is no track on the ridge connecting Gog and Magog, and some scrub bashing is required, but it's not too bad if some care is taken while connecting the numerous granite

islands in between. The east ridge of Gog is a scramble easy enough, while its north face is a rather smooth, featureless slab 160m high. Still unclimbed, it would make an honest prize for a rock wizard dedicated enough to carry their gear this far.

Below the summit of Gog, I took a rather direct descent line towards Cook Inlet, which may or may not have been a good idea. I then spent a few more days paddling around Port Pegasus, and took advantage of the persistent dry weather to bag the summit of Bald Cone. Its highest point is a giant diving board jutting out from the mountain. It makes for an exciting scramble and an even more exciting summit to stand on, surrounded by nothing but void on three sides. Another wonderful Rakiura mountain.

For three days while in Port Pegasus I left my food reserves untouched and lived off the sea, which made for a most pleasant change in diet. Port Pegasus is stunning to say the least, unspoilt (may it long stay this way!) and home to the most beautiful and varied marine life. Not all is easy for visitors however. Fish is abundant, and so are fish predators. While the locally common seven gill shark is harmless, the very steep granite shores and deep-sea floor offer no barriers to bigger sharks. On a pack-raft, I felt constantly very vulnerable. All creeks are tidal, and freshwater is scarce and hard to come by. There are taps spilling drinking water straight into the sea in Albion Inlet and near Belltopper Falls (for boats to resupply), but anywhere else, finding water requires both effort and imagination. And last but not least, sea lions are everywhere. They love playing with paddlers. Some play a little too rough. And if there's a spot flat enough to put on shore and camp, you'll need to fight a sea lion bull to claim it. After three days of continuous interactions with big mammals, I was worn out and ready to retrace my steps home.



Aerial view of Port Pegasus' Cook Arm from the summit of Magog

Beta from the Incubeto'

Introducing a new, monthly column from our Section Chair

So you want to take up climbing?

In a world of great diversity regarding equipment, choices become the first challenge for anyone who wants to take up climbing. And if you find yourself in this category, here is a list of tips you can use when entering the never-ending jungle of gear choices, reviews, suggestions.

1. I am too poor to buy cheap things

Yes, it applies in rock climbing as well. Especially when it comes to personal safety gear. Well, except for your chalk bag and shoes, all climbing gear is safety gear. So, while you can sew your own personalized chalk bag, the rest is safety gear. And even shoes need to be carefully chosen as they do have a direct impact on your climbing experience, but also on the health of your feet.



So, only buy gear that is rated (those technical embossed writings on the carabiner, or imprinted on the label of the harness, sling or any other textile piece of gear). Buy gear that is original and from sources that are confirmed. Your gear should come with a fully trackable system of compliance.

2. Always question things!

Such as storage of the gear you are buying. If it has been kept in the window of a shop, in full direct sunlight for the last 3 months, you might want to move to the next merchant and try again. Climbing gear is sensitive to direct sunlight (UVs and textile materials have never made good friends), humidity, and extreme temperatures. So make sure that if the shop smells like mould, you check the quality of the gear or, if in doubt, move on.

3. What do I need to buy?

- If you have already got a pack of climbers to go to the crag with, and a limited budget, start off with the essentials: harness, helmet, shoes, safety sling, 2 carabiners, a belaying device, and chalk bag.
- If you want to start your own sports climbing pack, you will also need quickdraws, a rope, more slings and carabiners for setting up top ropes, and, optionally, a brush for cleaning holds (toothbrush is totally acceptable, and even makes you look cooler sometimes).
- If you want to get into the more nitty gritty type of climbing, with natural protection, you will also need... protection gear: hexes, cams (also called friends, in the States, and they do tend to become your best friends in hard times), wires, a nut extractor, half ropes, etc.



4. What and how do I choose?

Ask someone who is more knowledgeable, and if available, definitely sign up for a climbing course locally. The instructor or a more experienced climber you have just met at the crag should be able to give you objective (hopefully) advice regarding the direction to take on your shopping spree. If they ask you what you intend to get out of climbing and where you want to get in the near future, if they tell you how to buy and what the difference is between this and that piece of gear, leaving the choice to you, then they are objective and have a low level of bias, which is what you want.

5. When choosing gear, keep in mind . . .

Harness: ask for specs, check reviews, what type of climbing activity it has been designed for, choose the right size, and most important of all:



try it on! And if you are in a place where you can actually hang in your harness or even climb and take a fall, that's even better!

Because that's when the harness shows its true face. Each of us is different, and our bodies have different needs. Stay in tune with yours and make the right choice.

- **Climbing shoes:** Following a very broad categorization, there are three types: alpine style (flat sole), slightly curved (intermediate – show a slight curve in the arch of the foot), and very technical (advanced – they have a very pronounced curve in the arch of the foot). So, keep your goal in mind. Do you want to climb arêtes up in the mountains, just have fun at the local crag, or crush luring climbs in the high 20s?

Regardless of your taste, you will have to try them on! And make sure that when you do, you load your body weight on the tip of the toe, and see if it holds. You should be able to stand on very tiny foot-holds, and trust that foot! Climbing shoes are not meant to be comfortable, but they are not meant to cause constant pain and cramps in your feet. Which is the fine line everyone is looking for with new shoes. Listen to your feet, give yourself 5-10 min in those shoes before you buy them. You will hang out a lot with them!

Safety sling: check what you can find and choose the right length and type.

Belaying device: based on what you are going to climb, you can choose anything and everything. The range is so generous, and specs are so advanced nowadays that unless you are climbing multi-pitch, in which case a GriGri doesn't work, the choice has become more or less a matter of personal preference. Go play with them and choose one.

Locking carabiners: you will need one for the belaying device, and a couple for your safety sling. Make sure you choose a carabiner designed for belaying. There are some specifically made to prevent from turning upside down and jamming the device while you are belaying or arresting a fall. But they are not the only ones that can be used for this purpose. Again, check what works for you, and go from there.

Helmet – Yes: an intact prefrontal cortex makes all of us so much nicer. So, make sure you try your helmet on before you buy it. They are different in shape, style, adjustments, purpose,



weight, etc. The shape of your head is unique too, so try it on! And to make sure you have the right size, once it's adjusted and clipped under your chin, try to

push it off your forehead. If it shifts to the back of your head, then it's too big or not the right shape or size for you. It should stay on your forehead, when properly fitted. No wobbling, no tilting backwards, frontwards, or sideways. It should also allow you to breathe and speak, so overtightening it is not going to solve the problem. Just try another model. Last, but not least: wear it at all times!

A project worth supporting.

Pete Strang asks for our help to keep a local treasure for us to use!

“You will be aware of Leaning Lodge and the Section using this wonderful hut for a venue close to Dunedin over many years for winter experience, survival, snow craft, and route finding as well as cross country skiing and exercises in management of weather and getting thoroughly lost in blizzards and white outs that last for days! I can remember taking some crazy trips up there in mid-winter in the dark with our cross-country skis. We have very much shared the original hut with the Otago Ski Club in the early days [I am probably one of very few who can even remember using the tow] and more recently with the Otago Tramping and Mountaineering Club who now have a Trust managing the hut. I carry the brief for the Otago Section on that Trust and happen to be a member of both clubs as a number of OSOZACs are.

To cut to the chase there have been significant challenges since the hut was rebuilt / refurbished in 2013 and this has been around as to who ultimately has jurisdiction over the hut since it is, believe it or not within the Dunedin City boundary! There have been lengthy discussions around building codes, whether domestic should apply [I kid you not] but more recently the adoption and approval of plans to bring it up to DOC requirements for a mountain hut is underway and it is expected that we will get the building consent required, albeit retrospectively. Much of the remedial work that needs to take place are centered on fire escape, iron cladding the hut over the present timber cladding, closing in the porch, securing the hut more firmly [already done] and a ventilation system. The galvanised bolting all needs to be replaced with stainless steel bolts as well. A geotech assessment has already been done.



The work required to bring it up to "standard" and to ensure its longevity to that all of us can continue to enjoy and use this unique mountain hut will cost around \$10,000. I have already contributed \$ 2000.00 to the cause and I think it would be great for Otago Section to contribute a similar amount or even more to this most worthy of projects.

This hut is a significant part of our history. It is a wonderful place to take our families as they start to learn more of the mountains, and in the depths of winter [and even in summer!] can be a place of starlight and storm. A perfect place to start the long apprenticeship of becoming a competent mountaineer.”

The Section committee will certainly discuss support at our next meeting, but we thought individual members might also like to contribute. If you would like to help you can send a cheque to Dr Peter Strang, Leaning Lodge Trust, [416 South Rd](#), Caversham 9012 or using internet banking Acct Number 06 0901 0362957 000 with an email sent to Alan Thomson, Chairperson of the Trust, alan.and.robyn.thomson@gmail.com and copied to petestrang@xtra.co.nz with your details so they can send you a receipt.

Rock climbing course for beginners

Local professional Tim Bartholomew is running a one-day course on 11 March.

The Otago Section has arranged a one-day introductory course for those keen to start rock climbing and ten places will be available at a cost of \$40 per person. For that you will get a full day's instruction, all the climbing and safety equipment needed, and the Section will even put on lunch for you.

If you'd like to know more, or sign up for the course, just email Otago.climber@gmail.com and we'll send you all the info and a sign-up form.



**A REMINDER THAT ASPIRING HUT CLOSES 9 APRIL FOR
EARTHQUAKE STRENGTHENING**

Useful new documents from NZAC Headquarters

NZAC HQ advise that the following new Access documents have just been uploaded to the NZAC website, Access framework, Bolting Standards, Code of Conduct for Rock Climbers and Landowner Guidelines. All can be accessed by opening the menu from <https://alpineclub.org.nz/> and going through the Rock Climbing menu.

If you just want one direct link to view them all, then this one might be helpful: <https://alpineclub.org.nz/rock-climbing/nzac-code-of-conduct-for-rock-climbers/>

This is also an opportunity to remind members about the Access Fund Grants application process <https://alpineclub.org.nz/rock-climbing/access-fund-grant-application-form/>

FMC Discount – Interislander Travel

The 15% discount off easy-change and saver-change fares have been extended. The discount has been extended to restart from 1 Feb 2108 to 30 Nov 2018 (i.e. not available for travel during Dec/Jan). An online discount code is viewable when you log into the Club website and you need to show your FMC discount card at the check-in: <https://alpineclub.org.nz/company/interislander/>

Section Safety Gear Rental

Our eight sets of avalanche equipment and eight sets of snowshoes are now available for rent from the new Hunting and Fishing shop, now at 141 Crawford Street, in Dunedin. The new shop is open seven days till 5.30 weekdays, 5pm Saturday and 4pm Sunday. More details at www.huntingandfishing.co.nz.

The rental costs are \$5 per day for an avalanche set of transceiver, probe and shovel and \$5 per day for snowshoes for all Alpine Club members. You **MUST** show your current membership card to receive that rate. Not a member, or don't have your card? Then the fee is \$10 per day and you will be required to pay a \$20 deposit.



Members are welcome to collect gear on Friday and return Monday and two day's rental will apply. If you wish to make other arrangements, please contact Keith or any of the committee and we will sort things out **BEFORE** you go into the shop. If you have any issues with the gear or rentals, please don't hassle the staff at Hunting and Fishing as they are doing us a huge favour by running the rental scheme for us

Rock climbing instructors needed – great pay offered!

This year this has been a huge interest in Tuesday Rock Climbing, with almost 40 new climbers registering their interest. The Section is keen to have these potential new members come along but we do need to offer a safe and enjoyable climbing experience.

The Section is planning a course for new climbers early this month but before that we need to have a good-sized pool of experienced climbers available to assist with running the course and with weekly supervision of the new climbers at the Tuesday climbing.

If you are an experienced rock climber with a real interest in passing on your skills and supporting new climbers, we'd love to hear from you. In return for your regular support on Tuesday nights, or Club Rock Climbing trips, the Section will offer training, a First Aid Certificate, and the Section will pay your NZAC Membership for each year that you help.

If that offer interests you, just email the Committee on Otago.climber@gmail.com and we'll be in touch to discuss the next steps.



PLB Hire – free for NZAC members

We have two PLBs available for hire, and this service is free for current NZAC members. Contact Keith Moffat moffat.k172@gmail.com or 027 664 4037 a few days in advance if you want to hire a PLB. \$5 per day for non-members.

Section Sponsorship Grants available

The Otago Section are again calling for applications for three, personal sponsorships for 2018. We expect to contribute around \$500 per grant but could go higher for something spectacular! The rules are simple: the winning sponsorships must contribute to climbing in the Otago Region and the project must have wider benefits – not just for the individual concerned but also for the wider climbing community.

In recent years, we have funded Alpine Training for a climber who went on to lead section trips, helped fund a trip to Nepal in return for on-going contribution to the Section and funded a young rock climber's winter training costs; he has gone on to develop and run a youth training programme attracting new climbers to the section. Your project could be next. Send us an email to otago.climber@gmail.com and tell us about your personal project; who's involved, what it will cost and how your sponsorship will benefit both you and the section.

2017-18 Otago Section Committee			
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