



Journal of the Canterbury University Tramping Club

2024 Edition

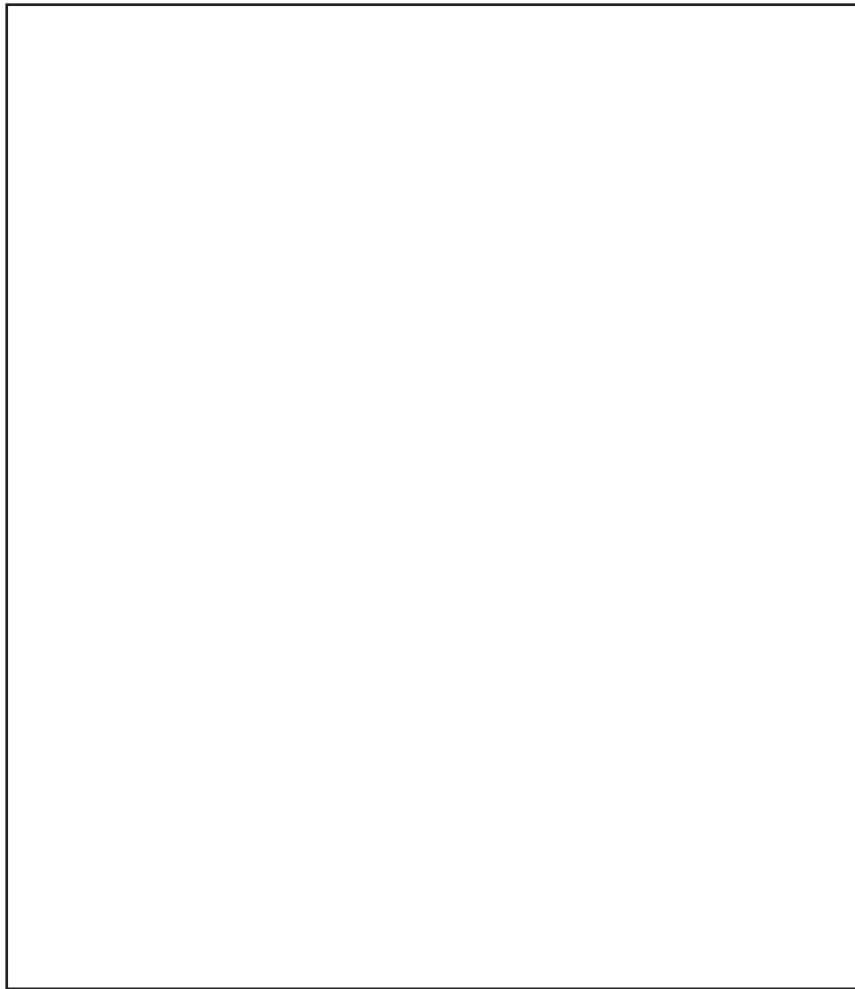
TROG

Canterbury University Tramping Club



Edited by Levi Humphrey

Draw the Hut!



2024 TROG
Journal of the Canterbury University Tramping Club
Design by Levi Humphrey
Printed at University of Canterbury
2025
A4 Spreads
Segoe UI & Adobe Hebrew

TROG 2024

Canterbury University Tramping Club

Stories spanning 01/01/24 - 04/04/25

Copy left at:

Date left:

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Edited by Levi Humphrey

trog@cutc.org.nz

Editors' note

~ Levi Humphrey

To the bored, the literature depraved, the TROG and CUTC frothers, as well as hut goers and whoever I haven't been able to categorise,

Welcome!

If you've come here searching for the eloquent writings of a brilliant book designer—one who knows exactly what they're doing all the time, who can perfectly wrangle these coming stories out of you adventurous CUTCers—you're shit out of luck (aside from the brilliant part). When I first took on the role of TROG officer, I believed I had myself in for a fairly easy job. However, I've never been known to make things easy for myself. Taking over from the two previous officers by myself felt easily achievable—I did, in fact, already have the skillset to do so. If my current self went back in time and told fresh, new TROG officer me, "Levi, you are not going to do this bit by bit, but actually complete the whole TROG in two sittings holed up in Len Lye," I'd punch myself in the mouth. I would, however, not be surprised at all.

I'm glad I sat with my screens out of view from the other product design grinders. Because man, y'all



love to let all that ass out for our beautiful outdoors—I respect it.

As much as I make out designing this book a chore, I've really enjoyed seeing and reading everyone's photos and stories. Exquisite.

See you out there, dirtbags.

Enjoy!

Your 2024 President flanked by our Captains



Presidents' note

~ Nick Slegers

Oh hey, hello!

Fancy running into you around these parts. Whether you're reading this in some godforsaken backcountry hut or sitting at home with a hot choc, I wish you all the best with your adventures.

With aching legs and a heavy heart, my time at CUTC comes to an end. Being part of CUTC has been such a privilege. I remember going to my first meeting and being totally intimidated by these fantastically cool people. But getting involved made me realise there's no secret sauce. The real cool was in the trying we did along the way. People who are passionate about something, get together, and do something? They're automatically bestowed with coolness. I'd recommend getting involved to any student starting out. Even if you think you aren't cool enough (you are), or skilled enough (just send it, you'll figure it out), or have enough friends (that will change). Getting involved in clubs was the best decision I made at uni. Sure, it was a lot of work, and yeah, there was some boring stuff. But (mild) inconvenience is the price of community.

Now, thinking back to my reign as Sir President (His Lordship if you please), we smashed it. A HUGE number of new members joined (the froth was palpable), and the committee behind the scenes were chomping at the bit to get in the hills. Even as uni deadlines loomed and work demanded attention, they still made some wicked cool events happen. Freshers had a huge turnout. The nude calendar was published (all for Kea conservation! Get yours now!). TWALK was a phenomenon (two articles published! RNZ and 1964 Magazine: 1964.co.nz/twalk-rogaïne). I loved sharing these events with our members, from cosy little day walks to multiday missions.

One last thanks to all those who came before me and to those who will follow. Without the legacy of the Kiwi outdoors community, us rambunctious students wouldn't be able to get up to nearly as much silly business. Thank you, thank you, thank you for all the work done to afford us the privilege of access to the best outdoors in the world. I wish all who follow a goon-slappingly good time in the hills!

Captains' note

~ Lucas Larraman & Poppy Gane

Written by Lucas, Poppy
Prophecy by Tash

Kia ora e hoa
Me mihi tuatahi ki a Ranginui rāua
ko Papatūānuku
E ngā mate o te tau, haere, haere,
haere rā
Mihi nunui ki ngā tāngata whenua
o Te Waipounamu, we tramp
amongst your tūpuna
Ka tautoko tonu tātou ki ngā
tāngata whenua o Palestine
Mihi ki a koe mō kōrero tēnei
pukapuka!

Once upon a time, in a land far
far away... there was a prophecy.
A rose quartz ball was unearthed
from the roots of a beech tree
near Tarahaka Arthur's Pass. The
lost and tired nude trumper read
these golden words from within
the pink crystalline:

Is that Lucas and Poppy?
or gargoyles
perched there on the lookout
like totems
like guardians
of the freshly founded posse
They toot their mornful kōauau
They fortell secrets
of the wind and of the moon
Is water wet, we ask them?
They do not deign to answer

A kea swoops down and whispers
in the nude trumper's ear:
'KEAAKEEEEEAAAA'
The nude trumper understood
because they had just learnt to
speak Kea: 'I heard the captains
are more social these days.....'. The
rumours were true and time was of
the essence.
The nude trumper and kea set off
for Ōtautahi Christchurch with a
woosh and a sqwark...

WOOF WOOF. WOOF WOOF.

The nude trumper and kea look in
from the window of A2 at the very
first Wednesday hui. Nothing like
starting the year off with a woof
off! AAHHHHHH! The serenity...

Now that the scene is set... In this
tell-all exposé we reveal the REAL
reason trampers become captains.
Join us as Poppy, 22, and Lucas,
22, reflect on 2025 and Canterbury
University Tramping Club...

What made us stay in the tramping
club, throughout the years?
Passion? Stupidity? An impending
sense of existentialism? Hiding
from mounting student loans?

Poppy and Lucas both experienced
a deep sense of community with
CUTC. It is a non-judgemental

space to come as you are; create deep-meaningful friendships and/or relationships ;)

****DON'T FALL IN LOVE WITH AN EXCHANGE STUDENT.** It does happen, and will keep happening, or at least if you PLEASE don't be a frat boy I'm warning you.**

;go have a fucking good time outside - chill bushwalk, to mountaineering FA, to baking cookies on a fire, all are welcome.

We interrupt with a quick add break ***OUT THERE DOING IT*** (not sponsored by hunting and fishing)

Poppy states that her priorities were the tramping club:

"Getting to the UCSA car park on a Saturday morning to go tramping is the earliest I would ever arrive at uni. In Fact in my first week at UC I went to uni twice. Once for the first CUTC meeting, and again to pick up the club keg."

She denied comment when asked about her experiences in Dunedin.

Lucas expands by informing the interviewer:

'In no way do I claim to be the sendiest, knowledgeable, best-looking or funniest... that's Isaac ***GO MULLER GO WILD***. Being a captain or tramping public servant is about giving back and helping facilitate amazing experiences in te taiao.'

They both agree that at the end of a long day of tramping, all we want is to share knowledge, kai, and a lukewarm mug of jungle juice. Additionally, they believe that sometimes we forget just how lucky and privileged we are to experience the many moods of Kā Tiritiri-o-te-moana Southern Alps.

Poppy furthers this point, 'bringing people together from across the country and world is a real treat. I never thought I'd have friends from Canada, Germany or even Gore!'

Annnnnnnnd the votes are in.. from a whooping rua-tekau mā rima trips, let's look at the top 10:

1. Bushball Embodies the drinking club with a tramping problem, or commonly referred to as snowball (fight!)

2. Avoca Ahhhhh the bathtub and bbq - where the delightful meet their match on 2x13 hour days

3. Wine + Cheese + 50th How can you make a 50th more fun? Hire 14 CUTC members to personally deliver wine + cheese. Everyone wore red, we danced outside the hut in unison. No we are not a cult.

4. Freshers - First trip of the year 100s of uni students hyped nf the mountains with only the strongest surviving (99.9999% survival rate)

5. Bushcraft - Arts + crafts with BUSH while the youth are taught

GO MULLER GO WILD secrets

6. Hut Bagging - How many huts around Tarahaka Arthur's Pass can be bagged? New record - proud of you xx

7. TWALK - Twenty four hour walk. Mainly sprinting contrary to popular belief of walking. Hash house provides yummy food for competitors. Great costumes on display for the first leg.

8. Snowcraft - Arts + crafts with SNOW while the youth are taught GO MULLER GO WILD secrets

9. Refreshers - cookielicious!

We are proud as punch of you all! General and committee members, kea and mokomoko to everyone in between! You all contributed to a beautiful year and community. Shout out to Tommy for voicing CUTC's opposition to the fast-track bill. YOU can do this to! F the anti-tiriti, anti-nature government!

Lots of love - from your 2024 captains

Final words of Kea wisdom 1.0 - 'Chur'

Final words of Kea wisdom 2.0 - 'Look after yourself first and foremost. Prioritise studies, whānau and friends before tramping. It's a huge part of all of our lives but it's just one part <3'

And so our story ends while another is just beginning... the nude trumper and kea are satisfied. They crack open a cold one and this year's tasteful nude calendar while watching the golden sunset behind the mountains...

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- Levi Humphrey



Boys are on - Lucas Larraman

Climbers go for a Paddle

Hollyford ~ (Several summers ago)

- Lucas Larraman - Feat: Tom Waldin, Henry

Several summers ago... the boys and i got shipwrecked on sinbad gully over in the Hollyford, we find a collection of inflatable rafts with too many holes to count. our fleet of five' kondor 1000s' became somewhat seaworthy after being attacked with duct tape. after some deliberation and no planning, we decide to go all chips in.

henry, tom waldin and I set off at first light. the kondors precariously perched on the subaru's roof with some cord and nzs greatest wingspan. the rafts fly off while crossing cleddau bridge 3, henry shouts and the kondors get a sprinkling of fine holes. the

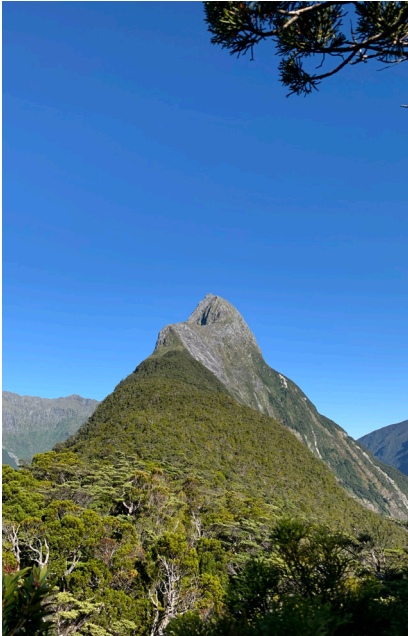
imposing granite skylines crack against the bluebird sky. we got ready to launch alongside 60 foot fishing vessels who were preparing to head south to the fiords. only one of kondors could stay afloat. we were not going to make the 3kms paddle to sinbad gully, even without the increasing onshore wind. after a kia ora and a promise beers, a fishercaptain gave us the 'yea nah chur' to dropping us off to visit and pay our respects to the maunga Rāhotu. we cruised out of deep water basin as tom pumped our deflating kondors because we had to somehow get from the boat to shore.

HOLLYFORD



Po Marie - Lucas Larraman

HOLLYFORD



Ko Rahotu Tera - Lucas Larraman



Time for some reggae - Lucas Larraman



Dane dance dance! - Lucas Larraman


Spot Henry with his sunk ship!
- Lucas Larraman

HOLLYFORD

i loaded up all the gear into the one floatable raft, if it capsised then all our gear was going to the bottom of the sea; not ideal. i precarious drop the gear raft into the chop, it suddenly starts to head to the middle of the fiord. i dive in after and swim furiously. i gain control of the raft and henry chucks me a paddle. meanwhile tom get sinto his kondor and sinks after travelling 5m. henry jumps into his donut and with a broken paddle heads to shore. with the mayhem going on, we wave to the boat as they laugh at and film our desperate attempts to stay afloat.

we arrive to land, in awe of the untouched, jurassic land we find ourselves in. a hoon of kaka laugh while a dense ball of sandflys buzz in our direction - death star style.... the climb up and down was a magical experience - truely one for ngā pukapuka. the ride back to piopiotahi was a true hoot! tom and henry were sinking in slow motion - they would link up every 5 minutes to pump each other up on the water. i was loaded up with gear and had at least some clearance - ngā maunga smiled down upon us!



On the boat! - Lucas Larraman

Charleston Climbing

Charleston ~ (03/02/24 - 06/02/24)

- Robert Ennor - Feat: Isaac Muller-Wild, Jon Lim, Matt Creahan.

Why walk when you can climb? Rock climbers are a curious breed; obsessed with the intricacies of rock faces, the crannies and crevices in the cliff faces, the vertical world. My brief journey into this new fascination of sore fingers took me to a wonderfully wild portion of Te Waipounamu: Charleston.

For those that have never been, the West Coast is one of the most desolate parts of an already fairly desolate island. In most parts, frequented more by tourists than actual inhabitants, its untamable nature caters to outdoorsy folk and it has its own mystique that fills the air; happily replacing the mechanical hum drum of Christchurch; it is a place where, if you spend a while, you can still hear the land breathe.

Accompanied by new found friends, brought together through the wonders of Facebook, we departed on the premise of new rocks to climb, apparently enough of a promise for me to drop any and all commitments for a few days. The boot was overflowing as we left Christchurch and ascended out of the barren flatlands, towards the other side of the hills.

The first night was fairly grim, apt for such a loosely planned mission. We pitched tents in the dark on a gravel skid site just out of view from the road, it began to rain soon after. Not the first choice of campsite, but by far the most affordable, it did the job. Opting for a bivvy bag meant I had a restless, but reasonable night sleep considering my position on the wet gravel.

At the first sign of light, I gladly removed myself from my wet, fluorescent cocoon and explored the surroundings before the others stirred. The stillness was striking, even though State Highway 6 was nearby, there was not a sound other than the gurgle of the nearby river and sadly infrequent birdsong. The first order of business in the morning was coffee, but in due time we packed up our things, reloaded the car and headed to the cliffs by the sea.



CHARLESTON CLIMBING

Photo 1: My first night on the wet gravel beside the car in a bivvy bag, the worst camp spot of the trip, but altogether not that bad.

The gloomy skies were the last signs of the poor weather and they soon cleared for sunshine, which gratefully lasted the rest of the trip. Sea mist hung in the air as we gathered our things in the Constant Bay car park, ominous noises echoed into the sheltered little bay. An alien oozing mass of seafoam filtered into one of the smaller bays we passed by. After a short walk, we reached

the open ocean and the intended cliffs, where we were met with a violent scene. Whopping great waves detonated against the cliffs and boulders spraying the walls, dashing our hopes of climbing but invigorating our wonderment at nature. On seeing the walls, I was shocked that this is where we were planning to climb, the wild ocean so near, threatened to swallow or at least sodden anything that got too close or comfortable around it. Standing in awe for a while, we then retreated and quickly rerouted to the glorious Bullock Creek.



Photo 2: The furious sight that greeted us on our first arrival at Cathedral Cove, Cathedral wall getting soaked. The photo, as usual, does the scene an injustice.

Near Punakaiki, Bullock Creek is a magical valley of limestone walls, a glorious sight for fans of

verticality. After some confusion we managed to find the Hanging Gardens crag and enjoyed a dreamy day of climbing the sun soaked wall. Engrossed by the scenery, I managed to fumble my way up some routes on the dusty limestone, while curious Weka scampered about everywhere.

CHARLESTON CLIMBING

The uniquely rippled and textured limestone made climbing more interesting, but sooner than I would've liked, my arms turned to jelly and I was done for the day. I was rather impressed watching the others saunter up indistinguishable ripples of rock, realising that I had come on a trip with some climbers of a very reasonable calibre. As the light faded we found a nearby place to camp. I was quietly pleased with the improvements in accommodation. The soft sand of the dry riverbed seemed out of place, but it was very welcome, giving the forest a tropical feel, and making for a much softer night's sleep.

Photo 3: The wonderful Hanging Gardens crag, true to its name Nikau Palms towering above. Matt, skillfully leading Where the Weka Was (21) with some guidance from Jon.



Photo 4: The second night's accommodations nearby the crag, a world of improvement on the first night.

The second morning beckoned, and the coffee flowed once more. Much quicker this time we collected everything and set off. On returning to Constant Bay, we were hopeful and excited about climbing the sea cliffs. As predicted, the sea was much tamer and the tide was right, it was time to climb. The sunshine was welcoming and glorious, and we split up to climb as much as we could. Having done hardly enough climbing to be qualified for comment, I enjoyed tagging along and learning as much as I could about this enrapturing new pursuit. Apparently the rock was quite good compared to Christchurch, not that I knew, but my novice fingers certainly



CHARLESTON CLIMBING

enjoyed clambering up the granite sea walls, making things look much more awkward than they should've been. Moving upwards is much more engaging than moving forwards, using every limb to grapple skywards and fully trusting every muscle to hold yourself against the rock face. It was thoroughly pleasing, and the thunderous waves breaking a few metres away made for an enthralling scene.

There were a few parties clambering about that fine day, placing all manner of sparkly metal objects into the rocks, something

I could see myself growing fond of doing. After a thorough day of climbing, with plenty of learning done on my part, we decided there was no better place to stay than right on top of the cliffs.

That evening, the sunset over the Tasman Sea, with gargantuan waves born somewhere deep in the Southern Ocean thundering into the rocks, was a sight that will hang around in my memory for a while. The best sleep was had that night, the endless crash of waves and the soft grass allowing an effortless drift from one dream land to another.



Photo 5: The culmination of the trip, the best campsite of the trip, one of my new favourites.

After a slow start soaking in the glory of our campsite and trying not to get devoured by the

sandflies, we vainly scampered around the cliffs, looking for a dry spot to get a last few climbs in. Unfortunately, the unabating waves had once again soaked everything, it was time to go. A final meal in the carpark of

CHARLESTON CLIMBING

Constant Bay, our gear strewn carelessly around the car. We found solace in the bench at the carpark, looking properly bedraggled like the climbing bums we had become. We happily gorged on what remained of the rations we had brought. Bathing in the sun on our last morning, I savoured the simple climbing focussed existence of our trip, and contently recollected a well spent few days before gathering my things for the last time and heading back to the dry and busy side of the hills.

Photo 6: The final meal, the charming tabletop, and a calm Constant Bay in the background. Matt noodles in mouth; Myself finishing the last of my salami, camembert, and bread diet; Isaac perpetually buzzing and surprisingly well organised, cooking up a feed; Jon behind the camera.



Lucas the kook - Poppy Gane

Freshers

Kowhai Flats ~ (03/03/24 - 04/03/24)

- Elvis -

Headed off at 10 AM from the car park, the trail to Mount Fyffe summit greets us with a long, steep, and seemingly endless climb, bringing us past our lunch stop - mount Fyffe Hut, situated at about 1100m elevation. Views of distant mountaintops began emerging as we got closer to the summit of Mount Fyffe. I was expecting an easy downhill to Kowhai Hut campsite after 4 hours of climbing to reach the 1500m summit, but what happened for the rest of the day surprised me dearly.

We had a rather peaceful walk along the ridgeline separating

the Manakau Peak and the Pacific Ocean, the spectacular scenery exhibited reminded me of how long I have not focused my eyes on such faraway objects. After experiencing a fair bit of scree running, or scree sliding I should say, as we descended down to the saddle, my friend Patrick and I started falling behind the faster group by a fair bit, thankfully, three experienced leaders stayed to cover our backs.

After a short break at a stream flowing towards the Kowhai River, the five of us set off. To my surprise, the downhill path was simply the stream itself. Checking



FRESHERS

on orange markers as we climbed down from rock to rock, I found myself walking slightly ahead of the group, reaching a set of larger orange markers directing me into a two-part bush walk, I headed in.

It was a bad idea to go into the bush alone, not because I got lost, but rather because I was too scared to wait in the dim forest for others to catch up, befriending hedgehogs and possums. By the time I got out of the forest and back onto the rocky stream, I had put on my head torch as the sun started setting.

The sun went to sleep unexpectedly quickly, it did not take long for the sky to get dark, completely. While trying to find the next orange marker in the dark, thoughts started emerging in my head, could I've gone the wrong way? Was there a turn-off to Kowhai Hut a while ago? Since I did not read the map carefully before setting off.

I sat on the side of the stream bed, holding my backpack. There was no one, no signal, only the flowing of the stream, the humming of distant helicopters, and the clear night sky filled with an uncountable number of stars.

I really need to make a damn good decision here, after checking the time, I decided to wait here for another fifteen minutes till nine to see if the rest of the group catches up.

Even though I had my sleeping mat, sleeping bag, and even a tent with neither poles nor pegs, in all honesty, I was stressed and worried, many thoughts raced through my head, I shouted, shining my torch at the cliffs and hillsides, the only response I got was the wind and water splashing.

Thankfully, shortly after nine, I saw two bright spots emerging from the forest, as waves of warm breeze brushed past my body, I could not be happier to see the group again. It meant that I was indeed on the right path, and waiting here was the best decision made ever. The two bright spots belonged to the head torch of Patrick and Mel, who were also very thankful that I'd waited here instead of traversing the stream alone in the dark.

With Emily and Tommy catching up to us in ease soon after, the five of us eventually made it to Kowhai Hutt an hour and forty-five minutes later. Striking a total of 12 hours and 45 minutes of tramping that day. I was rewarded with some fruit salad, my baked beans, as well as a whole stick of salami with tuna from a kind person. Everything was smooth sailing the next day walking back to the car park on flat.

In future tramps, I will definitely do thorough research, and stick within distance of the group. I sincerely thank everyone on the trip. What an unforgettable experience.

FRESHERS



Kia ora kaikoura - Natasha Wozniak



- Elvis



Sorry Yukai - Poppy Gane

FRESHERS



Got any 35mm? - Tommy Copeland



2am norwest gust crew

FRESHERS



Poppy Gane, a professional selfie taker



Just the essentials



Regroup and swim swim



Shared kai with a side of surboard bar and jungle juice - Amelia Gade

Bushcraft

Crow Hut ~ (09/03/24 - 10/03/24)

- Isaac Muller-Wild -



Crow Hut

Bushcraft has happened!

We lost a few people before we started, from university and a rolled ankle (RIP Emily, never forget). Eventually nine frothers and one wise instructor (me) marched up the **Waimakariri last weekend**. The day was baking and all students were quickly acquainted with the local sandfly population.

The river was crossed in all its icy depths and directions, and we stylishly navigated our way to **Crow hut** by evening. An attempt was made to start a fire and the chat eventually became suitably poor quality. A chill start on Sunday predicated an attempt to reach some alpine tarns, ending

halfway with time constraints.

We then progressed into an all out assault on the local flora to make it back to the hut for lunch. Ben was almost lost to the river on the way out, and I decided once again that the Waimakariri riverbed is far too flat and long.

We covered navigation with a map and compass, river crossing, and basic bush skills. Everyone learned something, had a good time, and 100% survival rate was maintained. Great success.

- Isaac #GOMULLERGOWILD

BUSHCRAFT

Crow Hut in there somewhere





Peaking through to Greenlaw - Lucas Larraman

Avoca Hut Trip Recap

Avoca Hut ~ (16/03/24 - 17/03/24)

- Sarah #bananasuperior (Valintine) -

Ahh, the 2024 Avoca Hut trip. Not to be mistaken for CUTC initiation, irish jig lessons, or cult creating.

Woowwwwee! What a weekend!

Around 9:30ish am on Saturday, 18 keen beans and three stoked committee members ventured up the Bealey Spur track towards Avoca Hut. There were views on views as we gained elevation. Chats were flowing, snacks were snacked on, and photos were

photoed along the way. Before we knew it, we were at the hut! (Bealey Spur hut, not to be mistaken for our final destination). Upon realising we weren't even a quarter of the way in, the group fuelled up and mished on. Despite some steep and tough terrain, everyone did their best to keep moving and soaked up the beauty along the route. After a break on Jordan Saddle, the team dropped down a steep spur to Galilee Creek with a 100% survival rate. Upon completing all the big sends for

the day the group regathered, threw on some head torches, and hustled up the Avoca River to Will's tunes. Everyone safely arrived at the hut just after 10pm and was revived with some BBQ food, hot tub time, and a good nights sleep.

Sunday morning consisted of a hearty brekkie, a group photo outside the hut, roasting Cole (legend has it he's still sizzling to this day), and shit chat over choice of sunscreen. Mentally prepared for another long day and walk in the dark, the group set off just after 9am. After some cruisy river walking and Cole's long awaited irish jig in honour of St. Paddy's day, the crew trucked on up Sphinx Saddle. The hard slog

was rewarded with beautiful views, an art session, well deserved kai, and a fantastic scree run down to the anti crow river. On the way down Sarah and Lucas enjoyed the stunning swimming holes, some ominous looking clouds loomed, and the first aid kit was put to good use. Spirits lifted and head torches went on at the Waimakariri. It was a long home stretch under an amazing starry sky! Runny mac n cheese never tasted so good at 10:30pm.

The trip in numbers:

Members: 21;
Walking time: 13 hours each day;
Vert: big;
Overnighters: 17;

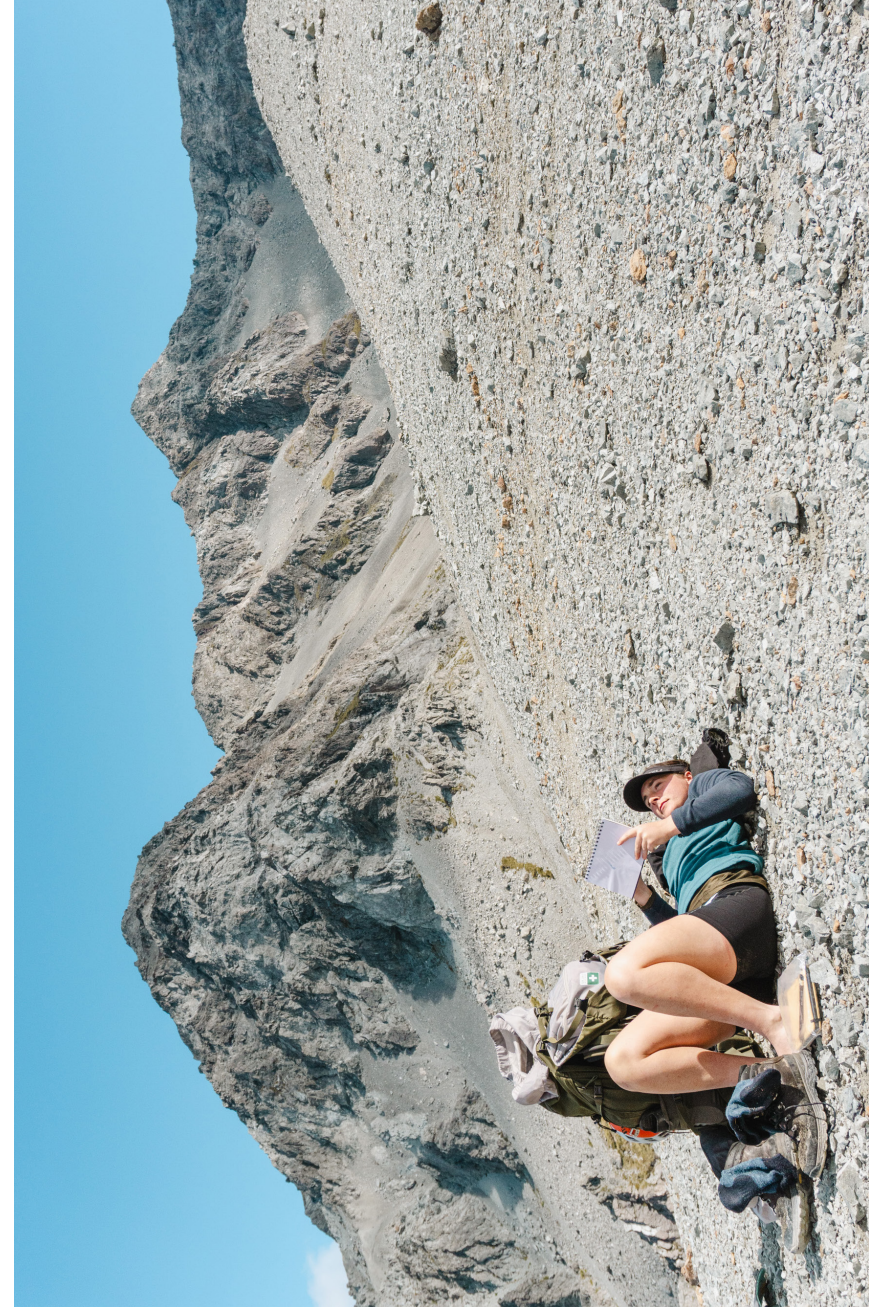
Day Walkers: 4;
Survival Rate: 120%;
Shooting Stars: Many!;
Hot Tub Rating: 17239/10;
Beat Boxing Boy Bands: 1;
Stitches: 6;
km's walked: quite a few!;
Ears: 5 + (2 x 21)

He ataahua - Freya High



Up and up and up - Lucas Larraman

AVOCA HUT



Artwork at the col - Lucas Larraman

AVOCA HUT



Cole on the descent - Freya High



Smoko at sphinx - Lucas Larraman



Realist artist - Lucas Larraman



Hannah Murphy being fucking rad - Lucas Larraman



We all slept in Avoca Hut



Stoked to be alive in this beautiful world

At The Peak

Summit of Bealy Spur, Avoca trip ~ (16/03/24 - 17/03/24)

- Andra Key -

I was starving once
and a king placed a feast before me
he told me to eat and eat
he told me to eat
but I had no fork
or knife
I'd been given no plate
no bowl
he told me to eat
and I couldn't take a single bite
I stared and stared
while my body screamed
I stared
with clenched fists
I stared
and I couldn't take a single bit
I stared at the feast
and my stomach caved in

Andra Key at the peak - Lucas Larraman



Hut Bagging

Arthur's Pass ~ (23/03/24 - 24/03/24)

- Emily Prout -

What an epic weekend we all had hut bagging!

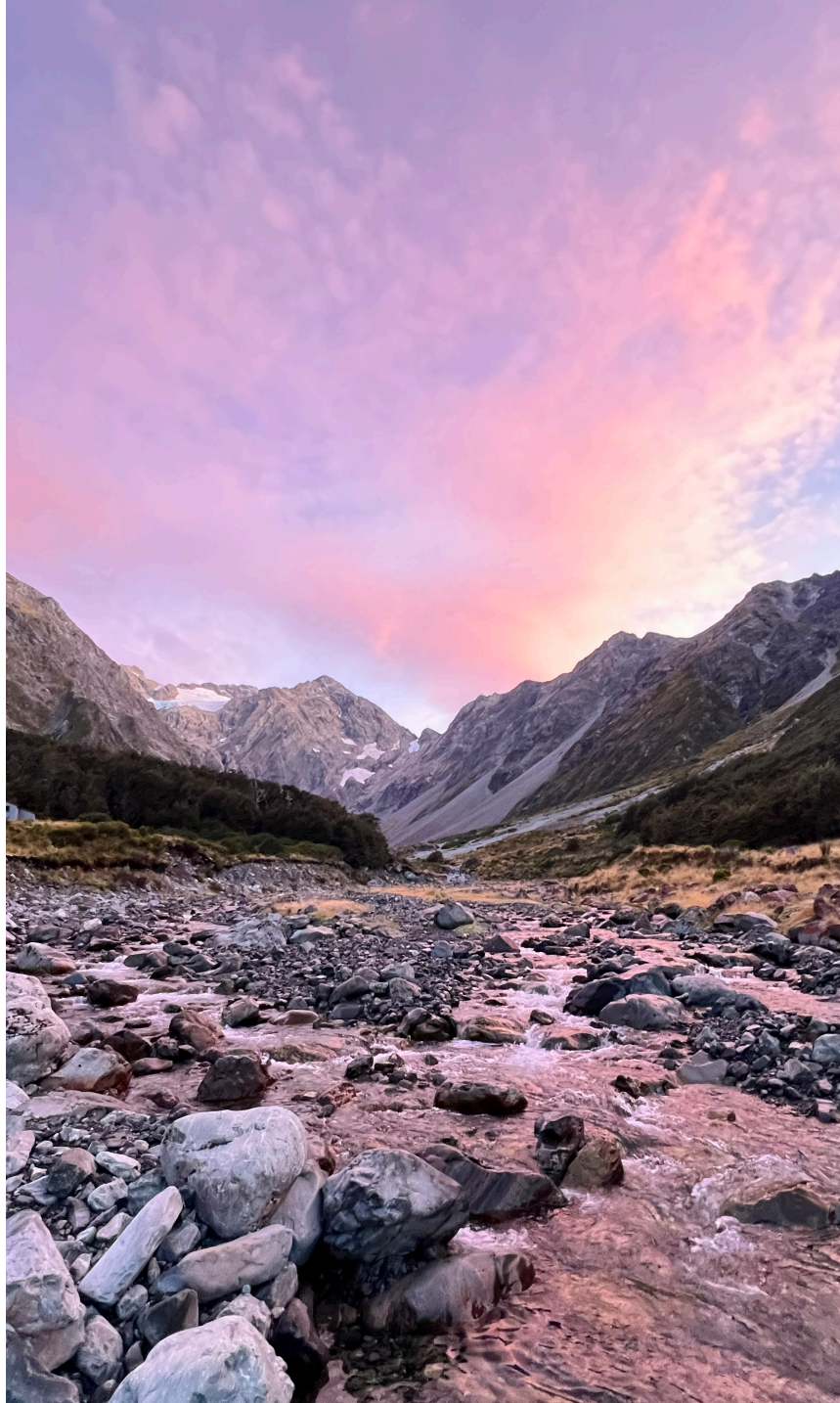
Huge kudos to Mon for successfully letting loose trampers all over Arthur's pass. What a rigmarole of routes, and plans!

We had groups setting off on Friday and Saturday, staying one night or two, doing day trips who had cars and did not have cars, who were in groups or went solo... lots of huts (28 pts!) were bagged and we were greeted on Sunday with some DELICIOUS nachos courtesy of Mon and Megan. Well done to everyone to got out there and finally thanks to our sponsors for the awesome spot prizes !

Big ups to Justine and Ferg for the mean as trophy!

For those unfamiliar, Hutbagging is where we get to as many huts as possible in Tarahaka, Arthurs Pass. This year we reached 28 huts with our stoked crews!!





CUSSC exec tries tramping

Mt Cook Area ~ (30/03/24)

- Louise Anscombe - Feat: Hugo Lethbridge, Jade Robertson, Riley Knox

In 2024 four members of the CUSSC exec set out on hooker track to reach Copland shelter and give this tramping shtick a try. How hard can it be?

With ice axes and crampons carving swathes through tourists, we approached the mighty glacier. We used the old route shown in figure 1: skirting the lake to the glacier terminus, where we would head up to the shelter. This was approximately the first of MANY mistakes to come.

The lake was slow and infuriating progress with moraine hindering our impressive alpenism. Around 4pm we had only just reached the glacier and the going was only getting more treacherous. It was like walking along precipitous sand dunes, but instead of sliding into the sea we were sliding into the ice cold lake and/or a cliff ALSO over the ice cold lake.

Jade may be able to whip up some ski week promo like the best of them, but she cannot keep skin on her feet. It was late, she couldn't walk terribly well and the travel, already bad, was only getting worse. After we temporarily lost him over a smallish cliff, Riley made a call better than his 2023 record of 33 days of skiing: to bugger off.



Fig 1: a route Rob Frost describes should only be done, "with very good reason..."

Back along the lake we wearily tread. The Moraine and the concept of tramping had beaten us. Unfortunately it was not over. It was rapidly darkening and Jade's feet weren't getting any better. She wasn't too keen on hooker track and I wasn't too keen on carrying her. Cowboy Camping beside the head of Hooker steam seemed much more romantic than sleeping in the car or driving back to Christchurch so we decided to set up an emergency bivvy

beside the hooker river. I had a fantastic sleep in my survival bag and my sleeping mat, woken by a kea landing on my shiny self. Not sure how well the others slept (actually I am: cold apparently) but the sun rising over Aoraki would put anyone in a good mood. Hugo was in fits of ecstasy; see figure 2.

Fig 2: Hugo in a characteristic state of glee
- Louise Ancombe



- Louise Ancombe

After an oaty breakfast made with the cloudy water of hooker lake (no kidney stones reported since) we set back on a walk of shame worse than any I have experienced before or since. But like with pursuing your sexual desires, bailing out of a tramp is not shameful. Copland shelter is still there and so are we. Just wayyy more humble. You guys should try skiing (or drinking) though. We'd smoke you.

CUSSC EXEC TRIES TRAMPING



- Louise Ancombe



ZZZZZZZZZZZZZZZZZZZZ

how are you kate
good thank you nothing much
happening

gurrrrrrrl
you my lil boo thang
so i dont give a hoot what your
dude say girl i know

you a lil too tame
ill be shootin that shot like 2K girl
i know
tell em im tell em im next
tell em you found a lil somethin
too fresh

all right boys were not off to die



bro were off to come back so we
got to dap
anyone want a redbull
hey hey don't forget to dap
redbull

just cranked it into leg 2 boys
look at the beauuuuuutiful scenery
so georgeuss
it's going to be fuckin hard to try
find stuff at night
stunning

there were like a group of people
in the creek didnt bother looking
thats what you say
oh look at that moon bro not real
brain in a jar

i see the bad moon rising
boys lets get going man
i see trouble on the way
all day light hoo
a really nice tree
frolicking

ZZZZZZZZZZZZZZZZZZZZZZ

i see earthquakes and lightning
a really nice tree
hey sib whats your best jellyfish
impression oh i got you hey yo
that's pretty sick
i see bad times today
all day light hoo
dont go around tonight
sib has been let off the leash woof
woof woof
well its bound to take your life
hey bro were gonna go up that
big hill my bro
theres a bad moon on the rise
awooooooooooooooooo

bit of a stitch up getting right to
the tihi the summit and the control
is no where to be seen
just gone midnight
the mentality is im loving being
outside
tommy and arsh right now got to
be bored as hell
see you at the hash house
woooooo

cruizzzzzy leg 3 incoming
yeah were just gonna get all
the controls and do it in a short
amount of time
come back fresh as a daisy
all day light hoo all day night hooo
ooooooooo that tonights gonna
be a good night
ayo Mr White
what's this
Jesse this is Lego Ricin
going to be lit tonight
Arsh on the joss
going kind of shit

cooking the stir fry vegetables
nice chengyue

the chiller is warmer than the
outside temperature currently
if you want to warm up i would
recommend going into the cold
room
not finding many clues but hey its
all about the journey
we just walked leg 3
im so loopy im about to go to bed
we rushed to set everything else
up this morning
we had heaps volunteers sign

one more look and i forget
everything woah woah
mamma mia here i go again
my my how can i resist you
mamma mia does it show again
my my just how much ive missed
you
yes ive been broken-hearted

homie

blue since the day we parted
why why did i ever let you go?
mamma mia now i really know
my my i could never let you go

[illegible]

waaaa woohooohooo weeeeeee
big crew leg 4 lets fucken hit it
we got adam delicious
we got sib
we got bo
we got tommy
we got arsh hello



Pre trip training - Isaac Muller-Wild

An Account of an Abortive Attempt at Alpine Antics

Remarks Ski Field, Queenstown ~ (01/07/24 - 07/07/24)

- Isaac Muller-Wild - Feat: Dan

My bedroom window looked straight into the back of burger king. Timaru burger king no less. The job site was out of town at the Fonterra factory, and presumably this was the cheapest and closest accommodation the company would pay for. In fairness it wasn't that bad a place, and I certainly didn't care when I came back from a day on the job – we worked 70 hours that week and I was smooooked. But now it was party time baby. My partner, Dan the exchange student, hitched down from Christchurch. Off to

Queenstown for a couple weeks of mixed and ice!

We set up camp in the kayaker's pull-out, half an hour out of Frankton since it was the only free camping in the entire region. Why it was free wasn't explicitly obvious, but the human turds next to the longdrop, biting cold, and proximity to nothing interesting were hints. Morning routine started with removing the two extra down jackets I had on my core and legs, then dragging myself into the car. We'd

eat breakfast on the drive to the Remarks and dry out our gloves on the air-con vents. Eventually we'd sort our gear in the carpark, hitch a ride up, and go throw ourselves at the snow. Some highlights of our first couple days include:

- Spending an hour and a half doing the three-legged dog through new snow from the edge of the piste to Lake Alta (a grand distance of around 500m, Dan didn't have skis)
- Me placing a cam at the top of Lovely Gully, forgetting about it and then walking away. Theres bolted anchors anyway you dolt.
- Realising Dan lost my laptop charger en route from Christchurch

Post holing - Isaac Muller-Wild



Pig in snow - Dan

By the end of the week, me and Dan were keen to try for an overnight trip; the morning drive was getting tiring. The next day we decided, we'd go tent on the plateau below single cone and climb Touchdown for an intro to ice. After dinner on the tables outside New World, we packed our bags and made ready. Dan even hired some snow shoes! Before we could escape to the campsite though, a random dude approached us.

He said "Ay, I like what you guys are doing you know. Just cooking dinner here, real free spirit kinda thing. What would you guys say if someone offered you a free pizza on the street?" I replied: "I guess we wouldn't say no?" "Well, its happening." (WHAAAT?? He said this like it was the most hectic thing ever). "I'll be back in 10 minutes."

AN ACCOUNT OF AN ABORTIVE ATTEMPT AT ALPINE ANTICS

Me and Dan looked at each other wondering where this was going, but not about to turn down free food being the freeloading scumbags that we were. We kinda wanted to get going due to the fact that we were getting up early, but hey.

True to his word, he returned 15 minutes later with pizza. Shit yeah dawg. However, the true motive behind his random act of kindness was quickly revealed: much like your naked mate jumping out at you after he asks to play hide and seek.

"You guys realise the earth is flat ay?"

"Haha yeah bro! Of course! All the ships fall off the edge!"

The bro was entirely straight faced. He wasn't joking. Oh boy. Turned

out he worked as a tennis coach and was only paid cash. Why? Because he was a revolutionary, working to overthrow the incumbent financial system. He hadn't paid tax in years. One of his mates apparently got him into the flat earth thing – challenging him to prove that it was round.

"But the harder I looked, the flatter it got."

He poured some water on the ground.

"I don't see it going anywhere. Explain that."

It was hard to argue. People just didn't want to believe him though. A result of the education Indoctrination system. People just believed what they'd been told as children. I asked him where a

AN ACCOUNT OF AN ABORTIVE ATTEMPT AT ALPINE ANTICS

good place to start learning about all this was, and his number one recommendation was a failed American rapper. We bid him farewell and promised to give fair consideration to his ideas.

The new dawn saw us reheating the pizza on the dash alongside our gloves. Posting up in an isolated corner of the skifield carpark we started to make ready. Minutes later though, we were kicked out because You Can't Park There Mate. So, an hour went by shuttling the car back down to the base and hitching back up. Good start.

The approach up the piste went swimmingly and before long we were setting up our tent in a lovely, sheltered divot on the plateau. Sheltered? Not for long

mother*&#ers. Every now and then a dust (snow?) devil would whip by and send snow everywhere. This would not have been much of an issue but for the mesh making up a third of the 3 season tents interior. Just like that our stuff was getting wet, and we'd just arrived. By this point, the day was getting on somewhat and we only had a couple hours before it got dark. We went and scoped out the approach gully, but didn't really want to commit since we didn't know how far away the ice was and weren't that keen on going into the night. Back to the tent then.

Come morning, the tent mesh had clogged with enough snow that it was basically a four season. Our sleeping bags and everything else



Free thinkers consume their evening meal on the tables outside New World - Isaac Muller-Wild



Glorious 3 season camp setup & Four season tent is a mindset - Isaac Muller-Wild

AN ACCOUNT OF AN ABORTIVE ATTEMPT AT ALPINE ANTICS

was covered in ice. A quick snack was had, then back to the gully! The gully looked wind-loaded and sketchy, so we rapped down in 30m chunks off convenient boulders and whatnot. The snow cracked, but didn't slide. Around halfway down we couldn't find any more anchors, but I still wasn't convinced as to the stability of the snow. The frustrating decision to retreat was made and we climbed back out. Back up the top of the gully some new people had rocked up though, and they quite simply ploughed on down. Guess that'll do for a stability test.

Finally. At last. It only took us 5 days. Swinging into ice. How good. Frankly I got a touch bored rather quickly since WI2 isn't exactly renowned for requiring complex movement patterns. But hey it was my first time leading and climbing on ice, so I'll take it. Dan reckoned he'd climbed WI4 back in the states, but I daresay I looked more solid than he did. At least my crampons fit properly. I had a stab at a steeper line to the left but got stopped by decomposing snice about 20m up and downclimbed all the way back.

Attention now turned to getting back to the car. We'd need to make sure we got back to the field early enough to hitch a ride back down the road. It was already 3:30 though and the lifts stopped at 4. Luckily there were some others still climbing: "Hey, could we snag a lift with you guys down the skifield road?" Negotiations were tough but a deal was struck. They

were leaving now though, and we had to skedaddle to catch up. We hit VO2max all the way back to the tent, barely ahead of our rescuers. After packing the tent down, I realised my ski and pole anchors were quite well secured in the snow. A little too well even. Another 30 minutes later they were free though, and I was finally sliding down the hill into the dusk light. Big ups to the homies for waiting half an hour for us to catch up.

Straight to New World. I chugged straight gherkin juice and choccie milk like it was the elixir of life. The next day Dan realised his toes were frostnipped, causing swelling under his toenails. Luckily, he got them drained at the medical centre with the aid of a straightened staple and a lighter (this shockingly led to an infection). The weather deteriorated for the next several days, signalling a retreat home to Christchurch and an end to our suffering.

AN UPDATE TO THE FLAT EARTHER!!!!

I was yarning with a member of the climbing club committee who grew up in queenstown and asked if she knew any flat earth tennis coaches. HE WAS HER COACH?!?! Small world. We looked him up and he's been in the news for selling weed to a 15 year old and for someone threatening to kill him over a \$10k flat earth bet, where both believed they deserved the prize. What a world we live in.

AN ACCOUNT OF AN ABORTIVE ATTEMPT AT ALPINE ANTICS



Topped out on a mixed route woوو - Dan

Snowcraft Poems

Castle Hill Peak~ (13/07/24 - 14/07/24)

Joe Hughes:

Nachos.
Beans.
One toilet.
Planning?

when you leave
you leave me broken
a broken river
of tears.

Kai Ferrier:

Wake up dar-field pies
Mi-nus eight no snow oh well
Nice day tho snow-craft

George Higgins:

The instructors taught us the lingo
There was a very lost kinco
We had lots of fun
We slid on our bums
And as Issac said "fucking bingo"

Emily Williams:

the thoughts under your boots?

who am i?
gkkkk gkkkk gkkk,
the sound of your sharp talons
piercing my crusty epidermis,
with every step leaving an
impression feeling like a kiss,

that first step you oh so slayidgely
took
left me wanting more

wanting you to whoar my frost and
frost my whoar.

wanting your front points rammed
all the way to my core

Chris Harvey-Hawes:

There was a young man from UC,
Everyone said he was a cutie.
He didn't his check gear,
Despite people's fears,
And now all that's left of him is
quite goopy.

Briar Van Vosselen & Rosa Stones:

Yo From UK London fam
(gat gat)
From the streets to the snow
(skiddy bot bot)
We don't have mountains in
London man we only climb your
bitch
(a bom bom bom)
Ice on my wrist as cold as the
snow
(gang gang gang)
Avalanched Five feat deep, mans
not hot
(blat blat blat)
Steep steep climb, our daggers
look different in London
(bam bam bam)
Man over here we self arrest back
in London the police arrest
(GAT GAT GAT)
We're not UK boys were moutain
men

SNOWCRAFT POEMS

Finn Seeds:

In fields of sunlit snow it grows,
The spiky plant, in grace it shows.

With leaves like spears, sharp and
green,
In alpine valleys, its form's regularly
seen.

Its prongs stand low, yet proud
and strong,
It flourishes, waiting for its next
victim to step awrong

The essence of the blood it spills
fills the fragrant air.
A testament to nature's art, and
the resilience it bares

It's time to unmask the prickly
bastard
As the humble spiky stabbing
spaniard

Tyst Hertoghs:

The basin was quiet as the
morning unfolds
A small group had come out to be
in the cold
Issac was happy and so full of love
Until he had lost out on the sight
of his glove
A poor little transceiver, buried out
in the snow
was wrapped in a dry bag as hope
started to grow
that someone would find it,
somewhere on the globe
however, a vengeful saviour then
smoked it with the probe

Hamilton peak was exactly 1963
meters
spoken by a man who knows all



SNOWCRAFT POEMS





Refreshers Recap

Cookies Hut ~ (20/07/24 - 21/07/24)

- Lucas Larraman-

22 cookie munchers left the car-infested swamp in the early hours on Saturday morning. Freshly collected Kaikōura fire-wood and home-baked cookies brought stoke to all. We were heading to COOKIES HUT to make some COOKIES. The mission was set - were the crew up for it?

Yes they were. The crew learnt an interpretive dance under the

watchful gaze of the Rakaia awa while waiting for Callum to find his meat pies (30 mins driving the streets of Methven). And then the annual cookie off started (1 cookie = 1 point). Poppy was not battering for her food and drink as she did on Freshers, yet she still brought an ample supply of goon, jungle juice, nic and extra joss (the essentials). Everyone sung here comes the sun as the clouds

parted to beautiful views of Kā Tiritiri-o-te-moana, the southern alpes.

The sun then went to bed and the fire rose as the crew gathered together to watch the moon rise and bake some cookies at COOKIES HUT. Some were chillers taking it all in and some boogie boogie dancers. The next morning we woke to an icy paradise and Temo as the victor with a cookie count of 22 (chur Temo).



Refreshers Poetry

Cookies Hut ~ (20/07/24 - 21/07/24)

- Poppy the poet -

Refreshers Poetry
Cookie munch
Cookie crunch
We made the journey, stopped for
lunch
Cookies were shared amongst new
friends
As we followed the river around
the bends
Firewood carried in by the crew
Provided warmth for me and you
Jungle juice of the finest flavour
Was enjoyed by all, something to
savour
While our trip has come to a close
An annual cookie mission we
propose
Next year gather up your gear
For another tramp to cookie hutt
in near

- Poppy the poet



Bushball

Woolshed Creek ~ (03/08/24 - 04/08/24)

- Naomi -

At 9 AM we started our day,
With a stop at Little Red Café,
We brought out our inner kid,
spinning 'round with glee,
On the playground, wild and free.
Costumes of all shapes and sizes
were worn,
Shout out to Poppy for her helmet
and horns.
Our trip went astray but turned
out all right,
Everyone's spirits were happy and
bright.
Lunch was had, then a snowball
fight,
The drinking began and went on
all night.
We reached the hut with the help
of Rory's Cokesickle and rum,
As our fingers grew cold and our
toes went numb
A talent show followed our warm,
hearty dinner,
Poppy and Hannah were clearly
the winners.
The keg was drained while the
night was still young,
We danced until our feet hurt;

As the sun rose, we did too
Left the hut and took in the view.
The walk out was icy, with slipping
galore,
But we all made it home, safe and
secure.
We stopped at Sheffield on our
way home,
To consume the pies world

famously known.
Thank you all for a fantastic time,
Here's to CUTC and goon wine!



Which way the baddies go - Lucas Larraman

BUSHBALL



BUSHBALL



Chill by the fire e hoa ma - Eliska Oplistolova

BUSHBALL



- Lucas Larraman



Aye yo, check out that view ayye - Lucas Larraman



All the homies together - Lucas Larraman



Batman still at the carpark - Rory Maher



Turtle in the air - Rana Cawley



Fuck yeah, party in a hut - Sam Hopkins



Poopy moe - Rory Maher

Two Girls, One Wood

Woolshed Creek ~ (03/08/24 - 04/08/24)

An erotic play by Jay Gamble, Kate Miskin, and Hannah Murphy

Characters

BELLE: a lesbian hiker, with a penchant for new experiences, and amateur navigational skills

BECKY: the bicurious ranger with an appetite for wood, but a curiosity for the forbidden fruit

Scene 1: Unions and bosoms

The stage opens with a mystic musical theme to an enchanting backdrop of trees, bushes, and shrubs.

BELLE sets up her tent diligently as the sounds of a thunderstorm roll in...

crack crack crack

BELLE: [finishing the final touches] there, now that's what I call an erect tent! [wantingly] If only it wasn't so breezy in here... all this wind reminds me of my great uncle on Christmas lunch!

BECKY enters from the side stage

BECKY: Excuse me, hi, how are ya?

BELLE: [startled to see her] Ah, hi, I'm good thanks. Just settling in for the night.

BECKY: That's a girl. I'm BECKY the Ranger. This is my bush.

BELLE: Oh, I'm BELLE. Thanks for having me in your bush, Ranger.

BECKY: Anytime love. Now, I don't recall you paying me for the ranger fee, do you have a fiver on you?

BELLE: I should do, let me check my bag. It's just inside my tent.

BELLE crouches down into her tent, ass bulging in her tight hiker shorts.

BECKY tries to look away but is increasingly distracted by the plump bosom.

BELLE: [rifling through her belongings] so how are things in the Ranger economy?

BECKY: It's been better, it's been worse love. The big boss Ranger has been working overtime these last few weeks.

BELLE: Have you tried V.A.G.?

BECKY: [confused, aroused] What?!

BELLE: Sorry - Vigorous Association Gathering. It's a union term. It means meeting with your union regularly to intimidate the boss into giving you better conditions...

TWO GIRLS, ONE WOOD

BECKY: Oh V.A.G. yes, right! I've never given that a go. To be honest I'm a little more... submissive... in that department...

BELLE: Well I LOVE V.A.G., can't get enough of it. Me and my co-worker did it last month - right in the meeting room next to my boss. It was great!

BECKY: Right.

BELLE rummages around her belongings, but frustratingly she can't find any cash

BELLE: Hey Ranger BECKY - I can't seem to find any money for the range of fee. I'm so sorry.

BECKY: No that's okay, maybe I could come back tomorrow?

BELLE: I don't think I'll have any cash on me tomorrow either Becky! Maybe there's... another way I could pay...

Thunder roars in the background, signaling the start of a very wet storm.

crack crack crack

BECKY: Gee, we might be getting very wet soon!

BELLE: [muffling] I kind of hope so...

BECKY: What did you say?

BELLE: Nothing! I just... well I'm really into the idea of a barter economy, something that goes Against The Grain Of Capitalism. Perhaps I could pay your Range Fee with a service?

BECKY: What kind of service were you thinking love?

BELLE: [moves closer] something that requires... a little less clothing.

BECKY: [nervous, sexually confused] like swim lessons?

BELLE: Not a swimming lesson. But you can guarantee I'll teach you a few things...

BECKY: I hope I can be a good student...

BELLE: Don't be so hierarchical
BECKY: Why do we need to bring capitalism into this?

BECKY: Sorry

Rain starts pitter pattering down.

pitter patter pitter patter pitter patter

BELLE: We're getting a little bit wet, maybe we can continue this in my tent?

BECKY: Sure.

BELLE: I've only got space for one though, so it might be a bit cosy.

BECKY: That's fine by me!

TWO GIRLS, ONE WOOD

BELLE: Take my hand.

BELLE leads BECKY into the tent and the pair lie down. The tent, illuminated by torchlight, shows the silhouettes of two very beautiful women.

TBC...

Hannah and Poppy, award winning Broadway performers at Woolshed Creek Hut - Sam Hopkins



Holy Heist

Broken River Ski Field ~ (06/08/24)

- Isaac Muller-Wild - Feat: Liv Jacka, Levon Stone and Matt Creahan



Suck it CUSSC - Levon Stone

We can't not get this. We (Canterbury University Tramping Club Committee 2024™) ran the biggest ever TWALK, the biggest ever Freshers, and I ran the best ever snowcraft course the tramping club and WORLD have ever laid their vision balls on. It's the night of the UCSA club awards, and we're in for a goodie. We rock up and it's all on: lights turned down low, buttoned shirts, and clean shoes. President Slegers has cracked out his finest cowboy hat and Lucas has bleached his buzz cut. We find our way to a table in the cavernous Haere Roa building and have a seat just in time. We have a perfect view of a stage bathed in purple light, with the president of the student

association poised to announce what we all want to know: WHO GETS THE BEST CLUB AWARD??? "Quiet! Quiet please! Its time for the big announcement... Best Club Award!"

"In the bag!" exclaims Lucas as the room falls silent. The air buzzes with static tension.

"The winner of the 2024 best club award.. is...

CUSSC!!!"

fukken wot

A gasp from the whole room.

No one saw this coming.

HOLY HEIST

Everyone knew about the biggest ever TWALK, the biggest ever Freshers, and the best ever snowcraft course the tramping club and WORLD have ever laid their vision balls on and thought, nay, KNEW it had to belong to CUTC!

it cant be

The CUSSC committee takes the stage and says something about things no one wants to hear, waving the trophy around. Was it sympathy from UCSA for such a bad snow season? Or just luck? Either way, the injustice of this night was to haunt all who attended for weeks to come.

Fast forward 48hrs.

Livs car was snugly packed with ski gear and 4 hombres. No, it's not hypocritical that we were skiing, we needed to do it for gnarly mountaineering missions. Besides, it was the last open day for Broken River Skifield and the bro had half price passes to burn. The Vibe-Rater™ was high, almost popping off on the ride up.

"BOYS. GIRLS. DRUGS. SHRIMPS. COPS." Viagra boys flowed through the speakers as if John Lennon himself was sat in the engine bay.

We hit the carpark before there was even a queue for the tram. Half an hour later we were above Palmer Lodge rippin corn like rabid vegetarians. From the top of the ridgeline we could see a

storm approaching from the west – hopefully it wouldn't bother us later.

Chilling on the sunny deck with toasties in hand, life was good. I cast my eye around the vibrant scene: clubbies skiing in floral dresses, UCSA Best Club Trophy, meat on the BBQ. UCSA BEST CLUB TROPHY??????? Our arch-rivals, CUSSC, had made an appearance. We gathered that they were on their way to Temple Basin, but because it had no snow they'd stopped here to actually ski. They stomped around the deck, acting positively raucous and uncouth. Taking photos with the trophy as if they owned it. I made eye contact with the trophy and



Trophy Spotted - Levon Stone

HOLY HEIST

saw a flicker of recognition – it blinked twice. A RESCUE WAS IN ORDER.

The CUTCSTRAREEEASC (Canterbury University Tramping Club Special Trophy Rescue And Rehabilitation Express Emergency Executive Action SubCommittee) was rapidly established and convened inside Palmer Lodge. The following plan of action was established:

1. Grab the trophy
2. Ski away with it very quickly to Allans Basin
3. Take a tasteful nude
4. Return it to CUSSC because otherwise they'd tell on us to UCSA
5. Profit

We prepared ourselves for the mission ahead.

Green light.

I made my way over to the CUSSC table and made small talk. Then, "could I have a quick look at the trophy? I've never seen it up close!"

"Sure bro", said the naïve CUSSC member. He knew not what the man before him was capable of.

I turned the trophy in my hands. It glittered in the sunlight like the fine jewel that it was. In a **flash** I about-turned and speed walked to Liv, who was pre-positioned for rapid exfiltration with an open pack – in the trophy went and AWAYYY. Shocked gasps emanated

from the CUSSC table when they finally realised what was happening. Their goons jumped up and ran for skis: THE CHASE WAS ON! As I clicked into my planks I caught a flying object in by peripheral vision, just BARELY reacting in time to batt it away with my pole. It had been a half empty beer bottle and it wasn't the last airborne beverage winging my way. **Time to gap.**

The goons caught us up at the tow right as Liv was about to get on, snatching her left ski clean off her foot! "Take the pack! I'll hold them off!" she cried. I threw the bag over my shoulder in a swift, smooth motion and ripped it outta there quicksmart. Zooming out of the unload area, I beelined for Main Tow. If I could just make it on I had a chance to escape, but Liv had conducted a subpar holding action: a goon had somehow already positioned himself in my path... this would be tricky. In his foolishness, the goon had placed himself next to a thicc wind lip. I only had one option. I picked up as much speed as I could, hit the wind lip, and AIRED STRAIGHT OVER THE GOON dispensing a handy tailtap on his helmet as I arced to safety. I glanced behind me to see the goon on the ground stunned. Further behind, Liv was dismounting the tow with one ski, handily catching up to the goon who stole her other one. She threw him over her shoulder and onto the ground like Jackie fucking Chan, skis and all. She came to eat banana bread and kick ass, and she was all outta bread.

As I approached main tow there were more and more goons streaming downhill towards me. As I scrambled to walk across a big tussock patch to reach the tow they finally caught up. Hardly a fair fight, there was soon six of them dragging me to the ground and tearing the trophy from its shelter in my sack. It was over.

We regrouped in palmer lodge. The CUSSC table now had the trophy on lockdown. That shit had more security than Area 51. We'd have to be more strategic this time. Better timed. Better executed. Better betterer.

An hour later their stance had relaxed. This was all the opportunity we needed. This time, Levon approached them and made small talk. They took the bait hook line and sinker. I was waiting in pole position next to the deck with skis on. Liv was next to me, coiled up like a spring, ready to launch towards our exit. A blur of movement on the deck. Levon had grabbed the trophy, thrusting it into my hands! Milliseconds later it was clipped to my harness and we were gone. Up the tow, and over the ridge into Allans Basin. SUCCESS!!!! THE TRAMPING CLUBS DIGNITY AND PRIDE TEMPORARILY RESTORED!!!!

We found a suitable rock to stand on for the photo. The storm we'd seen earlier was arriving with perfect timing to catch us with our pants down. It had been arranged for Matt to be photographer, but



Mission Accomplished - Levon Stone

he'd sacked it (we hadn't told him the plan) and was nowhere to be seen. The wind wasn't that cold by mountain standards but it felt pretty fucking chilly with no clothes on. Seconds turned into minutes. It had never been so easy to cover myself. Wait, who's that on the skyline?! Is it a kea? a CUSSC goon? NO, IT'S LEVOOOON!!! We got the shot and what a shot it was. There was even a rainbow in the background! We graciously returned the trophy and they dumped me in a pond for it (pricks). Upon return the trophy was noted to have obtained some enhanced architecture incorporating a more abstract form (it was bent). CUSSC could not be reached for comment at the time of writing. Liv shook hands with the bastards and that was that. What a day.

Mt Richardson Day Walk

Mt Richardson ~ (17/08/24)

- Nick Slegers - Feat: Gabby Morris, Sebastian Ramsey, Masae Nagami and Jiacheng (Eric) Wu.

While a shortfall of cars meant a few people had to be turned away (sorry!), a cool crew ventured off for a chill day walk. There was a slight change of plans (I entered the wrong location into google maps eek) so the planned Mt Thomas trek became a Mt Richardson rumble, but the walk was still gorgeous. The walk was only ~3 hours, but a short walk to start the day is a pretty good way to procrastinate my uni work while still leaving time on the day to do said uni work. Sure beats what I would have done otherwise (watch tiktoks on phone at home). The group was introduced to the



wonders of beech tree honey dew (yum!), and the uhhhh... experience... of horopito leaves (having a tongue that can taste things is overrated). Some fallen trees and mild mud marching added a bit of technical challenge, but it was still a lovely day walk. The crew charitably carries some logs into the muddy paths to make something for others to walk in. With muddy boots we finished the walk feeling refreshed. To my shock and joy there was even a place selling sheffield pies (delicious as always) at Oxford!



GO MULLER GO WILD promo - Lucas Larraman



Lush gorse and bush - Lucas Larraman

Hinewai Ramble

Hinewai ~ (21/09/24)

- Lucas Larraman -

The sun rose bright on Te
Waihora's shore,
We gathered ten, seeking paths to
explore.
Over coffee, laughter, and skies so
blue,
Our journey began, each heart
anew.
With Tommy's guides in hand, we
roamed,
Each leaf and creature, a world of
its own.
Poppy shared wonders, her eyes
aglow —
Did you know micro shrimp see
thrice our show?
Sam debated biking but chose the
ride,

While Calem brought vibes, with
smiles wide.
Sophie with her stolen plates,
Yet her spirit soared, unburdened
by fate.
Eliška's art, a gift in drawing,
A sketch of Hugh, so pure and
soaring.
Nina found magic in a waterfall's
spray,
While Lu will take a Horoeke to
France one day.
Mon chased kākā, not snow's
embrace,
While Yukai, calm, set a thoughtful
pace,
Dreaming of plants he'll soon ID,
On Te Araroa's winding spree.



Lucas, professional selfie taker

HINEWAI RAMBLE

Hugh, ever bold, sought a daring
flight,
Aiming for 80 on his bike, pure
delight.
But speed gave way to art and
dreams,
He gifted us watercolours and
hand-drawn memes.

And Lucas brewed warmth with
rooibos tea,
Though travelling from the car-
infested swamp, you see,
Our hearts belong where Hinewai
calls,
Far from the noise, where the
ngāhere enthral.



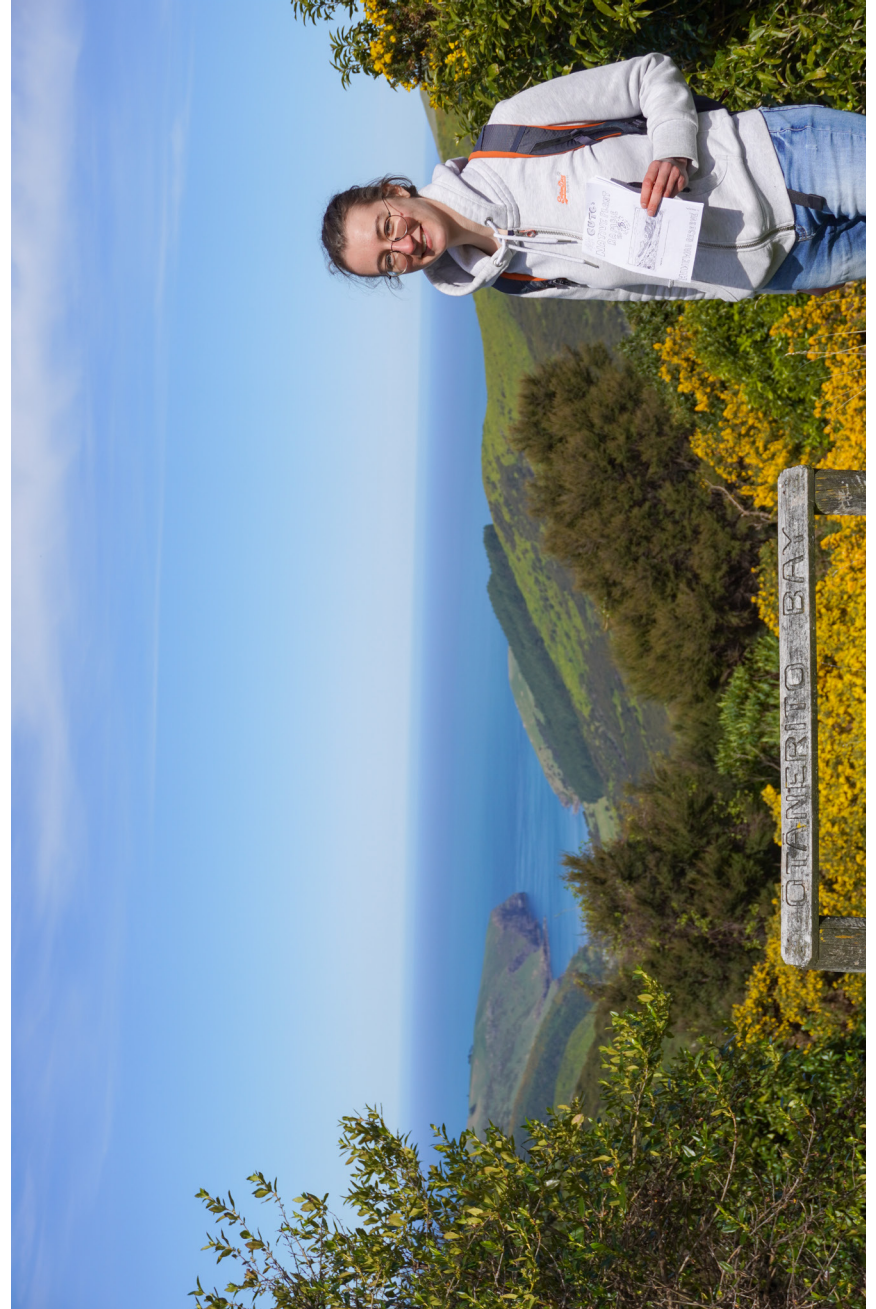
The legend of all legends - Mon Blakie



*The legend of all legends Hugh Wilson - Eliška
Oplistolova*



Baby 7 finger - Lucas Larraman



View on views!



Wear on Earth - Lucas Larraman

What Trip Starts Without a Minor Car Crash

Kaimatau ~ (01/10/24)

- Lucas Larraman - Feat: Campbell, Emily and Isaac

Kaimātau and a rather delightful sense of connetion

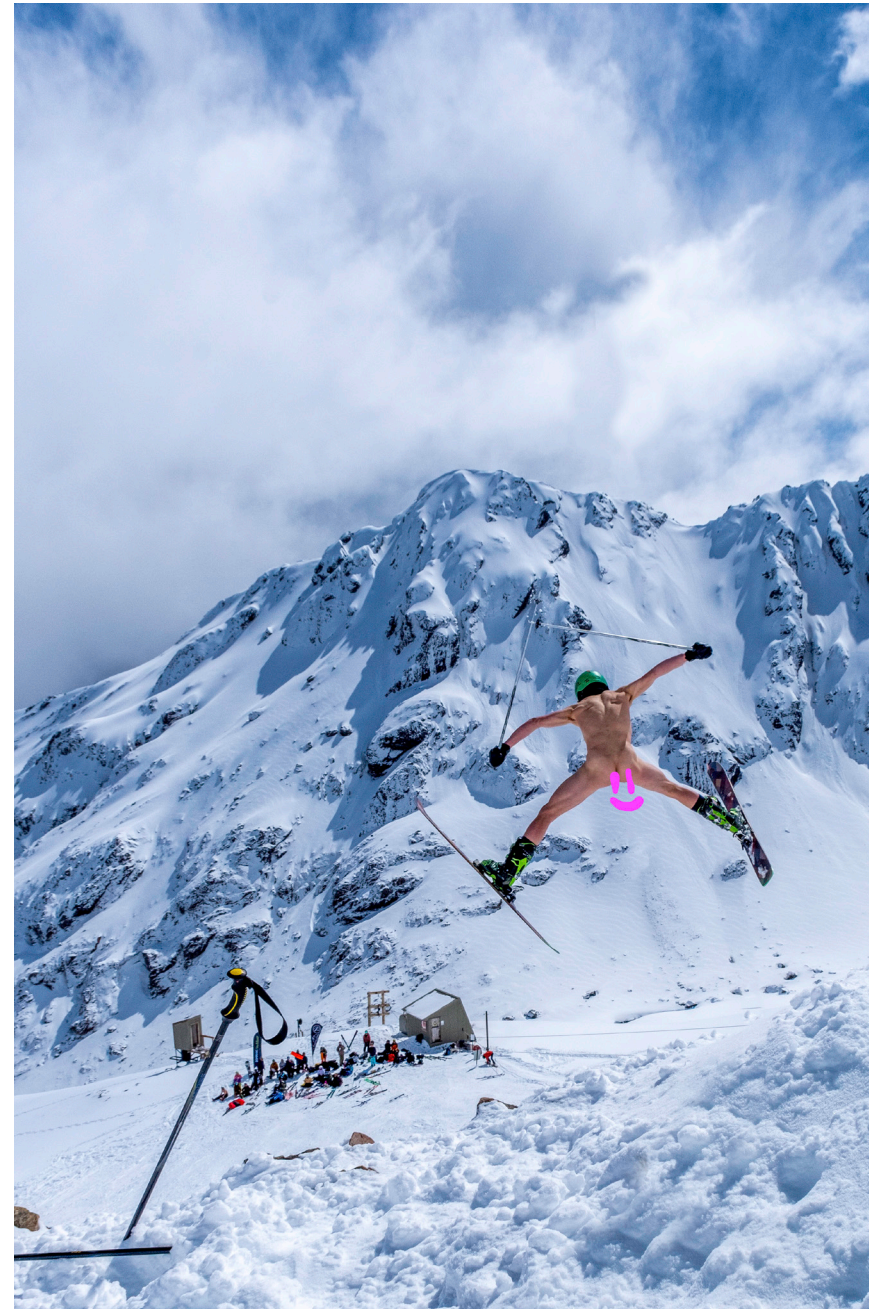
What trip starts without a minor car crash? The additional indentation adds to the already flawless aerodynamics of the Swing Road (trademarked). This trip is brought to you by Go Muller Go Wild and his infamous shrek vomit green designs!

Isaac and I were rather enjoying our evening faff (lolly-gagging for you silly Americans). **SIDERANT**

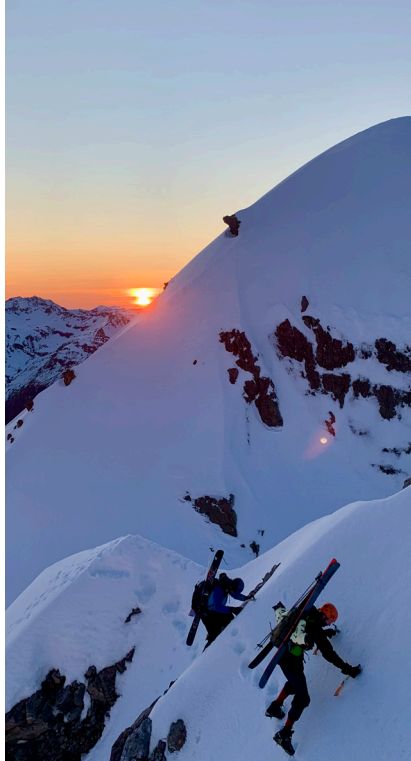
what's the faff with faffing? Our lives are in a constant capitalistic structured society? Why not break free, slow down and enjoy life more? I know what you're thinking: faffers are communists. You are 101% correct...

Crunch, crunch, crunch - Isaac (Go Muller Go Wild) speeds off after his hit-and-run. I prepare myself for a 3-hour transportation in a metal box. **SIDERANT2.0** Our lives are constantly spent inside a box: wooden living-environment box,

WHAT TRIP STARTS WITHOUT A MINOR CAR CRASH



Side Hussles - Malcom McRae



Couple Goals - Lucas Larraman

cushy sleeping box, studying box, drinking hole box... break free from the box and live in an igloo.

Emily, Campbell, Isaac (Go Muller Go Wild) and I settle in the for night in Tarahaka. Isaac sings everyone lullabies to bed - such a sweetheart. We wake up not long after and someone sleeping in the lounge isn't too stoked at our 1am departure...

'Notice more, be present and not so rushed' - a daily mantra I repeat to myself. Some road works delay our walk but provide the perfect opportunity for some salsa - quick quick slow quick quick slow. Beep, beep, beep, beep - the road worker look at us with confusion...

Dud. Dud. Dud. Dud. Our ski boots touch dirt, roots, roots, stones and then finally the world's finest crisp snow. Cue *perfect cramponing noises* Seriously, the conditions were phenomenal : plenty coverage, green light on AvINZ, no wind and an impending sense of connection. A firm GO MULLER GO WILD stamp of approval!

Isaac is keen to strip and show off his handmade *go muller go wild limited edition* budgie smugglers. Very nice! We applaud Isaac as he leads us up and up and up. We are not the second mouse to the trap but boy oh boy are we getting the cheese! Tāwhirimātea has gifted us theo's beautiful moment of weather, allowing us to pass through this space safely.

I glance up and spot a dark silhouette against the moonless

Surely Cover Shot - Lucas Larraman



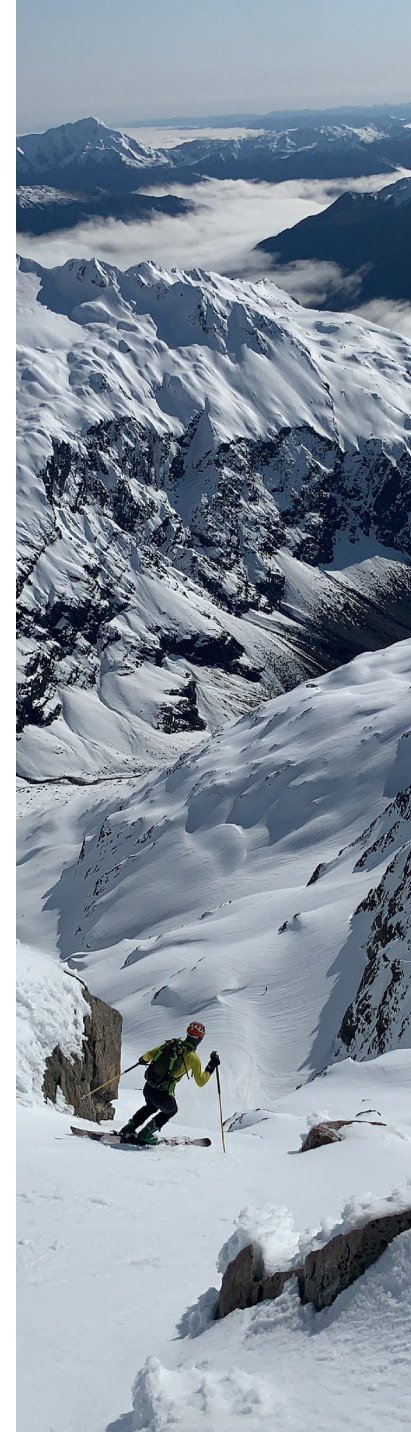
night. The ūpoko of Kaimātau - tēnā koe! I have been yearning for moments like this. Surrounded quietly by friends. An experience together in a space of utmost beauty. Hau ki roto. Hau ki waho. Breath in. Breath out.



Qts - Lucas Larraman



Bitta Bromance - Lucas Larraman

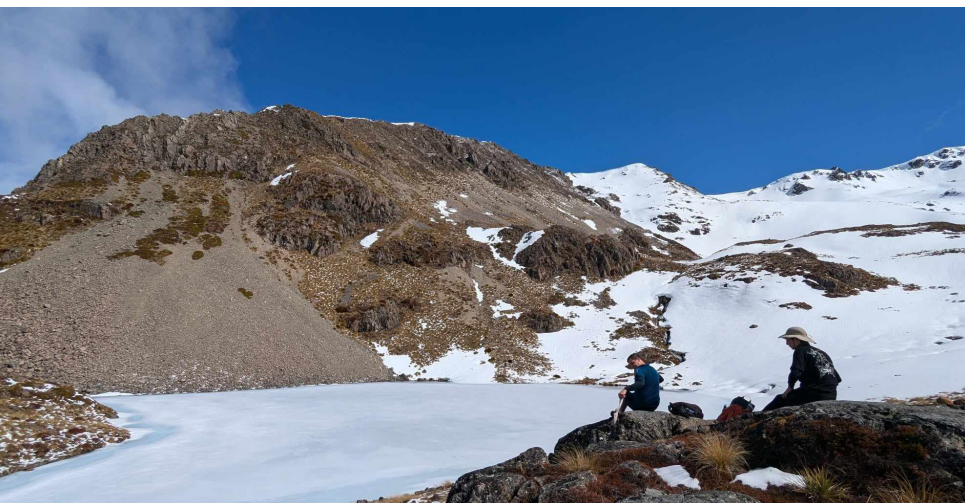


Isaac Shred Isaac Shred - Lucas Larraman

CUTC / OUTC

Ohau ~ (05/10/24 - 06/10/24)

- Yukai & Travis -



Break with a view - Yukai

Yukai -

Saturday morning we were in fog But we weren't too worried as it usually is low-lying. Went past the Glen Mary Tramping, Hunting, Fishing, Boating Ski Club (I didn't take a photo of the sign unfortunately) Freehold Creek Track is part of the Te Araroa. Was about to bushbash beside the river fortunately Fenton had the better idea to have a look around the corner where we found the track markers. Clouds started lifting, we were soon above the fog. Had to cross one dodgy stream – we watched out for each other. Saw

some deer tracks but didn't see any animals except for 1 wild rabbit. Stop at the frozen tarn for lunch and went back down. Had enough time for a stop over at the twizel salmon farm and restock supplies at 4Square.

Travis -

CUTC/OUTC

Unfortunately, due to the heavy rain round Dunedin and the subsequent roads being closed of OUTC was unavailable to make it. However, we had a blast, enjoying the sunshine and mountain surroundings. On

Friday we left rather late due to work commitments but made reasonable time making it to Lake Poaka by 10 pm.

On Saturday a small group went up to some tarns near Freehold Creek whilst the larger group went up Ben Ohau. For the Ben Ohau trip we started off in the fog obscuring the view towards the top making the climbing feel easier and quicker than would be on a clear day seeing the 1000m slog ahead. When near the top the fog opened to allow for the view to take over and we found some slushy snow. A long lunch at the top was had to appreciate the view. On the way back we followed the Greta Track loop which meant some knee-high crossings in some fastish flowing water. With great technique no one fell in and all the rivers were negotiated with easy. Once back at Lake Ohau the brave went for a swim whilst the others lounged in the sun. A cruisy evening at the campground ensued.



Quick jump - Travis

The following day the group split with some heading up Ohau Ski field for an amazing closing day in the spring slush whilst the others cruised back to Christchurch taking the opportunity to eat some tasty salmon and pies, whilst enjoying the views the McKenzie Country has to offer.



Campsite and stoke - Travis

Travis and the Pitted Prunes

Thousand Acre Plateau ~ (12/11/24 - 15/11/24)

- Ronja Keeley - Feat: Travis Brydon, Pitted Prunes



The Enemy - Ronja Keeley

Whenever we stopped for snacks, out came the prunes. When offered one, I would accept - they were pretty yummy after all - and Travis would have 4-5 of them. That evening when we arrived at Poor Pete's Hut (named thus because it was the last hut Pete built before he got married) we both had spicy MTR curries and went to bed fairly early.

The next morning, we had a lazy morning before heading off to Larrikin Creek Hut around 9:30. Every time we stopped for snacks, out came the prunes. We reached the hut around lunchtime and had lunch (Travis had more prunes) before climbing

With me freshly unemployed and Travis between uni and his summer internship, we decided to take a wee trip up to the Thousand Acre Plateau.

During our first snack break, I asked Travis, "so, what have you got for snacks?" Travis pulls out a pack of pitted prunes, along with some pretzels.

"Pitted prunes?" I asked. "You know the only reason I know anyone would eat pitted prunes is because they're constipated, are you constipated?" "Hey, they're yummy! And I'm very much not constipated, thank you very much," Travis answered.



Dinner at Poor Petes Hut - Ronja Keeley

The Needle as our afternoon mish. Having seen how many prunes Travis ate, I chucked the toilet paper into the pack, even though he insisted he was fine.

TRAVIS AND THE PITTED PRUNES

Following the path up to The Needle proved challenging, and I may have misled us once or twice maybe. At one point, Travis and I had taken different paths after crossing a stream, when all the sudden I hear from across the flax and tussocks "Hey Ronja..." "Yes?"

"Where'd you put that toilet paper?"

"It's in the top of the pack."

"Ok, nature is calling..." Travis gives me the sign to turn around, and I

start looking for somewhere to sit and wait. "It's calling quickly!" Well ok then, I'll just sit down right where I am.

The rest of the walk up the needle passed uneventfully, and the views of The Haystack, the Devil's Dining Table, and Mount Misery were to die for. We ate snacks and lazed around in the sun for a while before getting naked for the keas.

On our way back down, I carried the pack. We made our way



Getting naked for the Keas - Ronja Keeley

quickly down past the Spaniards and had just started the final descent to the hut when I hear

"Hey Ronja....?"

"Yeeesss...?"

"Do you, uh, have that toilet paper? I want to try to make it to the hut, but I have to bolt."

I quickly handed over the toilet paper, and Travis started down the hill at top speed. After about 15 meters I hear "I'm not going to make it to the hut - I'm just going to go into the bushes here."

I stopped for a couple minutes and then decided I might as well head down to the hut - Travis would follow. "Can I walk by you or are

you on the path?"

"I'm deep enough in the bushes, you can go by."

As I walked by, I glanced over into the bushes, and through the gaps I saw Travis, shirtless, with the shirt tossed into the bushes. "Why is your shirt off??" I asked. "Well, you see... the branch I was holding onto broke and I may have fallen, and I may really need a wash when we get to the stream... prunes are my enemy."

I headed down to the hut, dropped the pack at Larrikin Stream, and went to grab the soap and towel. As I neared the hut, I hear from across the clearing "Can you also grab my scuffs?"



Travis contemplating his life choices - Ronja Keeley

I look back to see Travis emerge from the bush, naked except for his socks and shoes.

That evening, after a thorough wash, Travis decided to have some instant noodles for dinner. "I've had enough laxatives, now I need some blockatives! And I'm not having any more prunes on this trip."

Travis' Note: The following morning I proceeded to eat more

prunes with breakfast, just at a rate less than the previous day's consumption, got to love me some prunes.

Practising for the Team

Milford Sound ~ (22/11/24 - 28/11/24)
- Lucas Larraman - Feat: Cole Blackwell

Dear Homer hut reader -
 this trog is about Cole getting naked - your welcome ;)



Rakau - Lucas Larraman



Piwari - Lucas Larraman



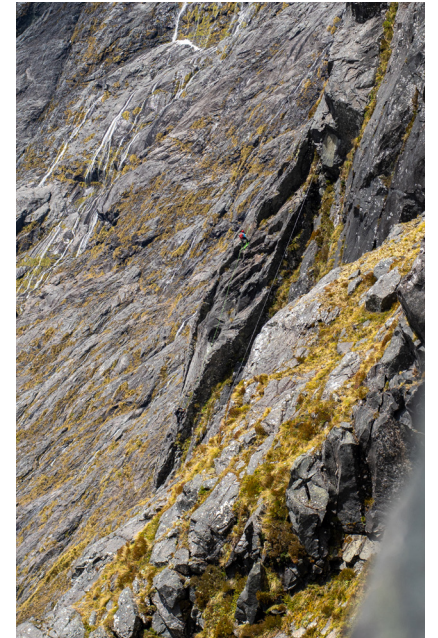
Toka Nui - Lucas Larraman



PRACTISING FOR THE TEAM



He Matuitui Tena - Lucas Larraman



Father son dynamic - Lucas Larraman



Kohu - Lucas Larraman



Toka - Lucas Larraman



Somewhere along the mist trail - Jason

Biking with Love

*Ohinehou Lyttelton to Mohua Golden Bay ~
(10/12/24 - 18/12/24)*

- Lucas Larraman - Feat: Jason Larraman

Biking with love

Feels alright, but you can't really
tell
An enormous sense of satisfaction
resides over me
Dada and I pushed ourselves hard
today

And the rewards are sweet -
beer, lying in the sun with an
approaching southerly
All while listening to Caamp and
Korimako
Drink till the cows come home.

Scurrying rats tug at my memory

An ill-conceived, humorous
dream?
Swarms of sandflies, seagulls to
unguarded fish 'n chips
Sweet sweet, milky milky tea?

A taonga of time spent together
Among the gentle burbles of
isolation
Clink, clink, clink, clink
Red and blue machines exit the
cocoon

A showery valley before us

Smudges of light dart back and
forth
A maze, a maze, a maze
Tūmatakuru in all directions
The awa slipping back and forth
A tuna released into a grand roto
Soaring away of sigh
Whispering unheard tales

Like powder skiing without
The danger of avalanche
Watch out for the cryptic rock!
Flowers there, flowers here, flowers
everywhere

A narrow bridge to traverse
Fuck
I just caught my handlebars and
Nearly fell into the vortex

Sweet, sweet, milky milky tea?
A side of biltong
Lekker lekker
A faraway dot on Te Araroa

Stolen land stolen land stolen land
'Gifted' to them three generations
ago
Or so they say
Mamae here, mamae there,
mamae everywhere

A single line of ducklings
I stop to laugh

Like ostriches with heads in the
ground
Or sitting on the mat for first day
of school
Jaggard tips
Lie across like some clich  you can
imagine
Or harakeke with lots of muka
Cloaked in the mists of
patupaiarehe

We begin to tie balloons to our
bikes
Like Carl and Russell
Up to paradise falls
I am so so lucky to be here with
someone I love so much <3

Norwester gently caressing - Lucas



Caught out in the trees - Jason



Smell the pretty flowers - Lucas



Red and blue machines leave the nest - Lucas



A lovely bode for the night - Lucas



Moonlight uh spotlight uh - Lucas



Pensive moments at the end of the day - Lucas



The scree tickles - Jason



Hydrate! - Lucas



Morning reflections - Jason



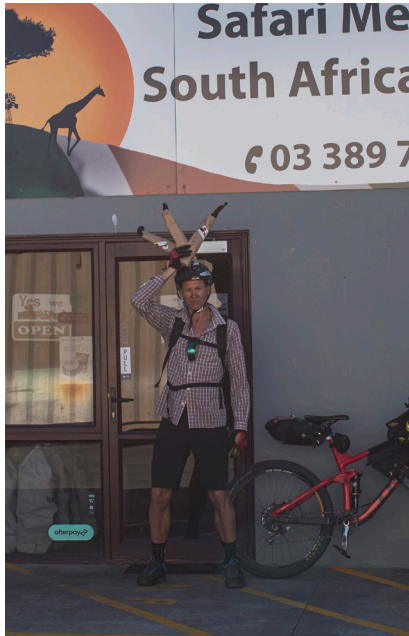
Just like high lining - Jason



Ali-D, a fierce All Blacks supporter - Lucas



Lovely bokeh - Lucas



Lekker lekker - Lucas



CUTC - Poppy Gane

CUTC Awards

Our Beautiful Backyard ~ (01/01/24 - 31/12/24)

Quote of the Year:

Bobby Stannard - '(in the aftermath of bushball)- "To me, that was nothing, but to you kids, that would've been like surviving world war two'.

Scary, his toes nearly froze off on bush ball because he refused to use a sleeping bag, cleaned out a sheet of ritalin to get his freak on at bush ball "that shit is not good for me man"

Not-in-my-pack Award:

Surfboard - Lucas you took a surfboard to make a bar that was sick

Masterchef Award:

Poppy - Only what she could scavenge from the Freshers

Surprised They're Here:

Naomi - Leading half of bush ball down an icy creek, resulting in many wet boots and sad faces

The CUTC Creative:

Isaac - GO MULLER GO WILD PACKS &
Rory's sick painting - It's epic

Wandering Spirit Award:

Travis - 72 huts (wtf how?!)

Highway Menace:

Yukai - Getting his rear window smashed and being super chill about it

Good Bugger:

Fenton - REVOLUTIONISED the gear hire system with Liv, pulled off a shed tidy up that would impress Marie kondo, solo ran an epic aurora hunting trip on the Wild West coast and is an all round great person. Also hasn't committed any fraud (yet)

CUTC AWARDS

Liability:

Daniel O - Was on exchange and within a period of around four weeks managed to: lose a laptop charger and his harmonica, frostbite his toes and get deported with club crampons and Matts crampon parts

Extra for Experts:

Travis and Liv - Longest time spent in Avoca bath tub - 6 hours (or was it 7?). I challenge anyone to break that record - to become a yearly award

Rakiura - Northwest Circuit

Stewart Island ~ (01/01/25 - 10/01/25)

- Ronja Keeley - Feat: Travis Brydon

Day 0

New Years Day, 2025

After a Christmas tramp with Travis's family and a couple days to wash our clothes in Christchurch, Travis and I had driven down to Invercargill, spending New Years at a random campsite in the Catlins. We arrived in Invercargill around noon, where we made one more stop at the supermarket and a stop at the pharmacy to buy me an ankle brace – I had ended the last tramp with pain in my

right foot and ankle that was stubbornly hanging on, and since we were about to walk for 10 days, I didn't want to take any chances. We then went to the airport, repacked our stuff, and checked in our bags before driving my car to a residential neighborhood a couple kilometers away where we could park for free. When we got on the plane (they didn't even check our tickets or ask for ID) there were 8 people and a pilot, there was paint peeling off the plane, and we took off after a 30 second safety briefing.



- Ronja Keeley

Once off the plane we checked into the backpackers, set up our tent, and went to freshen up a bit. While in the bathroom I had a horrifying realization. I had not seen my tramping clothes in any of my stuff that I had just unpacked. Indeed, when I went to double check, they were nowhere to be found. Luckily, most of the clothes I had with me were outdoor suitable, and I was able to make the necessary substitutions to end up with a suitable set of tramping clothes and hut clothes. Oh well, life went on. We got fish and chips that evening and ate them by the wharf – Stewart Island has the best fish and chips I have ever had because the cod is caught fresh just off the island. We dreamt about that fish and chips for the next 10 days.

Day 1

That morning, we stopped by the Department of Conservation (DOC) office to get some information about the track and to store our extra clothes and tent in a locker. Talking to the lady was very helpful, and we learned about some sections of the track that were only crossable at low tide, as well as when low tide actually was. At 9am we caught a taxi to the beginning of the actual track, which was expensive but worth it, because I knew from when I had done the great walk with a friend two years ago that the walk from town to the beginning of the track was a

terrible two hour slog on a paved road.

At 9:15 we took our "pre-Northwest Circuit" picture and headed off down the track. The great walk section was hilariously easy – walking it two years ago was so much more difficult, but I have learned a lot about tramping since then, including how to pack a lighter bag (although our bags were still around 17 kgs to start out with).



- Ronja Keeley

We ate lunch at the Port William Hut around 11:30, and cleared out as a big group of people came in. As soon as we started walking on the Northwest Circuit track, the difference in track maintenance was obvious. Within 5 minutes, my shoes were covered in mud, but it also felt like we were actually in a wild place now.

We arrived that afternoon at Bungaree Hut, which was already full of people. A family had boated

in and was staying for a few days, and an American family of three was doing the circuit on the same timing we were but had stayed in Port William Hut last night. The sandflies were pretty vicious at the hut, so the evening was spent inside, or outside walking around. Just before bed around 9:30, we took a small walk down the track and saw a kiwi rustle the ferns! We unfortunately did not see the actual bird, but it was a good sign.

Day 2

We walked from Bungaree Hut to Christmas Village Hut on day 2. There are two hunters' huts on the way there, and we stopped and had lunch in the first one since it was raining. In fact, there are quite a lot of hunters' huts on Stewart Island. DOC does not build or maintain them, instead they are maintained by independent clubs. There is a healthy population of white-tailed deer on the island, and a smaller population of red deer. The populations are maintained for hunting, because it generates a lot of income for DOC – hunters are often wealthy people, as evidenced by the fact that we saw two hunters fly into a hunters' hut with a helicopter a couple days later. The other thing about hunters' huts is that because people boat or fly into them, they often contain some supplies even when no one is staying there. Before reaching Christmas Village Hut, we went

to pop into the hunters' hut and found, among other things, an unopened can of beer. After umming and aahing for a bit, Travis decided to take it and drink it that night – it was evident there was no one staying there – and leave another beer in a hunters hut some other time.

Day 3

From Christmas Village Hut, you can climb the tallest mountain on Stewart Island, Mt. Anglem / Hananui, at 980 meters tall. Travis was set on climbing this mountain, and originally, we had planned to take a whole day to climb it and stay in the hut for two nights. The American family was planning to do the same thing, so we decided this was our chance to get ahead of them and maybe have some huts to ourselves. That morning, Travis woke up at 5 and got up to climb the mountain. I had slept horrendously that night and went back to sleep until eight, then got up, had a stretch, and went to go find some pāua. You are allowed to collect and eat it, and I was determined to give it a try. Travis got back around 10:45, just as I was frying up the pāua I had successfully pried off the rock and gutted. He immediately went to go charge his phone – he had turned it on to see if he had service on the mountain and had gotten a concerning text he had half read before his phone had given up on life. A couple minutes later, he was

able to read the texts, which said that his brother had gone for a trip in the mountains and had fallen off a ridge, shattering his kneecap and fracturing his pelvis! He had set off his personal locator beacon and been rescued by helicopter, and was now in the hospital post-surgery, recovering. It turned out there was service at the hut as well, so Travis gave his mum a call, and was able to talk to both her and his brother. It sounded like everything was under control.

After eating the pāua, which was in fact quite good, we packed up and started walking around noon. After an annoying set of up and downhills for 11km, we reached Yankee River Hut and found we had it all to ourselves. After a wash in the river, where Travis got stung by two wasps on both calves, we had dinner and went to bed fairly early. We didn't have too far to go the next day and had a nice sleep in, with no one to wake us up.



- Ronja Keeley

Day 4

On day 4 we walked to Long Harry Hut, which included a walk over some sand dunes and along Smoky Beach, with a hunters' hut we had just seen a helicopter fly to. There was also a boat on the

beach, with a group of people standing around it with beers in hand. As we came closer, it was evident that they were quite concerned. Once we reached it, we saw that the wheels were stuck in the sand, and the people told us they had tried to dig it

out and other boats had come to try to pull it out, to no avail. I'm sure that was quite an expensive mistake to make.

After we got to Long Harry Hut, we had a wash in the river and then tried our hand at some fishing with the hook and line left in the hut. We were getting bites right away but couldn't get the hook to stay in the fish's mouth. Because we were fishing on the rocks in the waves, the hook ended up getting stuck and we lost it, which I felt quite bad about.

That night we started getting serious about trying to see kiwis – it was evident the area was full of them – we were hearing them call at night, seeing footprints (see picture), feathers, and poo, and people in the hut books were saying they had seen plenty. We walked quietly along the track for a bit and heard one call, but alas, none to be seen.

- Ronja Keeley



Day 5

On day 5 we headed off towards East Ruggedy Hut. This was the first day we had a section of the track we could only cross at low tide, which was around 11. It turned out to be a long rocky beach that we had to rock-hop across. We decided we wanted to look for some more pāua when we got on the beach, so we dropped our bags and headed towards an area where there were some big rocks that would protect us from the force of the incoming waves. Not only did we not find any pāua, but the rocks were quite slippery with algae, and getting into the area was much easier than getting out. On my way back to our packs, I slipped and hit my right knee quite badly. It really hurt on impact, but I could tell nothing was broken. We sat at the packs for a bit while I recovered a bit, and then made our way across the beach, not wanting to miss the low tide window. It hurt to bend my knee, and I figured out that I could keep it mostly straight and make my left knee do all the work if I stepped up with my right foot, and down with my left.

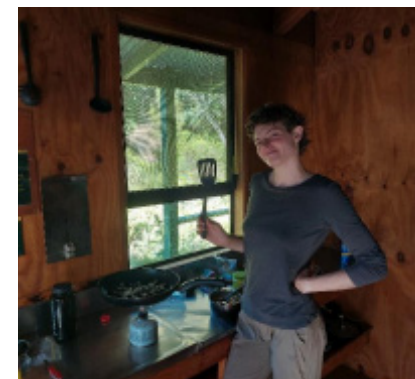
Travis ended up finding two pāua towards the end of the beach, and after lunch we headed up the hill. I was worried that my knee would cause me significant pain when walking uphill, but it turned out that the more I walked, the less it hurt. We took a small detour to an overlook that turned out to be a stunning view of East Ruggedy



- Ronja Keeley

Beach and the Ruggedy Range and then walked down across the sand dunes to the hut. There was no one there when we got there, so we spread our stuff all across the hut, had a wash, and fried up some pāua before we were joined by another guy traveling the circuit the other way and had to sheepishly make some room in the hut for him – we had spread out so much, both inside and outside that he said he thought there were six people staying here when he first walked up.

That evening we took another walk to the beach, which was actually quite far away, and walked quietly looking for kiwis. While we did hear some, all we saw was a possum.



- Travis Brydon



- Ronja Keeley

Day 6

Day 6 started out hot and muggy as we started walking to Big Hellfire Hut around 9am. When we got to the end of West Ruggedy Beach, however, it started to rain a little bit. I decided not to put my rain pants on – it would have meant taking off my boots and gators, and it was pretty warm anyway. Big mistake. The rain picked up in intensity, and by the time we had a very short lunch huddled near a big rock, my pants were wet from the knees down, and it just got worse from there. The water slowly crept its way up my legs and down into my boot, till the whole lower half of my body was wet, including my underwear. It felt like I had peed myself, and by that point I was absolutely miserable and hating life and tramping. As I got wetter I got colder, but was still walking so didn't really feel it until it was too late. Travis seemed unbothered by the rain, having the double advantage of more body mass and a higher tolerance for being wet and cold. Usually when we're walking together, Travis lets me set the pace and walks behind me. I slowed down quite a lot as I got wetter and colder, and eventually going up a hill, he passed me, and that was the final straw. I started crying but pushed on, stumbling through the mud and getting stuck, with my legs wet and cold and my boots full of water. Finally, we got to the hut. I couldn't do anything besides take off my

clothes and crawl into my sleeping bag, where instead of getting warm, I lay there freezing and crying for well over thirty minutes. Travis washed the muddy gators, hung up our wet clothes, started a fire, and made me some tea, and finally got in the sleeping bag with me, at which point I slowly started to warm up again and was able to stop crying. Eventually I was able to move and put on some more clothes and get myself something to eat, which helped a lot. I think I was dangerously close to getting hypothermia, perhaps had even started down that road. It felt really scary being unable to think logically and act to make myself warmer, or even to ask for help.

Day 7

On day 7 we had another 7 hour to walk to Mason's Bay Hut, with a low tide pinch point in the last third. Low tide was around 1pm, and so we got started fairly early after a beautiful sunrise and followed a big ridge down to Little Hellfire Beach, where there was a hunter's hut. It turned out that my pants had not dried at all overnight, so I decided to wear just the rain pants with no other pants underneath, which was in fact better than no rain pants. It was still raining a little bit that day, and, having learned our lesson from the day before, we stopped at the hunter's hut for an early lunch. We were able to make some soup and tea and be

sheltered for a bit before going up and over one more big hill to Mason's Bay, where we

would have to cross the pinch point and walk along the beach for ~4km.



- Ronja Keeley

As we went over the hill, we were hurrying along but having a good conversation, and it was raining a little bit. Suddenly I almost walked onto a kiwi on the path! It took a couple steps into a nearby bush and then stayed there and continued probing the soil for worms and other delicious things. Finally, it came out of the bush, less than a meter from where Travis and I were standing! It continued unbothered, coming

closer and closer to me. Then it poked its bill at my shoe, realized it was a foreign texture, gave its bill a little shake, and wandered off into the undergrowth on the other side of the path. I looked back to see tears in Travis's eyes. It was truly a special encounter, seeing a kiwi in broad daylight so close and unbothered by our presence in its natural habitat. They really are such odd birds, with feathers that look almost like fur, bones

that are filled with marrow like ours instead of being hollow like those of most birds, and nostrils at the end of their bills instead of at the top. It's no wonder they're so rare

everywhere except for Stewart Island – it looked like it had no concept of what a predator could be and that it should worry about us as a threat.



- Ronja Keeley

Still filled with awe, we headed down to Mason's Bay and picked our way across another beach filled with slippery rocks before passing by a rocky outcrop that was obviously the pinch point – in an hour, it would have been unpassable. We then walked for what felt like ages along the flat sand beach with the wind buffeting our backs (thank goodness not our faces), before turning and walking inland along Duck Creek towards Mason's Bay Hut.

Mason's Bay Hut is a large 20 bunk hut, and people often fly in and land on the beach to stay in the hut, so we were expecting there

to be others. Miraculously, the hut was completely empty, and we lit a fire and dragged mats into the living room to sleep on the floor next to the fire. We slept for a good 12 hours that night, exhausted by the previous 7 days of walking.

Day 8

Day 8 was a rest day, and after a leisurely morning and incredibly late breakfast, we set about exploring some of the area around the hut. There was a historic homestead, because people had tried to raise sheep in the area

for almost 100 years – from the stories on the signs, it sounded like a very difficult life. There were also two hunter's huts that needed to be checked out, and Travis went and climbed the tallest nearby mountain, called Big Sandhill. In fact, this area is one of the largest sand dune systems in New Zealand. Sand dunes are special because they are constantly shifting and moving, so the plants that live on them are specially adapted for that constant change.

It makes it hard for people to live in and build structures on, and so during the time the area was farmed, marram grass was planted on the dunes to stabilize them. It did its job incredibly well, nearly destroying the fragile unstable system in the process. However, DOC and the University of Otago have been working on removing the marram grass and restoring the dunes for over 20 years and have seen huge successes.



- Ronja Keeley

That afternoon, two big families flew in on planes, and very quickly the hut was full. We escaped for a bit by going to look at the other hunter's hut but enjoyed chatting with a couple of people during dinner. When one family pulled out fresh bread and cheese and tomatoes, however, I decided I'd had enough – there is only so much taunting one can take after 8 days of dehydrated meals and canned fish. We went to bed early,

having walked ~10km that day, and I slept well in the full bunk room, although Travis was driven insane by the snoring from the dads and uncles in the room.

Day 9

On day 9 we got going early, intent on getting a bunk in the smaller Freshwater Hut we were all headed to. To get there,

we had to walk 15km across one of New Zealand's largest undisturbed wetlands, a walk which was completely flat and had long stretches of boardwalk (but still contained some impressive mud pits). It started raining a little bit (I stopped and put on my rain pants, lesson learned), but it was kind of magical walking in the rain – the spider webs on the long grass were full of dew, and a couple Stewart Island Robins even stopped to say hello.

- Ronja Keeley



- Ronja Keeley



We arrived at Freshwater Hut around 11:30, claimed our bunks, and had a nice lunch before heading up Rocky Mountain in the afternoon. We left around 1, just

as the family arrived. On our way up the mountain, there were a series of what looked like shrines, with sticks and feathers and moss and a piece of meat on a stick in

RAKIURA - NORTHWEST CIRCUIT

the center. How odd. One of them had a little metal plate tucked in among the moss. "It's a trap!" said Travis. "What, no way," I said, and pushed the end of my walking stick onto the metal plate. SNAP went the trap, catching the end of my stick in a pair of jaws that would have snapped my leg if I were a cat stepping on it, which is indeed what they are set up to catch. At the top of the mountain, we met the DOC employee who was setting up the traps to clear the area of cats and other predators. Sometimes, there are endangered dotterels nesting at the top of

the mountain, and they are doing what they can to protect them. It seems like there are none there this year though, and they have constricted their range to only one single other mountain on Stewart Island. The weather had cleared up, and we were rewarded with some stunning views of the island – we were able to see the Ruggedy Range, and the big wetland we had come over, and Mason's Bay. We lazed around for a while up on the mountain before finally heading back to the (very busy) hut for dinner and an early bedtime.



- Ronja Keeley

Day 10

On day 10 we woke up at 5am, packed up, and left by 6am. We were intent on getting back to Oban around 4pm, because the DOC office closed at 4:30 and we

wanted to get our clean clothes for the evening. It was our longest day yet, with 23km to go, but half of it was on the great walk track and so would be easier walking. Walking down the track at 6:15 we caught a glimpse of 2 kiwi chasing

each other in the bushes! One last sighting before the trip was over. After going up and over a big hill, we reached North Arm Hut around 11, an hour ahead of schedule. We had lunch in the hut -both of our food supplies were now empty save for a few snacks – and then set out on the great walk section. It was raining a little bit, but the great walk was easy walking, and we sped along. We reached the end of the great walk section in under 3 hours (it said 4.5 hours on the sign) and then made it to town by 3:15ish. We picked up our clean clothes, dragged ourselves to the backpackers where we had booked a room, and took our first proper showers in 10 days (my shower was longer than the 5 minutes recommended by the

backpackers – sorry not sorry). Clean and dry, we headed over to the little grocery store to buy some ice cream. In the store, we were bombarded by the sheer overwhelming amount of choices, and reminded how expensive everything is – we settled on a tub of yogurt and some fresh fruit, which we inhaled by the wharf before going to the pub for some beer, since we had some time to kill before the fish and chips shop opened at 5pm. We had been dreaming of these fish and chips with increasing intensity for the last 10 days, and we stuffed ourselves with more grease than we'd eaten in the last 10 days combined before heading back to the room for some laziness and a 7pm bedtime – well deserved.

Afterwards

We had breakfast at a cafe across the street before heading to the airport down the street (Oban is not very big). After a quick flight back to Invercargill we walked to my car (which was still there thank goodness), went to the grocery store for second breakfast and lunch, and then drove to Dunedin, where we had an incredibly delicious lunch in the botanic gardens. From there we drove up the coast towards Christchurch, taking a quick stop at the Moeraki Boulders and in Ashburton for some groceries and also my first speeding ticket – what a way to end an epic trip.

- Ronja Keeley



From the Needle to the Haystack: A Tale of a Thousand Spaniards

Thousand Acre Plateau ~ (27/01/25 - 30/01/25)

- Olivia Jacka - Feat: Matt Creahan



Sheer Cliffs Dropping Off The Devil's Dining Table - Olivia Jacka

After going on a bunch of big missions (Matt) and slow work trips (me), we were keen to spend my last week off work in January on a chill but sandy tramp. With what seems like the whole committee only interested in climbing/alpine trips, we decided to return to our roots with a five day Kahurangi tramping extravaganza!

The initial plan was to link the Thousand Acre Plateau and Matiri Range to Mt Patriarch and the Wangapeka track, but

soon realised that our exit was blocked by roadworks. We briefly considered climbing all the way over Mt Owen to bypass them, but decided that this was overly ambitious given the foul weather forecast for the middle of the trip. I was scheduled to guide a group on the Old Ghost Road straight after the trip and didn't like the thought of being late and leaving my boss to carry a week's food for 8 guests by himself. We decided to be sensible and do the classic loop from the Thousand Acre Plateau



Matt In A Cloud Getting Stabbed - Olivia Jacka

to Hurricane Hut and out via Matiri River. Estimated travel time from Hurricane Hut to the carpark along an unmaintained track ranged from 9-19 hours and we were keen to see what all the fuss was about.

It was Matt's first time in Kahurangi and stoke was high as we charged into Lake Matiri Hut late on Monday night. As we crept around outside to avoid waking the sleeping occupants, a booming voice called "HALLO?" from inside the hut nearly giving Matt a heart attack. So much for being quiet.

Tuesday began with a steep climb to the plateau, a ridiculously large ancient peneplain covered in dense tussock and pockets of

stunted beech forest. Despite being an enormous bog, the ground was surprisingly dry and travel was fast. I educated Matt on the difference between a bog and a swamp – bogs are low in nutrients, while swamps are nutrient-dense wetlands where ogres live. We stopped at Poor Pete's Hut for a snack and to install a tasteful nude calendar. According to a laminated sign Mr Pete was poor because he was about to get married, not because he lived in a huge bog.

We arrived at Larrikin Creek Hut in record time and took in the views: an endless wall of cliffs cleaved off the Devil's Dining Table to the west, the long flat ridge of the Haystack rose above to the east like a carefully balanced pile of choss (spoiler alert: it was), and red tussock and alpine daisies shone all around us in the brilliant sunshine. With clear skies forecast for the next day we decided to leave climbing the Needle for tomorrow and took a well-deserved nap.

Wednesday dawned overcast with the surrounding peaks obscured by fog. This soon cleared to reveal brilliant blue sky as we began the climb to the Needle, a weirdly pointy cone that looked more like a saggy party hat than a needle to me. After a short climb, we emerged into a rolling meadow filled with tall yellow flowers. Tall, dense, spiky flowers. Uh oh. SPANIARDS.

FROM THE NEEDLE TO THE HAYSTACK

T R O G - 2 0 2 4

It was the densest field of Spaniards I had ever seen. And to top things off the fog had rolled back in, enveloping us in damp mist.

Unbothered by a few prickles, we continued upwards but the terrain soon deteriorated into what can only be described as Spaniard Hell. I smashed my way through with the odd yelp every time I got stabbed (which was quite a lot), but I pushed on hoping that the scrub would clear out eventually. Surprise surprise, it didn't.

Behind me, Matt didn't seem to be enjoying himself.

"This is my version of hell – I'm in a cloud getting stabbed!"

"I feel more scared up here than at any point on Aspiring"

"Maybe it's called the Needle because it's covered in fucking Spaniards".

Reaching the ridgeline, the Spaniards made way for thick West Coast scrub. Actually never mind, the Spaniards were still there except now they were



Spaniard Hell - Olivia Jacka

hidden under thick vegetation and impossible to avoid. At one point, I watched Matt fall into a hole all the way up to his head which he didn't seem to find funny. The hungry spikes had also begun to draw blood and I was unfortunate enough to slip and fall on one directly on my arse. To top things off, my allergies to just about

everything decided to flare up and my eyes and skin became all itchy and puffy. I was having a blast!

At the Needle's point the only view was the claggy fog blanketing us so we hurried along the ridge towards the Haystack. The scrub eventually gave way to a chossy ridgeline and our pace thankfully

FROM THE NEEDLE TO THE HAYSTACK

T R O G - 2 0 2 4



Matt Pretending To Be Part Of Mt Owen - Olivia Jacka

increased by about five times despite the sheer cliffs on either side.

At the summit of the Haystack we realised that the weather had deteriorated – the forecasted storm which we had planned to wait out in Hurricane Hut had arrived a day early. Within the space of 10 minutes it went from “ooh look its started to rain” to “holy fuck we need to get out of here”. The decision was made to retreat back to the hut instead of push on along an unknown (and probably very spiky) ridgeline in zero visibility and strong wind. The way down was equally ouchy, and the wind was now hurling needles of rain directly into our faces and making the slopes treacherously slippery. By this point rain had soaked through my raincoat and into my puffer, and we had reached the early stages of hysteria but that didn't stop us from nailing the nav on the way down. It was too cold to stop for long, although Matt did pause briefly to violently smash a Spaniard to death with his poles.

We were glad to reach the hut to dry off, have a hot milo and potato chips for dinner and settle in for another long nap. This tramping business wasn't so bad after all!

It rained and rained throughout the afternoon getting heavier and heavier. The dry cliffs below the haystack transformed into cascading waterfalls and the bog became somehow even boggier.

We made the call to return the way we came because even if we made it over to Matiri Valley, there was no way the river wasn't a raging torrent after all that rain. We were disappointed not to bag Hurricane and “McGoochie's” Hut (which would have helped me to beat President Travis in our fierce hutbagging contest) but it wasn't meant to be.

After a long sleep-in we dragged ourselves back across the plateau and back to the car two days early. The wet, waist high grass soaked us to the skin but it didn't matter because our clothes were still soaking wet from the day before. The fresh mountain air was complimented by Matt's frequent farts courtesy of his enormous dehy dinner. The weather cleared again by lunchtime setting our damp clothes steaming and we finished the walk in bright sunshine as if the storm had never even happened.

Overall it was an excellent trip with just the right combination of type 1 and 2 fun. The Tramping Club had made its triumphant return to tramping! As Isaac put it, tramps are just one big long approach to nothing, but maybe the real approach was the friends we made along the way. Or something.

Plus, we still had a spare day to climb 1700m up Mt Owen. The Vert Gods were very pleased.



CUTC - Rory Maher

Battle of the Bivvy

Devils Den bivvy ~ (01/03/25 - 02/03/25)

- Lilly Lang - Feat: Isobel Jones, Freya High, Emily Carter, Izzy Shanks, Bella Domaneschi, Lizzy Ticknerr and Lilly Lang

The long awaited game, two equally strong opponents, strangers to each other but not to fierce competition. The world watched on with bated breaths. While this may not have been televised, rest assured this match will go down in history. Up first: Izzy, Freya, Bella, Lizzy, Isobel, Emily Freya and I (Lilly). This team's strengths featured; consistent yaps, eating, nude photos, swims, and aggressively hungry girls.

7 in a bivvy! - Lizzy Ticknerr



The unnamed opposition had a headstart on all of us, the element of surprise. What we thought we knew, we didn't. A bake off between two groups was meant to reveal the dessert winner, but by accidentally choosing the same dessert, we now had mounds to eat, and was it us or was it the dessert that would win. The opposition had some very strong game play, 1kgs of mascarpone, 700ml of cream, a whole spongecake, lady fingers, 3 cups of instant coffee, chocolate, marshmallows, you name it. Our opposition, TIRAMISU

At devils dens bivvy the two groups looked at each other eye to eye, 7 girls vs 2.5kgs of tiramisu, one night, it had to be done. This was going to be our hardest game, we made sure to warm up properly, hydrate and to have breaks as real athletes would do. Our game plan involved making two different tiramisu's, Isobel, Freya Emily and I's for the first half and Izzy Bella and Izzy's for the second half. We started on a huge advantage and it seemed there would be no tomorrow for the tiramisu, forks were scraping the edge of the bowl and we were cheering at each mouthful. The match was in our favour. Halftime caught us offguard,



Beautiful view to wake up to - Izzy Shanks

but the rest was much needed. The second half of tiramisu was awaited, but as we got going, we slowed down and some of us even retired our forks. Now it was up to the key members of the team to finish this match off. Coach, sub me in. While we did hope to finish it off at night, we always had the extra time and penalty time the next day.

The next morning awoke and well and beyond the first thing to see and smell tough and taste and somehow hear as well... Tiramisu. All 7 of us shovelled tiramisu in our mouths like there was no tomorrow. Now would be a good time to say some of the 7 of us were gluten/dairy free which

backfired on our team as we all suffered. We walked out to the disappointment hut, where we had promised to make a lunch stop, yet this time less excited. The ref pulled out their whistle and blew, Someone claimed to whip it out and finish it off. I guess it had to be done. Sighing we all huddled around the bowl of what was once left and for the 3rd meal in a row had tiramisu.

It's safe to say that the 7 of us won the game, yet our opponents tiramisu put up much more of a fight than we had thought. Since then we have all followed the mandatory 6 month tiramisu strike, but really we all taste it at the back of our mouths even months later. The long-awaited game. Two equally strong oppositions. Unmet before. The world waited quietly to see who would win. While this match may not have been televised, rest assured—it will go down in history.

Team One: Seven girls. Izzy, Freya, Bella, Lizzy, Isobel, Emily, Freya, and me (Lilly). Our strengths? Consistent yaps, aggressive hunger, nude photoshoots, swims, and a shared inability to pace ourselves. We were loud. We were chaotic. We were ready. The Opposition: Unnamed, but deadly. They had the element of surprise. What we thought we knew, we didn't. The match was meant to be a bake-off, a friendly dessert duel. But both teams chose the same weapon. And now, we weren't just facing each other—

BATTLE OF THE BIVVY

we were facing it. The opponent: **TIRAMISU**. 2.5 kilograms of pure, creamy destruction. 1kg mascarpone. 700ml cream. A whole spongecake. Lady fingers. 3 cups of instant coffee. Chocolate. Marshmallows. The works. This was no ordinary dessert.

We walked in via Nina Hut, all seven of us crammed into a 2 person bivvy. It was part of our pre game bonding- like a locker room one could say. At Devils Den, the two teams locked eyes. Seven girls vs 2.5kgs of tiramisu. One night. One bivvy. Two bowls. It had to be done.

We approached the match like true athletes. Hydration. Stretching. Strategic breaks. Our game plan? Two separate tiramisus. *First Half*: Isobel, Freya, Emily, and I. *Second Half*: Izzy, Bella, and Izzy

We started strong. Forks scraped the bowl. Cheers erupted with every mouthful. The match was in our favour. We were dominating.

Halftime caught us off guard. The rest was needed. But momentum was lost. The second tiramisu loomed. We slowed. Forks were retired. Substitutions were made. "Coach, sub me in," someone whispered. We hoped to finish it off that night, but the game stretched into extra time.

Morning arrived. The bivvy smelled like defeat. And tiramisu. It was the first thing we saw, smelled, tasted—and somehow heard. All

seven of us shoveled it in like there was no tomorrow. Gluten-free? Dairy-free? Not anymore. The team suffered, we called for injury time. The team regrouped our focus and got walking out to the disappointment hut, which seemed fitting for our performance.

There wasn't much time left of the game, thankfully The ref blew the whistle. Someone whipped out the bowl. It had to be done. We huddled around the remnants and, for the third meal in a row, faced tiramisu. Stomachs full and spirits high, The final whistle blew. Game over. We had won!

The dessert put up a stronger fight than expected, 2.5 kgs is a lot (not sure what that says about us....). Since then, we've all committed to a mandatory six-month tiramisu strike. But truthfully, we still taste it at the back of our throats. In our dreams. In our nightmares.

BATTLE OF THE BIVVY



Devils Den Bivvy - Bella Domaneschi



Swim was mandatory - Bella Domaneschi

Experiences with Te Taiao as Manw'iri Maori

Honours Thesis ~ he aha te wa

- Lucas Larraman -

MIHI | Acknowledgements

Tēnā koe e Taranaki mounga, ko koe te rangatira i ngā wā katoa. E ngā mate, haere, haere, haere rā. Aroha nui ki ōku tūpuna, you are the inspiration for all of this.

Thank you to my hoa rangatira, Annie, for always being these for me. These past months have been a roller coaster, but they have been easier with you by side.

My endless love for my whānau and their love back have kept me going. Thank you Mama, Dada, Venetia, and Micah.

Mauri ora to The Longest Bach in Town, Tommy, Arsh and George, you are my boys.

E Hamu, thank you for all the laughs, valuable w'akaaro, and being my supervisor.

Thank you Kiwa and Ratu for your mahi in supporting the overnight hīkoi.

Calem, Jacquelyn, Peota and Wiremu, the memory of our overnight hīkoi is a taonga that I will carry with me. Ngā mihi ki a koutou for our kōrero and wānanga.

Nic Low, your pukapuka and kōrero are inspirational, thank you for your guidance.

Tama Blackburn, from kōrero in

the surf to out on a yacht, your w'akaaro are always insightful. Ngā mihi nunui ki ngā tāngata katoa e awahi ana ki ahau. Nā reira, tēnā koutou, tēnā koutou, tēnā tātou katoa.

HE HĪKOI TAKIRUA | With a friend

Stepping out of the car I smell the changing seasons. Nearby, smoke twirls and climbs from a cottage chimney. A pair of tōrea feast on pīpī at low tide. Brilliantly coloured oak leaves cloak the ground. I greet Whakaraupō with a smile.

'Beautiful day my bro!' Isaac calls out.

Isaac and I have been best mates since way back. We grew up on the other side of this harbour. Our childhood was spent getting to know the surrounding hills intimately: clambering up rocks, bumbling through bush and sleeping on tussock. Whakaraupō is filled with memories of my youth everywhere I look.

'Stoked to spend it with you!' I grin back.



Reflections with Kaurupataka - Lucas Larraman

EXPERIENCES WITH TE TAI AO

I take a second to savour this moment. A transition between geographical existence. Day-to-day life in the flat swamp city of Ōtautahi to precious time immersed within te taiao. A true privilege to have the time, ability, and opportunity to be here.

There are many experiences in this harbour. Generations and generations of experiences with tātai w'akapapa threading back to Te Korekore. Those stoking the ahi on this rohe safeguard these experiences within kōrero and mātauranga. He taonga nunui. To uphold tikanga and mana, some of these taonga are only shared within certain mana w'enua w'ānau. However, some are gifted and available for tāngata katoa to engage with.

I'm Māori and call this place home, but I am not mana w'enua.

Can I connect to this local living body of knowledge? How do I even begin exploring this pātai? Is it even my place to ask?

Take it slow. I remind myself. You don't need to hold the answers now. Be present, listen and let the mind wander. Welcome w'akaaro as a guide to explore these pātai.

What does that even mean? I worryingly overthink. Breath in, breathe out, relax.

Our climbing gear clink as Isaac and I shoulder our packs. He starts

leading me to our destination, a cliff face near top of the Mt Bradley. A perch with unobstructed views out to the jagged skyline of Kā Tiritiri-o-te-moana; the envy of kārearea. A truly perfect way to experience te taiao and climb some rock.

Despite having a 3-hour hīkoi ahead, I am excited.

Tall oaks and eucalypts line our path. They were planted during the arrival of Pākehā to this harbour, their roots growing alongside the roots of colonialism. Yet once these foreign rākau fall, the perpetual roots of colonialism will not decompose with them. The colonial rākau can be slimmed, but its roots will remain forevermore.

'What type of cloud do you reckon is over there?' Isaac asks as he points across the harbour.

A stiff onshore breeze and warm thermals have created a long puffy cloud. It extends from its creation at Awaroa to its end at Ōrongomai. Along the way, it follows the gentle curve of the topography, finishing directly above the Port Hills.

'Don't you think it looks like a gaff?' I muse. 'Long, straight and with a curvy hook at the end. Back in the rā they would have been as common as that cloud type. Cumulus.'

'Hmmm... I guess I can see that.'

EXPERIENCES WITH TE TAI AO

Isaac says as he holds the barbed wire down for me, 'What about that cloud up there?'

Hopping over the fence, I glance up and left at Te Ahu Pātiki. According to Kā Huru Manu, this mouna was once a passenger on the Ārai-te-uru waka. Sailing from Hawaiki to Aotearoa, the crew carried kumara and the knowledge of how to grow it with karakia and tikanga. The waka capsized near Matakāea near the end of its haerenga. The passengers swam ashore and became part of the w'enuascape as pō turned to ata.

Kia tūpato! W'akaaro of caution flash cross my mind.

A wispy korowai of kohu lingers on the upoko of Te Ahu Pātiki. It curls down the slope across the valley and is strikingly grey against the blue above. Appearing out of thin air then temporarily living before vanishing. Stationary yet in continuous motion. Simultaneous ora me mate.

Shivers tingle down my spine and I involuntarily jump.

The patupaiarehe are out and about. Small and fair-skinned, they are mysterious creatures that move within the kohu. There are many pūrākau of travellers hearing their shrill waiata or bone flutes before vanishing. Hōne Taare Tikao was a tōhunga who lived at Te Rāpaki-o-Te-Rakiwhakaputa and spoke at length of patupaiarehe. He said

that their closest pā sits on the other shoulder of Te Ahu Pātiki at the giant rocky thumb of Te Pōhūe.

'Those are kohu. In reo Pākehā they are stratus.' I reply to Isaac. 'There are patupaiarehe up there.'

'Good thing we aren't heading that way.' Isaac slowly nods his head. As we reach a wind break half-way up the hill, we see rocks peppering the entire hillside; the aftermath of Rūaumoko turning and tumbling in the womb of Papatūānuku. Faint thuds of falling pinecones bring me back to the present.

WHOOSH! CRACK! BAAH!

A hot, dry nor-west gust roars through my ears. Dust whips up. I squint above and spot a branch crashing down through the spindly web of twigs. Pine needles rattle down. Sheep in the paddock take off with urgency and no sense of direction. Sharp melodies of agitation cry out.

Ka tae mai te tamariki a Tāw'iri-mātea, ko Te Hau Kai Takata.

A wind also known as Te Māuru-e-taki-nei or simply Te Māuru. These ingoa trace back to Waitaha tātai w'akapapa where Te Māuru is the tamariki of Tāw'iri-mātea. Since then, this wind has been dominating and devouring this rohe for generations. They regularly travel a transformative haerenga to arrive here. Large weather systems cause moist

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air from above Te Tai-o-Rehua to collide with an invisible wall above Kā Tiritiri-o-te-moana. This collision causes ua on Te Tai Poutini while Te Māuru is the hau that makes it through to the other side.

‘Woah!’ Isaac calls out after the gust has passed. ‘That was full on!’

‘Yeah bro!’ I reply. ‘There’s a marker over there!’

We had temporarily lost the track amid the confusion. The 4x4 track leads the way out of the paddock on a steady incline. A repetitive putt putt announces the arrival of a smiley farmer and his passengers on a buggy. We swing the gate open for them. Wafts of diesel and a picnic reach us as they pass.

‘There are easier ways to get up here boys!’ The petrol assisted farmer shouts through a smile as they zoom past.

Isaac and I exchange knowing grins. We are both hungry, thirsty, and drenched in sweat. Our 20kg+ packs way us down physically, but we pull each other up with kōrero of reflection on identity and personal growth.

There is no one I would rather be here with. I think with content.

Kōrero with Isaac connects us. Is there an equivalent way that I can w’akarongo and kōrero to this w’enua? How do I w’akarongo ki te taiao?

‘Let’s take a breather. I’m hungry and thirsty as!’ I say to Isaac.

‘Sweet, was considering pushing through but glad you said something,’ he replies relieved.

We are high enough to look out and above the Port Hills. The divide between moana and w’enua of Te Tai-o-Marokura attracts my attention. Following this glistening coastline, my eyes eventually rest on Tapuae-o-Ūenuku. A passenger from the same waka as Te Ahu Pātiki and the mouna where the footsteps of the rainbow atua lie. I shift my gaze to the haze above the great flat expanse of Ngā Pakihi-whakatekateka-a-Waitaha. Through this shimmering air, the distant mouna appear distorted. Kura Tāwhiti stands out and remains sentry to distant treasured lands. I comb the distant skyline as I continue my twirl. Aoraki pokes his eyebrows over to watch from afar.

‘Kia ora e te rangatira.’ I mihi to the tupuna mouna.

I see tūpuna turned to w’enua and ara walked by atua. A sense of awe at the interconnectedness of everything fills me. My w’akaaro return to my relationship to it all. This is my home, but my w’akapapa lie elsewhere. What responsibilities does this privilege bring me?

‘Woah! Those clouds above the

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Port Hills and off Te Ahu Pātiki are completely gone!’ Isaac reels me back in.

‘Probably devoured by Te Māuru.’ I reply pensively.

‘That high cloud is coming in now. And there’s the arch! That was quick as.’

‘That’s Te Māuru for you. The height of its arch tells how strong te toka wind will be tomorrow.’

‘Not the best idea to sleep out tonight! Looking at that arch, we would wake up wet as pātiki!’

‘Yeah bro, was thinking the same! Let’s head to Packhorse Hut tonight. It’s not too far and it’ll keep us warm and dry.’

‘Mean as!’

Isaac and I begin to climb a staircase of rubble. We weave a path over and between precariously balanced boulders. Before long, a seemingly impenetrable field of tūmatakuru, tātārāmoa and gorse greets us. A humorous gathering of all spiky things. They sway side to side and waltz with Te Māuru. Our destination towers across from us.

Close up, the rock face looks like an upside-down harakeke fan. Cracks of varying sizes separate the vertical basalt columns. Weathered tūpuna columns stand on the outside and hug the aw’i

rito columns. In turn, the aw’i rito protect height-eager indigenous shrubs and the inner rito columns. Striking towards Ranginui at the most prominent point, the rito are what we have travelled to climb.

We are going up there? Tingles of anticipation electrify me at the thought.

‘Looks like we’ll need to swim across!’ Isaac says referring to the spiky path ahead.

‘I’ll go first then.’ I laugh at the absurdity of our situation.

I take precarious steps between quivering branches over a three-metre void. Each of the spiky plants present different obstacles that I must face to reach the other side. I push through tūmatakuru that scraps up my exposed skin. I unsuccessfully try to avoid tātārāmoa who desperately clutch at my clothes. I crawl under gorse which pricks everything. After finally emerging, a quick inspection reveals that the spiky plants have won.

Does te taiao even want us here? Hikoi and rock-climbing present opportunities to connect to te taiao, but are we going to places where tāngata aren’t meant to be? Or is te taiao just subjecting us to its many spiky flavours?

‘Paper, scissors, rock!’ Isaac and I decide on who is to climb first.

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The rito basalt column is rough to the touch. My focus narrows into my immediate surroundings. Each movement fosters a state of presence. An opportunity to experience the essence of everything in its all.

'That roof looks really fun!' Isaac shouts out.

I move through a jutting out overhang section. The droning rustle of tarakihi and harakeke fades away as I climb. Twirling and whooshing, Te Māuru attempts to throw me from the wall. The higher I climb the more determined Te Māuru becomes.

Is this how Tāwhaki and Karihi felt? Uru-rangi blew on them when they were climbing their aka. Who am I on this climb? Will I succeed like Tāwhaki or fall like Karihi? Is it even tika to place myself within this Ngāi Tahu pūrakau?

I don't know. I reflect with feet firmly back on the w'enua.

There are so many w'akaaro to explore. I am on a lifelong journey and this rangahau is a point of reflection. I need to relinquish my expectations to know the answers.

The outgoing tide exposes the vast mud flats at the upoko of Whakaraupō. Silty grey down there and up above. Te Māuru has grown, blocked the sun and created a gloomy mood. Looking in land, a vivid blue cuts

through the narrow gap where Papatūānuku and Ranginui meet.

'Should we go?' Isaac says after another climb. The sun is nearing the vivid blue.

SHURR! CLACKK! SHURR! CLACKK!

Is my leg broken? I remain eerily calm.

A mini-fridge sized boulder just rolled onto and off my leg. I should be in way more pain. My heart pounds and adrenaline courses through me.

'Woooah! You okay? You okay?' Isaac rushes up to me.

'Yes. Fine. I think. Can't remember. What happened? Everything so quickly.'

Isaac bandages the gash. Blood starts to creep through.

'That's the biggest boulder I've ever seen move! I was sooo ready to pull the PLB.' Isaac says energetically.

Testing my leg gingerly, we travel slowly. Rays move with urgency across Ngā Pakihi-whakatekataka-a-Waitaha. They reach us and everything erupts in a fountain of gold. Tussock fields line our track and sparkle with content. The stone-built Packhorse Hut welcomes us to shelter away from Te Māuru for the night.

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'Remember this moment brother. It's a goodie.' Isaac smiles with the fading light.

HE HĪKOI TAKIRUA | Alone

The awa cools my bare feet. Meandering down the wide flat Hawdon valley, this is its final stretch before linking into the Waimakariri. My eyes follow the awa to its upoko on the divide of Kā Tiritiri-o-te-moana. Dark and foreboding whakataritari-ua rise above the divide and signal rain on the other side.

Kei ua ērā, kei tihore tēnā.

How long until the rain reaches me? When will those whakataritari-ua make it over from Te Tai Poutini?

If enough rain falls, this mellow awa will quickly turn into a raging torrent and become impassable. I don't want to create yet another pūrākau warning future generations of calamity in the mountains. The rain is not meant to arrive until after I leave tomorrow, but Tāw'irimātea could always change his mind.

To make sure I leave before the awa rises, ka āta tiroiro au ki ngā tohu o Tāw'irimātea.

Within te taiao, both animate and inanimate entities kōrero of the upcoming weather and climate. These kōrero are ngā tohu o

Tāw'irimātea and understood through localised mātauranga taiao. The ability to w'akarongo to these kōrero comes with w'akapapa rights and relationship to te taiao.

The uri of Tūāhuriri w'akapapa to this rohe and its mātauranga, not me, and I understand this.

What is my relationship to the body of knowledge and whenua surrounding me? What does it mean for me to w'akarongo ki te taiao? I hope this becomes slightly more mārama during this hīkoi.

While preparing for this solo hīkoi, I packed some mātauranga taiao from Apanui Skipper's PhD thesis. In Te Waipounamu, sandflies biting with unusual vigour usually indicates that rainfall is imminent. Mountains wearing cloud pōtae are sure signs that the weather will deteriorate quickly. Autahi star twinkling more clearly from one side indicates that the hau will blow strongest from that direction.

OUCH! I exclaim to no one.

I had unwittingly chosen a spiky tumatakuru seat. Not the best spot for lunch. I readjust and crouch next to a patch of aruhe. My hummus sandwich doesn't require quite the same preparation as this mahinga kai. Back in the rā, this twisty intertwining matt was a vital carbohydrate source. Its roots were cooked then beaten.

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Glancing up the valley, I see royally golden tussock fields shining away in the sun. They wave and beckon me over.

'Haere mai,' they whisper.

'Kāo,' I reply.

My path today is not with the fields of tussock, but with the whistling stream emerging from a gorge. On either side, slopes rise out of the gorge and encounter a dominating swathe of tawairauriki trees. This swathe then gives way to crumbly, rocky scree slopes that extend to the mountain peaks towering above. A common trend around Tarahaka.

A bee buzzing along with the hau-matua comes to investigate my blue shorts. Excited in finding a bright colour in a flowerless w'enuascape, it joins me on my wander up the riverbed.

Te taiao is transitioning from Kāhuru to Makariri.

Kākano in the ngāhere and temperatures during the days have been falling. Invasive pests and cold bitter nights are growing in number. The watching mouna build their korowai of snow in ebbs and flows. The bee does not know what to make of it all and buzzes off with disappointment.

I reach an opening between two constrictions in the gorge. Tawairauriki line the auditorium

before me and silently spectate. Beads of dew remain on red lichen covered boulders, while a cool shady breeze running with the stream rushes over me.

Step, step, step. Jump, jump, slip. My foot flies off the wet lichen covered stones and into the awa. Ice cold water gushes up to my knee and fills my boot. I am suddenly spiked with uncertainty.

Why am I out here? I am searching, but what for again? My w'akaaro twist and twirl like the puffy clouds overhead, unable to gather direction or purpose.

Kei te āwangawanga au. That's okay, I remind myself.

The gorge tightens and steepens as I turn a corner. My vision fills with rock faces covered by grassy eye lashes. Spindly, they bob up and down with the tumbling water. Pattering at my feet, the descending droplets twinkle in the sun rays that stream through.

Cheet cheet. Cheet cheet.

Two pīwakawaka descend from above and circle me as they flit above and below each other. Their fans opening and closing with each sudden change in motion. Their laughter rings out above the steady rush of moving water. It is a performance, and I am hypnotised. Spinning on the spot, I mihi back to them.

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'Tēnā kōrua,' I speak aloud, 'I am passing through your kāinga, what do you think of me?'

Coming to te taiao as manuw'iri Māori, a relationship binds me to everyone I experience. This privilege comes with a responsibility to manaaki back. To express genuine care to all who w'akapapa to this w'enua. To w'akaake the mana of these pīwakawaka, this awa, those maunga and everyone beyond and between.

While I dwell on this, a recent kōrero with Nic Low enters my w'akaaro.

Catching sight of me, Nic smiles ear to ear in the mid-morning Ōtautahi glimmer. We hongi then order coffee. Among many things, Nic is a down-to-earth tāne Māori, trail-blazing kaituhi, and pūkenga in Ngāi Tahu history and hīkoi as a way of knowing.

Our kōrero starts with his pukapuka Uprising and his w'akaaro within. Like myself, Nic grew up tramping in Kā Tiritiri-o-te-moana. We speak animatedly of our shared love of being immersed within te taiao. We also share experiences reconciling internal conflicts. Our taha Māori can sometimes clash with mainstream Pākehā tramping culture.

'How do you go about walking these two worlds?' I ask earnestly.

'Your intentions or sometimes lack of intentions can help remedy.' Nic explains. 'Aat Vervoorn talks a lot about this. Go into te taiao with no intentions except a kaupapa to do wherever feels right. If you want to spend the day lying under a tree watching the light catch its leaves. Do that. If you want to do a gnarly first ascent up a thousand metre rock face. Go for it! It's all about listening to te taiao and your whakaaro'

RUUUURRR!

A rumbling body of water draws me back to the present. An unseen waterfall blocks my current path up the gorge and ends my time down here. A side-scare slope is an elevator up to the valley above. My pīwakawaka friends stay behind to munch on bugs in the shadows.

I am trying to embody a sense of purposelessness on this hīkoi. Where a lack of preconceived goals gifts me the freedom to follow what I am drawn to. To allow the free flow of w'akaaro and let this guide my experience with te taiao.

And at this moment, I feel like a kaukau.

Ripples of unrealised potential circle in the eddies beneath my toes. By beginning here, they have a long haerenga ahead. There will be fast easy stretches along the awa, and tough points filled with many obstacles. From time to

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time, these ripples will reappear to provide a point of reflection on their realised potential.

Isn't that life? A note of clarity rings out in my w'akaaro.

The w'akataritari-ua have grown taller but remain on the other side of the mouna. Finally, the sun peaks through and I lower myself into the water. Closing my eyes, I simultaneously hear and feel the awa reverberating. A wish and a rumble from the tears of Ranginui.

He makariri!

I clamber shivering onto a nearby boulder. The sun disappears and leaves behind an eery stillness. My skin tingles knowing that I am alone in this valley, moments like this where I am truly by myself are rare.

I catch myself in this colonised w'akaaro.

Am I ever truly alone? My tūpuna are always with me. Even though I can't see them physically, their existence in te ao wairua runs alongside mine like this awa.

I come across a fireplace as I continue up the valley. Remnants of entities passing through but not my resting place for the night. Around the corner, Sudden Valley Bivouac pops w'ero against the dark kākāriki. I set up my tent nestled on the ngāhere edge and turn to where I came from.

I catch glimpses of the Waimakariri Basin and Hineahuone as the horizon turns lilac. Towering mouna catch alight with the dying sun. A particularly strong blaze on a nearby peak snags my attention.

Maybe that's where te taiao and my w'akaaro will lead me tomorrow?

The frosty tussock crunches under my bare feet. I leave a world of starry wonder for my sleeping bag. Lying in my cocoon, I think back to the remainder of my kōrero with Nic. We want to create opportunities for Māori to engage with te taiao as tāngata whenua and mana whenua.

A starting point would be to organise an overnight hīkoi with Te Akatoki. I think to myself.

Is that a physical manifestation of my responsibility as manuw'iri Māori? I have the privilege of learning how to be here in te taiao, which brings huge personal benefits. What would it mean to use these skills to enable a hīkoi for other indigenous peoples? To engage with te taiao as our tūpuna have done for generations?

Is my manaaki atu in a manaakitanga cyclic relationship to this w'enua and its w'akapapa?

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HĪKOI TAKITĀTOU | All Together

'Anyone else feel that shaking?' Calem asks.

Everyone stops to w'akarongo. Kōrero ceases while the ahi continues to crackle. We nervously glance at each other in the dancing red light. A patu could cut through the tense silence. An earthquake here would be very bad. Our camp sits deep within Kā Tiritiri-o-te-moana. The Alpine Fault rests nearby. Just today, we were pointing out cracks in the w'enua caused from the movements of Rūaumoko.

'Ah actuals. That's just me shivering!' Calem chuckles. 'You can wrap me in seven layers, but you can't take the Ngāpuhi out of me!'

Our relieved laughter matches the distant rumble of the Waimakariri awa. Startled, a ruru takes off from a nearby boulder. She climbs crying out into the clutches of Pōtangotango. Tonight is Tangaroa-kiokio, but Hina has not yet shown herself. Above us, a tukutuku panel of w'etū connects mouna standing on opposite sides of the vast valley.

'Those are called the anang. The stars.' Jacquelyn shares with us.

The onset of darkness brought our rōpū to huddle around a blazing ahi and cook kai over the embers. Under the supervision of

Peota, we prepare a kūmara lentil curry with Wiremu's signature damper bread. Exchanging kōrero and mātauranga acts to w'akaake our existing respect and w'anaungatanga for each other.

'I feel so fortunate in getting to learn and listen. Hearing to take in and not necessarily to respond.' Jacquelyn reflects across the dwindling flames. 'In a lot of environments when we slow down, it's seen as odd or like you are out of the norm!'

Everyone is on the same waka for this overnight hīkoi. Our kaupapa to slow down and connect to te taiao as indigenous persons is our direction. I am the kaiw'akatere as the most experienced tramper onboard. I see myself responsible for ensuring that everyone on this waka is physically, emotionally, and spiritually safe.

Kei te manaaki atu tātou, kei te manaaki mai tātou.

I have been anticipating this moment for a long time. From the initial kōrero with Nic Low, to discussions with my supervisor Hamuera Kahi, through to the amazing mahi put in by Kiwa Kahukura Denton and Ratu Lolohea. We are finally out here as a rōpū. A beautiful bunch of individuals with different lived experiences, yet connected through w'akapapa to Te Akatoki and our indigeneity.

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I think back on the day as everyone continues to kōrero passionately.

DUD DUD, DUD DUD.

Cars and motorcycles cross the bridge behind our backs. A gentle breeze rustles the tawairuriki and tiny brown heart-shaped leaves float down. Recent snowfall reflects the overhead sun off the surrounding mouna. Our boots sink into the sand as we stand with anticipation.

‘Ko te mihi tuatahi ki a Ranginui rāua ko Papatūānuku, tēnā kōrua!’ I lead with mihimihi. ‘Tēnā koe e te maunga ariki, ko Kaimātau! Tēnā koe i tēnei awa, ko Waimakariri! E ngā mate, e moe i te moe roa, haere, haere, haere. Ko tēnei tāku mihi ki ngā tāngata w’enua o tēnei rohe, ko Ngāi Tūāhuriri! Me mihi ki ā mātou kaupapa! Nā reira, ko wai mātou?’

We each introduce ourselves to the w’enuascape in unique ways. Peota and Jacquelyn are both wāhine toa who grew up on their w’enua. Peota in Tuahiwi with her Tūāhuriri w’akapapa and Jacquelyn in Anishinaabe territory with her Odawa tribe. Meanwhile, Wiremu and Calem are both tāne pono who moved away from their w’ānau to study in Ōtautahi. Calem grew up on his tūrangawaewae in Te Tai Tokerau whereas Wiremu spent his childhood in Te Wanganui-a-Tara, away from his Ngāti Maniapoto roots.

Wow, this is huge.

We are starting our hīkoi in te taiao as our tūpuna would have done. Stopping to take a moment to acknowledge the mana, history, and relationships of everything before us. Will te taiao mihi back? We’ll have to w’akarongo to find out.

‘I thought you said this hīkoi would be flat?’ Peota says as everyone eyes me suspiciously at the first uphill.

‘We have this initial bit through the ngāhere then we will be out in the open and on mostly flat ground.’ I explain smiling.

The muddy track narrows as we climb. It meanders into secret gullies with whispering streams, out onto spurs with clear views, down steep rocky sections, up to an aruhe field in a clearing then down to a stretch of kānaka. Amidst these rākau, piwakawaka busy themselves taking out bugs while kakaruai tenaciously scratch the dirt. Only ceasing their busy lives when we arrive, they stop to watch us with curiosity.

We too stop and stare back inquisitively.

‘Kia ora e ngā manu.’ Calem says, barely audible.

One of the kakaruai respond by flying to Calem and holding eye contact with him. Everyone and everything go quiet. During

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this fleeting moment, I feel that something is exchanged between them. Then the kakaruai tweets loudly, snatches a worm from under Calem’s boot, and takes off.

‘Those manu are following us.’ Peota says as we continue along.

‘He tohu tēnā.’ Calem says quietly.

‘Calem, how do you read the messages within tohu?’ I ask. ‘I’ve my own ways but I’m curious to hear yours.’

‘It’s about opening up your mind to have a holistic outlook.’ He replies. ‘Messages not just come to you in your dreams. It can be in your physical everyday life. Acting on messages that can come to you from the manu, the birds, the living things.’

I nod slowly and think about this. Tohu are messages transferred through different entities within te taiao. Where are these messages from and who sends them?

Atua and tūpuna. I rest on this w’akaaro momentarily.

Does that mean te taiao is an interface between te ao kikokiko and te ao wairua?

My hinengaro is filled with w’akaaro confronting my perception of reality, but this is not new. These w’akaaro are always there, they come to the surface every time kōrero of wairua arises. My experience and perception

of wairua undulates like this very track we are on. However, I feel like I am becoming more tau in my taha wairua after returning to Taranaki. I still know this tension will persist, it is a lifelong journey, and the track will continue to vary.

‘We’re out of the ngāhere and on the flats!’ Wiremu calls from ahead. ‘Time for a kai aye?’

We take a seat among tussock as tall as our overloaded packs. A soft rhythmic tarakihi shrill rings out as we snack in the sunshine. Overhead, Ranginui is cloud-free and an electric blue. The Waimakariri has raced away but the sound of moving water remains, so we crane our heads to try find the source.

‘Over there!’ Jacquelyn points out.

A waterfall peaks out from up a nearby side creek. Kia tūpato! A faint mist rises above the waterfall and creates an incomplete rainbow, causing my stomach to sink. This partially formed rainbow is a well-known tohu aituā signalling the presence of Kahukura[5]. Murihiku w’ānui call it mutukou; a signal of misfortune for travelling parties. Not wanting to worry the others, I choose not to tell them, as this hīkoi is already stressful enough.

‘It’s amazing how much is actually in there.’ Peota remarks. ‘From here it looks like just bush.’

‘I’m always amazed at the

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experience of connecting to place.' I speak. 'Coming out here and creating memories, we learn so much about ourselves and where we are.'

'Yeah, te taiao is memories.' Peota responds. 'Places like this remind me of my whānau and even like on my Pākēha side. It's honestly crazy being here and also living near where this awa meets the moana. Those trees are slowly eroding over there. They then get guided out to the river mouth. This is the closest to my tūpuna I can get. Following where they would walk.'

I smile as pride radiates from Peota; her kōrero inspires me. I feel that Peota is experiencing her w'akapapa through hīkoi on the same w'enua that her tūpuna walked and continue to walk.

This makes me ponder my own connection to this valley. Am I able to experience my w'akapapa here too? Kāo. My w'akapapa is not to this w'enua, and that is kei te pai. I am becoming more settled with my relationship to Te Wai Pounamu. How do I experience my w'akapapa though?

A memory from summer comes to me.

I go exploring while waiting for the tide to drop. Up ahead, a grassy paddock ends in a clay cliff bordering the beach below. The black volcanic sand awes me and is warm under my bare feet.

I jump from boulder to driftwood and collect rubbish. After some time, I turn around to see the coast gently curving to meet the towering white wall of Parininihi. Looking directly out, Spot X glistens with whitewash under the mid-morning sun.

I notice that someone is surfing Boilers as I return to my van. The tāne catches a wave from out back and rides all the way to the waha of the W'aitara awa. Surfing with style, he dances up and down the surfboard in his board shorts.

'He must be crazy!' A kuia watching from her car remarks. 'The water is still freezing this time of the year!'

I jump in the moana on my surfboard. The kuia was right. I'm cold even with my wetsuit on. The sheer power of the awa overwhelms me. Despite all my effort, the awa pushes me away from where I want to go. Meanwhile, the tāne catches wave after wave with ease.

'Ko wai tōu ingoa?[6]' I call out while paddling with frustration.

'Ko Tama Blackburn tōku ingoa. Me koe?'

'Ko Lucas Larraman tōku ingoa! Ko Te Ātiawa te iwi.'

'Ka rawe! This is your awa bro!' Tama calls back with stoke in his voice. 'Look over there to Spot

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X. If you see whitewash breaking, then that means a wave is coming. That's a tohu! Feel the force of the mighty W'aitara. Taste its mixed salty fresh water! And most importantly, remember all of it! You are connecting to your awa through practise e hoa.'

I go for a wave and catch it. Exhilarated, I surf backhand all the way to the waha of my awa, jumping into its cold strong embrace with a grin.

'Check out that maunga!' Wiremu exclaims while we hīkoi.

A distinct straight line divides it in two. Snow lingers on the shaded slope but is non-existent on the sunny side. Rocky scree slopes tossing off their white blanket. I brush my gaze across the other peaks around us and see a similar trend.

'Personally, I'd rather be cold and see snow than be warm and not see snow.' Calem says adamantly. 'Like I'd never see this back home.'

'Absolutely.' I agree and continue inspecting the snowy peaks high above.

Hugged between two cliffs, one ridge line stands out to me. There is something about it that I can't quite pick. My eyes run right to left along this border between grey and blue. A rounded hump rears up then flattens out to give way to four serrated teeth. Ah that's it.

'Don't you guys think that looks like a kauae raro?' I ask.

'What's a kauae raro?' Jacquelyn inquires.

'Kauae translates to jawbone and raro to below.' I explain. 'So, Te Kauae Raro is terrestrial knowledge. On the other strand of that harakeke w'enu is Te Kauae Runga; celestial knowledge.'

'Māui fished up Te Ika-a-Māui with his grandmother's kauae.' Peota adds. 'You know, I reckon it's his fault that some iwi view pīwakawaka as bad omens. I mean, Māui got killed when his pīwakawaka friend laughed and woke up Hine-nui-te-pō.'

'I reckon those pīwakawaka and kakaruai back there were cool though...'. Calem starts.

WOOSH.

Something lands gracefully into a patch of tawairauriki nearby. In the middle of a dry riverbed, these rākau are the lone survivors of a flood. We strain our eyes to look amongst the crisscrossed branches.

'I think it's a baby kahū!' Calem whispers.

She stands on one leg amid the shadows. Framed by a ring of gold, her deep dark eyes slowly blink. She tilts her grey beak inquisitively, ruffles her speckled tawny chest then flies off.

EXPERIENCES WITH TE TAIAO

'I think that was a kārearea e hoa.' I explain. 'They're quite rare!'

'Woah.' Calem replies. 'A kārearea showing up right as we were talking about those manu? Definitely another tohu. Like, sometimes you may think something and not realise that what you were thinking would lead onto something. You know?'

Āe my bro.' I nod my head.

'I feel like if we kind of hone in on that element of our wairua side.' Calem continues. 'That's how te taiao is trying to tell us that we are not walking this hīkoi alone. There are people or stuff with us who are looking out as kaitiaki while we are on our way.'

'Tautoko.' I respond. 'Reclaiming spirituality is a way of reconnecting to tūpuna and who we are as peoples. It's allowing the space for your w'akapapa to express itself and come out.'

'Whakapapa is what has been given to us from generations and it's embedded within our existence.' Jacquelyn says. 'Without having the time to slow down and just sit, we don't unlock our own being.'

They're right and something stirs within me like a closed door that's slowly creaking open. Is this the embodiment of Rongo? A brief sublime moment where everything seems clear?

The colonial machine aims to disembowel the relationship between tāngata whenua and te taiao, but today our presence here defies this harmful notion. Through hīkoi and wānanga, it feels like some generational mamae held within our w'akapapa is healing. We can heal due to the endless w'aw'ai and mahi from our whānau, rangatira and tūpuna. This is a process of re-indigenisation for past, present, and future tāngata w'enua.

'This breath is a treasure.' Jacquelyn concludes. 'Our ancestors fought for this breath. How do we honour them by honouring this breath?'

Shadows lengthen as we arrive to Anti-Crow Hut. Smoke climbs from its chimney and dances with the rākau above. A lone rātā stands among the ever-present tawairauiki and watches us set up tents. Kaimātau greets me with a smile from across the valley.

I close my eyes and an inescapable sharpness permeates through my senses: numb fingers, rich earthy smells, calls of sheltering manu, and a taste of sweat. A sense of peace envelops me.

Kei te w'akarongo au ki te taiao.

EXPERIENCES WITH TE TAIAO



Tenei te ropu up e hoa ma - Lucas Larraman