



JOURNAL OF THE CANTERBURY  
UNIVERSITY TRAMPING CLUB



2023 EDITION

JOURNAL OF THE CANTERBURY UNIVERSITY TRAMPING CLUB

# TROG



EDITED BY COLE BLACKWELL AND EMILY WILLIAMS



# TROG 2023

*Canterbury University Tramping Club*

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*Edited by Cole Blackwell and Emily Williams*



# Editors' Note

To whom it may concern,

Through Emily's stupid Mechatronics Engineering Timetable, and Cole's inability to be away from Castle Hill for 5 days in a row, led to this Trog magazine being an idea that we fantasised about more than executed most of the year. However, after late nights in the Len Lye after already long days at uni, here we are with the 2023 TROG!!!!

Thank you all so much for your slay submissions, it made working on this magazine less of a chore and more of a privilege. The photography is immaculate, the poorly spelt descriptions make this trog edition ever so more trogalicious.

As faithful TROG officers, we made it our mission to lightly spellcheck these beautiful stories to maintain authenticity.

We hope you enjoy reading this as much as we enjoyed making it!

# President's Note

Adios, au revoir, haere ra, good bye, the time has come to hang up my tramping club boots. Looking back to four years ago when I made the big move from Auckland (yes I know eww Aucklanders alert, don't worry I now associate as proud South Islander), little fresher Liv had no idea about the places she would go, people she would meet and challenges she would overcome. The tramping club opened my eyes to the adventures that could be had in the mountains, the mountains became a place I could truly be myself (cliché I know), they became a place I could challenge myself both physically and mentally. To highlight a few memorable trips, we had 20 hr day doing the hard route into my first refreshers, we carried ice skates up to three tarn pass and camped on the snow at the time I had a light weight sleeping bag and remember wearing all my layers and shivering the night away with barely any sleep, I then carried 10 day packs into Ivory lake while having covid (which I found out later) this was definitely one of my top 5 sufferfests.

Tramping and the mountains became my way of coping with everything else that life threw at me, it was a place of no societal distractions, a place that made my problems seem insignificant, a place where I could breathe fresh air both literally and metaphorically. All at the cost of fuel, my joints, a bit of sleep and surprisingly not my degree. I have recently been asked about my 'why', why do I prioritise the mountains, the adventures, the early mornings, the cold nights in my tent. It's because of the feeling of ecstasy of walking in between snow flakes (or sometimes the lack of feeling), the moment you crest a snow covered ridge, the moment you collapse in hut at the end of a long day is addictive. These are the only drugs I will ever need, once running around Mt Arthur and the tablelands in cloud, drizzle and cold wind a trumper stopped us to ask us if we were high, the only type of high we were was high in the mountains.

The club has given me opportunities and friends that



have encouraged, supported, mentored and challenged me. I will be eternally grateful to have met these like minded mountain people. You learn a lot about people on tramping trips, who you can trust to look out for you with river crossings (sorry team I'm not to be trusted, IYKYK), who keeps calm in those slightly more stressful and/or exposed situations, and who gets understandably hangry at the end of a long day. As I hang up my presidents cap and my CUTC cap, I feel incredibly grateful for the past four years, I'm excited for you to delve into the stories in the trog this year. Some of you will be reliving the tramps all over again, some will be taking inspiration, and some this book may be the reason you join the club.

Its time for me to head off into the mountains, catch ya out there. Signing off as CUTC president 2023,  
Liv

# Captains' Note

It's been an amazing year to be a Captain for CUTC, with some awesome trips and rad people. It has been great to see so many people at meetings, with more international students, and finally a covid free clubs day! The other star of the day was our new shirts, CUTC members are looking snazzy in orange with a new design.

Starting off the year with Freshers as always, things got a bit hairy when there was a big pink blob over Mt Somers on metvuw. A rare stroke of genius in engcore on a Friday morning meant we were headed for the surprisingly good weather on the west coast, and we only got wet in the stream crossing on the way to Ballroom Overhang. It was a big night of dancing and big-spoon wrestling. Many drinks were had by 'friends of the foam' and delicacies such as eel and cheesecake were consumed by all. We managed to fit 70 people in Ballroom Overhang, and despite the slightly longer drive, the swim in the river and whitebait fritters were the perfect end to a fantastic weekend.

We made the most of the tail end of summer on some great weekends for the first half of 2023. We started off the semester right with a committee trip to

crow hut and made some kea friends. Lucas and Tommy led a crafty trip through the bush to Hawdon hut to teach those always useful bushcraft skills. The girl's trip had a stunner weekend and stormed up to Tarn hut with their fearless leaders Poppy and Caitlin. Other trips included a day trip up Mt Herbert and an overnight trip to Hawdon hut as well as holiday trips all over the country. A new project for the club was also started by Lewis and we are now responsible for a trapline on Mt Richardson. It is great that CUTC can contribute to the awesome environment where we spend so much time. Unfortunately, we had a few trips cancelled due to weather but that is part of NZ tramping, and we managed to get out and avoid our uni work as much as possible.

As much as we love getting into the hills, we have also had some cool events a bit closer to uni. Starting with the Intro BBQ, we finished the mystery beer that appeared in the freshers keg after it got back to the carpark. We had a few buy nights to stock up on gear and catch up with the other outdoor clubs thanks to Further Faster and Bivouac. A new addition this year was the TWALK movie night, which was enjoyed by all and got us pumped for TWALK. A group of us



rocked up to Foo San for a BYO, ready to play wearing all kinds of hats.

TWALK at Lake Heron involved a decent dose of type 2 fun. With record numbers it was a massive task, and thanks to our TWALK officers Nick and Daniel for all their mahi in bringing it together. The matagouri might have held strong, but many teams were stronger, battling through the night to make it back to the safety of the hash house. Apart from a few middle of the night food runs and a false alarm SOS, everything ran smoothly, even the weather held out for us until Sunday morning.

After a great holiday of trips further afield, we came back to Christchurch excited for Refreshers! The plan was to find somewhere new, concocted in the early hours of the morning of TWALK, we thought Kowhai hut in the Kaikouras would be the ideal place. Unfortunately the weather gods had other plans. With almost every road that goes over a pass closed, we decided to head for the bush of Lewis pass. With reduced numbers, and some legendary committee members that had to take over due to sickness (damn covid), the refreshers group headed for Cannibal gorge hut, and found themselves in a winter wonderland. From the photos we saw it looked like a weekend well spent, but the snow did mean a nervous captain sitting at home looking at NZTA road statuses

and hoping they would make it back to Christchurch without any cross country adventures.

Continuing with the snowy theme, a horde of us headed into Woolshed creek hut for Bushball: Christmas edition. The key items on the gear list for this trip were a Christmas tree, a keg, as much tinsel as we could squeeze into our packs and don't forget something for the potluck dinner! We managed to book the hut for ourselves so we could dance the night away, finish the keg, make friends with the possums, and hold some sock wrestling rematches from freshers.

Our amazing committee led some awesome trips over semester 2, and made sure everyone had a great time, from poem competitions at snowcraft, to refining our palettes for wine and cheese, and partying it up at Ohau with our southern OUTC friends.

Aside from our adventures in the hills, we had some great events and initiatives in Christchurch. Lucas and Poppy along with many willing models created the second edition of our tasteful nude calendar. With the help of some sponsors, this has raised money in support of our cheeky Kea friends. To round off the year, we had a great awards night where many useful prizes were given for the most prestigious of awards.

We had an eventful semester, and despite more trips being cancelled or changed due to weather than I can count, the 2024 committee took everything in their stride and gave up their precious time to do the admin so the club can run and people can enjoy trips every weekend. Thank you to everyone who contributed this year to make CUTC the amazing club that it is.

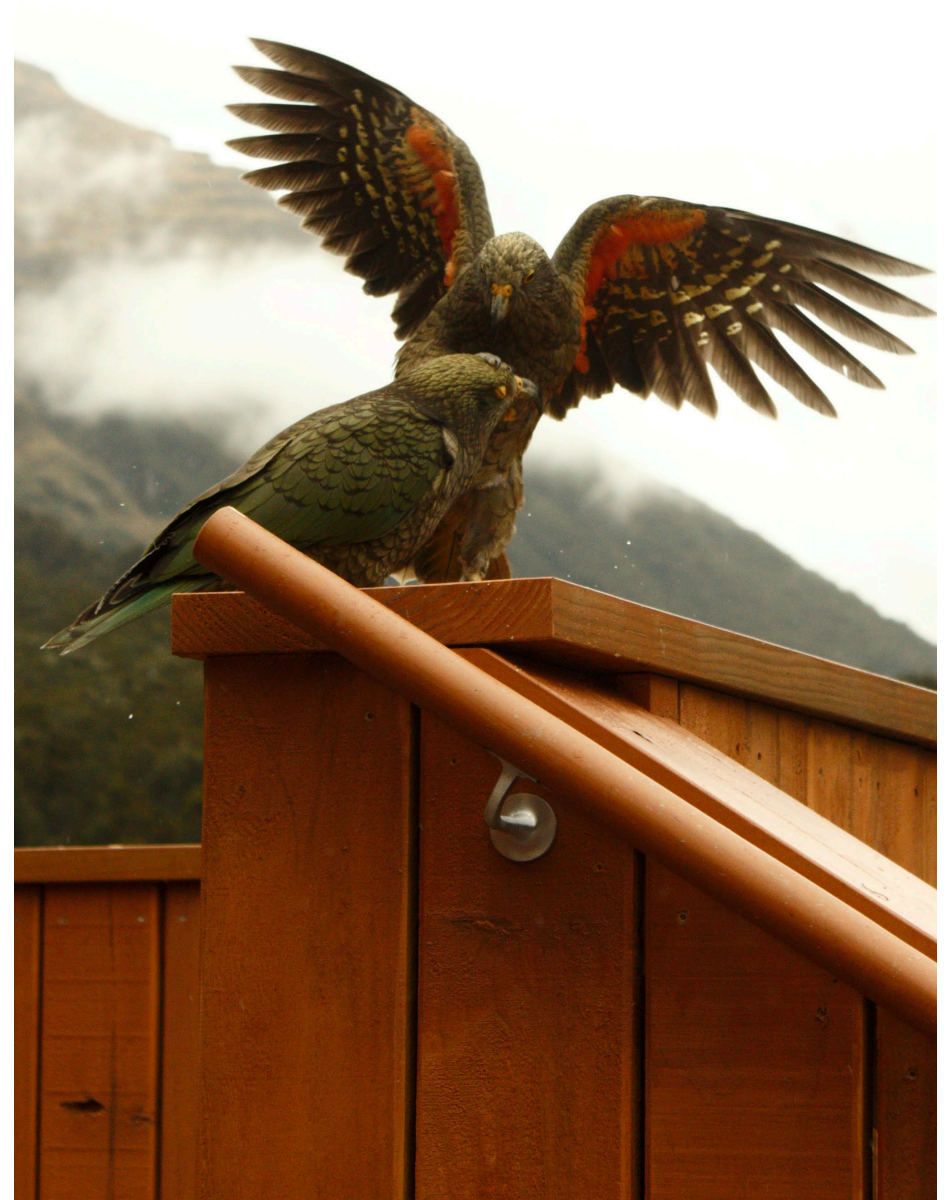
It was so great to see everyone enjoying tramping and being in the hills this year, whether you came for a day trip or a mountain epic. We are pumped for the exciting plans that Lucas and Poppy have as captains in 2024. Hope to see you out in the hills rock scrambling, goon slapping, and bush bashing.

See you on a mountain  
somewhere,  
Your 2023 Captains,  
Tommy and Anna



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## Ivory Lake Hut

1 Jan

By Liv Martin  
Featured: Lewis MacDonald

**A**s 2022 was drawing to a close I was pleasantly surprised that I had managed to avoid the dreaded covid-19 for two years. Having to isolate yourself in your room for 7 days sounded like the worst form of torture to me. Locked away from the mountains and the precious outdoors, I didn't think I would ever cope. My desperation to avoid having to isolate in my room for 7 days was enough to make me avoid drinking a shared

goon (yes I am possible of turning down goon \*gasp\*) and avoid catching covid for so long.

I had been dreaming of going to Ivory lake hut for so long, an extremely remote hut with the iconic red armchair. New years provided the opportunity to finally get into this amazing spot, the weather forecast looked clear and we had a 8 day period of hopefully blue skies.

Starting from Hokitika Gorge, we were starting in true west

coast style in the rain. Our spirits weren't getting dampened though as we knew that the weather was meant to clear this afternoon. Day one was a nice cruisey start to this big adventure, with a cable way, and a quick taking off of the boots for a river crossing so we didn't have to endure wet feet for the entirety of the trip. Making it to Frew hut where we would spend the first night of the trip, we had a full hut with everyone going in different directions. The sun had come out and gave us a chance to dry out our gear from the morning's constant drizzle.

Day two dawned along with good weather. Within 20 minutes of leaving the hut my mind had wandered to the adventure ahead instead of focusing on the current adventure. My feet slipped on the slippery river stones, my heavy pack meant I landed hard and smashed the bridge of my nose and gave my ankle a bit of a twist. What a great way to start the trip oops. I dusted myself off and assured Lewis I was fine, despite a slightly bruised ego. The track between Frew Hut and Price flat hut was in a lot worse condition than expected. There are two slips marked on the maps and these were the least of our worries with 3 quite fresh and tricky to navigate additional ones. We finally dropped down to the swing bridge 6hrs later which would take us up onto Steadman Brow. Feeling slightly demoralized as that section was meant to be the easy half of the day. After a

quick dip in the icy waters, lunch and some electrolytes we had decided to commit to the original plan and head up to Steadman brow. The climb was hard, my heavy pack and the hot summer afternoon was making our climb feel a lot bigger. My legs were struggling as the terrain became steeper near the ridge, slowly but surely I dragged myself up. I had been told that there were some good tarns further up the ridge on the map, it didn't look too far away but we were already buggered from today's effort. Looking back down the ridge there were some ok looking tarns so we decided to take the certain option as I was fully out of water. We set up camp and had disturbed a deer, who bolted off into the distance but was obviously curious about who had stolen his bed and popped his head up to come check out what we were doing while making dinner.

After a good night's sleep in the tent and a lot of water we felt rejuvenated for our big day ahead. My pack was finally starting to feel a bit lighter by day 3. Onwards we climbed up Mt Beaumont, with just a few small interesting sections, the climb up had been relatively straight forward, we became very relieved with our decision last night as the tarns that were meant to be higher up were completely dry. Just as we got to the top of Mt Beaumont the classic west coast clag started rolling in. At the Top of Mt Beaumont we had some signal. I had accidentally

**Facing page:**  
Liv, admiring a beautiful Kea, the iconic and endemic alpine parrot of the South Island

left my phone on and had heard it buzz in my pack. We took the opportunity to have a quick check of the weather forecast and were sad to see that the next front was going to roll in a few days earlier than expected.

Along the ridge we headed towards Ivory lake, finding our way through the clag and rock structures along the ridge. I felt like I was walking along the back of a stegosaurus. Because of this clag it meant we never got the picture perfect view of Ivory lake hut as we descended, heck we didn't get a view of the hut until we were 100 m from it. We were greeted at the hut by four others who were heading out via the Waitaha the next day. They had had a change of plans as one of their group members hadn't been feeling that well. I had managed to go the whole pandemic without catching COVID and was dreading the day that I did, and being absolutely paranoid I checked with the guy that wasn't feeling great, to check whether he thought his symptoms were COVID related or not. He assured me that it was just a stomach bug, so I felt comfortable enough to sleep in the hut and not pitch the tent outside. Ironical right.

Day 4 dawned and we had decided to give ourselves a rest day after two 12 hour days. We had originally planned to go up park dome today, but with the front coming in we decided a rest day would be much more beneficial. That night we had

two hunters for company who had come in for their delayed Honeymoon. After a day relaxing in the sun with the iconic armchair, stories about the huts' history, and a lonely seagull that spent its day in the middle of the lake, my legs felt somewhat refreshed.

Day 5, it was time to make our way out of here, the cloud had settled in yesterday evening and hadn't lifted, this ruled out the slightly shorter more technical route into the Tuke, so we made the climb back up to Mt Beaumont in very poor visibility. The descent in the cloud off Beaumont was tricky, we had to backtrack a couple of times as the route down was very specific. Finally we dropped below the cloud and had an amazing view of the Tuke valley and Dickie spur hut, which seemed extremely far away and was meant to be home for the night. The Tuke was a classic west coast river full of car sized boulders and crystal clear waters. If we didn't have so far to go before nightfall I would have gone for multiple swims. To get to Dickie spur hut there was a brutal climb up out of the Tuke. Finally we made it to the hut, after another 12 hr day and a lot of vert, I pretty much collapsed at the front door. A quick shower using my water bottle and a soup later I finally started feeling more human, but was absolutely shattered. Hoping that sleep would help with my headache I passed out in bed.

Day 6, this is where sh\*t hit the fan (excuse my language). Waking up I felt exhausted, all I wanted was a hut day but we had to keep moving before rain came in as we weren't sure what the rivers would be like going out from explorer hut. Yesterday we had a brutal uphill, today a brutal downhill. Each step down made my body ache. I had never struggled this much tramping, my head pounded and all I wanted was my own bed. The thoughts whirling through my head were trying to figure out why I felt so crap, yesterday was big, definitely didn't drink enough water, maybe I'm just not that tramping fit? As we neared the saddle I was reaching my limits, I sat down, cried and then got a bloody nose. Lewis fed me lollies and started taking some things out of my pack while looking visibly concerned. After a bit of sugar we pushed on to Mikonui hut, which is only 2 hrs walk from the road end but not where our car was. I was hoping and praying that there would be people staying there that were about to walk out and could give us a lift to our car. As we otherwise had no chance of being able to hitch a ride. Much to my disappointment the hut was empty and we were a mere few hours late. While Lewis made lunch we pondered my options, rest here but risk getting stuck for a few days while the weather packs in, two, walk out to the road but have a small chance of someone picking us up, or just keep

pushing ON. Food, electrolytes and Panadol helped to give me a boost and we decided to push on, I never really considered the PLB an option as I could walk to the road but it was the wrong one.

We pushed on to explorer hut, both of us absolutely shattered, with Lewis carrying some things out of my pack making his heavy pack worse. I had started to feel a wee bit better, but was still unsure of why I had hit rock bottom earlier that day. After dinner I collapsed into bed, but was woken by rustling in the hut around 10pm. Dopey and confused I opened my eyes to see Lewis setting up the tent in the hut. Now I was even more confused, he hadn't been able to get to sleep because of the mosquitos buzzing around the hut keeping him awake. So yes we slept in the tent in the hut, luckily there was just enough floor space.

Day 7, the weather had come in as the forecast said, it had rained reasonably heavy overnight and was now drizzling. Time to go home, still feeling exhausted I was so ready to go home to my own bed, usually I am never too eager to leave the bush and mountains. Over Murray saddle we went through lovely west coast bush, dropping back down to the Whitcombe river. We had one last obstacle to get back to the car, a short but steep viney, bush lawery bush bash to get up and onto the Hokitika gorge track. Everything was trying to hold me back, trap me



in the bush, using the last energy I had left I managed to burst out onto the walkway looking slightly disheveled after 7 days in the bush. We were definitely getting a few interesting looks as we walked back to the car along the Hokitika gorge walk, which was full of tourists.

Day 8, We had made it home. I had slept most of the car ride yesterday and was extremely grateful for my own bed last night. Still feeling under the weather, I was sitting in the lounge and decided to take a COVID test just in case. Low and behold it came back positive. Well, that explains everything. Thinking back to my symptoms and the headaches and scratchy throats I had blamed on dehydration today would be day 6, I had practically spent all my isolation deep in the West coast bush. I had always thought if I got covid I could just walk into a hut that people don't go to and hang there for a week then come home, as being stuck in my room would be the worst. Well I can tell you that being stuck in my room may not have been fun, it would have been a heck of a lot easier than tramping with COVID. I figured I probably caught it in the airport flying back down to Christchurch after Christmas even though I had a mask. I really hope no one caught it from me in the huts and if any one of the trampers who we met did catch it and reads this I'M SORRY. Somehow even though he spent 90% of my isolation

period tramping with me, Lewis somehow didn't catch it. Anyway I finally ticked off the hut that had been on my list for years, but just turned it into more of an epic than I had originally planned.



## Mt Madeline

1-2 Jan

By Lucas Larraman  
Featured: Isaac Muller-Wild  
Pounamu  
and Axl Radzyner

Isaac heading  
into the bush

A summit of Mt Madeline was a dream of 3 young tāne from Ōtautah. Pounamu, Lucas and Isaac made the annual commute to Piopiotahi while Axl spent the last of 2022 getting twisted near Tākaka. The two boys down south had high hopes, having been gifted five days of blue skies and low winds. But they knew that they would have to attempt Mt Madeline without Axl because the weather does not wait for djs.

A group of young dreamers jumped into homer tunnel waterfalls on the countdown of 2022. They then ran back to homer hut via the shortcut. Isaac and Lucas set off up the Tūtoko valley a couple hours later, on the first day of 2023...

A few days before, a pair of eastern Australians set off to climb mitre peak via helicopters – missing all the fun of navigating across Milford Sound in a Kondor 2000's. That same day,

a group of western Australians set off up Tūtoko valley - the day after monumental Darran rain. They arrived back the day after, humbled by nz bush. They had taken 10 hours to get to leader falls due to neck-deep bogs and swollen rivers.

Isaac and I are frothing and full of stoke as we take our first steps up the Tūtoko valley. Huge downed Tawhairaunui trees misdirect us and send us off in the wrong direction. Isaac goes, “yeah, nah I think we going the wrong way aye”. I agree and at the next stream we head back up to the doc track. We shake our heads and wonder at the power of the storms that rage through this valley, tearing down the ancient

A beautiful sunrise watches over the team and feeds their psych



Red Beech Trees.

A party of sandflies started popping off when we stop for a quick shmoko. Isaac is pissed and scuttles back and forth. I subscribe to the unpopular option that sandflies ‘are a mindset’ and will go away if you just accept the situation and become one with the fly. I am then able to chillax and enjoy some kai.

Escaping the bush momentarily found us in a space with unfathomable scale. Rivers gleefully laughed and Pīwakwaka curiously chattered. Eternal waterfalls glided over endless towers and faces of granite. At the head of the valley, Grave Colouir - a 1250m gulley of rotten snow and choss - glared and whispered that our friends had survived ascending it that morning.

The plan was to follow the dry creek just up from leader stream. But instead went for the “this must surely be it” - next time when looking for a dry creek MAKE SURE there is no water. Going up leader stream turned out to be so chillll and we even got a blessed encounter with some Whio. Bro, baby Whio have no chill when navigating rapids. They fully commit and end up 20m downstream when they get across. Isaac and I make mean as time and get to leader falls 3.5 hours after leaving the car - a bit less than the western Australians (give ngā awa some time to chill tf out!).

We cross below the picture-perfect falls, shrouded with beech

and pōnga and framed by a snowy pointy ridge. We have caught up with two other homies and we busy ourselves with finding the track/not-track to above the falls.

Isaac and I pump out the next section which involves precarious rock hopping above raging torrents “just gotta fully commit bro.”

After meandering along for another hour, we come across two bros, just having completed a traverse over Tūtoko from Ngāpunatoru Pass. They went into the mountains naïvely thinking that they’ll have to sit out a “chill as” storm that was to roll through. That storm was not “chill as” - they said they’d never been more scared for their lives in the mountains, counting the seconds in a tent that needs repairing, being blasted with 80km gusts and sleet for 52 hours. They managed to dry off then complete the traverse. Us being the first humans they’d seen for a week; they were wide-eyed at the idea a world existed out there. But having run out of food two days ago they were quick to get a move on.

We chill out a bit then head up the final wee bit to get up to Turner’s Biv. Slabs on slabs give way steep grass pulling and muddy fixed lines. We are roasting in the afternoon sun and cry out loud when we find some shade and a little spring. We are the same level as the hanging glaciers across the valley. I realise



what the swoshes and boom have come from once I see the ice cliffs breaking off and having a nonstop paaartyyyy. We continue up sun-bleached grass and granite to come across 3 kea who join us for the final stretch to the rock biv.

The homies who boosted up the final bit had claimed the penthouse - flat, high roofed and with epic views of Tūtoko and the ice cliff party. Isaac and I still get some mean as real-estate, looking over to Mt Grave. A kea decided to join us in our biv. This kea had no chill, it continues to sreeech at us for the next hour - any chance it got the kea would come in and try munch on gear. This is always the best part of the day in the mountains - reggae, magic pink powder and long shadows cast by the soft southern sun.

I join the penthouse homies and meander up delicious, golden slabs to a vantage point of our route tomorrow. Strokes of little fluffy clouds soar up

Lucas feeling the grandeur of the mountains



and down the contours of the ridges, rock spires, ice falls, crevasses, and the summit of Mt Madeline. How many others have been awe-struck by this grand amphitheatre? To experience and witness the many moods of Tūtoko. I feel very privileged and lucky to be here.

After being hushed to sleep by screaming kea and the booming of the ice cliffs; 2am reggae is the best way to get up. Isaac and I smash back some oats + coffee and we are jamming back up that delicious, orange slab again.

A full moon leads us to the luminous glacier. The freeze-thaw cycle is still in its early stage meaning two steps = one forward. Isaac decides to make

a zig-zagging snowpack (to later get berated by the penthouse homies). The whisper of the alpine glow gives us a clearer picture of the options before us.

Across the ice plateau, the pointy teeth leading to the summit smile and invite us in for tea. The only other option is a delightful snow scramble, but it has been cut off by a crevasse. We make the decision to cross the ice plateau to join the pointy teeth; we'll reevaluate and decide if the 100m free solo looks more promising when we get closer. The deep, acute shadows of central darrans' spires and peaks shorten behind us. The face of Tūtoko turns from lilac to deep purple to blazing gold. Painted

**Facing page:**  
Just before the  
summit, choose  
life

**This page:**  
When tramping  
turns into ice  
climbing





wispy clouds turn a shade of yellow that I have never seen before. Te Tai-o-Rehua beams and waves from afar. Isaac has a smile from one ear to the other - “this place is so fucking pretty; it should be illegal”.

The pointy teeth rock above the ridge is not in classic darran’s style - it is chossy and blocky. There comes a time in ngā maunga when you can choose to push for the summit or choose life. Always choose life. We see no need to solo bullshit choss for a summit 200 metres above us. We drink in the gloriousness of everything all at once. With our wairua feeling full and strong, we turn around. Choose life.

The snow on the descent is primo and we realise we didn’t have to get up so early. The penthouse homies are flying up and we have a kōrero about what their plans are. They reckon that they’ve picked a line through the crevasses to the delightful snow scramble to summit (they continue to send it!). Weights have been lifted off our backs and we cruise down. The dense bush of Piopiotahi far below sings to us while the magnificent waterfall under Lake Turner tumbles. Reggae plays gently when we stop for an impromptu ice climb on the terminal face of the glacier.

It’s always reggae in the mountains.



## SABRE FROM THE SOUTH BABYYYYYYY (MILFORD MOTHERFUCKERZ)

30 Jan

By Isaac Muller-Wild  
Featured: Tanja de Wilde

Stay psyched  
bro

“Do you want to go and climb the south face of Sabre?” I asked Tanja in the Homer Hut carpark.

I hadn’t even introduced myself at this point, just seen her around Homer Hut over the last couple of days. I’d heard she’d just done Finders Keepers on Moir’s Mate (for like the third time I think) and she seemed pretty sendy so why not ask? It’s not like the south face is something you need to really know your climbing

partner for.

The south face of Sabre Peak rises about 1000m above Lake Mariana, in one of the steepest, narrowest valleys in the country. It has a reputation as being cold, dark, and scary. The guidebook reads “parties will need to move extremely quickly to avoid a cold night out on the face”. I only found two ascents in the hut book over the last 5 years, compared to about 25 from the north. Tom Hoyle was surprised



there was that many. Could it really be that bad? Tanja and I got talking properly and our extensive preparation phase began.

First, we needed to know we could rip hard enough to pull the moves on the crux pitches (grade 18, seriously serious stuff). Brain Dynamics on the Mate got 24, so if we could climb that we were sweet - but the route turned out to be covered in snow, ice, and liquid water. Because obviously its gonna fucking snow in January. Luckily an afternoon cragging at the chasm proved that we were, in fact, fucking units.

The second ingredient we needed was shit chat. A couple of weeks stewing in the hut with the sport climbers was all we needed

to know that our yarns were 'cooked' enough for our 'fucked' objective.

The third and final ingredient was a fast and light approach. Success without this would be nigh on impossible, as without it the ascent could devolve into a pleasant outing. Not somewhere an alpineist ever wants to find themselves. We carried a sleeping bag to share, and eventually decided to bring the stove too. Tanja even cracked out the dehy Realmeals.

Uncomfortable bivvy? Check. Hardcore alpineism dehy food? Check. Positive attitude? Check. Oh yeah, its gamer time.

The walk in goes straight up Crosscut from Homer Hut for

about 1000 vert, then traverses across gorgeous glacier worn rock slabs to the Crosscut-Barrier Col. From there you sidle and descend more slabs to the valley floor. We started walking up at 2pm. The day was hot, humid and bluebird. Perfectly clear water ran down the start of the Gertrude, which was beautiful, but meant our carefully dried approach shoes would be getting wet 100m from the hut. B r u h. We hit the start of the climb and ripped into some steep tussock pulling. My shirt stuck to my back and my pack threatened to leapfrog over my head whenever I bent over to drink from a lily. We topped out after a couple of hours and were treated to a Karearea swooping, climbing, and diving around us as it surfed the thermals rising off the rocks. It turns out there's Chamois there too: we spotted three boosting around ahead of us as we traversed to the Col.

At the Col we reclined on warm, pillowy slabs to have our first proper geez at the face. It was strange not seeing it in a black and white photo. It was big too. And there was plenty of snow smothering the ledges near the top, because obviously its gonna fucking snow in January.

Trepidation tapped me on the shoulder: "shit, you're going to climb that?" The wall stretched from Barrier Pk to Sabre, threatening technical climbing no matter which route you chose. "Don't worry, you know you're up to it" I reminded myself. We had a

yarn about where the route might start, dried our shoes, and had a quick nap in the afternoon glow. This was the first weather window in weeks. We weren't going home without having a good crack at it.

We scrambled more slabs and teetered down on talus to reach the valley floor at 7PM. Our campsite was perfect: short green grasses on a flat spot at the head of Lake Mariana. The evening light dripped down the upper faces of Sabre and Marian, then caught fire for 15 glorious minutes. We were shocked at how pleasant everything had been so far: it was warm, bright(ish), and the lake had an easy beauty. The Realmeals got destroyed and they were fucking phenomenal. Like seriously good. If you eat like this all the time, then you're either French or own property in Fendalton (or own property at all in today's economy). Tanja even found a 5-month-old block of dark salted caramel choccy in her pack. How good!

Darkness crept out of its nest in the crevices between boulders, eyeing us suspiciously at first, then welcoming us under its starry wings. We slept on the ropes spread on the ground and our packs, sharing the sleeping bag. You would find a position which kept the breeze out and nod off for a couple of hours, then roll over, get cold and wake up to repeat the process. We probably managed about 5 hours of sleep, and honestly, it wasn't that bad: 5/10.

Route finding tends to be harder in the



Beep. Beep. Beep: 0520. It was easy to wake up because we weren't really asleep.

0630: Sunrise is upon us and we have far to go. We start making our way up an easy ledge system. Balanced blocks that appeared utterly lethal from a distance are suddenly firmly rooted in place when observed closely. Scramble, scramble, scramble. Tanja's carrying most of the weight, so we stop to even out the load. We climb a short, roped pitch in our approach shoes because the obvious corner is wet (a sign of things to come...). I turn to look back where we've come from: "damn, that's fucked." Lake Mariana fits in the valley floor like a perfect blue jigsaw piece and the river slithers effortlessly down valley. A tattered snow cloak flinches hangs from the northern flanks of crosscut. A dusting of sunlight illuminates the slabs above us. Time to start climbing proper.

The rock is excellent. Grippy and solid. It is also running with water and someone stuffed moss into all the cracks. We mess up the first pitch a bit and have to split it into two. I climb a rising traverse and belay at the base of a disgusting looking corner: Tanjas gonna looove this!

Tanja does indeed love it (not)! The corner is dripping wet and slimy, but with good pro initially. It wasn't to last after the corner opened up. She placed a .5 cam high, reversed a few moves, then committed to a traverse. It looked

and sounded pretty legit from the spectators seat. The angle eased afterwards, and she scrambled out of sight.

I heard "On belay!", stripped the anchor and started seconding.

The corner was as miserable as it looked, and my fingers quickly turned into numb sausages. I pulled on a piece of gear to bypass an especially grim move. I arrived at the top of the corner and cleaned the high cam Tanja had placed. The situation was now pretty spicy: extra hot Wattie's chilli beans kinda spicy. A top rope isn't a top rope when you're going sideways, so I was getting as much value as Tanja did. I looked left, across the traverse. The next piece was at the level of my feet - 10m away - with nothing in between to stop my pendulum should I fall. Further down, a right facing corner stared hungrily up at me. Ready to absolutely batter me into a chopper ride. I dried my slick shoes and hands as best I could, then committed to a tricky step-down.

"Breathe, breathe, you're fine, breathe."

"Fuck" – I'm absolutely gripped. My fingers slip slightly on the sloping wet right hand.

My big toe contacts the edge, I can readjust my balance a bit. The tricky move is behind me now. The rest of the traverse offers crap footholds, but good

enough hands to make it feel secure-ish. The corner below me grumbles: "Cheated. Cheated I tell you!"

The next couple of pitches were moderate and manageable. Wet, but not disgustingly so. We discussed bailing: the first two pitches should've taken us far less time and if we keep moving this slowly, we'll be spending an extra night out. But the terrain above is hopefully a little drier and easier, so we decide to go for it.

Pitch 6 was unremarkable except for the hollow spike belay and a mud falcon sighting.

Next up was the first crux pitch, Tanjas lead. Committing slab moves off a ledge led to some good pro, followed by a solid 3m of tech. Tanja hesitated on a couple of traversing moves, tried low, tried high, finally teetering across low. This brought us to the base of another corner. Once again, wet. Once again, slimed. Once again, drowned in moss. The rock quality was excellent though and I channelled my inner 'Castle Hill basin' to ooze through the technical stemming at the beginning of the pitch. The rest of the climbing was as close to type 1 fun as you can get on a Fiordland adventure route: solid, grippy rock with one of the most jaw-dropping views out there. I ran out of quickdraws after around 30m but spied a tasty looking belay ledge another 10m up. I'm getting to that ledge dammit! I clipped a nut with my microtrax and ran it out to the ledge where

a bit of cleaning yielded a bomber belay. Once again, the next pitch looked slimy and was running with water. Tanjas gonna looove this!

Tanja seconded with a big ol grin on her face, which ran off quicker than a breather in an alcohol-free zone once she saw what I'd left for her. She slithered over the first overhang and up the corner, almost out of sight. It was easy to tell when she found the crux because of the grunting and groaning. It was

Gaining some perspective with the help from views of the valley





the wettest, slimiest crack of the entire route and you had to thrust your whole body right into it. We both went through the 5 stages of grief as we grovelled, begged for mercy, and cried before accepting our fate and doing it. It is, undoubtedly, one of the thrutchiest moves I have ever and possibly will ever pull in my entire

No such thing as conditions, just weaknesses



life. Imagine a 3-legged dog trying to do the worm in a mud pit and you have a solid image of how it went down. Once we'd recovered emotionally, talked to a councillor, and worked through our trauma, we realized that the top was just a few pitches away! None of it was difficult climbing either. Up and up we went. Surely it must end on this pitch. No? Surely this one is the last... I was feeling a bit of fatigue and was ready to stop climbing, routefinding, looking for gear.

Finally, at 8:30PM, we summited! The sun slouched low in the sky, lazily tossing the last of its energy at the land. To the west, cloud swept up the ridge, creating a godly glow around Marian peak. The central Darrans stood proud and severe to our north. To the east, snowfields glowed a brilliant white. And to the south, a precipice. Which we had just climbed!!! That gets a fuck yeah from me. Tanja broke out the ancient dark salted caramel, and we relaxed for a moment. The most dangerous part of the mission was yet to come though: descent. It was at this point that I realized we were running a full two hours behind the time I'd done the north buttress with Lucas and Jonty (see TROG 20XX). "Ahh, we're going to go long here," I thought.

So began the raps towards the Marian-Sabre Col. Luckily, I'd done it before and could remember all the beta, which also meant that Tanja didn't have to



The team getting honoured with majestic views

read up on it at all either. Taking note of the fatigue, I decided that I wasn't going to cock it up now. At every rap I asked, "am I going to die on rappel today?" Biners? Locked. ATC? On properly. Prussic? Tied right. "Not yet", then over the edge. On the second rap we went too far, and I realized I had only a very vague impression of where we were supposed to be. It also got dark about the same time. They call me NavMan on the streets for a reason though and we worked it out. A couple more raps took us to the Col at about midnight, followed by a scamper up the perfect granite blocks of Marian for about 1am. The moon rose behind Sabre, framing it like a hulking, silent ogre. The technical ground was

behind us; all we had to do now was keep putting one foot in front of the other and we'd eventually get back to the hut. The ridge between Sabre and Marian is mostly walkable, with some easy downclimbing sprinkled throughout. As we scrambled, the tiny crystals in the granite cut our skin just the smallest bit, a thousand times over.

We made it to barrier peak. All downhill now. Our quads got a pummeling on endless sloping slabs. Onwards. We make it to Gertrude Saddle. Onwards. Pummel the quads. We reach the river crossing. Onwards. We reach flat ground in the Gertrude valley. Onwards. Dew is forming on the grasses, soaking our pants. The hut is close now.



Carpark. Door. Done.

Its 4:30am. Tanjas fingers ache with micro-cuts. I sit in a chair with no pants on eating peanut butter straight from the jar with a thousand-yard stare.

Big feed. Bed. Sleep. Rest.



## Freshers

*Late Feb*

By Poppy Ganes

Lawless  
behaviour

The tramp was off to a great start. I had lost my phone and pride the night before. Because of losing my phone I had no alarm and managed to sleep in an hour over our designated departure time. After waking in a panic, I had a speedy 10 minute turn around. I loaded my pack, my boots and the keg (my baby) into Toms car. Unfortunately while packing the back of the van I managed to knock Toms ceramic cup which

shattered on the ground. I didn't realise at the time but this would foreshadow my later antics. It was a beautiful drive to the West Coast jamming to some tunes and enjoying the scenery. Once we made it to the campsite me and Caitlin went for a skinny dip. The Americans made a new friend called tuna which was later caught, gutted and eaten by Blake and Alex. After grooving in the rave cave, slaying a keg stand and consuming excess



amounts of jungle juice the dogs were out. During the big spoon little spoon brawl I managed to tear Jesses shirt in two. I decided I might have to let someone take over for me because I was maybe coming on a bit strong. During the scraps rocks went flying and one managed to slam a fresher in the face. The black eye, bloody eyebrow and possible concussion was a wee bit stressful to deal with. But, don't worry, that girl is a hearty dawg and bounced back like a champ. Packing up to leave the next morning was a little grim. Nic had to strategically take his tent down without stepping in his own vomit. All was well when we made it to the market. There were locals on karaoke and an

Get your mug ready

abundance of dogs. I was happy, content and at peace.

My quote OTT (Of The Trip):  
Let's get absolutely kegless!  
- Poppy Gane



## Freshers 2.0

*Late Late Feb*

By Adam Walker

Some more  
lawless  
behaviour

The iconic Freshers trip; where noobies start their mountaineering careers; where the ignorant are able to suckle on mother nature's teat and taste just how magical her life-giving juices are.

Let's begin: The camera pans across the University's campus to the UCSA carp park, the place where most great trips begin. We see a mass gathering of people and by the look of their outfits, they are either going on

a CUTC or a CUSSC trip. It is clear to most which one each person is attending. No one really knows where they are going, but somehow, they end up where they need to be. A small group huddles on the side near the bike racks waiting for cars to show up.

That's us! AN extremely average sized group of 13 waiting for the cars to arrive so that we can start our trip. Due to the weather, the location of the trip changed from Mt. Somers to the





Smiles for the good weather

Ballroom Overhang, so that we wouldn't have to tramp in the rain and snow. No one would want that, unless they are a masochist (high potential in this group). At first we all make small talk, you know how these things go, until one of our trusty leaders Lucas shows up, Immediately breaking down walls like the KoolAid Man with a classic "what would be your super power?" ice breaker. Once we all memorized each other's names and superpowers, we commenced a game of "I'm going to the moon", which ended up lasting pretty much the whole trip. We continued to subtly bully those that didn't understand the game until we realized that our cars were never coming. Everyone who was meant to

drive caught COVID and was out of commission. Liv, Lewis, and Sam stepped up and grabbed there cars, thank you committee members for the legendary assist!

On the short 4 hour drive to Punakaiki, we learned that correct way to sleep in a car: Eyes barely closed, mouth wide open, and head bobbing. Thank you Ian for the lesson. We also had the mandatory poop talk from our lovely boy scout troupe leader Lucas. Most people think they know how to shit in a hole, but they would be wrong. Feel free to contact Lucas directly if you are now doubting your abilities. We all became excited to take a shit in the bush. Once at the car park, things became real. We double checked gear, slapped the goon, and headed off into the gorge. Lewis led the gang of merry trampers along the beginning of the Paparoa track until we split off across the bridge onto the inland pack track. Along the way the group discussed our normal pooping routines, Some delicious and spicy native plants, and the existential dread of death and the end of the universe :) Mixed in were many slaps of the goon and many river crossings.

A few Kms from the overhang, we stopped in a an absolutely gorgeous gorgeous George for a delicious swim with an effort from a few, myself included, to deep water solo.

This trip was momentous for me as the New Zealand Rock Collecting Competition (NZRCC)

was first explained to me. Quick synopsis: much like TWALK, participants are driven to an unknown location and have 12 hours to scatter and bring back the best rock. The panel of 3 judges include a geologist, an artist, and a chill human who would determine the overall vibe of the rocks presented. To me this sounded like heaven, and, being the amateur rock enthusiast I am, decided to practice ASAP. I found a beautiful piece of what I assume to be limestone near our swimming spot and proceeded to carry it with us the rest of the tramp (it was around 2-3 kgs).

The final river crossing was divine. Seeing a massive amount of trampers above the bank under the overhang with the sun setting west down the gorge. So scrumptious for the soul. And so many new and old friends waiting to be greeted. I met up with Jonas, who was on the easier tramp and who would share my tent for the night. I would soon find out how deep of a sleeper he actually was. After many meets and a few greets, the tents were set up and dinner was to commence. A group of soon to be friends somehow caught an eel and were filleting it and cooking it over a fire, many people had dehy meals, and lots of people just brought left overs. It was a real feast! At this point the keg had been hooked up and the goons were flying. So needless to say.

Once diner was had, a game of big spoon little spoon

began. Big spoon little spoon, is a very gentle game where two opponents face off and tr to spoon each other. This game began with our friends Lucas and Tommy gently caressing each other. It quickly got out of hand and became a full out brawl, which set the president for the rest of the night. Multiple hours of big spoon little spoon were played, with the occasional sock wrestling thrown in. These games have become a staple with all the outdoor clubs at UC and I do believe it started here. The night died down once all the liquids had been consumed. People started to curl up in their tents. But the late night crew jammed out by the river and had a grant ole' time. I loudly slipped back into my tent around 3am and Jonas was basically deceased, nothing could wake him. It was truly impressive.

The next morning, everyone stirred with the energy of those who were not hungover. Ate a small breakfast, which for most

The good ole "spoon or be spooned" challenge





included oats (the classic Kiwi breakfast). The trek out was much shorter than the trek in. However, there was way more mud. People were caked. Once out at the fox river car park, most of the group decided to go for a lovely, but very cold, swim in the river. It was great to see 50+ Uni student all swimming in the river together, although we definitely dirtied the water some. As a few people shuttled to get cars, we spent a hour or so at the quaint fox river farmers market. Although not many people had cash, the vendors were very kind to us. The white bait was great!

A drowsy shuttle back to UCSA, with many stories of the trip, short term reminiscing and

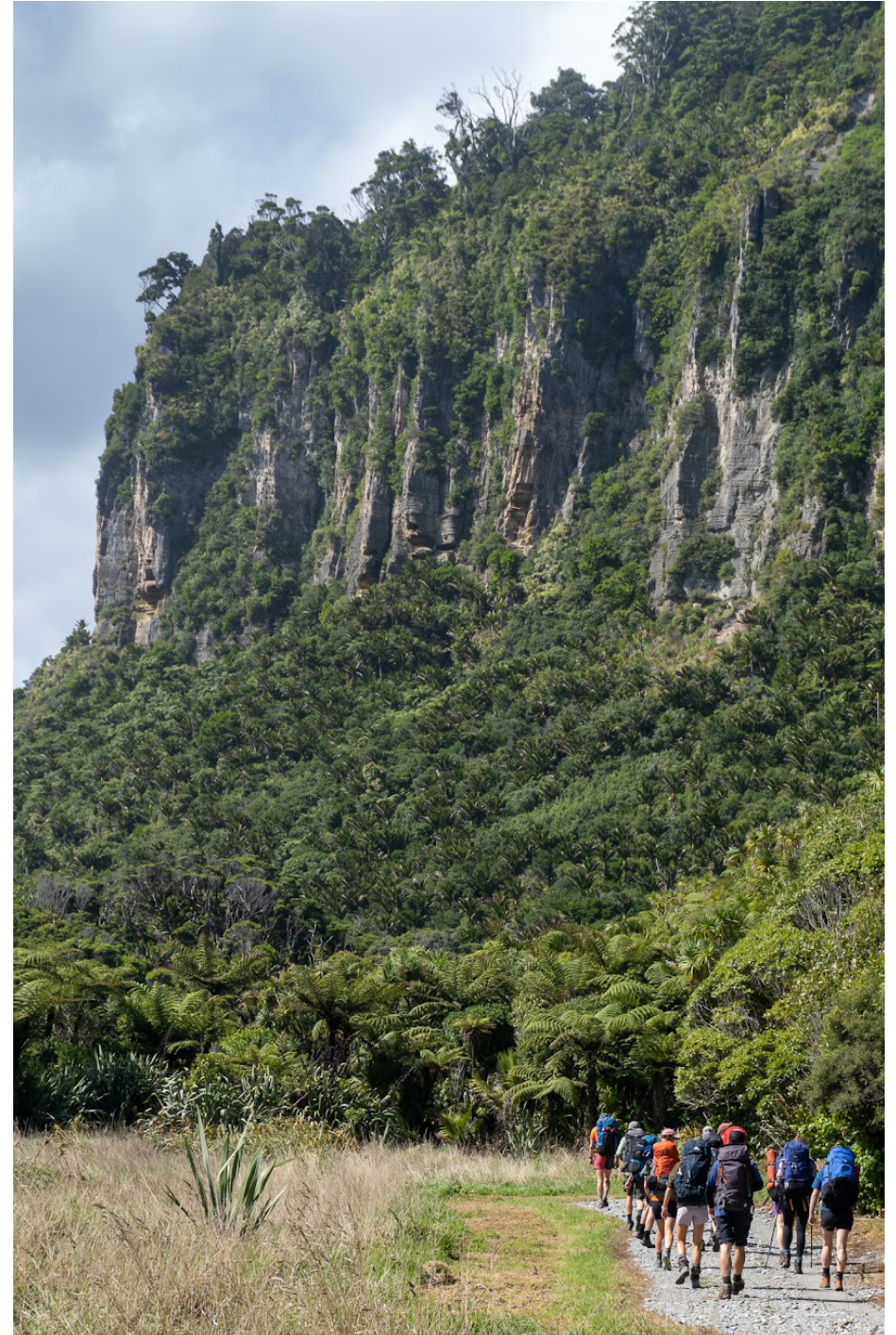
Poppy, a professional selfie-taker



Ian sleeping more, polished off this year's freshers. A true success story. One for the Books!









i don't know how much longer I can keep going

I tried to laugh about it

woooooahhoooh we gonna carry the boat

Boys don't cry

good morning it's about 2 two fifty five in the morning and we are about  
to go climbing

here are the boys in the tent good morning isaac

Falling in love with you boy

"So weve fucked  
up pretty bad..."



Hello Axl

## High Above Hakitere

18-19 Mar

By Lucas Larraman  
Featured: Axl Radzyner  
Isaac Muller-Wild  
and Kota

We're gonna be goining right there

damn mother fucker

Wake me up to dance baby! Do you want to kiss baby?

hey guys churr

yea lucas ahahaha

we are at the carpark ready to go first to cameron hut wins weeeep

And you know that this time I have said too much and been too unkind. I  
tried to laugh about it. Cover it all up with lies



we are going very light as soon as we stop moving we're gonna put a big jacket on

very thoughtful thats how you gotta do things out here very thoughtful

Baby. Its better this way.

we're confronted with this this thingie and it looks quite scary we're in the most beautiful spot right now

look at this this is absolutely fuckin stuuuuuning

yeah babey

so we've fucked up pretty bad got ourselves a little bit bluffed out \*300m bluff to glacier\* fucking abysmal we were meant to be over there to get to the route over there \*methven dread on mt arrowsmith\* but we went up the wrong fucking way

this is a great exercise in turning around yeah we gonna turn around we gonna go home alive and are yeah we gonna come back yeah to the route another day yeah and yeah we gonna know where to go next time.

#dontpressthebutton

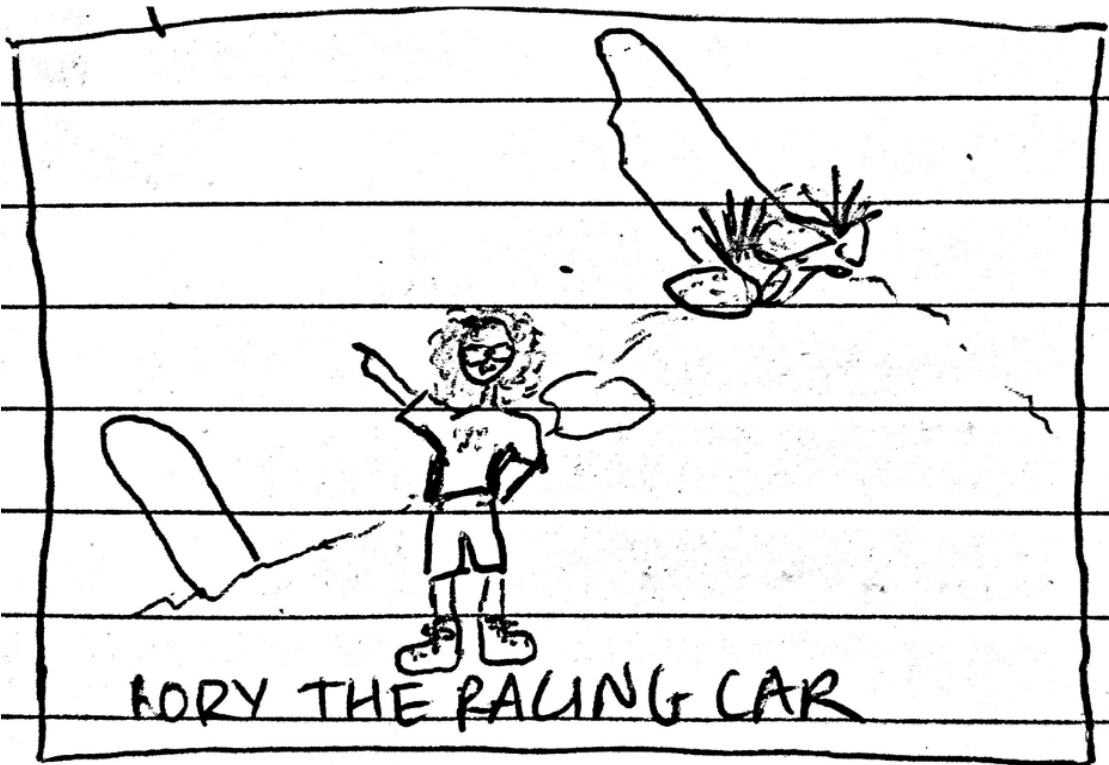
**Facing page:**  
Isaac and Lucas  
looking small  
compared to the  
mountains of  
Aotearoa











**Fun fact:**  
Roary the  
Racing Car aired  
from 7 May 2007  
to 29 September  
2010

## Salmon and Instant Noodles (Dragon's Teeth Attempt)

4 - 6 Apr

By Caitlin Mitchell  
Featured: Rory Patching  
Anna Cory-Wright  
and Patrick

**D**ay 0:

We drove from Christchurch to Golden Bay and stayed at Rory's family's farm for the night.

Patrick claims he is sick and has no energy, then throws conkers at my head energetically and excitedly goes to pick up more.

"Does the milk tanker come into the house?" - Patrick

Day 1:

Patrick is too sick to come tramping so we leave him at Rory's house. Day 1 is a 9.5 hour walk to Boulder Lake Hut. We haven't seen anyone else all day, and Rory is our tour guide, pointing out all the landmarks. We aren't going to do the Dragon's Teeth part of the tramp because my wrist is injured so hauling me and my pack up ropes wouldn't be ideal, and Rory and Anna are still recovering from sickness. Anna

also did an adventure race over the weekend so she didn't have a great time today.

Rory brought instant noodles, mushrooms,.... and cold-smoked salmon for our dinner tonight.

Day 2:

Even though we weren't going to do the Dragon's Teeth, I still wanted to go for an adventure so Rory agreed to come (despite only feeling 70%), while Anna stayed at the hut for the day. And then there were two...

We decided to do a mission to Adelaide Tarn Hut and back. The day started well, with me knee-deep in mud, and tussock bashing through head height tussock. We decided tussock bashing is much more friendly than bush bashing.

Once we had walked up from the basin to the saddle, we had some nice ridge walking, then through Trufala trees (you know, from the Lorax) with many photo stops. After only a couple of minor navigational mishaps, we made it to the hut, beating the 4-6 hour DOC time. Rory made us walk up another 100m from the hut to get to an optimal lunch spot, with a view of the Dragon's Teeth. Looking at the Teeth made us wish we could keep going, but everything was against us- injury, sickness, and the weather was meant to deteriorate a bit the next day. Rory didn't enjoy me making him pose for photos!

Back to Boulder Lake Hut just before dark. Couscous tomato lentils mushrooms cheese for dinner. Rory struggles to light the

fire with damp wood, and then decides to jam a large piece of wood halfway into the fireplace. 5 minutes later he decides this isn't a good idea, and when he takes it out it's smouldering so we have to chuck it in the stream.

A Leisurely Day at Boulder Lake (Anna's day):

After saying goodbye to the more active members of our party, and extricating myself from my warm sleeping bag, I spent my breakfast looking at the ridge lines surrounding Boulder Lake. I had to do something with my day, so I headed to the lowest point that could be considered getting to the top of something. I could see the old track markers and wondered how many trampers had got stuck

Rory being held  
hostage by  
being forced to  
have fun





down that steep sided valley. After taking a roundabout route back down to the hut, I decided this was a prime opportunity for a skinny dip under the waterfall behind the hut. I lasted about one minute in the water before sprinting for the sun. The afternoon was spent sunbathing, reading, gathering firewood,

eating, and checking the ridge line for Caitlin and Rory, who arrived just as I was getting stuff out for dinner, which was just as well because they had taken some of the ingredients with them. Side note: We realised why Patrick didn't come. Before driving to Golden Bay, and before Patrick agreed to go

Some beautiful  
Keas came to  
see what's up



on the tramp, I messaged Rory that he shouldn't tell Patrick about the difficulty of the tramp. Unfortunately, Patrick borrowed my phone shortly after, and it opened on that message. So maybe Patrick wasn't actually sick, he just didn't want to suffer.

Day 3:

Rory was 'assaulted' by me trying to tie up his hair. He has been complaining that his hair has been getting increasingly frizzy, and is making him overheat, but is horrified by the logical solution of tying it up.

We slipped and slid back down to the car. Along the way we saw a couple of kea who followed us for a while, squawking and posing for photos.

There's one section, about 7 hours from the carpark, on a slightly narrow track with a steep drop off that someone in the intentions book said they turned back at rather than walked across. But we thought that the many hours of extremely slippery muddy track before this section was much more hazardous!

After tramp antics: Rory doesn't like fruit in any form. He refuses to eat it, but is also embarrassed about it. So Anna and I decided to trick him into eating some by buying feijoa sorbet. Unfortunately we couldn't keep straight faces so he figured out something was up, and he only had one small spoonful after being threatened with an airplane. Apologies to Rory for the bullying he had to endure on this tramp.





New and  
improved  
trampers!

## Bushcraft

*Mid Apr*

By Yuanzhen Cao  
Featured: Tommy Copeland  
Lucas Larraman  
and Annie Huang

Just abruptly those pictures remind me of that staggering and unbelievable adventure I have been through. In a real sense, this tramping trip was the one coincided with my imagination and understanding, resembling the ones I saw from some vlogs. Originally, I thought the bag was quite exaggerated. BUT! I was totally wrong with the reality. After putting inside my sleep bag, clothes, snacks, fruits, three bottles of water and other

odds and ends, my bag was so full! Actually I couldn't estimate the weight of the bag, but what I know is that when it was on my back, I barely could straighten my back. That was SO CRAZY! I learned how to cross the rivers considering safety, how to use compass to locate my spot and the TRUE NORTH, how to trust in myself to better protect my teammates and me. As Annie said to me, "If you think you can't look after others, which means you





can't look after yourself well." I will remember this forever. Thank you Annie. Indeed, during the rest of the trip, I consistently broke through my capacity, especially in the PART TWO TRAMPING that was the medium leveled one. I still can't believe that I was with Tommy climbing down the mountain for more than one hour in the darkness. Thank you Tommy. The sloop was steep, looking like 30-40 degrees. The rocks were slippery with layers of large ones and tiny ones. The plants, (if you think they are soft and gentle, you would be wrong) pricked my palms and the skin on my legs. It was bleeding but that was my glory. At that night, I saw thousands of shining stars in the sky and maybe several shooting stars. I didn't care if they are true or not, I made a wish. Returning didn't take very long time, and I gradually moved fast than the first day. See, I have made progress ! We drove to CASTLE HILL, where I got stuck between the rocks. Tommy and Lucas saved my life again. I appreciate this trip. Dory became stronger!



## Goldney Ridge A Textbook Approach to Decision Making

4 May

By Joseph Chamberlain  
Featured: Travis  
and Ollie

High up on the  
ridge

To me, our attempt on Mt Rolleston's Goldney Ridge in May of 2024 was a textbook example of a clinical approach to decision-making in the mountains. We were faced with poor snow conditions, possible high winds, and difficult route-finding. But we rose above and utilised communication, enthusiasm, and our collective knowledge of the mountains to create the best possible result out of our day on the

Goldney Ridge.

The trip started out like many others: an early morning start in Christchurch as I picked up Travis and Ollie, and we took to the hills in the mighty Nissan Tiida. I was deleting coffee the entire way, but I probably didn't need it because I was absolutely fizzing already. There had been some recent snowfall, and I was stoked to get out and amongst it. The primary objective of the trip was to climb the Goldney



Ridge opposite Temple Basin, traverse along it to the Otira Slide, descend the Slide and head back down the Otira Valley. However, we had the side objective of carrying on past the Slide and up to Mt Rolleston's Low Peak. Mt Rolleston has been an objective of mine for a couple of years now, and I was stoked at the prospect of attempting its Low Peak with such an able crew. I had to be careful not to let my eagerness interfere with the safety of the team.

We arrived at the start of the ridge with a gorgeous view of Mt Rolleston basking in the morning sunlight. I thought to myself, "Will today be the day that I stand up there?" Only time will tell. With little faff we set off; no time like the present.

We quickly navigated the long scree slope at the base of the ridge, gaining the grassy plateau above as the wind began to pick up. And it was cold. There was no wind forecast, so this proved unexpected, and became our first critical decision point. Risk continuing with approaching clouds and the potential for high winds, or trust the forecast? After a quick discussion, we established that we were well-equipped for the cold, and decided to trust the forecast. So we pushed on.

From here, the ridgeline quickly narrowed from the grassy plateau into steep rock and scree. There was patchy, powdery snow which required

careful assessment to cross.

The presence of roller balling in some sections meant that careful evaluation was required. A quick snowpack assessment determined that there was, in fact, no snowpack at all – simply scree beneath the powder. No ice for the snow to slide off, a good sign. Now that we could understand the risks, we carried on, moving both quickly and carefully along the snow slopes to reduce the time spent in those areas.

More calculated risks and snowpack evaluations eventually led us up to the top of the ridge, where the conditions were much nicer. The wind had almost vanished, and the few gaps in the clouds rewarded us with fantastic views of Mt Philistine and the surrounding mountains. Knee and waist deep snow provided interesting travel as we would get ourselves stuck in the powder and flail around in attempts to get out, only to get stuck again. I was absolutely loving it.

After some time, the ridgeline quickly became steep and craggy. One option was to sidle down and around this section, and perhaps lose time in doing so. The other option was to send it up and along the rocky ridge in the hopes that the going would get easier quickly. It was a gamble with time, but we knew we had plenty enough to get to the Slide before dark regardless. The benefits of starting early! So we opted to have a shot at the

craggy section. Despite rapidly turning into a grade 12 or 13 rock climb, it was manageable. We set our sights on where we thought the ridge would drop back down and return to normal. However, the further we climbed, the more it became apparent that it was only going to get harder, and after half an hour we got to a point that was impassable. Well, it was passable, but the risk suddenly was too great, and more importantly, it was uncalculated as we did not understand it. Without protection, it would be stupid.

At this point all three of us felt somewhat sketched out. We had a very important discussion to gauge how each other was feeling, the weather, and the

possibility of rescue should we be unable to downclimb what we had just climbed up. Naturally, neither one of us wanted to rely on a heli rescue, but the weather was good and the option was there if it was really necessary. It would have been a free helicopter ride! (But don't glamourise it.)

We thus decided to backtrack as far as we could safely do so, taking extra care on the downclimb with the choss and unreliable rock. Fortunately, we were able to get ourselves back to easier terrain, but ended up wasting an hour and a half on that little side quest. No worries – we still had plenty of daylight.

We then proceeded with the sidle around the ridgeline on the

Smiling through  
the sketchiness







The route being  
illuminated by  
alpenglow

scree, which we probably should have done from the start. This was much easier travel, going back to the classic grade 1 alpine feel. We arrived at the top of the Otira Slide soon after, with still four hours of daylight left. It was at this point that I started seriously eyeing up the Low Peak, and I was absolutely locked in and focussed on it. Was today the day? I wanted to get up so badly, and I knew it was a dangerous mindset to have. To counter this, I called a meeting with the team to discuss turnaround times, since we didn't know the state of the Slide and didn't want to take the added risk of being on it in the dark. Especially with its infamous reputation for rockfall. All agreeing on a time, we began to move

quickly in an attempt to gain the Low Peak.

Any sort of hiccup in our pathfinding would have called off the attempt, which is eventually what happened after an hour of travel up the ridge. A massive gap prevented further safe travel along the ridge, instead requiring downclimbing and sidling around the gap to get onto the face of Low Peak itself. It was obvious that our attempt was over, and the sun was beginning to set in the Otira Valley. With disappointment, we called it right there. But not without getting some sweet pictures first!

Looking down the Goldney Ridge from our high point for the mission (1950m).

With ease, we made it back

down the ridge and down the Otira Slide with an hour of daylight to spare. The Slide was in perfect summer conditions, which meant it was perfect for rockfall, so we were happy to get down in the daylight

In the end, I wasn't really all that disappointed. It was a fantastic day out, with excellent company and lots of lessons learned. The mountain will be there to climb another day, and the dream of summiting Mt Rolleston lives on!









Jumping into  
TWALK!

## Operation Don't Drop the Camera: Photography at TWALK 2023

7 - 8 May

By Euan Robinson  
Featured: Nick Slegers  
and Daniel Smith

Being a TWALK volunteer is great fun. You get to meet lots of new people, check out some private Canterbury high country land, and witness hundreds of people voluntarily charge through matagouri for twenty-four hours. But after doing this a few times in my uni years, I'd grown a little tired (literally) of the sleep deprivation, and the novelty of cooking beans to the sound of Rick Astley at 3 am had worn off too. I needed something

to spice things up. "I reckon the event website needs some photos," I suggested to Nick early on in 2023. I'd got into photography fairly recently, and whilst I didn't rate my work all that highly, I saw an opportunity. My proposal — I would volunteer to be the event photographer and skip out on cooking beans, and in return, the club would pay the hiring cost for a nice camera. And don't drop it.

Truthfully, I just wanted an

excuse to play with camera far more expensive than my own. Somehow, my sales pitch worked, and one week before the event, I popped down to Lightchasers Rentals to hire a Canon EOS 90D and lenses. (Big thanks to Lightchasers for their wonderful customer service and affordable gear!) On the big day, I turned up at the UCSA carpark, camera in hand and accessories akimbo. My partner for the morning was Annie, who had been tasked with manning the club's social media. We came up with a rough plan to snap photos of the competing teams as they gathered at the carpark — you know, while they remained fresh-faced and in their unblemished finery.

Here's a few photos. Let's pretend it's a montage.

While the montage happened, everyone had loaded up the buses and cars, and set off on the long drive to the event's mystery location. The drive, thank goodness, went without a hitch. (I have a bit of a bad history with the drive in, you see. In 2019, I was one of somehow only six volunteers for the event — shoutout to Maxime, Leon, Winston, and the Martin siblings! — and I have fond memories of breaking down in the middle of nowhere on our way to Castle Hill Station, waiting two hours for the backup van, transferring a literal tonne of heavy-duty kitchen appliances across in the twilight, strapping a chunky fridge to the top of Maxime's tiny car, driving

over Porter's Pass, watching in horror as the RPM dial plummeted and the car faltered... I had the time of my life.)

At some point along the way, the vehicle I was in overtook the bus convoy, and we arrived quarter of an hour ahead of the masses. As we piled out of the car, beautiful Lake Heron and the ranges lay before us. All was calm, but not for long.

Faint dust clouds popped up above the crest of the hill, signalling the imminent arrival of the buses. As they rolled into the carpark, I adjusted my camera, keen to capture the competitors' reactions to the landscape ahead of them. That three-hour ride must have them desperate to stretch their legs, I surmised, watching them pour eagerly out of the buses. Click! Some competitors wandered towards the water's edge, gesticulating photogenically at the scenery, and murmuring about what the TWALK legs might be. Click! Others sat down amongst the tall, golden tussock to take in the view. One of them was in some lovely lighting, head and shoulders poking above the grass, gazing serenely across the lake. Click!

I turned around to make my way back to the buses when an indignant "Oi!" hit me. It was at this point I also noticed the hills I had my back towards just before were now lightly covered in competitors...dashing for the woods. Three hours on a bus. People pouring out the buses.



Dashing for the woods. Squatting amongst the tussock. Oh, no. I swivelled around with a deer-in-headlights expression, gingerly approached the lady (now standing) whose confusingly public and yet undoubtedly private moment I'd unintentionally invaded, and garbled out a profuse apology. In my defence, I think the folks running to the woods had the right idea about where to take a piss, and she looked like any of the other dozen competitors sitting in the tussock — but in situations like this, the only thing to do is show the photo being deleted and get out of there before you die from embarrassment. At least the other volunteers thought it was funny...

After a lot of yelling by Nick and Daniel, the teams assembled at the start line. Annie and I ran down the path a little bit and got into position. The whistle blew, and suddenly, the hordes charged. Vikings, mushrooms, shrubs...road cones, Dalmatians, scrubs...they rushed past hollering. And soon they were gone — a colourful, wiggly line winding its way across the valley, stretching itself out more and more as each team settled on a pace. After a brief invasion of noise and vibrancy, calm returned to this patch of Lake Heron.

With the competitors off and away, the volunteers drove over to our HQ, the Hash House, and helped an advance crew finish setting up camp. Our Hash House for this year was an aircraft

hangar, though the sleeping quarters were in a garden a few hundred metres up the road. Ostensibly, this was to increase our chances of getting a quiet and proper sleep. Dear reader, this is TWALK. There is no such thing as a proper sleep.

We ended up in a funny grace period of the first leg where little work needed doing and dozens of bored volunteers needed entertaining, so a bunch of us piled into and onto a land rover and set off to see if we could spot the leading packs. After trundling along a dirt road for twenty minutes, we spotted them, and boy, I never thought I'd ever see road cones vault a fence without being thrown by a student, but it happened! I just don't have the photo to prove it...

Upon our return to the Hash House, we turned on the speakers, put on some music, and got cracking into the cooking.

Here, let's have another pretend montage!

We were treated to a gorgeous sunset. After this, my memory of the sequence of events gets a bit hazy but in no particular order, I do recall:

Setting up the camera to take a timelapse of the competitors scrambling over the hills at night.

Bonding with other volunteers through scrubbing dirty pots and pans in the cold and dark at midnight.

Having absolutely no idea what was going on while Daniel and head chef Blake danced





away in the middle of the hangar to what I think was obscure Soviet music.

My favourite part of TWALK — watching the little white dots of competitors' headtorches move across the twilight landscape.

Around midnight, we hit a lull in activity at the Hash House, and one by one, the night owl volunteers made their way to the volunteers' camp to catch some sleep. At around 2 am, I was briefly awoken from my slumber by the dulcet tones of Blake rousing everyone (else) from their sleep. I was conscious enough to register that he sounded somewhat worried. Something about (running out of?) food. Hmmmm. Must be dreaming.

At 4 am, I woke and made the bleary-eyed trek back to the Hash House. It was instantly clear to me as I entered the hangar that the level of goodwill in the building had reached its nadir. Competitors and volunteers alike were all a bit tense from the brief famine I had accidentally slept through, so I decided that now was not the time to retrieve the camera, and put in a few hours of food prep. The carrot-and-onion knife and I became good friends.

As dawn approached, a light haze and drizzle settled over the valley. Crap! The camera! Thank goodness, I packed it away before anything expensive could happen. And to my glee, the timelapse had somewhat worked, capturing the dance of the little white dots.

A bunch of us made another

trip in the land rover in the morning. Our cargo — one hundred sausages. Here's another pretend montage of some photos from overnight, and the UberSausages trip.

The morning was somewhat marred by a dire lack of hash browns, but our brave competitors pushed through the remaining legs. Without much fanfare, it was suddenly all over! Twenty-four hours were up and everyone crowded into the hangar for the prizegiving. My final task — getting photos of the victors while Nick said important things over the tannoy. And then it was time for packing up, and driving home, and having that nice warm shower I'd been thinking about since 4 am. TWALK 2023 was a success, and most importantly, I hadn't dropped the camera.

I'd like to conclude with this short reflection on TWALK, as it holds a special place in my heart. If TWALK is new to you, I hope these photos have given you a glimpse into the bizarre and yet extraordinary event it is. I simply love the diverse range of people it brings together — the matagouri-loving competitors, the cheery bus drivers, the hard-working TWALK officers, the generous landowners...and not least, the volunteers — from the Martins of yesteryear, to the friends I made while scrubbing pots together this year — I'm grateful to you all.























Coming onto  
McKerrow Island

## Hollyford Track

1 - 8 July

By Ronja Keeley  
Featured: Nick Slegers  
Blake Porton-Whitworth  
and Travis Brydon

**T**he Hollyford is a tramping track in Fiordland National Park. From the road end to the ocean it is 57 kilometers (about 35 miles) long – you can do a loop but it is difficult because it gets very swampy. There are 6 huts on that section you can stay in: Hidden Falls Hut, Lake Alabaster Hut, McKerrow Island Hut, Demon Trail Hut, Hokuri Hut, and Martins Bay Hut. The section of trail from the road end to Lake Alabaster Hut is well-maintained

and relatively easy to walk. After that, the trail gets much more difficult – a section of it is even known as the Demon Trail.

### Day 0

At 5:30 in the morning, I packed up my stuff and moved out of the room I'd been living in since February. I had more bags than I moved in with, which I explained away with the fact that I had a fair bit of non-perishable food I was keeping till my next stable place. In the days prior, I had prepared

8 days of food for myself, which were all contained in my (very heavy) tramping backpack.

As soon as Nick and Travis arrived, we piled into Travis' car and headed out. We drove 9 hours to Homer Hut, with quick stops in Lake Tekapo, Queenstown, and Te Anau. We only drove each other slightly crazy with discussions about US politics.

A quick profile on the other members of this expedition: Blake: Big history and politics guy, studies those things at university. Loves his bourbon and coke (and carried them with him on the tramp – was unsuccessful in convincing the rest of us to join him). I concluded that he's a sensationalist, both politically and in everyday life; he loves a good story and dramatic examples. Quote of the trip: "Ow my back!"

Travis: Quiet guy when you first meet him, pretty funny once you've been around him a while. Loves skiing, cars and anything else with a motor. Studies engineering. Quote of the trip: "Ah, stitch up".

Nick: Studies law and history at university. Easy to talk to and connect with. Also loves skiing, tramping, and things that go vroom. Will talk history for hours and tell you about obscure conflicts in surprising detail.

Quote of the trip: "She'll be right!"

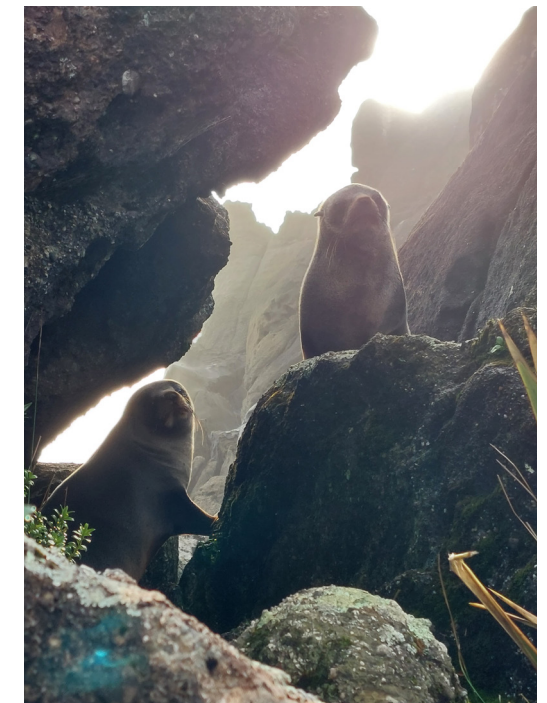
### Day 1

Road end to Lake Alabaster Hut:  
19.65 km

The morning found us waking up at Homer Hut, which is a basecamp just off the road to Milford Sound for people doing climbing and mountaineering. It had snowed on us overnight, and the views must have been gorgeous – alas, we left before the sun rose.

Around 9 we bravely set out with packs heavier than they would be for the rest of the tramp. My pack was around the same weight as everyone else's (perhaps even a bit heavier – I had gone a little overboard on how many wraps and cups of oatmeal I thought I would eat.

New Zealand Fur  
Seals





However, as the lightest person there, I definitely had the highest pack weight to body weight ratio. Weighing less does not mean I need to eat that much less, however, and I don't need less gear either – if anything, I need more layers to keep me warm at night. Anyway, I think I was real brave about it, even if I was slow going up hills on the first day.

Although I struggled most at first, Blake was in bad shape by the end of the day. Along with

Incredible trees  
in front of the  
Hokuri Hut



a good dose of blisters, he had pinched a nerve in his back and was in significant amounts of pain. As soon as we reached Lake Alabaster Hut, he dragged a mattress in front of the fire and proceeded to put on a snorechestra performance for us (which he later vehemently denied, but I have an audio recording of it).

#### Day 2

Lake Alabaster Hut to Demon Trail Hut: 13 km

On my way to the long drop this morning, I saw a Ruru (Morepork, New Zealand native owl). Travis was up and we observed the owl for a couple minutes, and it observed us.

Today marked the beginning of the more difficult section of the track, and sure enough, a kilometer or so in we already had to clamber our way around a fallen tree on the trail. It was our first, but definitely not our last.

Blake was still in pain and very brave about it. Once we got to McKerrow Island Hut, however, he tapped out. We agreed that we'd meet him back there in 4 days, we made sure he had enough food, and said goodbye. He said the rats would keep him company in our absence, as well as the "hot Scandinavian women" who were sure to come by (a tramping club tall tale, made up by men who are convinced that if such a thing were to happen, it would look like the "Castle Anthrax" scene from Monty Python and the Holy Grail – click to see a video of the scene).

So Travis, Nick, and I headed off on the Demon Trail, determined to go further before nightfall (well, Travis and Nick were – I half wanted to stay the night at McKerrow). Demon Trail Hut did not have a fireplace, so that night we were quite cold. Nick and I began our almost nightly tradition of trading shoulder massages, a luxury after a day of tramping.

#### Day 3

Demon Trail Hut to Hokuri Hut: 9.6 km

This day was relatively short, but quite technical. It also rained on us a bit. There were quite a few trees that had fallen over the track, and we did a couple unnecessarily long detours while trying to find the trail again. It's not called the Demon Trail for nothing: sections of the track were effectively walking uphill through a stream flowing across slippery rocks. I came to appreciate that maybe tramping takes more skill than I give it credit for – I generally don't think of it as something that takes a lot of practice, but not slipping on those rocks while also carrying a heavy pack on my back took quite a bit of knowledge about weight distribution in my body. We arrived at Hokuri Hut in the early afternoon, and used the sunlight to dry out our sweaty clothes and roast ourselves a bit as well. At sunset we went down to the lakeshore and watched the sunset while trying to keep away the sand flies that wanted to eat



All smiles from  
Travis

us for dinner.

#### Day 4

Hokuri Hut to Martins Bay Hut: 13 km

Today's tramp was relatively flat and easy; much of it was along the lakeshore. We got going as the sun rose at 8:30 and arrived at Martins Bay around 12:30, which gave us plenty of time to explore the surrounding area.

The boys convinced me to join them in a round of beach cricket, which I did, but not before taking a series of action shots of them playing. I don't know how to play cricket, but I concluded that it's kind of like baseball except you only have two bases.

Later, we explored the rocky seashore nearby. There were





Views from a bridge crossing on the Demon Trail

really interesting rock formations, and we got surprised by some fur seals!

Day 5  
Martins Bay Hut to Hokuri Hut:  
13 km

The next morning, we slept in, and then went swimming in the lagoon before breakfast. It smelled like sulfur, and we really didn't feel that much cleaner. We left around 11 and ate lunch on the lakeshore, which seemed like a great idea until we were swarmed by sandflies. That evening, we went skinny dipping in the lake before sunset. After dark, we dragged out a mattress and stargazed for a while. The stars here are stunning here because there is effectively no light pollution – the closest town is far away, and there are absolutely no lights here.

Day 6  
Hokuri Hut to McKerrow Island Hut: 16 km

Hiking back along the Demon Trail was less difficult now that

we knew what to expect and our packs were significantly lighter after eating 5 days worth of food. I entertained myself during the 5 hour hike by making a concerted effort to watch the Les Misérables movie in my head and sing all the songs in order. I know the soundtrack well, but getting the songs in the correct order turned out to be pretty challenging.

Nick and I started talking about musicals, and it turned out we were both Hamilton enthusiasts. I had a selection of Hamilton songs downloaded on my phone and on the last night we sang along to them in the hut together (which was great for us, but less great for Travis and Blake, who nevertheless bravely tolerated us).

After a quick lunch at Demon Trail Hut, we hiked all the way back to McKerrow Island. Blake saw us coming from afar, and we exchanged a series of whoops for about 15 minutes before we saw him. As expected, Blake had a series of unverifiable tales ready for us. "You just missed the hot Scandinavian women, they left a few hours ago!" He also claimed to have killed 3 rats with the hut's wood chopping ax and to have seen a kiwi during a midnight bathroom run (but had no picture proof of either; also, that valley is not within the range of any kiwi species so it would be pretty big news if they were there).

Four days alone in the bush had definitely had an effect on Blake, but all in all, he was in

pretty good shape. The hut, however, looked like a bachelor pad, with firewood strewn across the porch, a mattress dragged to the fire and blocking the door, clothes drying on every imaginable surface, and the rest of his belongings generally exploded across the interior of the hut. All of this was perfectly understandable, given that he had been alone for 4 days, but the cries of protest when we slid his stuff to the side or asked him to move his mattress so we could walk through without falling over him were vociferous.

Day 7  
McKerrow Island Hut to Hidden Falls Hut: 20.2 km

Packing up the next morning was quite a feat for Blake, and Nick and I made bets on what time he would be ready. We each bet the last of our chocolate cookies, with me betting that we would leave before 8:45 and Nick placing his bets on after. There was plenty of bribery and cheating involved

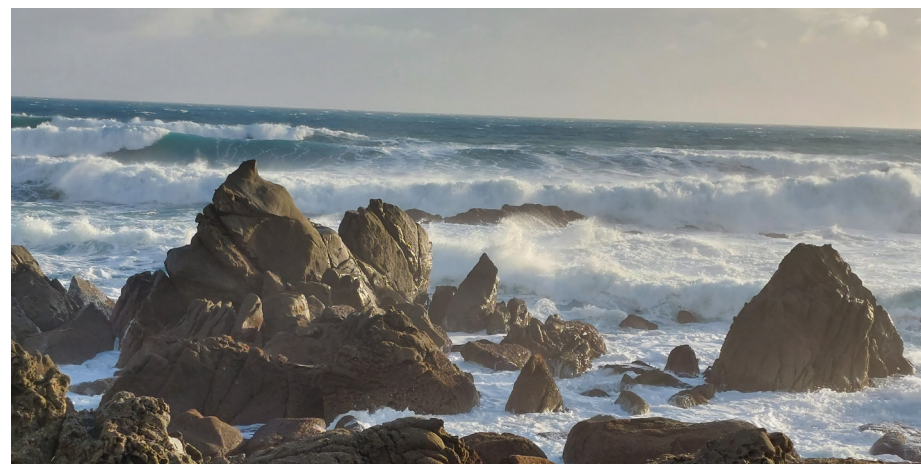
without Blake's knowledge: I offered Blake a my cookie if he was ready by 8:30, and Nick stated that we really were in no rush. We left by 8:40 and I ate Nick's last cookie that evening.

This section of the trail felt much easier than it had on the way in: a week of conditioning combined with much lighter packs meant we went quite a bit faster. Nick and I sang some musical numbers while walking, while Blake and Travis found themselves far ahead on the trail.

Day 8  
Hidden Falls Hut to Road End:  
8.6 km

The last hike was short, so we took our time packing up and chopped some wood for the next people to stay in the hut. We arrived at the car around 1, changed into clean clothes, and drove to Te Anau. None of us really wanted to eat canned fish and cheese for lunch when there was a supermarket waiting for us. At the supermarket, we each got

Rocky sea shore at Martins Bay





what we had been craving most. All I really wanted was yogurt and some chips, so that's what I got. I couldn't be bothered to dig out a spoon, so I ate 500ml of yogurt using doritos as a spoon in the parking lot of the supermarket.

Afterwards we drove to the hostel we had booked and showered off 8 days worth of sweat before going back into town for a "pub feed". That night, we soaked in the hostel's newly added hot tub and looked at the stars one last time. All that was left of the trip was a 9 hour drive back to Christchurch (featuring a full sing-through of Hamilton by Nick and I) and a couple loads of laundry once back at home.











Aoraki National  
Park

## Sefton Bivvy

3 - 4 July

By Mon Blakie  
Featured: Lucas Larraman  
Axl Radzyner  
Emily Prout  
and Adam Walker

Lucas asked me to write a trog for our Sefton Bivvy Trip. I said, "Why? Nothing much eventful happened". He said "are you being serious?" I am always cereal. Here is a short story of everything uneventful that happened on a trip to Sefton Biv:

We were supposed to be going to Barker Hut but Lucas was pressed for time, Axl is allergic to cold water and Lewis recommended avoiding the 'bastard' stream around Avoca

Hut. Weather changed and so did the plans. Emily sent me a list of items to collect/steal from her house and the gearshed: crampons, ice axe, orange puffa, black polar fleece, Nell's poles...

I knew it was gonna be a good trip when I got in the car Monday morning. Spent the journey swapping life stories with Lucas and the two strangers, Adam and Axl. The lights up Mount Hutt shone across the dark blurry fields. I remember laughing

hearing how the boys got into trouble as little kids - I never did because I am an angel. A fact, not a "faxl".

The clouds changed colour as we hooned into fairlie and I bought a pie for brekkie. Axl had been feening for a pie and when we got back in the car I asked him why he didn't get one. Turns out he had and already eaten it.

Met Emily at the doc centre where we left our intentions and were warned not to go up to Sefton Biv. I don't remember why, conditions were good and avvy forecasts were low.

The walk was chill, we were in no hurry, Adam "has thoughts". Lucas had brought the 2022 naked calendar to leave the

naked photo of Hooker hut at Hooker hut. However at Hooker Hut Lucas dropped the photo and it slipped through the crack of the deck at Hooker Hut. Luckily he found a way to crawl under the deck (somehow from the back rather than through the trap door where we were sitting?) to retrieve the Hooker Hut naked photo from under Hooker Hut.

There were some grandparents and their family having lunch at the hut and we showed them the calendar. The old man was very impressed and wanted to know if we were in it. Righto...

We continued boulder hopping. The patches of snow got bigger as we climbed the hill. I filmed

Drive responsibly







Adam doing his best Karate Kid impression

the others throwing rocks to hit a particular part of the frozen stream. The video is five minutes long. Simple creatures. Emily and I overheard Axl's phone call to his Dad and we were laughing because he told him exactly what elevation level we were at. Are those penguins on hooker lake? Or moving bergs? Oh they are people and the lake is frozen! For the last wee bit we donned the crampons and there was a small fun section before we were on the snowy ridge before the hut.

Right, time for naked calendar photos. Now? Okay. UGH BRRR FREEZING!! Hurry up and take your pants off!!

Following the photo shoot I defeated Adam in an epic ice axe battle. You kill my father, prepare to die. We cooked dinner with the door open watching the full moon hanging heavy in the pink sky above the mountains across from us. To the annoyance of everyone else I lost all my belongings about five times over in the cramped biv

- "have you seen my..." At some point Axl pulled a six pack out of his bag - chur!!

The doc centre radiod in with the weather report for the next day - 70km winds in the afternoon eek! Then we played cards while Axl "slept". I say this in quotation marks because he woke up when we switched to deep and meaningful conversations for a bit before some rolling logs. For those who don't know, rolling logs is an extremely serious technical sport. You need at least three people lined up horizontally in sleeping bags and then the person on the end rolls over the other two. Then it's the next person's turn to roll. This went on for some time.

Bedtime was late by tramping standards - I think we went to sleep around 11.30pm. The wind was howling outside. It was the sort of wind that made train noises. I lay in bed wondering (agonising) if our crampons and ice axes were blowing away. I was

so paranoid that at 4am I poked my head out and stomped them into the snow. We really should've brought them inside.

In the morning it was windy enough for Emily to have a fight with the shovel when digging a shithole. I think Lucas wanted to stay longer because he tried to drown out the wind with reggae. There was also some controversy as to whether pasta water should be drunk or tipped out.

Dropping into spiderman position is a valid descent technique when things get gusty. At the snowline Lucas realised he hadn't shut the bivvy door. Or had he? He climbed all the way back up to check (good lad) just to realise that he had.

Being back on Hooker valley track feels ridiculous when you have a heavy pack and ice axes and people pass you in matching gold gym sets, selfie sticks and high heels. Axl and Lucas needed to be back in Christchurch so we huddled in the middle of a bridge

to say goodbye, probably not the best spot, and made some comments about how good the sunrise from the top of Mt Cook was for passersby to hear.

Then Emily, Adam and I set off to have lunch on an iceberg.

We unknowingly made the news:

<https://www.stuff.co.nz/timaru-herald/132494186/doc-warns-against-walking-on-frozen-alpine-lake-in-aorakim-cook-national-park>

Walking on a frozen glacier lake is fine-ish if you are smart about it... Listen to the noises of the lake, spread out to distribute the weight etc. We were particularly careful where the iceberg meets the lake because obviously that's going to be the weakest and sketchiest part of our sidequest. It was a peaceful half an hour before people began to follow us. In the meantime I figured out how to drink from the Lake using the detached tube of my water bladder as a straw. Call

Getting naked for the Keas!





me an engineer.

Some more people came out to join us and we took their photos. Then three tourists were standing together in a line waiting for the first person to climb on the iceberg. Uh oh. I yelled at them waving my arms. MOVE! SPREAD OUT. SPREAD OUT NOW. They moved but too slowly. The ice cracked underneath the woman at the front! Luckily she fell backwards onto her bum and could kind of scootch back onto more solid ice.

Fuck me people are dumb. But if you have never been to somewhere with specific dangers, how are you to know what the dangers are?

We carefully found a new spot to step back onto the lake and put crampons on for the short walk back. This made the short walk a lot shorter. I love my lil boot spikes. The rest of the day was smooth sailing. We drove back in Emily's Dad's car (if ykyk) and made the compulsory stop at the Geraldine kebab shop for dinner. Hehe that rhymes. Yum. Leaving in darkness and arriving in darkness has the surreal effect where you wonder if the trip even happened. I think it did, but, like I told Lucas, it was nothing eventful really.















Views of  
Pinnacle Biv and  
the surrounding  
mountains

## Lost on the West Coast (Again)

9-11 July

By Lucas Larraman  
and Adam Walker

**N**au mau haere mai  
ki another trog of  
#dontpressthebutton. You  
may remember 'west coast does  
bush' from 2022. You thought we  
would learn something? Nah we  
don't do that xx

Roses are blue. Violets are red.  
5am Riccarton Road is dead!

Doo doo doo doo doo dooooo do  
do  
Do do do do do - do do do do

do do dooooo - do do do do do  
do do do di di do do weoweo do  
do do do doo do

Marlon Williams sings My Boy  
as we make the turn on to the  
great Alpine Highway 73'. Adam  
'ROCKS!' Walker is thinking of  
Nina and te rā rises into a  
glorious day.

The drive over to the coast is  
always special and this time was  
even more special. Adam first  
meticulously explains to me why

birds aren't real (don't believe  
me? have you ever touched  
a powerline? have you seen  
a bird touch one? those birds  
are charging their little drone  
batteries; mind=nofuckingway)  
then describe in great detail  
why everything is soup (solid  
to liquid ratio not defined;  
mind=nofuckingwayholysht).

We arrive in Hokitika and  
after thinking about 'ki uta ki tai',  
we collect some stones from the  
beach to bring with us into ngā  
maunga. A splash of salt water  
on our faces does us well and we  
are heading ki uta. Kā tiritiri o te  
moana are gloomy, suspicious  
and strokes of wispy clouds  
shroud ngā maunga. A brief  
glance up at the Toaroha Ranges  
confirms no snow coverage along  
our traverse and we decide to  
leave the crampons, ice axes and  
avi gear in the car (big mistake).

The Princess (RAV4) is very  
nearly caught out in a muddy  
state but the Princess pulls  
through to safety. Adam and I give  
the Princess a 'chur and see ya  
later' then we are heading up the  
Whakarira Gorge. Adam gets up  
to his waist in a bog before he  
goes 'yeah nah this ain't the one  
aye'. We are on a mission sans  
gps and we are lost in the first  
hour following a trap line (classic  
government trying to catch us  
out). The river calls and whispers  
us back on track and we ascend  
to the GORGE-EOUS GORGE  
GORGE-EOUS GORGE.

A rock pig head oinks 'ka kite'  
and we are 'boo boo'ing

ourselves up to the Boo Boo on a  
fresh cut track.

A schmoko serves us well in  
the confines of Boo Boo before  
the afternoon delight commences  
- reggae (It's always reggae in the  
mountains). A delightful mist (and  
Adam) kisses and holds me tight  
while I jam reggae and cruuuise  
up to Pinnacle Biv.

Adam is a great cruiser,  
everyone should cruise like Adam,  
Adam is a beautiful man. Light  
dashes in and out of our future  
and the clouds rise and tumble.  
Hope of dryness rises above the  
clad and captures us before the  
rain really starts and we are  
damp as.

We learn that - Pinnacle Biv  
has no mattresses comfy wood  
creates a comfy night.

The next day brings forth  
golden rays gleaming into the little  
hut. My eyes follow the gleaming  
rays to the Arahura Awa where  
Waitaiki lies. I acknowledge the  
mana of the source of Pounamu  
and the haerenga that she

This is the guy  
who thinks birds  
aren't real



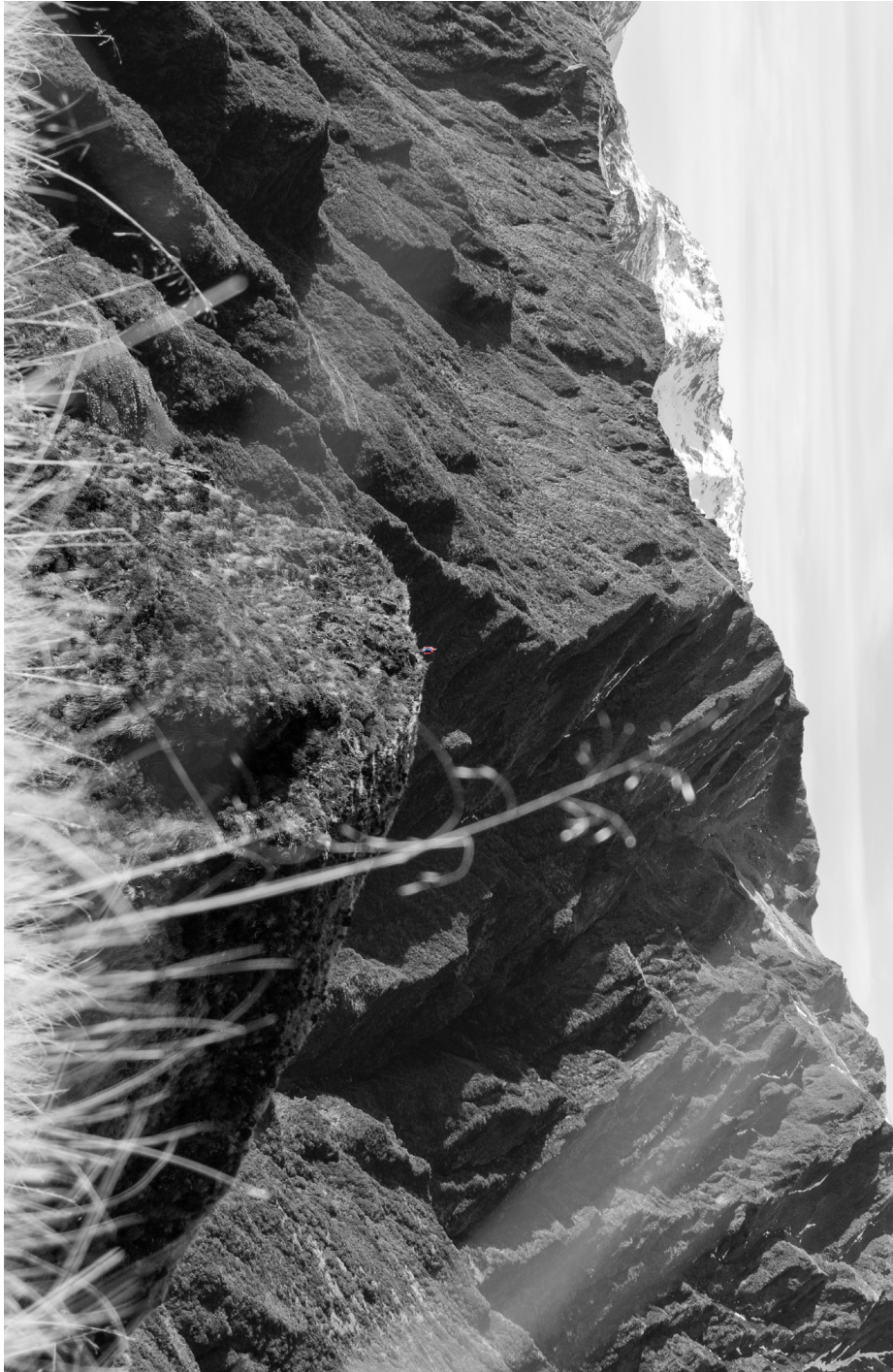


went on back in the rā. My eyes are then drawn to Te Moana-tāpokopoko-a-Tāwhaki and I experience all of its glory.

We at CUTC take our hat (and little bit more) off to the Kea. That's why we created a 'tasteful nude' calendar to raise funds for Kea Conservation in 2023. As I write, we have raised over \$3,000! Why am I mentioning this? Adam and I created March on that fine morning - the mood was just right, the colours glowing and well ... it got steamy.







## **Trip not-Haiku #1: A Little red Bivvy Just above the bush Let's take some nudes**

When the sun is out, you gotta take a nude photo shoot for the calendar. Lucas and I stripped everything except our wear on earth puffer jackets (gotta shout out our sponsors!). Check out March, it's quite steamy and you might get lost in the views. There is nothing better than fucking around naked with friends on a crisp morning in the bush. Alas, the shenanigans can't last forever. Lucas took a shit in a hole and we boosted over Genoa peak to the ridgeline, kicking away 100kg possums along the way, trackless. We got stuck in the middle of some beautiful science as the condensed dew on the East side of the ridge began to evaporate and create a massive cloud of fog, while the west side remained

clear. Science is often ominous though and fog means you lose your eyes for real for real. But of course we weren't going to press the button!

## **Trip not-Haiku #2: A lesson to us From the fog and the ridge Cotton saves lives**

We push through, surviving only on berries and our own urine. Following our paper map because we are experts at reading maps and there is no way we could be wrong. As we go we discuss the classics, soup, birds, love, war, trials of the mind, and of course, love of cheese. Man I love cheese. We find sparse snow on the tops and get in the first couple runs of the ski season. We stick left because that's what

Fog rolling in  
over the ridge up  
to Pinnacle Biv  
to Pinnacle Biv





you do when you're in blind and in a maze (hand on the left wall) and cross a real sharp ridge, im talking 100 mm width. sharp enough to cut butter.

Once across the ridge the maze comes to a dead end, but we gotta stay left, so we cross the ridge once more and continue past point 1618. At this point, we plan to head to the highest peak in the tallest tower, we slay the dragon, capture the princess, and live happily ever after in our swamp. but at the highest peak, we realize that we are on the wrong peak. its also 3 pm, we still have to climb a mountain and go down the other side, ideal before the sun sets at 5pm. Day light is minimal, and the fog is still

The fog hugging  
us tight



hugging us tight. Because we are responsible adults with a sense of self-preservation, we had to lightly press the button (it basically didn't happen) to confirm our location.

### Trip not-Haiku #3: Don't press the button Don't you dare Ah fuck

With our newfound knowledge, Lucas and I drank some jet fuel and cruised on up to Mt.Reeves. Leaving our crampons and ice axes in the princess, was a choice that we made...not our best one, but it was one. we skedaddled up the side of ole Reeves, grateful that we decided to peak instead of skirt. We took a lil pause at the peak to acknowledge the mountain and leave our rocks (ROCKS! Cant believe this is the first time im mentioning rocks smh). Still a little day light left, we plan to hit the saddle at sunset. Snow has a different plan. But snow can suck it, we toddle on, wary of avalanches along the way. Slowly Lucas and I make out way down the back face, one set of footprints behind us, lonely and white.



### Trip not-Haiku #4: Rocks! Rocks! Rooooooooooooooooocks! Roccccks! Rock!

We finally hit the saddle at sunset, a goal reached, but there is still more to go. the fog still wrapped around us, burritos in the mountains. we descend down adventure ridge, and what a fitting name for this tramp. Dark and foggy, our torches barely work, whiting out everything in front of us. We make out way down the ridge picking out reflecting marker poles as we go. We both are wet and wild! I have a nice slide, but the tussock stands firm. We finally hit Adventure Biv. Our minds are melting from the full on decent off Mr. Reeves. After 30 mins, we decide to carry on to Cedar Flats, awards await us. Lucas becomes a zombie and I an orangutang. This bit of the tramp is a blur...fuzzy in both our minds. But the decision to carry on was the correct one. at 9:30pm we hit Cedar flats hut. So grateful for walls and someplace dry. But we ignore that and take

all our clothes off, grab out food and meander over the river to the hot pools. The warm water licks all the tension out of our bodies (yummy!) we eat vigorously, and Lucas comes in clutch with a fucking pudding? Cake? Idk but it was delish.

Ka Tiritiri-o-te-  
Moana

### Trip not-Haiku #5: Cake in a hot tub? Fuck yeah, my guy Gobble gobble gobble

We slept good that night. A true banger of a day.





# SNOWCRAFT POETRY

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*Featuring Lucas' Famous  
Lentil Curry Recipe*



Lentil Curry

→ Cook 3.6 kg Rice

→ Chop up onions and fry on medium high

→ Grate garlic cloves x 5

→ Dice ginger

→ Put 16 tbs of Curry Powder, 4ts tumeric, with onions, and lots of Pepper

→ Add ginger + garlic to pot, fry for lil bit

→ Add 10x Coconut milk, 10x Canned tomatoes to pot

→ Add 10x Cans of water

→ Add 2kg dried red lentils

→ Very important to keep stirring !!! ★

→ Add 4x chickpeas, drained

→ Add Capsicum, spinach (how much? use judgement)

→ Simmer for 20-30 mins then salt ★

Naan Tomatavenger

- Heat up Naan!

→ Keep GF Separate

Banana Salsa

- Dice bananas into big bowl

- Dice red onions very thinly

- Just before serving? add lemon juice

- Salt + Pepper

Voilà!

**CONSTANTLY STIR ★**

**CHUR**

*Adding and removing vegetables that are important to make it better than before*

## When In Doubt... Throttle It

By Hayden Groves

Dusty and hung, we stumbled to the carpark to have some fun!  
Subarus galore, with awd power we were out to explore!  
To the mountains we went, full of devils with summit fever intent!  
Rotten snow aside, steeze and stoke used to glacier slide!  
A feast we have had, cheers to the instructors for being such fucking lads!

## Reefs of Grey

By Ben Hood (Third Place)

A sea of white  
Reefs of Grey,  
I have on this day  
Gone to places I have only seen  
Far from places I have often been  
Making friends, learning skills  
Discovering a new type of thrill  
So soon, I will return  
To these seas of white  
And reefs of Grey  
On another, sunny day

## Arts and (Snow)Crafts

By Rosie Durgan

A scenic drive  
Before we arrived  
Then we got our tramp on  
With our crampons  
For lunch we were serving cheese  
And lots of steez  
Learned how to self arrest  
That was the best  
Used an ice axe

To stop us falling on our backs  
Saw a kea  
And lots of skiers  
A tranciever went missing  
Couldn't find it despite searching and wishing  
Spread out in a row  
Digging through the snow  
Abandoned the search  
Tranciever stranded in the lurch  
May it rest in peace  
A moment of silence please  
...  
Then we made our way to the environment centre  
Sliding down, way to send it  
Lots of laughs and jokes  
And always, plenty of stoke

## Call Me an Avalanche, Coz I'm Wet and Loose

By Laura Craft and Cole Blackwell (First Place)

Before the sun rose, we all set out,  
To see what snowcraft is all about.  
With a quick pit stop at Sheffield pies,  
We aimed for the mountains, snowy peaks high  
Laura and Liv just full sent the road,  
While others used chains to conquer the snow  
AchYewwwwwww, I caught the stoke,  
It's a shame that Cole's pizza bread made him choke  
While our crampons got filled with snow and ice  
We praised our lord and saviour, steezus christ (amen)  
We threw ourselves down the

Facing page:  
Lentil curry  
recipe, enjoy!



snow that was hilly  
 And ice down the pants proved to  
 be kinda chilly  
 In the middle of learning how to  
 be like the French (oui, oui)  
 A few of the meth hounds had to  
 pee pee  
 It was hard to find a urinating spot  
 because there was no grass  
 And the hounds were afraid to  
 show the world their nice juicy ass  
 We learnt how to stop and to self  
 arrest falls  
 And going down backwards was  
 the sickest of all  
 At the end of the day, a  
 transceiver could not be found  
 But that didn't dampen the phych  
 of the mighty meth hounds  
 Fishtailing down the road was not  
 part of the plan,  
 Then we saw axl's dad in a van  
 Getting into the lodge proved to  
 be kind of hard  
 A South Island entry was almost  
 in the cards  
 Now we are all toasty warm  
 sharing food by the fire  
 the lingering stoke from the day  
 couldn't be higher  
 After such a beautiful and  
 educational day,  
 I think it's about time that we  
 should all hit the hay

## The Dirty South Ram: A Haiku

by Axl Radzyner

A raid impending  
 Stolen mazda demio  
 Cigs, vapes, crack dealing

## A Snowcraft poem

by Poppy Gane

This poem is about those who  
 cannot be here with us tonight,  
 also known as the transceiver.  
 Prancing through the snow,  
 We may never know,  
 The fate of the transceiver,  
 I wish I could still see her,  
 Somewhere between a rock and a  
 hard place,  
 I can still picture the snowy face,  
 A lesson I have truly learned,  
 One day I will return to  
 Craigieburn,  
 With a car that has four wheel  
 drive,  
 All my mates will return alive,  
 Shovelling snow with all my might,  
 Everything will be alright.

## Woof

by Adam Mckelvey

The snowiest of crafts  
 Followed by a delectable- dinner  
 Crampons on  
 Crampons off  
 Transceivers lost  
 Woof

## A love letter to punch crust

by Isaac Muller-Wild

I love punch crust  
 Crispy crunchy crust  
 Like a perfect creme brûlée  
 Delicious dessert  
 Shred the pow, they say  
 But it's just not the way  
 I'll take a breakable crust any day

## Spilled Ink

by Riley and Elise (Second Place)

Roses are black  
 Violets are black  
 Ink is everywhere...  
 GO MULLER GO WILD





## Cassidy-Blimit Traverse: “Dude, I have no idea which one Cassidy is.”

5 Aug

By Joseph Chamberlain  
Featured: Campbell  
Noah  
and Oscar

Noah and Oscar  
en route to the  
Blimit climb

**W**ith high hopes and low expectations, I obsessively checked and re-checked the Arthur's Pass avalanche forecast throughout the week. The fresh dumping of much-needed snow on Wednesday had created considerable avalanche risk, but I was not one to give up hope easily. Campbell and I had been looking at the Cassidy-Blimit traverse for ages, and this weekend our schedules finally

lined up to give it a crack. The week at uni passed slowly, but, against all odds, the avalanche conditions improved to the point of near perfection. We were ecstatic, so excited in fact that I got a grand total of one hour of sleep on Friday night.

Waking up in the morning, I picked up Campbell and two American exchange friends (Noah and Oscar) whom I had met at Refreshers two weeks before. Wheels turning, tunes bopping



and full of caffeine, we headed out to Arthur's Pass Village and the beginning of the track.

I proved my effectiveness as trip leader by going the wrong way pretty much straight away, so we had to backtrack until we found the path that led through the beech forest and up the mountain. It was very steep, and Campbell showed up the rest of the group by boosting ahead as we huffed and puffed. In staggered sentences, we came up with excuses as to why we weren't as fast as him.

Moods were high as we emerged from the bushline. Despite the low cloud, the view across the valley was gorgeous, and the mountainside was lit up

with shouts of "Sheeeesh!" and "Yee-haaaw!"

Shortly afterwards, we donned our crampons and proceeded sharply up the mountain through a neat, icy gully. Into the clouds we went, slowly but surely. After some time walking and assessing avalanche terrain along the way, I heard my name called. Turning around, I was rewarded with the most magnificent view of Mount Rolleston poking through the clouds across the valley. This warranted many more shouts of joy and excitement.

This revitalised the group, filling us with energy and determination to continue. We marched on along the ridgeline, four lads filled with the elation that

comes with being surrounded by the spectacle that is the Southern Alps in wintertime. The low cloud continued to clear until there was but a thin layer of high, overcast cloud above us, providing a nice blanket of protection from the sun (we still wore sunscreen!). We could see along the ridgeline, but it was at this point where I exclaimed, "Dude, I have no idea which one Cassidy is." Neither did anyone else.

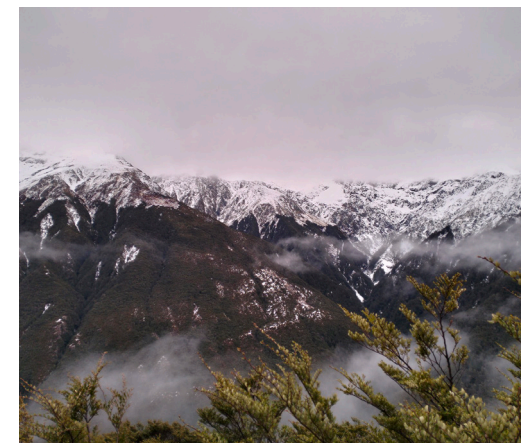
Another group was ahead of us making some nice footprints, and we eventually caught up with them. After that, we had to make our own steps.

We must have summited Mount Cassidy at some point, because Blimit eventually loomed ahead of us with Temple Basin skifield below. The ridgeline up to Blimit looked gnarly and rocky. We couldn't wait to start climbing it.

Some exciting climbing ensued as we tackled the Blimit ridgeline. Steep gullies were sidled, rocks were climbed, steps were made, exposure was felt, and I was having the time of my life. After reaching the summit, we had lunch on Nature's doorstep, with the most phenomenal of views encapsulating us.

Absolutely loving life. We set off again after a quick lunch, sliding on our bums down a gully. Good self-arrest practice! The plan was to head down to Temple Basin skifield and down to the road from there.

Noah was especially excited



Looking back across the valley from above the bushline

by this. We laughed as he watched with awe and released the occasional "Hell yeah!" On getting to the ski lodge, we found CUSSC having their annual birthday party. Stoke was high amongst everyone as we came in. Louise was painting a neat mural, and one lad offered me a beer for the journey down the mountain. Nothing like some good hydration.

Tunes were played and yarns were had as we boosted down the Temple Basin track and back to the car. An unexpected bonus occurred as a Kea came right up to us in the car park. He provided some entertainment by bouncing around us as we packed the car, and threatened to steal my gaiters. I think Noah was more excited than the Kea by the whole ordeal.

On the drive home that evening, I was close to falling asleep along the Canterbury Plains. The best remedy was a can of V and an hour-long singalong to Taylor Swift. Blank

Oscar and Noah walking through the beech forest





Space never sounded so good. We were exhausted coming into Christchurch, but after such a fantastic day. moods were high. The avalanche conditions threatened to cancel the trip, but hope prevailed and we pulled it off. I couldn't have asked for a better mission, and more importantly, the people I did it with.

**Facing page:**  
**Top:**

The crew  
**Middle:**  
Mount Rolleson  
through the  
clouds

**Bottom:**  
Me, sitting on the  
Blimit summit

**This page:**  
Cheeky Kea  
saying hello







Did you know  
that Emily  
drew all of the  
cartoons!?

## Snow Wipe and the Two Dwarves

17 - 18 Aug

By Caitlin Mitchel  
Featured: Angie Varon  
and Calum Macintosh

**T**he tramp to buckland peaks hut started on a long dirt road, a 4wd track. only about 15 minutes into the approach calum insisted that he would have survived an abortion. after 5 kilometers of easy gravel walking and about 14 seconds of vertical terrain, we decided we were working very hard and needed out first break. 3 long and hard hours later, we broke through the snow line, and the snow broke into our shoes. oh,

and the sun was setting. we caught sight of the hut. it looked close as and calum was estatic because he spotted a chimney- we would be warm soon. but the descent to the hut took ages. angie basically rolled down the hill, falling maybe a dozen times into snow covered tussock, beelining for shelter. our arrival at the hut was met with two fold disappointment. calum realized that the chimney he'd seen was an apparition, and caitlin realized

that, upon packing for this tramp on the comedown from a different kind of trip, she had forgotten her head torch (and her toothbrush, and her hair brush, among many other things...) our freezing cold fingers and toes were soon forgotten when calum prepared a 3 star tramping dinner and caitlin a 5 star hot chocolate. calum's pov : I awoke shivering on my 21st birthday... i was greeted by caitlin and angie shouting about my nocturnal wriggings, annoyed at my desperate tactics to stay warm. We had a slow morning, none of us too excited to leave the warmth of our beds.' as we were about to leave i pronounced i'd wait until we returned to go to the bathroom. my friends, knowing this would at best result in constant complaining, and at worst in me shitting my pants, handed me the toilet paper and forced me to go to the long drop. As i approached the toilet i looked down at the measly toilet paper rations and sensed my impending doom. The first wipe confirmed my thoughts and i knew the rations were insufficient. after trying and failing to maximise what little tp i was provided, i waddled out of the toilet to look for alternatives. i returned with leaves, however these quickly proved sharp and ineffective. i moved on to the only alternative... snow. having finished the job i returned to the hut a broken man. melting ice rolled down my pants and my heart filled with shame. i looked forward to revelling in the

sympathy my friends were sure to give me. As i entered the hut caitlin screamed "you better not have used all my toilet paper, that's for the next 3 days!" Upon explaining the desperation of my situation i was met with no further sympathy. heartbroken, i finished packing my bag and we started the descent. 10 kilometres later, after ample lecturing about how many wipes are appropriate for a poo while tramping, calum appeased us by asserting that if he could turn back time, he would do two things: 1. Kill hitler and 2. Spread his cheeks while he shat for a smoother, simpler clean up. The end





En garde!

## Three Ski Mountaineers and a Tramper Who Carried Skis for 250 Metres

25 Aug

By Mon Blakie  
and Emily Prout  
Featured: Isaac Muller-Wild  
and Axl Radzyner

It was Wednesday 8.20, the last week of term three. I'd spent all weekend the week before on an assignment, had an essay in shambles, a test on Monday, and one that Wednesday night and one on Friday night. My heart was beating fast, my fingers and toes were tingly and my palms were slightly sweaty. But not because of my deadlines.

Isaac had just made a group chat called 'Backflip the Bealey slide'. (Actually it was called

'Backflip the Otira slide', but "never let the truth get in the way of a good story" - Axl).

Isaac had asked me if I wanted to ski off Rome Ridge a few weeks back - Fuck yes! - and his message "alright we doing this" was enough to get my blood pumping and distract me from all the thinking I was supposed to be doing.

I didn't think I was up for it to be honest. Using my thumb I measured the gradient of

different places I'd been skiing and compared the width of the bold lines every vertical 100m to the top of the low peak of Mt Rolleston. It looked really really steep. Hmm. If any of us fell it would be bad. And I was pretty exhausted with the Uni grind. I told the others my fears and said I could come hangout in Arthurs anyway. I said I could go say hi to the CUSSC crew at TB but in my gut I knew I'd already committed.

I guess I could always climb down...

The plan was to drive to Arthurs Pass at 8:30pm Friday night, after Emily's test, camp by the start of Coral track and get moving at 3am. We got 2 out of 3 of these things.

Isaac showed up outside my flat half an hour late (which was fine because I had expected this and napped in the meantime) with no Axl in the car. My phone had the following texts:

Isaac: Probably be over at yours at 8:35

Me: Yep just call me I'll leave my phone ringer on

Isaac: Sweet. We'll no longer be there at 8:35 anyway

Isaac: In a completely unexpected turn of events we are running behind

Isaac: 15 minutes or so

Backing out of Emily's drive, she related how she completely missed the bridge bit and hit the gutter the day before and it was really bad. THUD. Isaac hit

the gutter.

Turns out Axl was buying food at the supermarket and stealing lip balm so we picked him up outside smackandbehave\* and we were off.

The vibes were on, the sky was clear and because I'm Simone-super-safe-safety-officer of 2023 I even filled out a BASE form for Euan to monitor in the unfortunate events that something really bad happened. It probably wouldn't. Not like we were doing anything dangerous. We drove out of reception before I could submit it.

It was surprisingly warm in Arthurs pass. Emily and I shared a tent, which unlike my two person tent definitely wouldn't fit three comfortably (sorry Axl), Isaac slept under his trusty tarp and Axl was in a bivvy bag. After a 2 hour nap it was time to get up.

Transceivers, contact lenses and too many thermals were put on to the tunes of Free Bird and Careless Whisper. After the third gag on my boiled egg I gave up and spat it into the bushes and we were off.

HOLY GUACAMOLE!! I have never hated trees more in my life!! The new stiff mountaineering boots I got off market place kept slipping on all the tree roots - should've worn trail runners. The top of my A frame kept getting stuck in branches and I was bashing into tree trunks with my ski boots sticking out the side. I felt like I'd regressed to an unstable, awkward beginner



tramper and was getting flashbacks to slip-slip-slipping if you've read Trog2022. After about 250 very painstaking vertical metres of me slowing the others down I knew this wasn't gonna work for us to reach the top by 8-8:30. I abandoned my precious set up in the bushes and continued on.

Another 100 metres and enough snow was sparkling under our torches for crampons and ski boots. While the others were doing that I submitted the BASE form. Chatted to a few mountaineers doing a Rolleston - Philly loop and then kept moving. Then a whole CMC group caught up to us. Seriously? Ugh the audacity of other people to be doing a cool trip at the same time. Moisture swirled around as clouds drifted in and out flirting with us. Would we get a good sunrise? Would we not? Spoiler: we did. After the ridge started to get fun the stars began to disappear and the horizon went orange. We were well above the clouds now and I could actually see where we were going. Low peak looked huge! Right before the notch after which the others would ascend another 300m to the summit, the sun broke over the horizon and turned everything golden.

Isaac gave me his keys and a PLB and I put some music on to distract myself from the fact that I was downclimbing alone. Goodluck! See you at the bottom!

There was only one hairy bit downclimbing where the snow

was soft. It was narrow and steep and I felt like my ice axes and crampons weren't getting any grip. And there was not much snow till you hit a rock. But positive self talk does wonders. I would have sounded like a little kid narrating what I was doing. Unrelated side story: Nana tells me when I was little I used to climb up the pantry saying out loud "get down, get down" the whole time.

By now it was nearly 8:15am and I sat on a nice flat bit in the sun for like half an hour enjoying the view and having a proper breakfast. My second hard boiled egg had kind of de-shelled in my bag but I ate the intact pieces and washed it down with a chocolate energy gel and some muesli bars. Yummm, quality cuisine. Normally I'd be getting out of bed. Honestly I'm a fan of this alpine start thing, might have to incorporate it on more chill tramps. You can be nearly done for the day and it's sunny and not even lunch!

I remember contemplating how weird that some things I love about the mountains are so contradictory. For example, I love the connection and the dead silent remoteness. Or the peace and the adrenaline. And the fact that the world can feel so big and yet so small. It's raw and real and dreamlike and yet I am consciously more alive somehow. Makes coming home even more unappealing. But would I want to stay in the mountains? Would I then feel satisfied?

Anyways... the rest of the ridge was pretty chill and a bit after 11 I was back at the car. Reversing out of that car park took some careful five point turns and I was reminded why I am the passenger princess. Then there were some weird noises and stressful angry sounding beeps. There was no handbrake - I looked everywhere! And there was no red emoji on the dash, maybe because the pack on the passenger seat wasn't wearing a seatbelt? Oh well Isaac can't care too much about his car after he "she'll be righted" it out of Emily's driveway and told us it's actually a 'swingroad' not a Nissan 'wingroad'.

Parked up at the Bealey valley car park. Wait there's

a third peddle? I thought it was automatic? No it must be automatic because I could drive it... oh THATS the handbrake. I looked like a crusty mad woman and got some questioning glances from some very well dressed tourists... I shut my eyes for a minute and opened them to Isaac and Emily grinning outside the window.

Emily's half:

We descended off the ridge leaving Mon behind and wished for the first, but not the last time that day, that she would be ok going down by herself. My hands were about to drop off, so I grabbed my ski gloves out while

Axl finding his lines







Rome Ridge

Isaac dug a pit (as you might expect) and Axl mentioned that his boots were feeling very ave.

We passed through the notch, a person sized gap in the rock allowing us to cross to the other side of the ridge. I became a bit swayey because this signified the start of the crux section and like Mon, I'd been thinking about it a fair bit that week. Once we were moving it was fine, I figured if you just look at your hands then you could be anywhere. It was more the thought of it than the actual thing itself. After another quick stop whereby Axl moaned about his boots, we were on the final stretch. The summit was much further than you might think, but just the right amount of far at the same time. Isaac was already there when I arrived and he greeted me with a huge goofy smile, a 'what the heck, we're here' smile. The high peak looked glorious and our route down steeeeep. The marvel of the summit was interrupted by a great roar. Axl, having taken his boot

off, had a grim look on. I got my bagels out, stoked we could finally stop and eat something. wwwBut just when I thought a rest was coming, we saw a cloud arriving in a hurry. High Peak was eclipsed in a matter of a minute. Isaac and I exchanged a look - "Right skis on, lets go". I put my poor bagels back in my bag and we packed up in a mad rush. The thought of not being able to see where to ski down was pretty dooming. We adopted a friend from another party and set off at pace. The boys kept saying how bloody steep it was but I honestly felt more at home on my skis than I had earlier with crampons.

The run was epic, and I couldn't believe we were pulling it off. It felt like we could just ride wherever on the mountain, such a freeing feeling. Luckily we had Axl and Isaac to guide us because a few shoots seemed to go left right left and if it was up to me we probably would've been bluffed out. Lower down we hit avalanche debris which proved super tiring

and slow with huge icy bobbles sticking up. Next up was tussock skiing. I hit a rock and did an ungraceful downhill faceplant, the kind where your legs are all confused and you can't get back up.

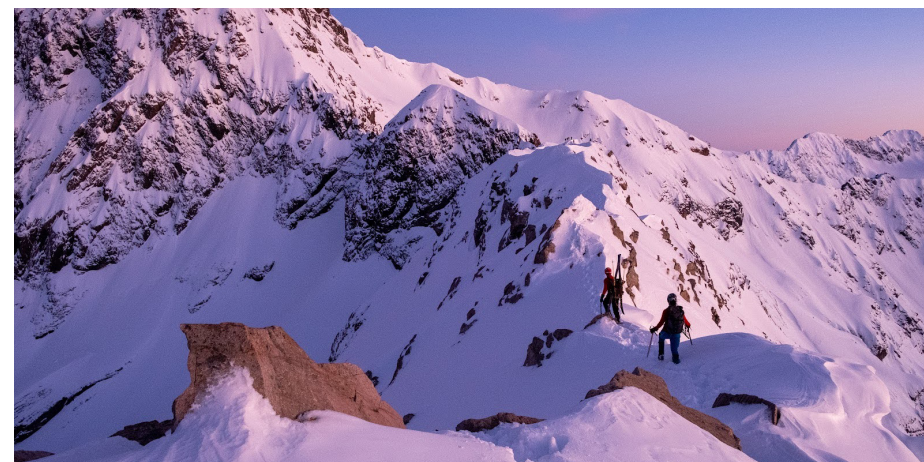
We walked the last 50m to the river in the valley and paused feeling suddenly so safe in comparison to the last few hours of constant vulnerability. The bagels came out, Axl's boots came off for the last time, and we had a minute to look at where we'd come. The peak which had taken 6 hrs to reach, we had just shedded in 1 hr top to bottom.

We cruised out the valley which ended on a popular walking track. The kind of walking track where people step out of the car in posh clothes and walk for 15 min. At the sign saying '2 min to carpark' Isaac waited for Axl and I, clearly keen for a good finish. So a mad goose chase began. We were sprinting, heavy packs with skis jumping up and down,

poles flailing. Isaac over took me from the side despite my attempts to trip him with a ski pole. At the entrance to the carpark, a gaggle of tourists were waiting, taking up the entire track. I worried for a moment, Isaac ahead of me, heading straight towards them, the wings of his skis sure to whack someone. But at the last second he skirted sideways and flew past them. His middle name must really be Steez as I've been told so many times. I can only imagine how confused the tourists would have been. We fell about laughing in the car park until we realised Isaacs car was there! Peering in the window, there was Mon tucked up in her sleeping bag.

I was desperate for a run when we got home but none of the others were too keen - I know lazy right. I arrived home to find my flatmate Nell, perfect! We set off straight away for the Port Hills. The sun set on our run and I suddenly felt super hungry so we

Morning  
alpenglow lights  
the way for the  
team





jettied back to the car and I tried to eat my last bagel while driving manual down Dyers Pass.

Isaac taking advantage of the bootpack from his team, typical



## A Series of Unfortunate Gear Events

29 Aug

By Emily Prout  
Featured: Isaac Muller-Wild  
and Nell Brown

Skinning up on  
the Craigieburn  
Range

The holidays were on and it was time to get out as much as possible. Rolleston was a hard act to follow and after talking for far too long on the phone Isaac decided to come over so we could figure out where to go. He had some great wild cards including mountains near Nelson, inaccessible mountains without avalanche advisory and Mt Tasman - not sure why we didn't just go with Tasman really. We agreed on the

Craigieburns. Coming down stairs we found Nell, who in a move of classic spontaneity, decided she could come too.

We set off the next morning and hitched from the Porters road. Skinning up the ski field we were called down to by some confused kiddies on the chairlift:

"Why are you walking up?!"

"Because we have no money for a chair pass"

"But you have tramping skis. They



must be expensive”  
 “That’s why we can’t afford the chairlift”

The little gremlins could not understand the fundamentals of being a student in the outdoors.

We toured along the ridge towards Mt Enys, regretting our decision not to bring ski crampons. Walking was somewhat better but the punch crust was slow. Isaac dug a pit and Nell suffered boot problems (there always has to be one). We arrived at an area with a large enough wind drift and decided this could be the place to snow cave. Isaac and I left Nell to sort her boots and start on the cave-digging.

Style is everthing

We ran two lines into the valley below Mt Enys. We skied like two friends dancing together to their favorite song, turns in flow with one another. At the bottom we discussed another lap, buzzing with energy, but by the time we reclaimed the ridge it was nearly sundown and we were tired. I had been thirsty the whole afternoon but didn’t take water and Isaac hadn’t brought much food on the entire trip and insisted he had no water. We found Nell again who had been digging for hours and only made a small impression you could just sit in. The odds were not looking good for our cave and to my outrage Isaac pulled out of his bag a drink bottle with WATER in it - how dare he.



We dug and dug while the sun set and the moon rose. We were making good progress eventually but it became apparent that one person would have to sleep on a large rock so we could all fit... sorry Nell. After a fair amount of faff to get all of us into the cave in the right order with the right gear, we were smooshed in for the night and Nell came out with “awh I need to pee”. But she was not allowed out and that was that.

The next day we ran lines from the cave after melting some snow for water. We ventured back over the other side of the ridge and skied low in the valley till the snow turned to ice. After 10 minutes of touring back up we were on an icy section, having to slam skis into the crust to make them stay. One particular slam saw my binding snap clean off my ski. We laughed until the thought of boot packing set in. Isaac, always willing to rescue a damsel in distress, managed to make a fix that would allow us to go up the hill. But we definitely couldn’t get it to be good for downhill. We hussed back up the skin track but Nell’s bindings were popping out and snow kept sticking to Isaac’s skins. He used his ski pole to tap off the snow and it bent. While trying to bend it back, it snapped clean in two, making 2 broken bits of gear for the day.

Back at the cave, we had lunch and decided I could single ski down. So the others took some weight out of my pack and we set off. It all went surprisingly



Our caving ridge

well and in no time we were down at dry skree. We transitioned and walked to meet the Porters road. The day wouldn’t be over without a run so I ran to get the car from the main road and came back to find the others climbing some nearby rock.

Turning off the Porters road and onto Highway 72 we started to feel a weird thing. The car was making strange sounds and swerving funny. A flat tyre. Since everything had already gone so smoothly that day, it was only fitting. We hunted around the car and found the place that a spare tyre would be, but it was empty. No jack, no wrench, no tyre. We made various calls but nobody had a tyre that would fit. Our flatmate Heath set out to rescue us with the spare from my Suzuki Swift which surely wouldn’t fit. But somehow it did... sort of. We made it going less than 70km/hr back to Christchurch for a later night than expected. At least we had a good story.



Fast forward a few months and Isaac decides he should really go buy a spare tyre. He gets a great deal and comes home to try to figure out how to fit it in his car. While fiddling around in the boot he finds a secret area.... WITH A SPARE TYRE IN IT.







Who doesn't love  
a good day of  
frontpointing?

## Frontpointing on Philistine

9 Sept

By Liadan Dickie  
Featured: Will  
and Skye

00:03

My eyes flutter open. I have slept less than two hours. I have exactly 2 hours and 12 minutes until my alarm will go off. I shouldn't be doing this today. I have 3 assignments to write. But fuck it, I need a day in the mountains. I shut my eyes again.

00:04

Fuck, only a minute has passed? I can write those assignments in the evening

anyway. Or tomorrow. I force my eyes closed.

00:07

Welp, I guess I'll just get up and work on those assignments. I'm not sleeping anyway. I'll go back to bed in half an hour.

00:09

Cup of tea in hand, I sit down with my laptop and start typing.

02:15

Oh crap, that's my alarm. So

much for going back to bed. I better get ready to leave.

02:34

Ping 'Here': a text from Skye pops up on my phone.

02:35

"Mornin'"

"How are we?"

"Good good"

The usual pleasantries are exchanged as I toss my pack in the boot and hop in the car.

04:40

We pull into the trailhead. Several cars are here and we can already see headlamps on the bluffs halfway up the mountain.

04:46

After donning our boots and exchanging pleasantries with the skiers in the carpark, we set off.

04:50

Skye's headlamp is dead already. Fortunately the moon is bright.

05:07

We don crampons. Will asks if I have a second ice axe.  
"No. Will that be a problem?"  
"...probably not"  
I am nervous. I've never been in 2-ice-axe terrain before.

05:45

Fuck I love frontpointing.

07:31

What a good sunrise. Life is

good.

08:30

Crap, I forgot sunglasses.

08:48

Wow, that's the top? This mountaineering thing is easier than I expected.

09:39

Hmm, going down is slower than expected. My eyes hurt. I'm torn between boosting down to save my eyes versus lingering to stick with Will and Skye. Skye's boots are too soft for crampons to work well, and our descent is a slow process.

10:01

Some good fellow named Isaac lends me his spare ski goggles. He gets my number and I promise to return his glasses once we're back in Christchurch. More content now, I wander down the mountain with my companions.

13:01

Back in the carpark. What a good mission.  
"You're still keen to get dropped at Castle Hill?"  
"Yup," I reply.

I'm exhausted, but I told my friends at Castle Hill that I'd come climb in the afternoon. I can't pull out now.

13:43

"Cheers for the great trip, flick



me your account for fuel ey. See  
yous,”

I give the classic post-trip  
goodbye, and hop out of the car.

17:45

I expected to nap on a pad but  
the rocks were too good. I spent  
most of my afternoon falling off V8  
mantles. My hamstring hurts.

19:01

Back home. I need to go return  
those ski goggles. Fortunately  
Isaac lives nearby. I hop on my  
bike and cycle over.

19:17

Goggles are returned. I thank  
the good fellow Isaac for saving  
my vision, then cycle home.

19:31

Home.  
“We’re a bit late, but want to come  
watch the NIBS finals?” A flatmate  
asks (for you non-climbers, NIBS  
is a bouldering competition).  
“Fuck no, I’m going to bed,”  
What a good day. My eyes  
flutter closed.



## Tattoo With a View: Pack Horse Hut

*6 Sept*

By Poppy Gane  
Featured: Lily Kingdon  
Kate Holmes  
and Annie Huang

Lyttelton Harbor

**W**e were on a mission to get  
some fresh ink. Before the  
walking started, we took a lovely  
tour through Lyttelton and through  
Akaroa. Lyttelton Coffee Co was  
definitely a ‘woof’ moment.

After struggling up the hill in  
my 2-wheel drive Impreza we  
set off to conquer Mt Herbert.  
We were unaware that Little Mt.  
Herbert was before Mt. Herbert.  
When we were hiking up the hill, it  
did not feel so little. The views of  
Lyttelton harbor from Mt. Herbert

were stunning and definitely  
worth it.

I had carried my stick and  
poke kit with me. Remember it is  
very important to sterilise the skin  
and the needle before tattooing!  
Lily took the pain like a champ.  
She got a lovely wee heart <3.  
Annie and Kate decided not to  
make any permanent decisions,  
so their tattoos were drawn on  
with marker. I decided to get  
something meaningful and special  
to me. So now there is ‘woof’



tattooed on my foot.

After the fresh tats we decided it was time to capture some content for the CUTC tasteful nude calendar. We frolicked naked around Pack Horse to the confusion of sheep and their baby lambs. After the photoshoot we were joined by our new mate Burt. He was quite a snorer. So, we decided to set up our mattresses and have a sleepover by the fire. Luckily, we didn't get carbon monoxide poisoning.

The fire was not very good for heating the kettle or cooking up food in the frying pan. Thank goodness Lily had brought up a camp cooker, 5 cans of beans, a small library of books, several skin care lotions, and every other

necessary item. In the morning, our friend Burt had left us a couple presents (so generous). I found two cans of eaten tuna under his bunk, and an empty can of peaches on the windowsill. Lily discovered some other cans and bottles left behind. The smell of it all was heinous. Annie thought it would be good hut etiquette to let Burt know he had forgotten his valuable belongings so yelled out to him to come back from down the hill. Realising we did not want his rubbish, Burt awkwardly wandered back up to the hut to collect his things.

In conclusion: great views, great friends, great stories and remember to take your rubbish with you!

More nudes for  
the Keas







## Very Short Trog for a Very Short Trip

26 Sept

By Sarah Valentine  
Featured: Alex Hooker

**N**ew spring snow. Stay at uni? Nah dude, that rude. Planned day mish. Castle hill peak. Yew! Leshgo.

Gear acquired. Layered up. Lunch made. Pack...packed.

Left Christchurch. Tunes, yarns, and heater pumping. Sunrise. Pretty mountains.

\*Wobble wobble\*. Car should not drive like that. Pulled over. Checked tyres. Nothing wrong? Hmm, skeptical. Wait for Sheffield.

Sheffield. Checked tyres. Shit. Flat. Air pump? No air pump. Faff. U-turn. Darfield.

\*Cue Road Trippin by Red Hot Chili Peppers\*

Darfield. Air pump found. Pumped tyre. PSSSHHHHH. Shit. Puncture. Big sad. Faff. Move car. Faff. Get spare from boot. Faff. Change tyre. Pump tyre. Great success.

Hit road. Unstoppable. Tramp

time. Fuck yeah.

Car park. Boots, gaiters, pit vipers, and packs. Go.

Crunch crunch. Puff puff. Step step. Look at view. Spot incoming cloud. Hope and pray.

Photo stop. Shnack. Mish to Foggy Peak.

Uh oh, clouds. Keep walking. More clouds. Keep walking. Thick cloud. Stop walking. Faff. Shit. Whiteout. No bueno.

Back down. Out of cloud. Up, cloud. Down, clear. Big sad.

Run down. Yarn to tourists. Run down some more. Reached bottom. All done. Cloud cleared. Aw man. Next time.

The end.

Photo stop  
Uh oh, clouds  
Whiteout







The allegedly  
haunted Page  
Shelter

## Halloween Spooktacular Page Shelter, Temple Basin

28 - 29 Oct

By Olivia Janes  
Featured: Levon  
OJ  
Lewis  
Eleanor  
and Albert

It was the season of spookiness, so while the majority of trampers were getting their scary horror fix from end of year exam study, a small group of us decided to get our own by taking a halloween-themed trip to stay the night at the allegedly haunted Page Shelter.

The 5 of us met Saturday morning in the Haere-roa carpark, 2 of us already in costume. Levon was dressed as Cody from Surf's up, and OJ was Patsy from

Monty Python and the Holy Grail, complete with a flag, the iconic coconuts, and also a life-size skeleton from the warehouse.

All of us had cars, so needing only one we decided to just take Levon's. Complications arose however as Levon didn't want to stay the night so he could get back to watch the rugby world cup final the next morning spoiler-free. The logical thing to do would've been to take 2 cars, but thinking of the turtles we decided to take

just the 1 and bank on Lewis who was tentatively going to rock up that night and go back in his.

After a brief (mandatory) stop at the Sheffield Pie shop where tourists gave us some weird looks, we arrived at the temple basin car park and I put on my pumpkin mask which I had made from a \$2.50 bag and cut holes for the eyes. Visibility was very poor with it on, but for the spirit of the halloween trip I was determined to make it the whole way up the hill without taking it off. OJ was carrying the skeleton over her shoulders and Levon had his skis, boots, and an optimistic view that there might just be some snow somewhere to use them on. The sun was high and it got very warm, with sweat building up inside the mask and regrets for not cutting a mouth hole for difficulty breathing, we made it to the shelter and I took the mask off in relief. Turned out this wasn't Page shelter though, looking at topo maps we could

see a black square 200m higher away from the rest of the lodges, so we figured this must be it and kept climbing. Disaster struck when Eleanor's sleeping bag came loose and rolled a good 100m or so down the hill, while she scrambled down to retrieve it Levon attempted some skiing on a tiny nearby patch of snow.

Up the scree slope and around the corner, we arrived at the shelter, pleasantly surprised by all the snow and the stunning mountain views. Levon even climbed up the basin and got some proper skiing in. It was prime softness for making a snowman, so with plastic bags for gloves we got to work and made one so big and so tall that it didn't last long and began tipping over, so we quickly snagged the photos before it toppled for good. From the remains however me and OJ spent the rest of the afternoon building and sculpting a snow car for Mr Skeleman.

It was time to say goodbye to

Levon getting  
some proper  
skiing in





Levon now, we felt safe enough for either Lewis to arrive or just figure out hitchhiking back so we were okay with him taking the car. After dinner, Albert climbed up the basin to catch the sunset and obtained reception briefly - just enough to see a message from Lewis that he wasn't going to be coming. No worries we thought, she'll be 'right' - getting home will be a tomorrow problem.

That night by candlelight we played several intense rounds of one night ultimate werewolf, which if you don't know it's like a very fast and very fun version of mafia where you don't need a moderator but use a pre-setup voice recording to determine who wakes up when etc. etc. In the

Mr. Skeleman



middle of a game OJ's phone battery died, so Albert pulled out his and recorded his own very hilarious voice recording so we could keep playing. Suddenly out of the darkness the skeleton which we had propped against the wall tipped forwards and fell towards Albert, giving him the fright of his life. Unfortunately this was really the only paranormal activity we encountered that night, we did have a ouija board but no one knew how to use it.

So the next morning we made an early start down the hill so we could figure out how to get back. At the carpark we exchanged phone numbers and started discussing hitchhiking plans, ready to split up, when OJ spotted Levon's car in the carpark. Turns out he saw the message Lewis wasn't coming and hitchhiked back himself, what a legend. We were thrilled to have a chariot to take us home, even if we were in extreme anxiety the whole way back along the pass because of the scarily low amount of fuel left in the tank.

So overall despite the disappointing lack of ghost sightings it was an amazing trip with plenty of scares and plenty of spook. Maybe the real spooky ghosts were the friends we made along the way..?

