

Otaihape Alpine Club

PO Box 180
Taihape 4742
www.otaihape.org.nz



March/April 2013

We hope you are having a great summer and spending lots of time outdoors with friends and family. With the big dry happening at the moment, it is hard to imagine snow falling. Hopefully a sunny summer means a snowy winter.

AGM and Annual Work Party

AGM – Saturday 20 April - 1 PM

Work party – Saturday 20 April, Sunday 21 April
(Most attendees arrive Friday)

All members – please consider stepping up to the committee – you don't need to attend this weekend to be on the committee as most business and communication happens by email.

Will you be joining us?

1. Please email president@otaihape.org.nz to confirm if attending.
2. Committee and Office holders, please email president@otaihape.org.nz to indicate your intentions for the year ahead.
3. All staying – There is no bunk fee charge, but please check availability and book your bunk with the booking officers. Phone Kim/Alison Duncan 06 388 0021.
4. Saturday night will be Pot Luck dinner, so bring a suitable dinner and dessert dish to share. (Plus your own supply of tipple)

This weekend is always an enjoyable sharing and social occasion for members.



(L-R) John Livingstone and Kent and Barry Evans digging the trench for the gas lines for the new stove at the 2012 work party.

Maintenance

Great news! We were successful in getting a grant from Pub Charity for \$4,100 for four new double glazed windows. One for the lounge – which was leaking badly – and the three others for the bunkrooms. Big thanks to Pub Charity and Jon Torgersen, Kim and Alison Duncan, Jenny Randle and Geoff Sawyer for all the help getting the application together.

With the cessation of Telecom's CDMA network last year the car phone in the hut is no longer operational. We are looking at replacing it with a normal cell phone. Please contact me on neil_ranford@xtra.co.nz if you have a 3G 027 cell phone you would like to donate.

Neil Ranford - Maintenance Officer

Celebrating 75 years – 2013

Celebrations for our 75th anniversary have been deferred until after winter. If you are interested in helping with this milestone event please email president@otaihape.org.nz

No joining fee

To attract new members we will continue to offer a "no joining fee special". For more information see our website www.otaihape.org.nz

Join us on Facebook!

Otaihape has joined the social networking age with its own [Facebook](#) page. [click here to go to the page](#)

Please join, click link above, or search Otaihape Alpine Club on Facebook and become our friend which means you will be automatically notified of updates.

Skiing abroad

Several of our members travelled overseas recently to ski the Northern Hemisphere. Jude Hamblyn shares her account of skiing the Silk Road. We also feature Andrew Phyn – a local Taihape boy who is having success in Europe with his own brand of skis.

Skiing the Silk Road



The Registan in the ancient Silk Road city of Samarkand, Uzbekistan.

The Silk Road countries are not most people's first choice of ski destinations. Most of them are unpronounceable, end in 'stan, and involve lots of red tape just to get in. But once you are there the experience is unforgettable and the skiing surprisingly good overall.

This summer I ventured to Kyrgyzstan, Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, Georgia and Armenia.

All are ex-Soviet republics where Russian is the lingua franca. Ski infrastructure ranged from modern European-style resorts in Georgia to ancient soviet-built lifts in Uzbekistan. All the countries are united by a love of vodka and the ubiquitous shashlik or kebab.

Highlights of the trip were: holding a hunting eagle on my arm in Kyrgyzstan; steep, deep powder, mulled wine and outstanding hospitality in Georgia; staying in an old soviet style hotel in Armenia; and speaking Russian (and being understood!).



Ski lifts – Uzbek style!



Powder heaven – Shymbulak – Kazakhstan



Lunchtime kebab – Karakol – Kyrgyzstan

'Taihape is home and always will be' for ski founder



Andrew Phyn.

Andrew Phyn is the founder of Whitedot skis. While he is now based in the UK, he's originally from the Upper Kawhatau Valley, near Taihape.

"My family still farms there under the capable hands of my older brother Campbell. My parents now live just outside town in Winiata."

Andrew has fond memories of his early life in Taihape. He remembers spending time on the Rangitikei, the wide streets, and the long summers.

"I remember hanging out at Stanford Sports - think this is Taihape Sports now - and being towed behind the quad bikes with skis on when it snowed. I was a raft guide with Rangitikei River Adventures and the river is still one of my greatest memories."

Andrew's early schooling was at Kawhatau Primary. He then went to Huntley School in Marton and Palmerston North Boys' High School as a boarder at College House.

"I first skied when I was 13 with the College House ski trip and got hooked straight away. I went on trips with friends to the South Island and as soon as I left school got a season Pass at Turoa."

He loves all three of Ruapehu's ski areas. "If I had to choose a favourite, it is Turoa just because it was where I spent my weekends and days off and is as close to home as any ski field is to me."

He has enduring memories of Ruapehu's infamous blue ice. "I still hear people moan about the powder not being perfect in Chamonix, but tell them about

driving up the hill back home and seeing Ruapehu glisten blue. The features like lava tubes and the volcanic terrain are unique. A natural back country park where ever you ride."

Andrew left Taihape in 1992 to travel Europe. "I'm unsure how I managed it but 21 years later and I'm still here."

Apart from some time spent in Taupo, Andrew has mostly lived in the UK and a bit in France and Austria.

"I've done loads of things mostly centred on sports equipment manufacture and growing brands. I did a degree in the UK but my proudest achievements are my marriage and my two kids and my product podiums, also seeing my daughter ski at two years old was a buzz."

Andrew worked as a ski technician in the New Zealand winters, a raft guide in the summers and has always been intrigued how skis are made and work.

"Understanding how boats and water moves from my rafting days meant that shaping and composite use came very naturally."

"The idea to make skis formed in my head around 2006 but the first ski didn't arrive off the press until 2008."

Andrew specialises in freeride skis. The sort of skis you take away from the resort and into the back country. "If you're into walking to the crater, I design skis for the job."

Andrew says Whitedot really took off when three of his ski designs podiumed on the Freeride World Tour.

"They were the first British products (NZ designed) to podium in a first class ski event and the first company to allegedly have more than 50 percent of its products on podiums on first class ski events."

Andrew returns to Taihape whenever he gets the chance. "Taihape is home and always will be."

To find out more about WhiteDot skis go <http://splitn2.com/whitedot/>. The 'Preacher' was designed with Ruapehu in mind.

If you would like to trial a pair this season contact Jude Hamblyn on Judith_hamblyn@yahoo.com

Otaihape Club members are eligible for a discount.