



# Footprints

#078

Auckland University Tramping Club

2024

# FOOTPRINTS

THE ILLUSTRATED ANNALS OF  
THE AUCKLAND UNIVERSITY TRAMPING CLUB  
ISSUE #78 - 2024



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Front: “AUTC Snowman” by August Allocco, Kahurangi National Park

Back: “In the Shadow of the Maunga” by Alex Jobbins, Syme Hut Track

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Rosanna Rov & Seán Thomson

# *Editors' Note*

Welcome to the 2024 edition of Footprints!

It has been an honour and pleasure to collect your adventures in this document, and it's a joy to see another year of stories unfold under open skies (and a few times in caves too!).

This collection is more than a record. It's a patchwork of shared moments: misty mornings, muddy boots, meals improvised and memories made. Whether you ventured deep into the wild or just out of your comfort zone, we thank you for letting us walk a little way with you.

Due to production time constraints, some images appear just as they were originally sent to us—lower resolution, perhaps, than we'd like. But we've come to appreciate this as part of the charm. The learning, excitement, and friendships forged in the Great Outdoors shine through, even the occasionally pixelated edges.

Here's to fresh air, full packs, and finding your way—wherever the trail may lead.

Frank and Ella



# *Captain's Note*

Wowee what a year!

I think I can say with confidence that AUTC is well recovered from it's covid lull. We had a record number of members this year – over 800! Great to see so many international and local students alike getting stuck in the outdoors. And maybe most excitingly, we were crowned Auckland Uni's Sports Club of the Year this year!! What an honour :)

I think we also had a record number of trips too – over 157! What great variety too – alongside the ever-popular weekend and multi-day adventures, we also had 24 (!) caving trips, and an uptick in day trips such as the chill ecology walks and swamping. Enviro trips were also super popular – check out George's report to hear more. We even had a fun collab with the Waikato Uni Tramping Club, booking out the the entire Pinnacles trip with keen trampers. We also had social trips galore, including 2 grandly successful o-camps and many social nights – wine & cheese, patch-sewing, a social night at shads, and the return of more folk dancing! Thank you to everyone who ran trips this year – you guys are absolutely incredible!

We also saw the return of many instructional courses, including 6 basic bush school trips and an advanced bush school! And of course also 6 snow school trips, which were a roaring success. Thank you so much to all our instructors for putting their hands up to pass on their knowledge :)

Rather excitingly, tracks near our beloved Ōngāruanuku hut are starting starting to be opened up (previously all closed due to kauri dieback). It's still a bit up-in-the-air when access to the hut will be fully open, but we've had a few missions to O'nuku for some repairs and a bit of a scrub up. Fingers crossed we'll be able to return for more hut shenanigans sometime in the next few years!

Before I sign off, I want to give a big big thank you to everyone in the committee. This club's success this year is a direct result of all the enthusiasm and passion you've all poured into the club this year. Thank you also to every member of AUTC, for coming on trips and bringing your enthusiasm and making this club what it is. You all were an absolute joy to captain.

Here's to another fantastic year!

**Janelle Evans**  
**AUTC Captain 2024**

# *Table of Contents*

<b>Front Matter</b>	<b>i - iv</b>
<b>Trip Reports</b>	<b>1 - 86</b>
<b>AUTC Photo Competition</b>	<b>87 - 100</b>



**Yo ho ho!** It was a Christmas themed tramp planned the weekend before Christmas on the 16th-17th Of December. We all met at Uni in the morning ready to set off for the day. I had previously organised everyone's gear they required so we handed that all out and fuffed around trying to fit it in people's bags. We were then off, with a few stops along the way for last minute things people forgot, toilets and ice-creams!

It was a beautiful sunny day when we arrived and we set off along the track. **The forest was a gorgeous podocarp forest and the track snaked along the Waihaha riverside.** We had a few stops on the way to make sure we stayed together as a group. We arrived at a point we all stopped and thought was a good place to swim. The dip was icy to say the least but pleasant once we got our heads underwater. Then it was icy again so I did not last long at all! We then pushed to the hut. There were already a few people there, but we brought tents anyway in case! A lot of the group were keen to stay in tents so

there were no fights over who gets to stay in the hut. We chilled out since it was late to mid afternoon at this point, then we had our wonderful potluck. Now I've done a few potlucks on tramps before but this one was by far the most successful. We had such a wide range of food, and not everyone just brought cake!



After the Christmas-spirited dinner, we then moved to open presents. I realised I didn't have any Christmas music except snoopy's Christmas so I played that on loop about 5 times until I got pissed off with it. We decided none of us really knew each other so there wasn't much point to do an actual secret Santa as planned so we did yankee swap.

I picked first and was extremely stoked with my pick and made it very clear I was extremely stoked with my pick in the hopes no one would stitch me up and take the chair I got! Thank goodness no one did, although most of the presents were either bathroom material or chocolates so they were all pretty disingenuous.

# Chrissy Tramp

Waihaha River  
16 - 17 December 2023

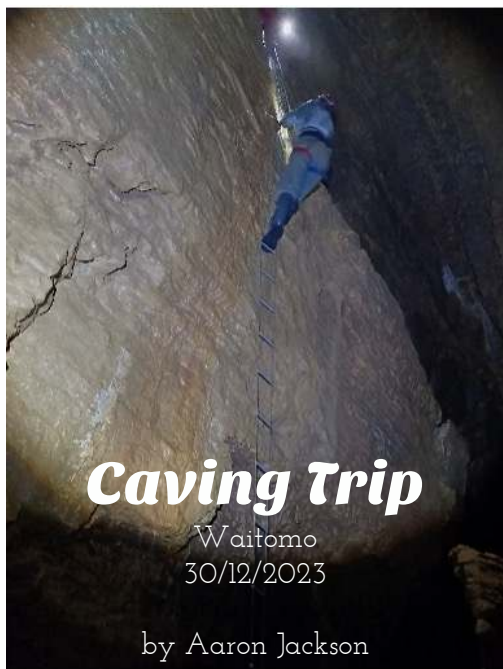
by Teresa Devonport

We then just played multiple rounds of cards and enjoyed some mulled wine I made on the fire with the cheapest goon I could find at the shop. There was a clear sky so we enjoyed that, with some photography.

The next morning we got all of our stuff together, packed down the tents and had breakfast. We walked out, stopped for a swim by the bridge once again freezing our tits off and made it all safely to the cars. It was then just a journey home, in our cars!

I would just like to thank everyone for coming on Chrissy tramp, it was wholesome as and I hope to keep Chrissy tramp as a tradition!





# Caving Trip

Waitomo  
30/12/2023

by Aaron Jackson

**O**n the second-to-last day of 2023, an intrepid group of spelunkers (*that's a wonderful word, isn't it?*) set out full of anticipation for a day filled with walking, wading, crawling, squeezing, wriggling, and abseiling our way through some cold, wet and muddy holes in the ground – specifically, the rather impressive ones in Waitomo. We were a motley group of nine, consisting of: three capable leaders (Colin, Solomon and Emma), three enthusiastic newbies (me, Mina and Lulu) and two Frenchmen (Sven and Guillaume) who had found their way onto the trip through a series of mutual connections.

After some faffing about with gear in the carpark and remarking on the excellent weather that we would soon leave behind, we cheerily set off to begin our journey into the underworld. We walked

along a muddy track, and then bush-bashed our way to the cave entrance. This proved a little tricky to find, and we were obliged to take Colin at his word when he said something to the effect of: “it’s much easier to navigate below ground than above it”. Nevertheless, we managed to find the correct hole in the ground, prepared ourselves for entry, and descended into the darkness.

Once properly inside the cave, we were given the obligatory safety briefing, then lead on a route through various twists and turns, admiring some spectacular mineral formations on the way. They were an astonishing variety of shapes and sizes; long and delicate straws, massive columns, flowing curtains, dagger-like stalactites...

One particularly impressive formation was called “the birthday candle”, a name which thoroughly understates the immensity of the structure. It is a massive stalagmite that pushes up from the ground to a height of about 6-7 metres and is about 2 metres wide at the base, which, according to Wikipedia, makes it the tallest known stalagmite in the country. Obviously moved by the moment, someone in the group started us all singing happy birthday (I’m not sure who it was to).



With speleothems suitably admired, we continued deeper into the cave and eventually came to a section that required us to abseil down a deep crack. This seriously slowed our progress, but the delay was more than made up for by the feeling of sheer awesomeness that comes with abseiling in a cave. Once we had all managed to make it down in one piece, we started walking along a subterranean stream.

At one stage, the cold water reached a level known as “critical depth”, and anguished yelps were heard from a few of the males in the group. Eventually we reached a point where we had to use a cave ladder to ascend up to the next stage of our journey. Cave ladders are fickle beasts, and a small waterfall did not make things any easier, but thanks Colin’s reliable belaying we all made it up intact.

Soon after this, our guides decided they would like to have a bit of fun. Sven and Guillaume were sent into a small hole and told to “just keep going”. The rest of us (excluding Colin, Solomon, and Emma, i.e., the people who knew what they were doing) merrily piled in and discovered that we had been directed into a very tight, very muddy, and apparently dead-ended hole.

Eventually we were persuaded that yes, this is actually a dead end. No, it does not lead anywhere, and yes, this is all just a joke. With some difficulty, 6 slightly irritated but (mostly) secretly happy fools slid out, thoroughly covered in mud. Side quest completed, we moved on to our next major obstacle: the ominously named “organ grinder”. As it turns out, this name is not much of an exaggeration – it describes a very narrow horizontal gap, so narrow that the larger



cavers in our group had to exhale slightly to squeeze through. Apparently (according to Colin), the method for getting larger people through is for them to remove as much clothing as required and attempt to slide through. Fortunately, we did not have to resort to this.

On our way out of the cave, we had another abseiling section to navigate. As this would take some time to set up, a few of us went to explore a small cavern with some special mineral formations in it (I don’t know the proper name for them). A piece of laminated paper near the entrance informed us that these formations were so old and fragile that we needed to remove our overalls to prevent them being coated in mud and damaged.

With great anticipation, we stripped off our filthy overalls and entered. The walls were covered in small, intricate structures, glittering white, with delicate straws hanging from the ceiling. Walking through in my thermals with bare feet, it almost felt sacred. It was all incredibly beautiful, but with limited time, we eventually pulled ourselves away from it and went back to where the abseiling gear had been set up.

Once we got everyone down the cliff in one piece, we realised that we were running well behind schedule, and made haste towards the cave exit to avoid an unwanted search and rescue callout. With the critical message sent, all that was left was for us to enjoy a well-earned dinner.

This magnificent meal was eaten on the ground in the carpark and consisted of: Colin's carrots collected from the dumpster behind Farro, some chips, a few miscellaneous leftover snacks, and some beers generously provided by the excellent Sven. It was a fitting end to a thoroughly enjoyable day.





**Day 1** of my Lake Waikaremoana adventure unfolded with a drive from Auckland, aiming to split the daunting 6-hour journey. The road was my companion, but the long weekend traffic turned it into a challenging odyssey. Cars snaked ahead endlessly, testing my patience.



Arriving at the Brett Road campsite, we faced a new challenge – setting up the tents in the downpour. The rain-soaked ground and relentless drops turned the tent into an island in a miniature lake. I sought refuge in the car. Surprisingly, the rhythmic rain on the car roof became a lullaby, and I drifted into a peaceful sleep.

**Day 2.** Waking up, the realisation hit me – I had forgotten to pack my tramping pack. Faced with a pivotal choice between embarking on the ultra-light adventure of a lifetime or retracing my steps to Rotorua to purchase a bag, I weighed the options carefully. Opting for the latter, I decided to make do with my 26-litre bag, strategically cramming it with essentials and carefully selected luxury items.

The process of determining what constituted an absolute necessity and what fell under the category of indulgence became a thoughtful exercise. Sleeping bag, PLB, ibuprofen, food, and cooking equipment were unquestionably essential. The deliberation became more nuanced when it came to items like undies, and I found myself contemplating the significance of a raincoat. Despite the clear skies during our departure, the decision to include it proved fortuitous, as an unexpected downpour later confirmed.

Among the luxury items that made the cut were thermals, hut shoes, and a compact puffer jacket. Left behind were the full first aid kit and a spare set of hiking clothes.

After some intense packing we set off, making a pit stop in Murupara at the bakery, then navigating a challenging

gravel road, encountering wild horses and maraes along the way. Upon reaching the trailhead, my navigational hiccup led us down the wrong path, but thankfully, Alex swiftly corrected our course. The wind was so extreme we thought we might blow off the ridge or a tree might fall on us. Ascending a formidable hill and traversing undulating terrain, we eventually reached Panekire Hut. Panekire Hut had a beautiful view at time, the wind was so extreme it blew us both clouds and clear! Welcomed by the warden and immersed in a powhiri that introduced us to Te Urewera's wonders, the experience took an unexpected turn as I bumped into an old workmate, Rebecca—an unexpected but heartwarming reunion. We ranted about our old up all night long as we had moved onto greener pastures.



**Day 3**, the hut marked the beginning of our day. Rebecca, drawing from her prior experience on this route, cautioned us about its challenges, sharing tales of her

past triumphs. Undeterred, we embraced the "yolo" spirit and commenced our descent from Panekire, bound for the hut where Rebecca's group intended to spend the night.

We paused for morning tea, engaging in light banter with the vaping hut warden, injecting a touch of humour into the expedition.

Continuing on, we joined forces with Rebecca's crew on the way to Korokoro Falls, a detour well worth the effort, allowing us to enjoy the scenic beauty without the burden of our packs. Parting ways with them at Korokoro Falls, we proceeded to a leisurely lunch and a refreshing swim in the vibrant blue waters, basking in the warmth of the sun.

However, the idyllic setting belied the toll of the 28 kilometres traversed on undulating terrain, challenging the claim of a flat route. We finally arrived at Maruiti Hut, a structure that, though showing signs of wear, offered a pleasing view. The accommodations were snug, resembling sardines packed for the night, prompting me to retire early, fatigued from the day's extensive trek.

**Day 4** commenced with an early awakening at 4 am, courtesy of an intrusive alarm echoing through the confined quarters—a subtle reminder of the less glamorous aspects of communal living. Despite the initial disturbance, I managed to steal a few extra moments of sleep before fully rising to prepare for the day ahead. A minor concern loomed as we had initially planned to use the water taxi, but Alex's mum had a change of plans, prompting us to reconsider our mode of transportation.



The logistical challenge arose in notifying the water taxi service about our change of plans, given the absence of communication. Nonetheless, the day unfolded with splendid weather, and we briskly covered an extra hour's worth of distance to reach the first hut. There, we encountered fellow hikers from the previous night, engaging in the seemingly audacious act of running with packs. Continuing through undulating terrain, we stumbled upon a sign indicating the water taxi location—a bit earlier than anticipated.

Perplexed by the discrepancy, we spent an hour deliberating with others about the disorganised state of the water taxi arrangements. Realising the lack of clarity and organisation, we decided to abandon the water taxi plan altogether, suspecting they might not even be aware of our reservation.

Opting to meet Alex's mom instead, we hurried to our rendezvous point and, thankfully, caught up with her despite a slight delay. Feeling spontaneous, Tasma and I embraced the "yolo" spirit, booking another hike to Sandy Bay Hut for the evening. Returning to our cars after Alex's mom dropped us off, we found ourselves at the starting point of yet another trail, this one following an in-and-out route.

Embarking on the trek, we marvelled at the crystal-clear waters, the most pristine I had ever seen. A refreshing swim by the lake's edge was followed by a leisurely walk to the hut. As the sun began to set, I prepared a simple noodle dish, basking in the tranquillity. However, our peaceful evening took a turn when a group of bogans disrupted the serenity who rowed in from fishing the lake attempting to start a fire in a designated fire ban area. Diplomatically, I intervened to address the situation. De-

spite this minor hiccup, the evening unfolded with a captivating sunset, rendering the experience memorable despite its uneven turns.

**Day 5, our final day**, unfolded with a serene morning, marked by a refreshing dip in the shallow waters beside the hut and a satisfying breakfast of oats. Eager to avoid a late return to Auckland, we swiftly undertook our cleanup duties and set out on the trail, which continued to impress with its well-maintained condition.

During our journey, we paused by the final stretch of the lakeside track, succumbing to the temptation of one last dip. To our surprise, we once again encountered the group of bogans, now proudly showcasing a trout they had

caught and ingeniously using harakeke to carry it.

With a sense of urgency, we hastened downhill, reaching my car without incident. The apprehension caused by the earlier remarks of fellow hikers about the safety of parking in the area was quickly dispelled as we found my car safe and sound.

Navigating the gravel road, we made a brief lunch stop in Murupara before embarking on the drive home, fortunate to encounter minimal traffic. The journey concluded on a positive note, allowing us to reflect on the adventures of the past few days while enjoying a smooth and timely return to Auckland.

*Te Urewera Ranges, you beauty!*



# Rangitoto Eastern Coast and Summit

2 March

by Vin Lima

Our lively band of almost 30 left the crowded harbour in mixed spirits. Some were ready to go and energetic. The others saw reality. It was early and we needed coffee. The first tramping mission was to buy overpriced sloppy coffee from the ferry shop.

Now the band was feeling good and as we landed on terra firma, we commenced our walk. It started along the southeast side of Rangitoto where black rock and low shrubbery dominate the scenery. The clouds lifted and we were graced with some sun. Thankfully for our anxious leader only one person fell among all the crags and points of the winding path. No major injuries and soon the band was ready for lunch.

At this point some started to lose their minds. Those inflicted by the hiking hysteria started to rebrand themselves as Team Syphilis. None were French but they carried the Parisian spirit in their hearts.

With this renewed energy we headed to the summit. The views were well worth the hike. Glittering light blue ocean and the ever so expansive Auckland landscape. With a small detour to the lava caves, where some members were almost lost to the depths of Rangitoto, our trip came to an end.

No one was lost for long, and no one missed the ferry. Successful trip.



# Dragon's Teeth (Excerpt)

2-10 March 2024

by Sam Fu-Allen

After what can only be described as one of DOCs historical attempts to breach the Geneva Convention, August and I woke sleep deprived thanks to the incredibly uncomfortable bunks. Such an experience was only made sweeter by Colin's remarks of having slept like a baby alpaca, having been "held lovely and snug" by the chicken wire that the DOC dictionary considers to be a mattress. Once again the Kahurangi sun beamed down on us as one eagerly hyperactive and two marginally unmotivated hikers set off from Adelaide Tarn Hut.

Starting abruptly with a steep push up the Mt Douglas saddle, the mood rapidly improved as the quads burned and the hiking masochistic spirit returned. On breaching the pass, we were treated to a spectacular view of the Dragon's Teeth high route; an impressive section

of rugged bluffs with no clear path across. A brief moment of pathfinding down the pass culminating in a semi-controlled scramble quickly set the tone for the next 6-hours navigating the Dragon's Teeth.

A few moments of backtracking were inevitable as gullies and animal tracks kept leading to impassable cliffs. However, thanks to the TinMan's (not to be confused with Tony Stark) sun-bleached markers, the route was relatively well established. Several sections were frequently described as "low technicality but high consequence" requiring committing, rock climbing-esque moves (notably while carrying ~18kg packs).

Perhaps enjoying the rock too much, August and I attempted to traverse a section while Colin went for the more sensible stream-filled gully. More sensible and Colin in one sentence? Well, while August successfully downclimbed, I





After a pitstop for wound reviews and clinical rounding, Colin received medical clearance from the nearest healthcare professionals. The hiking continued and after trudging past the Drunken Sailors, Lonely Lake Hut came into view. Little could stop August from marching down to the little yellow hut, Colin and I following close behind. Lonely Lake Hut was the perfect end for our bruised and battered legs after a truly epic day of off-track hiking.

managed to trap myself on some questionably wet terrain. My backpack sliding down to August's waiting arms was quickly followed by my rapidly descending body. Colliding with August possibly saved me from significant injury but came at the cost of bruised knees, sore egos, and ripped thermals (that I still use to this day). Choosing to follow more sensible lines from this point forth, the high route continued with great exposure, consistent scrub bashing, and Class 3 scrambling before finally popping out onto the opposing ridge. The high route was officially completed!

Our euphoria for navigating through the Dragon's Teeth high route quickly soured as we noted the remaining "path" was uncairned across classic undulating terrain. Some frustrations later, a path was eventually identified. It was at this point that Colin chose to throw himself off the side of the mountain. With a spectacular somersault, our Hobbit party member attempted to leave the fellowship in favour of Cirque du Soleil (an application that is still being processed).



# COAST TO COAST WALK

March 16  
by Lucy Douglas

The journey begun by the Pacific Ocean. 25 brave souls rallied outside the downtown ferry building. Many had already done battle through the St Patrick's day crowds. We were preparing for an intrepid adventure through the dangerous streets of Auckland. A PLB was of course brought along as a vital piece of safety equipment in case Auckland's 5G network collapsed.

Walking past campus was our first hurdle. It haunted us with bad exam grades and similar terrors. We were only too glad to make it away from uni and onto the first Volcano - the domain.



Here our fear was the violent geese. Although we did also hold out some hope of finding the domain turtles. We did not, nor did we get attacked by the geese, so I guess that's a reasonable trade.

The next volcano, Mt Eden, proved to be rather pleasant...Once the thoughts of molten lava exploding out of the crater were buried... I mean, forgotten... ah overcome? We found our 25th member

up here! Maybe they are a Lava Monster in

disguise? Oh well, they didn't murder anyone (she says not including the group photo of us at the end because we are missing a few people...)

We'd had to battle our way up a 'goat' track to get to the top of One Tree Hill. A few people succumbed to the trials ending up on their knees, but everyone struggled on to the top. Tin whistles



were played to ward of the bad spirits chasing us. It should have been smooth sailing down the hill to the end from here. However the Royal Oak Roundabout stood in our way. We bravely surged across the road stopping cars in their tracks. Our dangerous road crossing decision was well rewarded with some icecream served by an overwhelmed looking shop attendant.

Based on the shocked expression of them as we walked into the shop, I am starting to think maybe we were biggest danger on this walk the whole time.

The journey ended at the Tasman Sea (with a view of power lines. Followed by a quick trip on the trains that were actually running in the weekend, well done AT!





# HUNUA WALKIES

## Taking Susie for a walk



23-24 MARCH  
by Will Griffiths

The best thing about Uni tramping clubs is reading the ‘dumb’ stuff other trips have tried to pull off in the past. The reason dumb is in quotation marks is, depending on the reader, the activity can be seen as maybe legendary, totally understandable, or inspiring.

Being students, most of us haven’t got to the stage of stiff knees, sore backs, or as my mother would say, a fully developed frontal lobe (calling us silly). Due to these factor, Uni tramping clubs have the ability to pull off ‘dumb’ stuff.

**EXTREME IRONING** trips had stagnated in the club for a few years. **EXTREME IRONING** is a delicate sport where an **IRON** and **IRONING** board get taken to stupid places, and we do a bit of **IRONING**.

It popped up on the committee addenda to look at bring **EXTREME IRONING** back, and after some investigation, I found out we have our own club **IRON** and **IRONING** board called Susie and Rusty. Time to do something ‘silly’!

Sascha was on board very quickly with my proposition, with the only condition being that he didn’t have to carry Susie up, which wasn’t really helpful.

He did agree to bring a suit up, so I was partially happy with the deal. The next stage of the do ‘dumb’ stuff was to pack 15 people into a 2 person hut at the top of Hunua. After reinforcing how unenjoyable and horrible this would be I had over 30 sign ups. Trampers are weird.

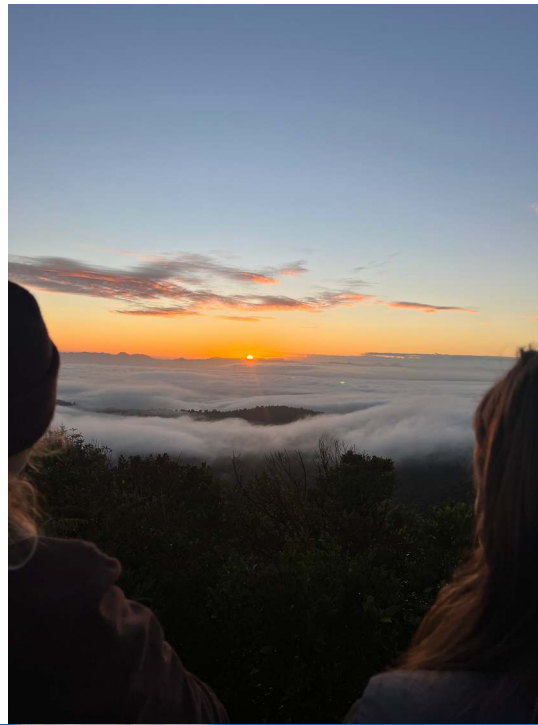
The view was clouds and Susie enjoyed the free ride up, often reaching out and grabbing onto vines and tree branches as we passed. The relationship with Susie had deteriorated by the end, and seeing Trig K hut was a welcoming sight.



We created dinner with a lot of stress and wizardry, played some cards, then started to set up sleep positions.

We had 4 group members run away to tents, which made life a bit easier. I had a hammock which made life a bit precious for people sleeping below me, but, it all worked out (as pictured).

By the morning the clouds had cleared a little and, on the observation tower, we were able to catch a awesome sunrise. Followed by some morning **IRONING** to make sure we all look our best for the decent down, we said our goodbyes and slow made the trudge back down.



## Day 1

I met with George at Auckland Airport. When it was time for our plane I was very excited but nervous when I saw the tin can of a plane we were flying in. We were the first flight of the day, and I kept my eyes peeled for dolphins and whales but non seen sadly :(.

After we bought an extortionately priced bottle of gas, George gave me a lift to Haratonga Campsite where I just chilled for a couple of hours waiting for Daisy. George was working today but we had plans to meet tomorrow. I had a wonderful time at the beach, the sun was out, I had a boogie with my headphones. I rock hopped and I snorkelled looking at amazing yellow seaweed and lazied in the sun listening to podcasts.

When Daisy arrived she went for a walk to the beach to understand the situation with how great it was. We then set off to go on our walk, and we walked to Aotea road. When we got there we decided to stick our thumb out to save some time, a Ute pulled over and told us to get on the back. We were on [#barrierbaybee](#).

As we rode I realised there's a familiar smell coming from the cab. Uh oh, but we were committed so we just held on for dear life. Once again [#barrierbaybee](#). Thankfully we made it unscathed. The dude was a legend and we started on the Windy Canyon track.

This was a beautiful track with lots of exposed rock. Tramping through cracks between the cliffs was especially spectacular. Daisy and I were particularly excited by the native plants. The weather was constantly changing so sometimes we were getting whipped by rain other times it was a gorgeously sunny. We arrived at the track intersection and summited the tallest peak of the island, Mt Hobson.

Mt Hobson was a trippy experience since the wind was intense the clouds were moving so fast, I felt like I could sit and watch the landscape change forever. The clouds shaded the sun out so much at one point, the sun looked like the moon. We then powered on to the hut. When we arrived, we kicked our feet up, and had a chill one with kai, chats, and talking to our other peeps in the hut. We then went to bed excited for what tomorrow brought.



# Aotea / Great Barrier Island

28/03/2024 - 02/04/2024

by Teresa Davenport

## Day 2

We woke up from an alarm from a warm and comfortable sleep. We got up, had some breakfast and set off for our day.

The day was windy but the track was scenic as we headed down loads of stairs dreading the fact we'd have to come back up them to get back to the hut. We'd decided to stay our first two nights at Mt Heale Hut so we were exploring without our heavy bags. As we got to the intersection of Peach Tree track and the tramline track we took a left heading for the waterfall first. On our way we headed over some pretty vertical slippery tracks... we assumed since it was a tramline the track would be great but alas. The track was either clay or rocks on the most vertical parts and mixed with some scattered showers we had it became slow going.

When we finally arrived at the waterfall, it was a disappointment initially. We had been walking for an hour for just a bit of a stream we thought at first. To our relief we spotted a DOC sign that said Waterfall 2 mins. We got to the viewing spot then parkoured a bit further down to get a better view. It was marvellous, so a swim was a must. We jumped in, manus were on and it was FREEZING. Although my body quickly acclimatised to the cold. We then went out and I did a reccy a bit further down the stream. Phone in my mouth I got some brilliant photos. As well as some cracks in my screen as some bite marks in my phone case from me clenching my teeth to the cold water.

It was worth it when we got out and had our lunch, it was pretty cold but not as cold as the water.



After lunch we set off determined to make it to the hot pools. Once again navigating the steep and slippery slopes, we got to a point where I got reception when I got a message from George. He had found other hot pools on google maps closer to our current location. We once again decided to do a reccy to find these mysterious "peach tree hot springs". Alas after some treacherous cliffs traversed by me we realised there hot springs were a hoax put on by someone trying to waste our time! Just a freezing cold stream was to be found.



We kept on the track where we walked a bit further down where Daisy said on her map said were other “Hot springs” so once again after another mish off track we were fooled. No hot springs in sight, not even a cold river. Argh.

After up many many steps uphill. We finally made it back to the hut. Daisy didn't manage to book a space in the hut for the night as it was full, although we had hoped there might be a spare bed due to the windy weather. Alas we arrived at a full hut pumping so Daisy still had to top and tail with me!

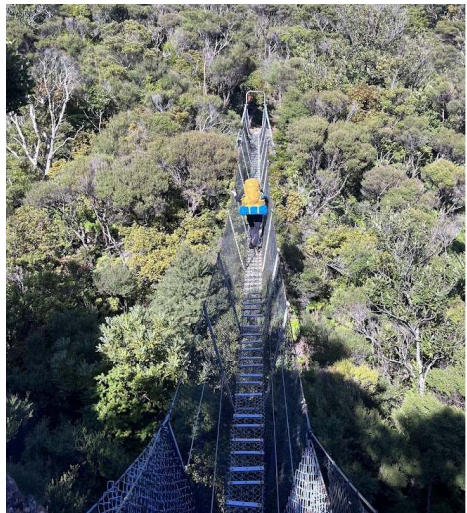
We caught up with George and chilled out. Enjoying dinner and the company from the other hut goers. We had an early night from an exhausting day excited for the days to come.

### Day 3

I woke up busting to use the toilet so I got out of bed trying not to step on Daisy. The sky was clear but the wind was cold! Although I enjoyed a beautiful view across to Te Hauturu Toi or Little Barrier Island.

We enjoyed our breakfast blissfully as we weren't in any rush due to the next hut only being a 2 hours walk away. The breeze was cool and the sun was nice. It was a brilliant day to go tramping. We boosted over a few dodgy footbridges and enjoyed the beautiful blue ocean views. After a few stops, and a few laughs we finally arrived at the hut. A little more shabby than the flash Mt Heale Hut, although classic NZ backcountry hut vibes.

We had a hot lunch then we decided it was a brilliant afternoon to go to the beach. We split up due to the faff I was doing (enjoying a hot brew) so I insisted they leave without me so I wouldn't hold them up and could just dawdle along. When we all went there we looked over the brilliant blue water. We all went for a swim at “Bush's Beach” – original name. After a spectacular afternoon we decided to head back as the sun was going down. We all waited patiently to get our chef on as the kitchen was busy. When it was our turn we enjoyed our meal with a side of Kawakawa tea.



We also played a few rounds of hearts which we all had a turn at winning at. It was a throwback to my **Windows XP** playing days with hearts and freecell.

It was then time for bed, I was especially gassy this evening due to my curry and I remember letting a big one rip in the night and someone said “ew yuck.” Not sure if that actually happened.

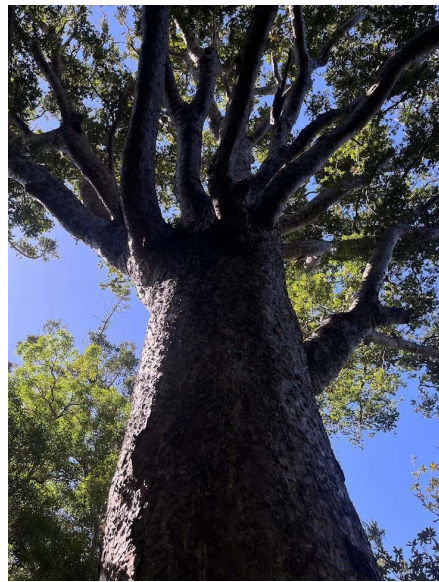
## Day 4

I woke up to say goodbye to George and use the toilet. Then I went back to bed to have a lie in as we were having another chill hut day.

After Daisy and I finally were awake we enjoyed our breakfast and more faff getting ready for the day. We then set off for our 20 km day walk.

Blissfully breezy and blue sky seemed like another great day. As we made up forest road, it was a wide well maintained path that had beautiful scenery. We turned off to “Kauri trees” a short path where we enjoyed the massive trees. A couple that thankfully my ancestors didn’t make it to, they were grand.

After grinding up the road we made it to our lunch spot. This was a bit of a rock scramble, we were glad it was dry. We enjoyed a delicious meal (mine was curry that I think was the culprit of giving me gas from the day before) and marvelled at the view. When we finally decided to get our a into g, we headed down a slightly less maintained path, the Kiwiriki path.



Many fallen trees and slashes through city grass later we made it to Kiwiriki bay. The side path to Kiwiriki bay was especially gnarly and gorse crazed. I enjoyed a nap and a swim. The swim led me to cut my feet on some oyster rocks **#rip**. Although all good as it wasn’t too bad.

We then walked back up the path and out back to the hut. This also wasn’t the best maintained path and we enjoyed this sign that says “Track Upgrades happening here”. This sign must have been there before the current government decided to slash EVERYTHING.

Daisy and I enjoyed some plant ID too on this app I have. We had a quick stop into Bush’s Beach to marvel at the sunset, me to take a dump and for Daisy to make a sandcastle. I was intensely trying to let it rip as we walked to try and get all the farts out of my system. Hoping for a fartless night.

We then boosted out after realising how hungry we were, once again picking Kawakawa leaves on the way for our tea. After returning to the hut, Daisy was so hungry she hurt her mouth trying to eat.

## Day 5

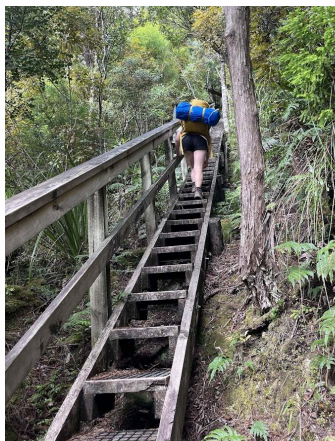
Daisy and I woke up blissfully late in the morning. We enjoyed our breakfast, and this morning was another immensely faffable morning. My farting was less intense last night due to me letting it rip on the walk the day before but it did unfortunately persist.

When we finally set off we decided to take the “closed route” as we heard from others that the reason it was closed was a bit lowkey.

We set off through the beautiful Nikau and along quite a flat track at first, appreciating it. As one thing we learnt. Aotea does not do flat! We got to the reason the track was closed and it was actually fine.

I'm glad we did walk over the new track back cause I've walked on many many open tracks dodgier than that.

We finally arrived at the first intersection and we decided to take a detour to “Coopers Castle”, excited to see what greets us at the other end. Alas after a 45 minute walk straight vertical up, it was just another view point! Stunning none the less but for real what is with the false advertising! I cut my legs up badly on that cutty grass for a viewing spot where we'd see later but better. I was **#pissed** about it.



When we finally made it down, we decided it was time for lunch!! We then went on a 2 min detour to see the Kauri dam and far out that was more interesting that Cooper's Castle. There were lots of interesting exposed rock faces too after this point. I really enjoyed them. We then set off back up to the top of Mt Hobson. **#STEPS #STEPS #STEPS**.

When we finally made it to the top of Mt Hobson, sadly the blue sky was gone. The view was still banging though. We ran into a few other people we'd be sharing the hut with that night. Some of them are so nice to even share their Easter eggs!

## Day 6

I had a bit of a restless night due to the anxiety about missing my flight the next day! I woke up to Daisy's alarms. She was leaving before me so I knew I had another hour to doze. When I finally got up and out and ready it was 7am. I walked down the hill enjoying the sunrise, as the sky looked beautiful shades of pink and red I felt so lucky. I saw a morepork too!



I finally reached the hot springs around 8:30am. I had a nice soak in them attempting to wash off the 6 days of tramping. The hot springs were perfect. They had levels of hotness and depth, I

felt very lucky to go that early in the morning as they were undisturbed.

Unsuccessful in the mission of washing the tramp off but successful in maximum relaxation. I mished on to the road for a bit of road walking to end my trip and hopefully a bit of hitchhiking! The road walk was pleasant and surprisingly short as I could boost it with no obstacles. Sadly I couldn't manage to hitchhike as no one came along the road!

I finished the hike with an ice cream, a nice sandwich (sadly the burger shop was closed, errrr apparently the owner forgot to take the mince out lmao) then a bounce on communal Aotea trampoline. I had a yarn with this lady as her kid jumped on the trampoline with me. I asked her if she knew my cousin, and she



did. Then she proceeded to talk about how much of a babe my cousin was **#barrierbaybee**.

I then went to the beach for my final swim on the barrier. On my way to the beach I fell into this ditch that had black sludge at the bottom. I assume it's kerosene from the runway...

**#barrierbaybee. #breachoftherma**

Still, I had a nice swim and washed the black sludge off. It was quite a blissful way to finish off the trip. I made my way back to the airport and had another slightly harrowing flight home with turbulence.

Thanks for coming, everyone. It was fun!



# Crosbies Hut Hike

6-7 April

by Emily Steiner

A group of seven aspiring young hikers ventured out from the cold, dreary landscape of the Clock Tower to the sunnier shores of Thames for a weekend getaway. After a coffee stop, pie stop, petrol stop, Maccas stop, liquor store stop, and Pak'n'Save stop, we finally reached the start of the track: Waoitahi. Our mission was simple: hike up to Crosbies Hut and bask in the solitude and connection with nature that Pinnacles hikers miss out on.

The track starts off well-formed with a steady climb up to meet the muddier Karaka Track. Covered mostly by trees, the anticipation built for some gorgeous views of the Coromandel.

However, the higher we climbed, the thicker the bush, and we soon realised why Crosbies Clearing has its own name (because it's the only clearing for miles around).

Unperturbed, we slogged on up to the hut and were finally rewarded with some views of the surrounding hills. Half of the group set up camp, while the other half got cosy setting up in the hut.



Given it had been 5 hours since our last stop at Maccas, we were all ravenous for a feast. And hot damn, was it marvellous. We munched away on noodles, cheese, salami, nachos and Go Native meals until the sun fell and the cider came out. We ended the evening with a game of Bananagrams under lamplight before hunkering down for a chilly night.

We woke the next day expecting a lovely sunrise but found the clouds had rolled in for a drizzly morning. We packed up our stuff and headed back the way we came. The rain had doubled the mud from the previous day, turning the track into a treacherous slip 'n' slide, but we took our time (and some tumbles) and made it back safely to the cars (and eventually Maccas). All in all, the track made for a great intermediate trip and we thoroughly enjoyed it.



# Kaimanawa Ranges

9 - 12 April  
Lucas Hebbberd

## DAY 1

After a slightly delayed start due to miscommunication and Auckland morning traffic, we left the clock tower at about 7:30 to make the journey to Kaimanawa Forest Park. After stopping at Taupo for lunch, we continued the drive to the start of the track. The road was windy and treacherous with a massive amount of pot-holes; Lucas' slightly impractical car that has about half a foot of clearance struggled at times but we eventually made it to the campsite we were parking our car at. As we started walking, rain started to set in. The tree cover along the road we were walking down saved us here. We met quite a few people camping along the road in various places; we weren't quite sure whether they hunting or hiding from the Inland Revenue Department (or potentially both). After powering it through the road section, we arrived at the trailhead after about 2 hours (Ferg waited in the toilet to keep out of the rain - what a man will do remain dry).

The rain picked but we were unperturbed and kept going. However, very quickly we reached a quite large hill which did in fact perturb us and we slowed down a lot. Lucas lost his sunglasses and morale was somewhat low.

Visibility was also quite low with all the views off the hill being of cloud, and Max got a bit lost (Lucas took this as an opportunity for an extended break). We eventually made it to the top of the hill,

where we discovered Anna and Lance were much better at climbing hills than the rest of us. The sun began to set during the descent (not that we could see it) and soon we found ourselves walking in the dark. We had a few navigational mishaps that involved us climbing under trees but nevertheless we made it down the hill to the Tauranga-Taupo river. The final section to the hut ended up being almost a maze through some trees (there may have been a few circles involved) but we finally got to Cascade hut. We were the only ones there and everyone was very happy that we didn't have to bust out the tents. Night-time activities consisted of Lucas taking a signature water bottle shower, no one liking a the bottle of cheap rum and Lance trying to start a fire with wet wood, deodorant and a gas stove (we sadly did not get a fire).



## Day 2

We started the next day in the rain (again) and soon reached another massive hill (again). The climb up Maungao-rangi was strenuous and many lollies had to be eaten to keep us going. However, once we got to the tops we were treated

to a change in terrain and internet signal from the cell tower at the top. We had an early lunch on top of some spiky plants (and in some deer droppings that we found half-way through our break). Taking advantage of the rare occurrence of mobile service, we checked the weather and found that it was going to REALLY start raining on Friday. The official verdict was that that would be a later problem. As we kept walking along the tops, the clouds parted and we got to actually to see something that wasn't grey. Looking further into the Kaimanawas one direction and to the Kawekas in the other, the view was incredible. However, the wind was picking up again and we felt the need to keep going.

*As darkness set in, we crossed the river and found our way up to the hut.*

It was about now that Lucas and Ferg both ran out of water, which made for a bit of a miserable downhill section. The descent was steep, but we eventually made it to Oamaru river. We took a 10 minute break, which turned into a 20 minute break, which turned into a 30 minute break which finally concluded after 40 minutes. The track continued up to a saddle (we were not enthused for more uphill), where Lance, Max and Anna either heard a stag or a branch whacking against a tree. The top of the saddle gave us a great view into a valley where we could see the river we were not looking forward to crossing. As darkness set in, we crossed the river and found our way up to the hut. We lost the track at several points, but what would be a trip without a bush bash? We again found the hut unoccupied. Lucas tried to set u the

solar shower that we found there, but failed miserably and had a cold water bottle shower instead. After a night of card games and drinking, we went to bed on some quite uncomfortable doc mattresses and got some much-desired sleep.

### **Day 3**

After leaving 40 minutes after the agreed departure time of 7:00, Max joked on the way out "surely we just walk the whole way out today." Everyone laughed, but this ended up being prophetic. After some deliberation about the rain on Friday, our goal today was to skip our planned accommodation of Oamaru Hut and camp halfway between the hut and the road end to reduce our walk on the last day. We got back to the turnoff from the previous day and then expressed extreme skepticism in the apparently 4 further hours to Oamaru hut. The track journeyed further down the river and eventually to a hill. We did not want to go up a hill and thus decided to proceed with a river bash. Now with wet boots, we eventually left the river and started walking through some fields in the final stretch to Oamaru hut.

We were again with resistance as it had started to rain and there were many spiky plants along the track. We persevered through and made it to Oamaru hut for lunch. Some hunters had taken up residence in the hut for the week and while they didn't have any venison, they did have about 80 cans of beer each. Oh, the beauty of being helicoptered in.

It was about now when the prevailing opinion was 'screw it, lets get to the road.' We gapped it to a swingbridge (though we did stop to look at some whio), where the final decision to con-



tinue to the trailhead was made. Lucas and Ferg set off ahead with the aim of Lucas getting to the road first to get the car. However, in our way was the final massive hill. Morale was low, we were running out of lollies and things were looking tough. The weather was getting noticeably cloudier and the impending darkness was getting more and more worrying. After passing the site of the old Te Iringa hut, we only had the descent left to go. It was about now we had to bust out the headtorches and progress slowed.

As always, the end seemed much closer on the map than it actually was. However, the end was eventually reached. That was apart from Lucas, who promptly dropped his pack and, armed with a water bottle and a dwindling supply of chocolate, set off down the road to get the car. It was with great relief that to finally reach Clements Clearing campsite, where he was never had been so happy to see his car. While driving back down the road blasting Taylor Swift, he missed the rest of the group and had to do a u-turn a kilometre down the road, an act that tempered his majestic arrival somewhat.

Now all together again, everyone was very satisfied with the distance they had made that day - Lucas' phone said 50km, which was almost certainly an overestimate but it makes us seemer fitter so we're gonna use that measurement. Everyone was in high spirits on the drive home, though this was slightly reduced when the only KFC on the way home was closed. We finally arrived back in Auckland at about 1:00 in the morning, a bit later than planned but regardless everyone was very happy to sleep on something other than a DOC mattress.



# VERY WET TONGARIRO ALPINE CROSSING

Charles Fields  
20 - 21 April



**T**he trip began with the group driving to Wairakei Terraces for a quick day trip. Originally, we had planned on doing the crossing on this day but had to push it back to the following Sunday for a better weather window. Nevertheless, we still had a great time at the hot pools and the drive down to Tongariro went very smoothly.

Upon arriving at our campsite, we discovered that with it raining all day the site had flooded a little. We were able to get our tents set up and cook dinner with a few minor changes to the plan. To get a fire going for cooking, we had to hold an umbrella over the pit the entire time because it was raining so hard. In the end, we made the most of a very, very wet night.





Crossing Day! The day started bright and early with a quick breakfast and packing up of camp. We drove to the Park and Ride just outside the park and boarded our shuttle. The shuttle ride to the trail-head was beautiful with stunning views of Tongariro. The hike began with clear weather and the group was feeling great. The climb to Red Crater was beautiful but, unfortunately, clouds did begin to roll in as we approached the summit. The descent from the summit to the geothermal lakes was quite foggy but around 12:30-1:00 pm, as our leader Alyssa predicted, the clouds began to clear and we were able to have a great view of the lakes and valleys that make up the Tongariro Alpine Crossing.



The descent into the forest below went off without any issue. The group was definitely feeling the last 19 km by the time we reached the parking lot. We ended the trip in Taupo with dinner at Lone Star.

This trip wouldn't have been possible without the wonderful people that made up this group and the people of AUTC who helped organise it.



# WAIPU CAVES

20 April  
MARTIN LAMBRECHTSE-REID

Caving was a first time experience for me and ten other beginners, and we weren't sure what to expect.

After arriving at the Waipu cave's entrance, we were given a safety briefing of what to expect. "This cave is super chill! You'll be at least a few metres from the walls of the cave at all times!" What a stitch up.

Once we got into the cave, we were greeted with an array of glow worms on the roof of the cavern. It provided us a great view, and the end point of the less committed cave tourists. Not us though, deeper we went. Entering a new cavern, we were told to have fun and explore. All looking nervously at each other, we were directed to an ominously human sized hole in the rock going straight down. "Jump in." And as we did, our nervousness was replaced with a child-like sense of adventure and exploration. Each of us diving down increasing contorted holes and caverns with a smile.



By the time we were reaching the end points of the cave, people's confidence and desire for exploration had improved. People were checking outside caves, climbing up walls or trying to jam into increasingly tight cracks. Sometimes we got through, sometimes we didn't.

**BEING A BEGINNER CAVE ROUTE OF FIRST TIMERS, EACH PATH THROUGH THE CAVERN HAD MULTIPLE OPTIONS.**

There was usually a tighter squeeze option, and a more spacious one. Not that it mattered, everyone went straight for the tightest option. Each squeeze provided a good challenge, being tight enough that some back and forward wiggling and movement was required, but nothing tight enough to cause a sense of fair. The encouragement of the group certainly helped though!



Our cave route ended up taking us in a full loop, finally connecting back to itself with a short muddy rockslide. We then followed the stream back to the main cavern entrance.

Our trip ended up with a few abseiling runs in the main cavern. A short lesson from Tony was enough to hop on the ropes and give a go descending into the cave from the roof. It looks high from the bottom, but I can assure you it looks higher from the top...



My first caving experience was a lot tighter and challenging than I was expecting. Coming in, I had ideas of walking through a large cavern with only low cave roofs to duck under. But coming out the other end of the cave, I'm glad it was more than that. And by the size of everybody's smile, so did they.



# MONTANA HERITAGE TRAIL

LUCY DOUGLAS, 28 APRIL

*MUD! Mud, mud...? That's what you expect to find in the bush. Instead we got the WOOD! Wood, gravel of perfectly made 4 month old track. Well 'wood' lots of it was plastic pretending to be wood*

OH AND DAM! DAM,  
OH DAM THAT'S A  
LONG WAY DOWN.



Can recommend the Montana Heritage Trail as a clean shoe chill day walk. Nice and close to Auckland. If a 1 year old can do it, so can you!



**In an effort** to avoid exorbitant hut fees during the Great Walk season, we decided to do the walk as soon as possible (2 days) after the season, hoping to also find a few less people on the track as well. In classic AUTC fashion, we left 1.5 hours after the intended departure and ended up at the road end at around 7. Luckily, there was only a 20 minute walk to Mangetepopo Hut and we all made it to the hut in short order. Logistics at the hut were a bit crazy as upon arrival we found that there was only 1 bunk left; with a group of 13 people, this was going to be a problem. However, we were hungry and it was decided that it would become a problem for later. We also came to the realization that between the 13 of us, we only had 3 stoves, which made cooking dinner a bit interesting. We ate dinner sequentially outside in a cold (but beautiful) night and finally went to bed in as many random places around the hut as we could.

We woke up the next day to clear blue skies, promising good views from the top of the mountain later in the day.

While we thought our departure time of 8:30 would be enough to beat most of the traffic on the Tongariro Crossing portion of the track, this was definitely not the case (so much for Lucas' theory that the off season should be quiet). Nonetheless, we continued along the very nice boardwalk – a luxury for New Zealand tramping. We made the obligatory stop at Soda Springs to see the waterfall and take a photo before making use of the last bathrooms before Oturere Hut later in the day. It was slow going up the Devil's staircase but we eventually made it up to Red Crater. We experienced more traffic up the last little bit of uphill towards the highest point of the track, but it's hard to complain about going too slow when it gives you more time to admire the views. The weather stayed the course and we couldn't have had a better view from the top; we had panoramic views of Taupo, the Kaimanawa ranges and even Taranaki way out to the west.

That's not to say that Tongariro wasn't equally as cool; the views of the various



# TONGARIRO NORTHERN CIRCUIT

*Lucas Hebbard*  
3 - 5 May

craters were incredible and being able to see how far we had come was very satisfying.

We had to commandeer a member of the public to take a photo of us as a group and then had to take individual photos with the various landmarks for friends/family/online dating profiles.

After briefly 'losing' some group members due to bad counting, and getting to hear some expert tin-whistling, we continued down towards Emerald Lakes and finally over to Blue Lake for lunch, where various gourmet tramping meals were consumed. The more adventurous among the group then continued on to make the descent up to North Crater, where we found – guess what! – yet another crater. After walking around the plateau, we found an incredible view of Taupo. We also gazed upon the trampers doing the much maligned downhill section of the crossing, feeling very grateful that they weren't in their shoes. Though the descent seemed much more perilous than the climb up, we made it back to the group and traced our steps back to the turnoff to Oturere hut. A bit of further downhill led us to a very desert-y area, which was a nice change from the mountain scenery. We all made it to the hut in by mid afternoon, had a quick break then continued to our destination of Waiho-honu Hut.

As the sun started to gradually dip below the mountains, we had a renewed sense of urgency as we made our way over undulating desert terrain, but overall spirits were very high.

As we entered bush for the first time on the trip, some members of the group decided to partake in a quick bush bash to save the windiness of the main track. For

perhaps the first time in AUTC history, a quick bush bash ended up actually being quick and placed the now much dirtier bush-bashers ahead of the other group. Who knew it was possible? We arrived at the hut to find that there were only 5 bunks left; a decent bit better than the previous night, but still not enough for everyone to enjoy the luxuries of a DOC mattress. Luckily floor space at Waiho-honu Hut was much more plentiful and we didn't have to all sleep shoulder-to-shoulder, which made the sleep that night much more comfortable.



We woke to a very frosty morning, and while what was presumably a beautiful sunrise over the Kaimanawas was blocked by a patch of trees, its reflection onto Ruapehu was perhaps equally as stunning. We quickly got going in the morning and then stopped going just as quickly as we made our first stop at the historic Waiho-honu Hut, which was quite a bit smaller than the main hut (it wouldn't have been fun if we had to fit everyone in there!). From then, we had more undulation as we walked between Ruapehu and Ngauruhoe.



Making the most of our being in the area, we took the opportunity to zoom up to Tama Lakes which was also a very nice view (common theme for the trip). From there, most of us were on the home stretch. A bit more undulation took us to Taranaki Falls, a pleasant surprise to all of us as ChatGPT didn't include this when I wrote the trip description. A few brave souls were going from a swim, but no one

in our group decided to partake. About here is when we split up; while most of the group had a short walk to Whakapapa Village, the drivers still had about 3 hours to get back to Mangatepopo carpark. As a parting gift to the rest of the group, the drivers bestowed their oversized packs upon the rest of the group, making the walk out a wee bit easier.

The track degraded in quality a bit from here; originally the plan was to do this section on day one in the dark, but in hindsight this would not have been the best idea. Finally, our brave group of drivers made it to their cars (nothing beats the feeling) and managed not to get lost on the way back to the rest of the group, who had been evicted from the DOC visitors center. From there, our next destination was the obligatory Macca's stop (as is tradition) and finally we arrived back in





# May Bush School

MARTIN LAMBRECHTSE-REID

4 May

Auckland much later than anticipated (funny how trips tend to do that). Nevertheless, the weekend had still been a great one, thought we were all extremely happy to have somewhere to sleep that night that wasn't the floor of a hut. Following a swift drive to the campsite in the Kaimanawa ranges, we set up our campsite in the dark as it approached midnight. A frosty night ensued before making a final gear check before we set off on our adventure.

Our path took us from the trailhead up to the peak of Mt Urchin through a well-maintained forest track. It was steep at times, and there were ample times for snack breaks. While it was a chilly morning, we quickly warmed as we ascended. At this point, our resident zip-off pants enthusiast provided their sales pitch, which become a recurring theme. P.S.

zipped vent pants are way better, fight me.

As we crossed the bush line, we were presented with a wonderful view of the national park mountains; Ruapehu, Ngauruhoe and Tongariro. We couldn't have asked for better weather, and we took the opportunity to enjoy the sights while we ate lunch.

With our snacks exhausted and taking advantage of the perfect visibility, we took the opportunity to practise navigation with a map and compass. Though confusing at first, we got the hang of it and were able to reliably pinpoint ourselves on the map. Thank you to our group leaders for their patience! Now following the map with our newfound skills, we headed for the valley where we would make camp.



Approaching the early afternoon, we were greeted by two older gentlemen as we descended into the bush line. "There's still frost in the valley! It'll be a cold night down there." Nervous glances amongst the group set in.



As we descended, a shallow river presented itself. A short lesson from guides was enough for us to find a buddy, jump in and make the crossing. It was lots of fun navigating the slippery river rocks with a friend to help us stay upright. Thankfully, everyone made it across the rivers without any slips. A few more km of river crossings and we safely made it to our new campsite, wet boots and all.

A fire was quickly set up in a vain attempt to dry our boots. Despite the lack of dry sock success, huddling around the fire provided a great opportunity for cooking food and spreading embellished yarns. Not to mention the toasted marshmallows. As the night set in and the temperatures dropped, one by one we were all off to bed for another big day.

Not much else to say here: **Cold was a criminal understatement.** Boots? frozen. Our tents frozen. Socks? Frozen.

We set off to try get some warmth through movement. However, this time navigation is left on us.

I was impressed with how our group worked together, supporting everyone's suggestions for a navigable route. Before long, we made it to a bush section that would lead us to the ridgeline.

Approaching the bush, we split into two smaller groups. We would bush bash our way to the top. We each took turns lead-

ing, clearing underbrush and finding paths around the steepest section.

After a challenging 400m ascent, we made it to the ridgeline for a much-needed lunch and opportunity for dry socks. This spot provided a good final opportunity for rest and photos before making the final trek back along the ridgeline, and to the warmth of an air-conditioned car...

Through our teamwork we were able to push through the hard sections with a smile, which really elevated the whole experience. We had learnt a lot in terms of pure technical skills, and what we could push through, particularly regarding the cold. I'd like to thank our guides again, for providing such a positive experience for us. Until next time!



# SUNSET AND SUNRISE IN THE PINNACLES

By Ellie Fried



We met at Clocktower at 10 am and piled into the car. Unfortunately, we got a flat tire as we (fortunately) approached the car park. Thankfully, a couple travelers that were part of a large group very quickly changed the tire for us. We started walking shortly after 1 pm.

We followed the Kauaeranga Kauri Trail (Pinnacles Walk), which was not as wet as I had expected after a couple days of heavy rain. The trail had some large steps, steep sections, and lots of rocks.

We arrived at the Pinnacles Hut in under 3 hours (DOC's time). We listened to the hut warden's intro and sorted our hut bookings. Alex's booking didn't go through and Luke didn't have a booking, but the hut warden was very understanding and was able to work everything out. We chose our bunks, ate some late lunch/snacks, and got ready to head up to the Pinnacles for sunset.

It was a steep climb over slippery rocks to the top. The metal rungs built into the rock were very useful.

Freddy supplied us with delicious Whitaker's Hazella chocolate at the top. Back at the hut, we feasted on pesto pasta with crumbled feta, salami, prosciutto, and more cheese for dinner. After dinner, we played cards for a bit, then most of us happily went to bed at 9 pm and Luke stayed up to stargaze. There was lots of snoring in the hut at night.

We left the hut at 6:10 am to get to the top for sunrise at 7:10 am. It was windy and chilly at the top and very crowded.

Looking out toward eastern Coromandel and the Mercury Islands, there were clouds but the sun peeked through. Looking the opposite way, the sky turned beautiful shades of pink, purple, and orange.

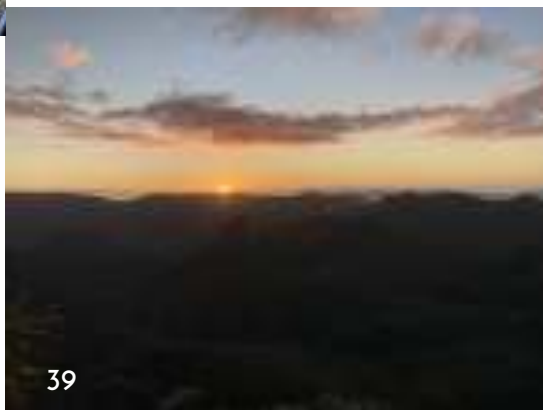
After returning to the hut, we packed up and ate some breakfast on the porch before heading out at 9 am. The way down was much more slippery and wet than the day before. We stopped for a water break at the waterfall crossing.

Suddenly, someone fell off the trail several meters above us. Luckily, the tree



branches broke his fall and a few people climbed up to help him down. That gave us all a fright.

We took the drive back to Auckland slowly with the tiny spare tire, and made it back to the Clocktower at 2 pm.



# Henry Croft

17-19 May

## Pirongia Mountain Loop

Wasting no time introducing ourselves to the mud



### Friday 17th May

It was a bit of a slow start to the trip, with us waiting for one member to finish their assignment. Unfortunately, they had too much to do, so they pulled out of the trip. The good news was this meant we'd all fit in one car, saving us money on fuel. The remaining 4 of us (we started the day with 6 coming!) finally arrived at Kaniwhaniwha Reserve Carpark around 9:30 pm. Flicking our head torches on red, we walked 35 minutes to Kaniwhaniwha campsite, where we promptly set up tents and fell asleep.

### Saturday 18th May

Because yesterday obviously went too smoothly, why not have another curveball today? After waking up at 7:00 am, unfortunately, a member felt too sick to continue. Miles (our amazing driver!) had to walk to his car and back, delaying our departure by about an hour. Once we got underway, it only took 800m until we hit the mud, or more like the mud hit us, and continued to for the next 3km.



The tallest native tree in the country, a 66.5m Kahikatea tree

## Shortly after leaving the mud, we reached the tallest native tree in the country.

It was amazing to think about what the bush used to look like with many more trees like this.



Miles taking the 'linear route'

We then continued over the swing bridge and began our first steep section of the day. However, it quickly flattened out, and we soon arrived at Central Clearing Campsite. Since it was only 11:15 am, we decided it was too early for lunch and headed off towards the hut. It was easygoing until about the 14 km mark, where it began to get muddy and then steep. One member chose the "Linear tramping" route through the mud while the other two went around. Initially, the linear approach was slightly faster. However, as the track began even steeper and muddier, bush bashing seemed the better option.

Eventually, after many slow climbs and descents, we made it to the cone at 945m. Here, there was actually a nice view back towards the campsite and onward to the hut. We followed the ridge down to the hut and passed through what can only be described as a swamp, more than knee-deep mud and up to 10m wide. We tried to use a fallen tree to cross it. This came with varying success. Once we got through, there was a boardwalk that just kept going and going for what felt like hundreds of meters. Unfortunately, once arriving at the hut, clouds had rolled in, and it was impossible to go further than 50m or so. We washed off, set up tents, made dinner and went to bed.

## Sunday 19th May

We woke up still inside a cloud, and after eating breakfast, there were no signs of visibility improving. So, we packed up and headed to the summit, and after climbing the observation tower, I'd love to say the view was amazing. Unfortunately, all we got was a lot of wind and this...



View from the summit at 09:03am

Having seen that the quality of the track was a lot better than the day before, we decided to send it down to the carpark. After about 10 minutes, we broke out into a slight clearing where we realised that the cloud had burnt off and there would've been sweet views at the summit.

But hey, gotta have some reason to go back. The rest of the way down was a steady descent with some muddy patches, but nothing like the day before. We passed quite a few people on their way up of all ages. It was just after 11:00 am when we made it back to the campsite we stayed at the first night and we were back at the car at 11:30 am.



View further along the ridge at 09:12am

# MOONLIGHT TONGARIRO CROSSING

25 May

Martin Lambrechtse-Reid

Our adventure for today was the Tongariro crossing in reverse (Ketetahi to Mangatepopo hut), just before the winter snow sets in. Leaving the trailhead at about 1am, we got stuck in. The weather was clear, calm and could almost be considered "warm" in the sense that you could still feel your fingers.

The first section of the crossing is a long uphill section of alpine tussock. We made the most of this opportunity to meet everyone in the group, spread a few yarns and smash through some snacks. Nevertheless, we made good progress and approached the Blue Lake well before sunrise.

The Central Crater greeted us with the iconic volcanic views and provided a well-deserved flat section to observe the Emerald Lakes from. The Red Crater was also visible from our angle, and highlighted the most challenging part of the Crossing; getting up the steep scree hill to the Red Crater lookout. Despite the challenging grade, ice crystals on the ground sparkled in the moonlight made the climb a touch more engaging...

Do any of these bother you about hiking? **Overcrowded trails? Seeing a super steep hill that's on your path? Getting stuck behind slow people? Do you struggle to get to sleep in your tent at night?** Well, let me introduce you to the newest hiking trend; doing it at midnight!



**ONCE WE TRIUMPHED THAT NOTORIOUS HILL AND THE GROUP RECONVENED, A NEW PLAN WAS FORMULATED.**

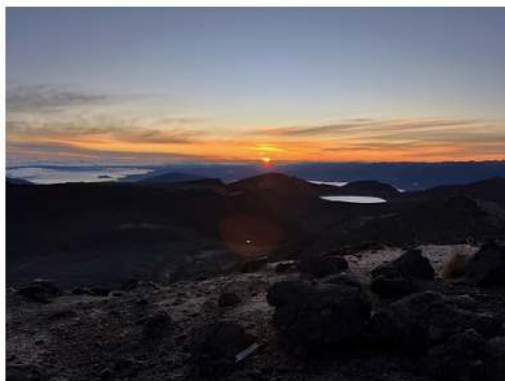


The high-altitude wind kept the conversation brief. For those that were interested, a small party would split off the main path and summit Tongariro, before meeting back at the hut. And so off we went, determined to outpace the sun.



The ridgeline was frosted over and rocky, but nothing we couldn't handle. While the sun hadn't breached the horizon, enough light was given off to aid in our navigation. It was difficult to not stop and admire the view while there were still hills to climb. Soon the final ridgeline was in sight, and we sheltered below the peak as we waited for the sun to reveal itself. A victory chocolate bar was in order.

With the sunrise, this was our queue to get moving (and warm again). From here onwards, there was no longer a defined route or natural feature to follow. So, we did the obvious thing and scree surfed down the side. The steep slopes gave way to a vegetative ridgeline which we followed down toward Mangatepopo valley. Before long we spotted the other group that was just completing the crossing. As we reached the hut we headed straight for bed for a well-earned sleep.



# Caving Rima

## Libby Lord, 31 May

Instead of enjoying the winter sun, 12 members of the AUTC travelled up to Waipu and headed underground to explore the caves. After a smooth trip up north, we were decked out in the necessary gear - overalls, gumboots, helmets, head torches and gloves. We split into 2 groups, one exploring the showcave and the other heading to mastercave. The showcave had a large entrance, and seemed to go on forever. There was an underground stream lined by rocky banks, a wall of glow worms and plenty of optional squeezes. Mastercave had a nondescript entrance hidden by a pile of rocks. A tight squeeze was required to enter the cave, which quickly became a large cavern. We waded through an underground stream, saw some beautiful stalactites and slid down muddy slopes. I squeezed back out of mastercave damp, muddy and with several new bruises but with a true sense of having escaped the world for a few hours. Returning back above ground, I was newly excited by the vivid colours, gentle breeze and fresh air. All of the cavers on the trip, beginner and experienced, had a great time and left buzzing about future adventures.



*'Twas the night of Winter Solstice, when all through  
National Park.  
Not a creature was stirring in the foreboding dark;  
All boots and packs hung outside huts with care,  
While six intrepid trampers climbed the Devil's Stairs;  
Other hikers were nestled all snug in their beds;  
While the Moonlight Crossers put helmets on heads;  
With courage and mettle, we gained the Summit  
Plateau,  
And escaped our busy lives to a world turning slow,  
When what to my wondering eyes did appear,  
But a possum in the bush with absolutely no fear,  
Alone in the night, we climbed up to Red Crater,  
We froze off our asses, but warmth would come later.  
The moon on the breast of the new-fallen snow,  
Gave a lustre of midday to objects below,  
We slid down to the lakes so lively and quick,  
But the sharp smell of sulphur made me feel fucking sick.  
Looking up we saw the lights of Rishi and Ben,  
As they quickly descended down to the glen.  
We kept marching on and up to Blue Lake,  
When the fog made its entrance, of course, for God's  
Sake!  
But before it wrapped around us, we were able to spy,  
The stars of Matariki, shining in the sky;  
So onwards we trudged, with spirits anew.*

**Emily Steiner**  
21 - 23 June



*With our packs full of food, and way too much goon.  
As we made it over to the side of Ketatahi,  
A pat on the back for our hard earned mahi,  
As I struggled on sidling North Crater around,  
Down the track Hayden came, each step with a bound.  
And with him came Ella, sharing cheesy bread,  
“Not long to go now!”, At least, that's what she said.  
On the horizon the sun, it started to shine,  
And I saw at least three 7k to go signs,  
We finally stepped into beginnings of brush,  
And the trees thickened quickly, and the ferns were so  
lush.  
As we neared the finale of this walk of great fame,  
And reached the carpark, first finished was James,  
But it wasn't over yet, with cars left at both ends.  
Until we were gifted a hitch by some new Danish  
friends.  
And the sun rose up swiftly, as we reached our safe keep,  
At Mangatepopo Hut, we could finally sleep.  
But we cried to each other, before rest was in sight—  
“Happy Solstice to all, and to all a good night!”*

# TONGARIRO MOONLIGHT CROSSING

Aidan Kozyaniak

23 June - 3 July



## *Land of giants, carved by glaciers*

Do you ever find yourself in a situation that forces you to ask yourself, how did I get here? Well, that's exactly the question I was asking myself as I stood half way up a snow slope in the Macaulay Valley. I was in the midst of a South Island trip that started as a mere 2-minute conversation at AURAC club night. Then 4 months, the odd passing mention and a fairly stagnant group chat later, I landed in Christchurch ready to explore. The crew consisted of William 'I'm Bored' Griffiths, Riley 'I have a Blister' Smith and Isaac 'The Kid' Hook. We all congregated in Will's Toyota Fielder in the pickup zone at Christchurch Airport. Armed with a basic plan, enough food to feed a family for a month and of course a great attitude, we made the executive decision to head straight for the hills. Planning to take on the Macaulay Valley the next day.

As we made our way through the driving rain and the windy roads on route to Lake Tekapo, we came to the sudden realisation that we

hadn't given much thought to our accommodation for the night. But thanks to some extensive research of the Topo50 map we located our saving grace. The most glorious hut in the entirety of these great islands, Irishman's Creek Roadman's Hut. Built in the early 1900's it had all the requirements of a good hut. Beds, a table and of course enough room on the floor for a couple sleeping mats.

The next morning, we arose in paradise surrounded by snowy landscapes, we were ready to explore the hills. However, despite his progress in his electrical engineering degree and the fact he took MM1 while still in High School, Will was unable to start the car. But after flagging down a kind local and an intense moment of embarrassment for dear William, the car started and we began our journey to Macaulay Hut. Once at the road end, 18km stood between us and our base for the next 4 days. Fitting as much equipment to our bodies as we could muster, we began the journey. Surrounded by a mountainous landscape that puts Mt Eden to shame, the kms seemed to fly by for most of us. Will however, despite the fact he spends every weekend tramping in the North Island, still managed to find a way to complain. Enduring this and a few ticks of the clock later we made it to Macaulay Hut and set up base.

The next three days were spent exploring the hills that surround the hut. Day one consisted of exploring the west of the hut. Absorbed by the beautiful surroundings we used our 'start of the trip' energy to make some swift progress into the back country. From ridges to scrambles, we got ourselves right into the swing of things. All donning new alpine boots the odd discussion of a bit of rubbing was dismissed as we continued to explore. The ice axes and crampons eventually came into play as we made our way towards our first peak, pt 1905. After arrival at the top, further appreciation of our surroundings and of course a few

photos, we began our decent. Upon arriving at the hut, the boots came off, the fired roared and the cards came out. However, our naïve dismissal of ‘rubbing’ came home to roost. As Riley’s boot had done a great job at chewing away at the skin of his heel. A pivotal moment.

The next two days consisted of more exploration. Reaching pt 2180 and Tindall Basin, in two great feets of deep snow plugging. Our exploration was revolutionised when we gave bum sliding a first attempt coming down from pt 2180. The third day saw us find a great slope surrounding the basin and spend an hour or so attempting the break the land speed record on our shovels. Creating what can only be described as New Zealand’s best alpine slide as we tested our pelvic strength sliding down the at times rocky surface.

After three great days in the mountains we arose the next morning, looking to get out of the valley before 4x4 clubs arrived to celebrate Matariki. Our blistered soldier Riley managed a ride out with a kind hunter, but for Will, Issac and I we had to brave another 18km. But again, in a place like that the kms flew by. Once back in the car we reunited with Riley and headed straight for Tekapo Springs Hot Pools to cleanse ourselves. Then feeling almost too clean we headed back to NZ’s best hut for another night in luxury. The group was rocked by scandal however, after the damning revelation that Isaac was 19. But after a bit of soul searching, some goon and the acceptance that age is just a number we still managed a ripper night. Eventually braving the smoke bellowing out of the hole in the wall called a fire to fall into a deep sleep.

The next morning, we headed to Mt Cook National Park for some sightseeing. Feeling very much like tourists we managed to see Tasman Glacier and Mt Cook dragging a demon battling Riley Smith with us everywhere we went.

After some Sir Edmund Hillary worship at the Hermitage and a Powerade for Riley we took on our next challenge, a multipitch amongst the alps. With a revived Riley and the AURAC Gear Officer Issac leading the way we rose our way up the historic climb. Gaining great views from the top that left us feeling very privileged. An extended repel down gave Will the great opportunity to watch some Instagram reels. This Generation... Once down feeling very accomplished we headed back to the Palace in Irishman’s creek and headed straight to bed. Braving a fireless night at -4 degrees to fall into a peaceful sleep. From there we headed back to Christchurch and turned our backs on Paradise as a storm rolled through. Much to everyone’s disappointment.

It’s been difficult to summarise such a great trip into a few paragraphs and if you manage to come across one of the members of the group there a lot more to tell. But three phrases sum it up pretty well for me. Great People, Great Places and Great Adventure. Round two is already in the works...



# THE ADVANCED BUSH SCHOOL

Martin Lambrechtse-Reid and Emi Lipoth  
27 - 30 June



The dense bush of the Kaimanawa Ranges provided the perfect opportunity to practise challenging navigation. Sometimes our route was well planned and democratically discussed, but other times it was settled over a game of paper-scissors-rock.

## **bush nav**

Our biggest challenge for day two was to split off into our subgroups and navigate our own path to a predetermined point on the map for camp. My group decided to take to the ridge-line before powering through the bush.

The bush was incredibly dense with short visibility, so we set a compass bearing and headed onwards. We chose to make tracks down a river gully rather than a spur, trading thick bush for a steeper slippery route.

Taking the gully certainly had its advantages, but it wasn't without challenges. At one point, we reached a dry waterfall section. James scouted the drop ahead, proclaiming it was "pretty dicey but I'll do it if you do."

"Straight up the guts" echoed through the valley as we fell descended off the drop. The other groups decided on similar routes but wisely stuck to the spurs instead of the steep gullies, especially as darkness descended on the valley. One group traversed a spur to the river flats before, to their absolute shock and horror, coming face to face with a seemingly insurmountable bluff separating them from the river (nicknamed 'The Wall'). After a

short scramble accompanied by a slew of profanities, they too joined up with the third group and headed to the campsite for the night.



## **campfires**

On the second night, we were tasked with starting a fire using a flint and steel. This proved to be quite a challenge, as most of the wood and shrub in the valley was soaking wet. After much struggle, we were shown a useful cheat, which involved cutting open a tampon and using its dry gutted insides to start some embers.

We also experimented with some more unorthodox methods of fire starting...

Eventually, we had a roaring fire which served as the perfect remedy for cold hands and roasting marshmallows.

## **bivvies**

Prior to our trip, we had an instructional evening on the basics of bivvy building and knot tying. We headed to the Auckland Domain and spent the evening playing shelter origami.

However, it quickly devolved into tree climbing and triple shoulder stacking...

Now overconfident in our skills, we were able to put our bivvy making skills into practice on the trip. We did our best to find flat, non-rooted and relatively warm spots to make our shelters. This proved to be good practice for what was to come...

The final night involved setting up camp in what was essentially the frost flats which, as the name suggests, are cold. So instead of making a few small shelters, we opted for a single bivvy. A mega bivvy if you will. This shelter was made up of all the tarps we had between us and just about fit our whole group – a grand total of eleven people. Though basic in nature, some creative thinking and questionable engineering resulted in a peaked roof in the middle and double seam sealed tarp edges. It was quite the luxury experience.

## **food**

While group discourse remained civil for most of the time, heated discussions flared up when it came to the topic of food. One group challenged themselves to consume only ready-made, heatless food, taking on the moniker 'Team Cold Soak'. While they theoretically saved time and weight, they also reported that mealtimes became bland and uninteresting and that they missed out on the communal aspect of camp dinners. One brave anonymous trumper chose a 1kg block of cheese to be his main source of calories over the four days... a decision he would later come to regret. We hope he will never underestimate the importance of fibre ever again.

## **conclusion**

I feel comfortable speaking for the group in that we all had a fantastic trip, chock full of top tier memories and stellar vibes. Thank you to our instructors Chris and Seán who delivered some outstanding teaching and helped us develop our backcountry leadership skills. We can't wait to put our new skills into practice!





## KOHUKOHUNUI TRACK

Jack Anderson  
29 June

Last weekend's Mt Pirongia trip was foiled due to Pāhautea hut being fully booked. So I searched for a plan B and settled on a mission on which I've been mulling for months - the highest point in the Auckland Region, Kohukohunui Peak in the Hunua Ranges, at 688 m! (It's technically Hauturu/Little Barrier at 722 m, but the council keeps this top secret). I recruited fellow civil engineer Anuraaj and sent the word out just before midnight on Thursday. Man, does the AUTC mailing list provide - within 24 hours, we had 14 signups!



The initial plan was to depart the clocktower at 8 am, drive up to the northern end of the Upper Mangatawhiri Dam and hike Ernie's Track to the summit. Fortunately, Aaron came in clutch and informed me that this section of the road was gated off. So, the revised plan was to start at the southern end and begin east, adding about two hours overall and increasing the trip to 22km. Fortunately, everyone but (surprisingly) the German guy was game for a 7 am start.

So we assembled at the clocktower at 7 am and hit the southern motorway. My car's conversation primarily consisted of Biden's winning debate performance and the inevitable rediscovery that far too many engineers are in the tramping club. After an hour, we reached Hunua Regional Park and descended to the reservoir, cloaked in gorgeous sunlit fog. We walked along the long gravel section (Lilburne Road) to Piggotts Campground, offering more views of the humongous reservoir (the second largest in Auckland at 16.5 million cubic metres).

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# AFTER SEVERAL GNARLY STAIRS, WE CONTINUED ALONG THE MANGATAWHIRI RIDGE TRACK TO THE FIRST DECENT LOOKOUT.

An island could be seen in the distance, which Miles suggested must have been Australia. The deep insights didn't stop there. I got to speak with Raphael from Brussels, who studies bird cognition - and Kayla from New Caledonia, who studies photography and took the two photos of above.

Eventually, we reached the Kohukohunui Trig Track and continued to the Peak at 688 metres. We climbed up the tower and were treated with views of the Coromandel Peninsula, the Firth of Thames, the islands of the Hauraki Gulf, and the Waitakere Ranges, which were covered in approaching rain clouds. On the way back, it started to pack in, but fortunately, everyone brought raincoats, and the forest canopy absorbed most of the rain. Most of us enjoyed seeing the Hunuas in their gloomy alter ego. We also managed to spot a Kākā high in a pine tree.



Just as the sun began to set and clouds developed a rosy hue, we returned to the reservoir and said our goodbyes. Fortunately, the trusty Aqua had no problems getting up the steep gravel section back to the main road. On the way back to the clocktower, Mimi, Hannah, Anuraaj and I stopped off at BP for a well-deserved Whittaker's bar and chai latte. Ngā mihi o Matariki, te tau hou Māori!



# Sno Skool

Lara Pyves  
30 June - 3 July

**Author's Disclaimer:** This recap of events may or may not include varying levels of embellishment, exaggeration and truth. As always, safety is the number one priority in the mountains.

Beginning 12 hours early, the first snow school of the season was off to a rough start. Thinking we'd all been organised and ahead of the game, we arrived at the National Park YHA in leisurely time. Keen to utilise the climbing wall, get to know each other and get to the pub, we lounged around waiting for Jayden to finish some phone call with senior instructors.

No sooner had he hung up, there was a shift in energy; something big was about to disrupt our evening. "We can either go up the mountain today and wait out the storm in the hut," Jayden told us, "or, cross our fingers we get some decent weather in the next few days... but we might have to call the whole thing off.." Offended that he'd even suggested we turn around and make the 5 hour journey back without experiencing any snow (on SNOW school) we eagerly agreed to scale the beast that evening.

Plans were made, and everyone sprung into action! Bags were hastily packed, gear was quickly assigned and everyone shoved on their buffs and gloves and hats. But wait, there were only 9 members of a 10 strong crew! Where was Hamish? Still stuck on Advanced Bush, 3 hours away! Reluctantly, we left him to fend for himself, and await his future escort from Jayden.

Up the mountain we climbed, and it wasn't long before we reached snow! (Whether it was real, or just from the snow machines shall remain undisclosed.) Before long, darkness fell and out came the head torches. Up and up we climbed, with poorly packed rucksacks, tired feet and a severe lack of knowledge. A few challenges, including a dizzy Libby and several tight 5's later, we decided that crampons would be best for the remainder of the journey.

'Learning on the job' would be an apt way to describe the entirety of our trip, and the first night was no exception. A hastily given lesson on crampon basics was well received and we were off again. Eventually we neared the hut, but not before we stopped to gaze at the beautifully clear milky-way; what a treat, Cecille's first ever experience of it!

We finally made it to Ruapehu Hut and into the warmth! The usual delayering, bagsy-ings of bunks, and cooking began, with poor Jayden heading straight back down the mountain to rescue Hamish from his low altitude sickness.

The morning brought absolutely no view (even though we'd more than earned it!) and very very slushy snow. An announcement that this was an 'inside day' chilled Lara to her core, and she promptly insisted on going outside even if it was just to stand on the ledge like a moron getting wet.



After plenty of theory, coinciding with a slight dropping of winds, Jayden decided enough was enough and we all realised that actually we were outside people and a little bit of sleet wasn't going to stop us! So ensued the 40 minute dressing routine: thermals, layers, thick socks, waterproofs, buff, another buff, hat, gloves, boots, helmet, goggles, crampons, phew!

Only to get outside, become extremely excited about the snow, learn a few walking techniques, huddle lots, and then decide perhaps the wind hadn't died down so much, and we weren't in fact penguins after all, and head back inside to reverse the whole process. Kitting up and kitting down took up the majority of the day!



Dinner was followed by fresh ice cream! Ask Jayden for his recipe. And an aerial croc wrestling tournament extravaganza. First up were Lara and Nicole, with Nicole (being the more experienced in the sport) taking an easy win. Libby vs Lance

followed with a successful win from Lance. Hamish versed Jayden next and due to an unfair height advantage, Hamish suffered a heavy loss. Next, came Lance vs Lachlan and, after an exciting and end to end match, a draw was declared. Everyone wanted to challenge Jayden to see if he was really as difficult to beat as Hamish had made out. He was! Though Lance and Lachlan both took a sole victory over Jayden, the overall victor was unquestionable. A very successful evening.

Officially day 2, Tuesday was met with similar white out conditions, as well as a drop in temperature. With an improving afternoon weather forecast, the morning was spent indoors learning more avalanche theory. After replenishing our stomachs, we headed outside into what was basically a blizzard.. (not quite but it was heavily snowing!) Lara was freezing for the rest of the day but fortunately her toes didn't drop off! Phew! A venture down the slope took us to practising some more skills including how to climb up and down steep slopes as well as our digging technique. The evening was lots of fun again, this time with the challenge of firstly attempting to beat the jigsaw record of 1 hour (we came very close but had some interference from the ice cream man!) and secondly to navigate the table traverse and bunk flip. Hamish, Nicole and Lara gave a good go but all were beaten by the mighty table. Next time!



fallen over the past few days and weeks, which Donald was very interested in.

We learned how to do a basic snowpack test too, before huddling up under the emergency shelter just for fun.

We headed down the mountain late in the afternoon in high spirits, Nicole taking point on nav, showing us how she chose her route based on map and live conditions. You never stop

Our last day was looking by far the nicest weather-wise, so we rose early to see the sunrise (much to Lance's excitement) and the rest of the mountain we'd been standing on.

Libby even glimpsed a pointy cloud (otherwise known as Mt Taranaki!) As had been the case for the rest of the trip, our day started with a steep learning curve of daggering down the self-arrest slope to an area more sheltered from the wind. We all felt like true mountaineers by now and not one of us chose the safe option of a belay assist!

Safely down the slope, the fun part began; everything was better in the sun! We learnt edging and ledging, how to cut steps, slip, trip and fall techniques, self arresting, and there were even two avalanche's! (scenarios).

Though we'd covered all of the steps on avalanche rescues heavily up in the hut, the surprise and pressure meant we were off to a bad start. It was all a bit of a panic really, and our debrief on what went right (not much) and what went wrong (quite a lot) lasted just about as long as our slow paced rescue. Determined not to repeat the mistakes again, our second surprise scenario went much better. Still a few things to work on though.

Just before wrapping up for the day, we got a demo of the different layers of snow that had

learning!

A well deserved meal in National Park had us fondly recalling our favourite times from the last few days, before the late night drive home. That trip was, as Toby would say, Legendary!

Based on a true story.



# BEGINNER SNOW SCHOOL 2

Nearing the start of the season, Snow School Group Two (Thomas, Blake, Elliot, Henry, Kat, Katelyn, Mia, and Tony) was lucky enough to embark on a fun and exciting adventure learning different mountaineering techniques taught by our wonderful instructors, Brendan and Trisha. Our trip began at the University of Auckland clocktower, where we all met each other for the first time. Nervous but excited, we began to talk about the only thing we knew we had in common, our love for climbing and tramping. From there we set off in our cars (shoutout to Brendan's Honda Civic) to Mount Ruapehu.

After waking up bright and early at the backpackers lodge, we drove up to the whakapapa ski resort where we were greet-

ed with tons of snow and a scorcher of a day. Very quickly, we stopped to delayer as we were all sweating buckets and had completely overestimated how cold it was going to be. On the way up the mountain, Brendan and Trisha began to teach us all of the basics from how to hold your ice axe to walking up slopes safely with crampons. Having got the basics down we headed to the Ruapehu Hut located 2040m high. Nearing the end of the day, we settled in for dinner and shenanigans, including the prusik climb, puzzle, table traverse, and, of course, sock wrestling.



The next day, we woke up bright and early and stepped outside the hut to see the sunrise, where we saw some of the most amazing views. We began our day by putting together a weather report accompanied by some more avalanche theory. From our weather report, we decided to wait for the horrendous wind that had picked up that day to settle down and set out in the afternoon for some self-arrest practice and more terrain climbing techniques. After a lot of sliding, we headed back to the hut where we

learnt some more theory and made dinner. The night didn't go without its fair share of mischief as we once again whipped out the prusik climb again and ate some authentic ice cream straight from the mountain, which Brendan had so kindly made for us. Later that night, we set out again to go stargazing in the cold before going to bed, and I have to tell you, *you HAD to be there to see how beautiful it was.*

On our last day, we woke up super early to make the most of the day. We were all so excited to see that our instructors were squeezing whatever time we had left to teach us as much as possible. The day was filled with all kinds of activities, but the one that stuck out the most was the avalanche rescue simulation. We were completely taken off guard when Brendan called out, “avalanche!” We managed to regain our composure to find the buried transceiver and finish the simulation with what I’d like to think is a pretty decent time for our first rescue.



It is safe to say that once we were all down from the mountain, we were spent.

Over the past three days on the mountain, we had worked so hard to make the most of the opportunity given to us by our awesome instructors. Thank you so much, Trisha and Brendan, for giving up your time to introduce us to the wonderful world of mountaineering. You'll definitely see us back on the mountain at some point soon with our newfound mountaineering skills!



## THE AUTC PLANT TOUR SERIES

**Toby Elliott**

Upon arriving at the bush, the days are usually spent smelling and eating native plants (the bland hangehange and the peppery kawakawa), knocking on nīkautrees (they make a very satisfying sound), and hunting for kererū (don't worry we don't eat them). Our missions have been to many places, ranging from the Wenderholm, Maraetai, and Shakespear coastal forests to the awesome kauri forests in the Cascades regional park, with towering kauri and rare plants.

We have experienced all four seasons, from cold mornings in Totara Park, to hot summer days that usually ended in ice cream and swims, to a memorable day in the Cascades where it rained non-stop (*although it didn't deter us from our mission to find and eat plants*). Our plant tours have usually ended in legendary picnic feasts, fun (and competitive) outdoor games and real fruit ice cream!

Thank you to everyone who has come to the tours and to those who helped make them so much fun! We are running a few more this year so keep your eye out for the emails!

Over the past year, we have been conducting many missions to Auckland's forests with one goal in mind, which is to hunt legendary native plants. These tours usually began with reasonably early starts at the clock tower, followed by a convoy-style car trip to the local bakery for pies and treats. These bakery trips have been largely successful, although google maps has sometimes led us astray to non-existent bakeries!

*Here are some highlights from each tour.*

### **I. The Hunua ranges (23/7/23)**

This was our first (and longest) trip out to the bush, where we did the Massey-Cossey loop track in the Hunuas. It was a great time and the real fruit ice cream at the end was well deserved after a 5 hour tramp.

### **II. Omana Regional Park - Round 1 (17/9/23)**

Our first AUTC plant tour! The weather was great for this one, we spent the day looking at coastal plants, spiders, broken eggs, and awesome views! The ice creams at the local dairy at the end were a good treat!





### III – Wenderholm Regional Park (1/10/23)

Our largest plant tour yet! We went up north (stopping for food in Ōrewa for pies), and climbed some hills in the stunning Wenderholm regional park. We saw nīkau (the knock-knock tree), heaps of flowering kōwhai, and really nice views of the water. We ended up this tour with frisbee (which has become a plant tour tradition), and swims in the water.

### IV – Shakespear Regional Park (19/11/23)

Our first of the “rainy day” tours, and the last of 2023, this one was a bit smaller in terms of people, but was nonetheless very fun. We headed up to Shakespear on a rainy Sunday (with the usual stops), chucked on the rain-coats, and went plant hunting. Halfway through the trip, the weather cleared up and it ended up being a legendary sunny day. We saw rare plants and birds (tīeke, pōpokatea and korimako), and fed some of the local sheep. We stopped off at Scrunchy millers, a new ice cream shop in Takapuna on the way home for a well-deserved treat. Despite the rainy start, it was a great trip up north!

### V – Cascade Kauri regional park (25/2/24)

This one was our other ‘rainy’ trip, but unlike Shakespear, it did not give us a break. Instead, it rained the whole day and we got absolutely soaked! Despite the weather, we managed to have a fun day out, where we crossed bridges on the newly opened tracks, ate lots of supple-jack, and marveled at huge kauri and rimu trees.

### VI – Omana Regional park – Round 2 (31/3/24).

This trip (luckily) the good weather returned, and we had a great day in the sun looking at some cool plants. Afterwards, we had a nice shared lunch by the beach, with ice creams, breads, chips, and mince savouries. We ended the trip with a competitive game of frisbee, during which the frisbee got stuck in a Pōhutukawa tree, and we used various objects, including sticks and other discs, to get it out.

### VII – Point View Reserve (18/5/24)

In this trip, we split our plant tour team into two for the first time and went round in a loop to look at the plants! We continued our tradition of a shared lunch and frisbee on top a hill with some great views of the city.

### VIII – Cascades Regional Park (Round 2) (22/6/24)

This was our second trip out to the cascades, and unlike our last trip, it did not rain (until the very end). We split off into three groups, where some of us went along the river, while others went up the hill to see the huge (well over 1 metre in diameter – worth visiting if you have the chance – kauri). We also saw the Werewere Kōkako – which was a highlight! We finished off the day with a new addition to our post plant tour games – cubb, a highly competitive game where you try to knock over sticks! It was a great trip, with excellent plant photos and nice food!



# NOT PIRONGIA WITHOUT MUD

Jack Anderson  
27 - 28 July

In June 2022, I was cooped up in my bedroom, trying not to catch COVID from my family and out of significant cabin fever spawned the idea to climb Mount Pirongia. Two years and one month later, on the weekend of 27th-28th July, it finally happened. Outside the Clock Tower I assemble with five Americans, a Fin, a programmer, a pilot, a nurse, a film archivist, an infrastructure analyst and a German sea sponge cancer researcher. Oh and another civil engineer!

We hopped on the southern motorway. As the Tron is a major cultural gem of the North Island, a stop was made there to allow international students to appreciate the sights, chiefly PaknSave. We procured miscellaneous ingredients for Mediterranean bowls.

After arriving at Grey Road at 11 am, we started hiking up Tirohanga Track. Marc was deep in the world of his audiobook - Harry Potter and the Order of the Phoenix, and we requested a book update, which he supplied in the form of a three-word summary. This became an ongoing and entertaining feature of the trip discussion!



After Stopping For Lunch At The Trig Station, We Continued To The First Of Many Rock Scrambling/ Chain Sections, Easily My Favourite Part Of The Hike.

Mt Pirongia, the highest point in the Waikato at 959 metres, is an extinct stratovolcano - meaning the region has some remarkable volcanic rock formations.

We climbed the observation tower as sunset arrived, filling the sky with gorgeous pastels. An hour later we arrived at Pahautea Hut - the last stretch illuminated by headlamps. Dinner preparations began on our bizarre Mediterranean bowl smorgasbord, with an array of fresh vegetables, falafel, peppers stuffed with cream cheese, feta, olives and copious amounts of brown rice. For dessert was a classic - PaknSave chocolate mud cake, shared with some other hikers. The night sky was incredible; with virtually zero light pollution we saw several shooting stars and pointed out some southern Hemisphere constellations to those new to Aotearoa.

At 8:30 am, we departed Pahautea Hut and headed along Makaukura Track. After passing through a swampy patch, not managing to avoid the notorious Pirongia mud, we descended back into rainforest. Discussion focussed around life goals (Brody's include opening a psychedelic therapy centre in Mexico, so stay tuned for that), and the relationship between language and thinking - with Anna recommending 'The Island of the Colorblind' by Oliver Sacks.

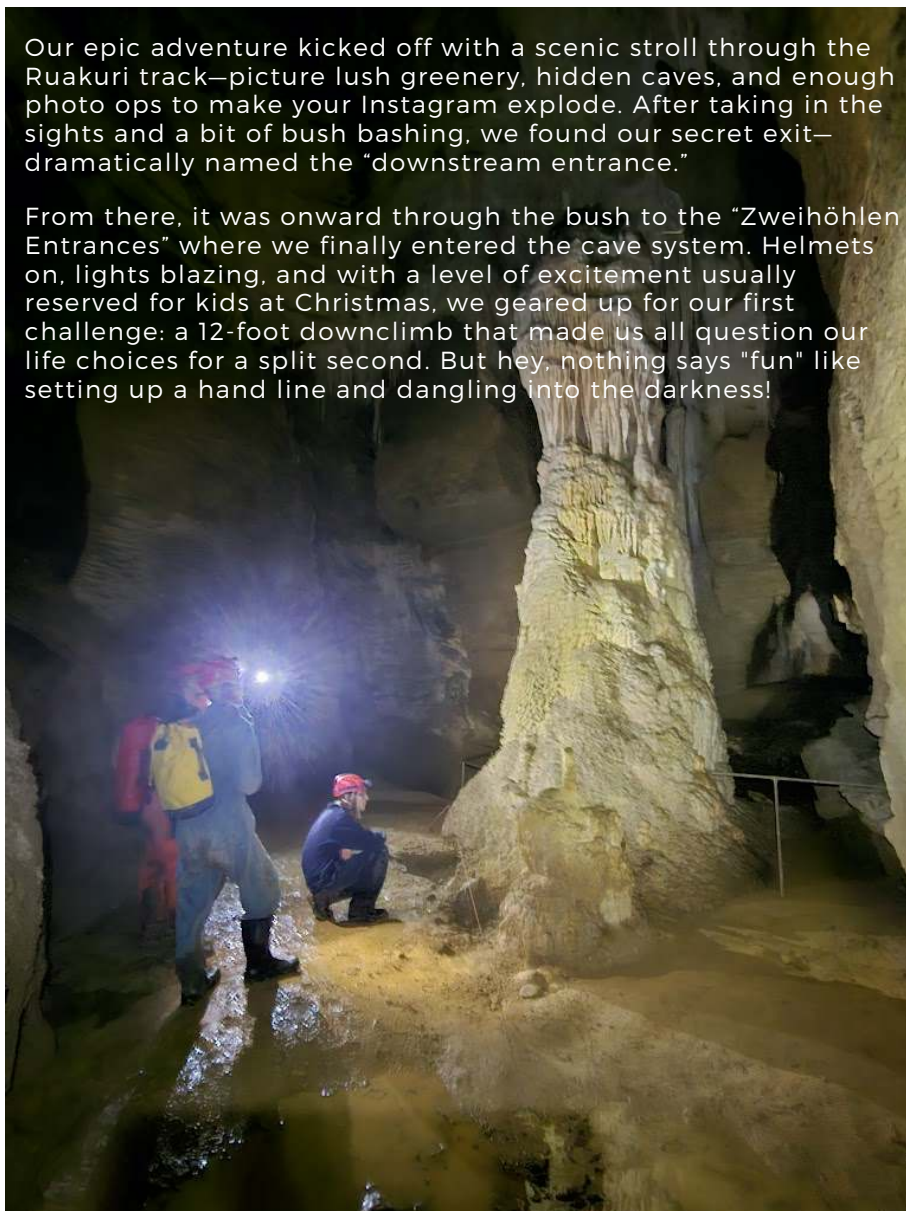
Back at Grey's Road, we said our good-byes and hit the road. On the way back into town, we made a donut/ coffee stop then listened to Harvest Moon covered by a band from Reagan's hometown in Michigan. Three word summary of the trip: worth waiting for!!!!



# GARDNERS GUT CHRONICLE

Our epic adventure kicked off with a scenic stroll through the Ruakuri track—picture lush greenery, hidden caves, and enough photo ops to make your Instagram explode. After taking in the sights and a bit of bush bashing, we found our secret exit—dramatically named the “downstream entrance.”

From there, it was onward through the bush to the “Zweihöhlen Entrances” where we finally entered the cave system. Helmets on, lights blazing, and with a level of excitement usually reserved for kids at Christmas, we geared up for our first challenge: a 12-foot downclimb that made us all question our life choices for a split second. But hey, nothing says “fun” like setting up a hand line and dangling into the darkness!



WRITTEN ANTHONY BROATCH  
27 JULY

Next, we had a bit of a "warm-up squeeze"—because, apparently, the cave wanted to test our mental fortitude early on. But we pushed through and were rewarded with “the finger” stalagmite. Then came the grand prize: the colossal “birthday candle” stalagmite, which was so big it could probably host a party for all the other stalagmites. Seriously, this thing was huge—by far the biggest I’ve ever seen.

Our next challenge was setting up a ladder (and adding a belay for good measure) to climb down into the streamway. Once we were all safely down, we continued upstream, where Colin—our resident climbing monkey—scaled a 35-foot wall to set up another ladder for the rest of us. This led us up to the Lambert levels, which felt like reaching the secret level of a video game.

And then came the real fun: we stripped down to enter the “helictite grotto,” a first for me. Everything was new and exciting, probably because this was only my second proper caving trip, so I was basically like a kid in a candy store. After crawling back out of the grotto (with everyone’s dignity mostly intact), we stumbled upon the “organ grinder” (spoiler: no one got ground up). Colin and Chris expertly guided everyone through, ensuring that we all made it out in one piece.

Finally, we set up the ladder again, climbed back down to the streamway with Colin’s belay assist, and headed downstream through the carved tunnels to our exit. And just like that—success! Another epic adventure in the books.

A massive thank you to Colin for organising everything, and also to Chris and Blake for their caving guide skills.



## TONGARIRO VIA HARDMAN'S RIDGE

*After completing the moonlight crossing, I realised I liked sleeping too much to do it again. Inspired by an NZAC member I met during the crossing, I devised a plan to summit Tongariro via Hardman's Ridge and maybe knock off Ngauruhoe if we were up to it.*

### PROS

- No car ferrying shenanigans
- The light of day
- Less tramping (ew!)

### CONS

- Doesn't sound as cool
- Less sign ups
- Less time to bore people with geology

We arrived at Tongariro to a full car park. Slightly concerned and propelled by an oncoming car, we boosted our way to the Mangatepopo hut. After backtracking to recover a dropped crampon we arrived at Mangatepopo to the sight of a person sleeping on the deck. My heart definitely sank a little. Fortunately, there were enough beds inside for us. However, the same cannot be said for the group behind us.

We were simultaneously the first to rise on Saturday and one of the last to leave due to an abhorrent amount of alpine gear faff, but eventually, we were up

Hardman's Ridge. This was the first point in which my mouth had the misfortune of tasting the snack known as "Squid Jerky". Ben had mentioned that he purchased a bag from Costco the day earlier however I didn't think much of it. Now the crisp Tongariro air was replaced with the smell of fish, a pretty bad tradeoff if you ask me. Anyways we made it up through some sizable snowdrifts and up Tongariro.



**WHILE WALKING DOWN THE ICY SOUTH CRATER WE PASSED SEVERAL GROUPS OF TOURISTS IN SNEAKERS WITH ONE EVEN WEARING JEANS.**

I guess the news stories are true. At this point Ben had finished the entire 350g bag of squid jerky, and let's just say that squid had intentions of getting back to the sea ASAP.

After returning to the hut, we realised how boring we were after talking to a group who were in the process of climbing the four largest North Islands volcanics, skiing down them and bikepacking between them (yes, they had to bike to New Plymouth!).



There were debates on Sunday if a Ruapehu summit really counts if you catch the gondola and the jury verdict was that any gondola assisted summit would count as cheating. While we probably wouldn't make it to the summit due to time constraints, we decided to see how far we could make it. Delta Ridge was rocky af, which actually made for a fun mixed rock and ice ascent towards the NZAC hut. We continued up from the hut another 250m or so, punching through the inversion layering and being rewarded with a bluebird day. At the turnaround point, I checked on my map, and we were ~20m higher than the Far West T-Bar, which is the highest I had been on Ruapehu prior to the trip. I'll call that a success of some kind.



# *Beginner* SNOW SCHOOL 3

18 - 21 August



With ten eager people and the gear for all packed into two overflowing cars, Beginner Snow School 3 had officially begun.

It was off to a rough start when Shannon realised that she had left her rain jacket at home, and we went to fetch it on the way down, but from then on it was (mostly) smooth sailing as we made our way down to National Park. Stopping at a fluorescent service station just north of the Bombay Hills, we properly met everyone else over dinner and got the feeling that things were about to kick off.

It was still three and a half hours to National Park, and as we drove through the foggy night we chatted about studies, tramping, climbing, the weekend ahead – the usual pre-trip car ride conversations. A sense of excitement ensued as the pearly white slopes of the Central North Island volcanoes came into view, shining beneath a full moon and a cloudless sky.



After Elise's blue Hyundai arrived a full half-hour later than Jake's (partner's parents') white Toyota Rav, due no less in part to missing two exits and having to do a U-turn before we went on the road to Taupō, we sleepily clambered out of our cars, extracted our gear from the boot, and shuffled into the warm (perhaps a little too much) National Park YHA.



Waking up to the silhouette of Ngauruhoe against a backdrop of golden skies and dark clouds, we had our breakfast, distributed gear, packed our bags, and set off for Whakapapa. After a briefing at Whakapapa, spirits were high as we geared up (quickly realising how difficult it is to put crampons on with ski gloves) and set off into the long-awaited snowy landscape.

As we gazed up, we noticed the slopes were much barer than expected, with only a light dusting of snow clinging to the higher reaches. A pang of disappointment hit us; we had been looking forward to navigating through snow and ice. But mountaineering, like life, often throws curveballs, and this was just another challenge to embrace. Determined not to let this minor setback dampen our spirits, we decided to press on. We unpacked our gear and strapped on our crampons, the metal spikes clinking with a reassuring sound.

Navigating towards the hut, everyone showed a dogged determination to pick up the newly learnt snow skills. As we stood on the final slope behind the hut, we looked at each other with a strong sense of pride and camaraderie.

The huts drying room was met with pure ecstasy, and after refuelling we set out for the afternoon. Descending the familiar slope wasn't as easy as expected, and humbly reminded us of the changeable nature of the mountains. Self-arresting was definitely a fan favourite, but as the sun sank low, tiredness from the day began to arrive and so we made our way back to the warm abode.

The evening brought about much merriment despite a long day of snow-filled fun. The night was filled with weather forecasting and theory, a glorious (sweaty) battle on the multi-pitch traverse, and immaculate banter as we devoured bowls of curry.

Ready for a full day of avalanche rescue and self arrest we were all eager for an early start. Throughout Saturday's activities, each person experienced many different challenges from learning the importance of tight crampons and a well assembled avalanche shovel to mustering confidence during the day's worsening weather conditions.

With penguin huddling, a precarious ice axe wielding snowman, and the support of our group and amazing instructors we all returned safely after an epic day. After dinner and a fun, salty science experiment, we reflected on our weekend so far. The hut was warm with both a feeling of personal achievement and the spicy aroma of mulled wine.

As we geared up and opened the hut door on Sunday morning, we were ecstatic to find the sunrise lighting up a beautiful, clear sky. After a sick day of snow science, self-arresting, and ice axe skills, we returned for the final time to the hut. Packing up quickly after lunch, navigation down to the cars was our final task. Employing all the skills we had learnt, our group cheered with triumph as the sight of brightly-attired skiers at Whakapapa carpark slowly appeared.

Cramming into our cars, Ruapehu slowly drifted into the distance as we made our way towards the long-awaited hot pools and kebabs. Giving our "highs, lows, and lessons learned" for the final time, the shared sentiment, personal growth, and fulfilment from our weekend together was a recurring theme. On behalf of our entire group - a massive ngā mihi nui ki a koe to our awesome instructors, and to all those involved, for your passion and hardwork in helping make BSS #3 the fantastic experience that it was!



# TRAMPING WITH PUBLIC TRANSPORT

The old timers always reminisce about how they could get out tramping without a car. We took this as a challenge to do just that!

The train then a bus got us to Titirangi where we had a very tasty pie for lunch. Rumour has it the bakery even makes its own butter!

After consuming the pies and gathering the troops (half the amount of people who'd signed up due to the poor forecast) it didn't take long for us to find some bush, there was a wide gravelled track running through it. Naturally we followed the track. It wound its way up the hill. We paused regularly to take in the views across the harbour and some of the drinking water dams.

Near the top of the hill, we found a conveniently placed, if a bit overpriced, icecream shop by the Arataki Visitor Centre. We could not resist the icecream, even as it started to rain a little.



We continued our pleasant wondering back towards Titirangi. Some friendly Kereru graced us with their presence along the way. Although they weren't as friendly as the Piwakawaka that photo bombed our group photo. Our happy chatting continued all the way back to Titirangi, where good old public transport picked us up for the homeward journey.

Even though it was just an afternoon of walking, I deem that as successful public transport tramp!

Next challenge is to do an overnighter on public transport... this may be harder.





# MT TE AROHA

## Fair Weather Hiking

31 August

Miles Nicholson



On a sunny afternoon in the mid-semester break I decided that with this nice weather it might be time to stretch the legs and get up a mountain. I checked the weather for Saturday and it was looking on. So I sent out the email and did up the intentions form, however the forecast started to worsen...

On Saturday we assembled at the clocktower ready for a long day ahead hopeful that we would miss the rain. We drove an hour and a half down to te aroha domain. We started the mission up the mountain and quickly made the 45 minute stroll to the Whakapipi lookout where we admired the view over the township. We then set-off for an hour-long



climb through some pretty heinous rain with spots of thunder. Just when we thought it was about to get worse we saw a glimpse of a service road leading to the summit. The forest then opened up into a massive cell-tower that pierced into clouds. We decided to have lunch under the shelter as we waited for at least some of the clouds to clear up.

Luckily the clouds cleared up briefly so we could get a peek at the views I advertised in the sign-up. After we finished lunch we made the long and arduous journey back down to the domain. We wound up at the bottom of the mountain proud of our perseverance through tough times and decided it was time for a hot drink at the local cafe. After that we headed back to Auckland for a hot shower and some well needed sleep.



## TANGIHUA BOOK HUNT

7-8 September  
By Lucy Douglas

We're going on a book hunt and we're not scared!

Five of us stood at the clocktower at 7am on the Saturday morning mentally preparing for the trails we'd face over the weekend. We were heading back to Tangihua Hut, the last known location of a dreamed about book. We could not remember what the book was called and despite hours of googling we couldn't work it out. We even had a picture of Andrew reading the book, but it didn't show the cover! So our only choice was to go back, more than a year later and see if the book was still there.

By 7.30 we decided two of our group had been scared off by tales of what we may face. Failing to make contact with our

missing members, we tried to decide if all five of us could fit in Andrew's car. Just as we were putting stuff in I received a phone call. One of our missing party members was coming!

That meant six, so a second car was in order. Leaving Billy on the lookout for our late arrival the rest of us headed off to pick up my car. Almost to

Grafton Gully and our other missing member called! They were also now on the way, and had a car. It made for a pleasant-ish trip around the block to return to a confused Billy.





Eventually the late arrivals showed up and we left an hour behind plan, but we were on our way to find the book!

The track was much as we remembered. Scrambly, steep and poorly maintained. One member of the party asked 'how could it get worse than this?' when we were still heading towards the junction where the track really deteriorates. They soon found out.

*'Catching shit' became the phrase of the day as more obstacles that stood between us and the book were overcome. Spirits remained high. 'I guess the real obstacles were the friends we made along the way' (thanks for the versatile quote structure Billy).*

Sooner than expected we arrived at the hut. Busting to go to the toilet I headed that way to find it infested with Wētā. Clickety clacking they made their way away from the light I was letting in. Seems no one had been there for quite some time. The hut book agreed to this with no entries since July!

Heading back from my side quest Andrew had already been into the hut and found that the book was still there!!!!!! Whoop! More than a year later! We rapidly took some pictures of the cover this time. Then we had a read and some great yarns.

## Quest complete...

Oh not quite, now we need to track down a version of it so we can read the rest (of course the original has been left at the hut for the next person to find).

And yea, I almost forgot. We had to walk out the same way the next day. We all survived, yada ya, who cares, we found the book!!!!!!





## te whare okiki

On the 27th of September, we set out from the Clock tower for a wee Kaimais overnighter.

We drove down to Matamata, and after a quick stop for lunch, headed to the Te Tuhi track trailhead. The beginning of the track went through poorly marked farmland. After getting lost twice, we eventually spotted orange triangles leading into the bush and dodged and ducked our way through the gauntlet of electrical fencing (except when I didn't duck enough and was electrocuted) and curious cows to the edge of the bush.

The bush track consists of a sharp ascent through podocarp forest (new word courtesy of Rebecca and her botany knowledge) before evening out and meeting the North-South track: a track that goes from the top to the bottom of the Kaimai range. We began heading south on the North-South track and noticed an immediate difference in track quality. The Te Tuhi track is a dry, easy track (and recently trimmed thanks to

some lovely AUTC volunteers) with only a few diversions due to windfall. The North-South was much muddier and required a bit of clambering over tree branches and through eroded clay sections. After nearly losing a boot to the mud and crossing some low streams, we made it to our destination for the night: Te Whare Okioki!

We spent the afternoon playing card games and eating snacks on the deck. Once it started getting cold (with the forecast predicting negative temperatures), we headed inside and got a fire going. We toasted marshmallows on the fire before dinner (chickpea curry and couscous). After a cosy evening, we headed to bed pretty early and got a good night's sleep.

Overall, the trip was great for beginner/intermediate hikers looking to go somewhere slightly less busy than Pinnacles or Waitawheta.

# AROUND MT TARANAKI

By Ella Kramer  
4 - 6 October

## Day 1

We all met at the clocktower to depart for our lovely 5 hour drive down to Mt. Taranaki. After a pit-stop at Macca's, we rolled into our campsite just after dark. While we couldn't SEE the mountain, the mountain shaped gap in the blanket of stars left our imagination running wild!

We set up camp in a field/glorified parking lot (we think it was our campsite...?), made dinner, and huddled into our tents for a chilly night.

## Day 2 (13km)

Woken up by the rooster's screech at 6am, we rolled out of our sleeping bags. The beautiful mountain sunrise promised in the trip proposal email was noticeably missing. "We don't talk about it" - Ashwyn. We did however get to say hello to the various dogs, goats, sheep, and baby cows whose home we shared for the night.

We drove ~15 minutes to the Egmont National Park Visitor Centre. It started raining the SECOND we hopped out of the cars. It started pouring rain just as Justin clapped and said "let's get going!" After walking to the trailhead we got started on a muddy, slippery, and steep trek up to our destination of Holly Hut.



After trekking up hundreds of stairs, we finally reached the ridgeline and the summit of Henry Peak (1224m). We were greeted with stunning views... if we closed our eyes and pretended. The rain and wind was whipping around us and our tired raincoats were beginning to fail. Our clothes were soaked through which washed off the mud, since only Simon was prepared enough to bring gaiters.

We passed the Poukai Mirror Reflection pool, which was a spitting image of the thick layer of clouds fully surrounding us. Only Ashwyn ventured on the short loop path around the lake. With wind speeds rising and dampened spirits (and gear), we made a final push to the Poukai Hut where we would stop for lunch. This hut was marked online as unbookable and closed for repairs so we were just hoping it would be unlocked at this point. Arriving @ 1pm, luck was on our side! Entering the hut, we all immediately stripped off our sodden layers and hung them to "dry".

Out of the ripping wind and rain, I assessed our group. Of worrying note, Joshua was quite pale, legs shaking, shivering like crazy, and having trouble walking or speaking. Nick and Ashwyn had been helping him out in the back for the past kilometre or so. Hypothermia

had struck! Moving fast, we switched out his wet layers for a collection of our dry ones. Propped him in the bunks in his sleeping bag with a hot water bottle and I did regular medical assessments.

As Joshua slowly began to unfreeze, I reassessed whether we would be able to continue and make it to Holly Hut. We were all freezing. With 2-3 hours of hiking between us and our planned way-point, I announced that “the decision will be made at 3”. A phrase that was tirelessly mocked the whole weekend.

Reality hit us around 2pm. We were forced to shelter at the Pouakai Hut. Luckily, we had it completely to ourselves (because it was closed lol). With plenty of bunks for everyone, no one had to pitch a tent (definitely not happening after we saw lightning), or sleep on the



floor. Jake seemingly did not get this message as he set up his sleeping bag square on the floor in a potentially mildly hypothermic daze.

Andrew and Nick worked tirelessly to try and start a fire. With Andrew whittling wet sticks into potential kindling, Nick attempting to set his gas canister on fire, Rosie asking “hand sanitizer is flammable right...?” Unfortunately, despite their valiant efforts, the lack of any dry wood (other than the tempting broom handle...) was an unfixable problem.

Most of us packed into sleeping bags and eventually emerged to make dinner. Meals ranged from my pasta in a ziplock bag (no dishes!) to Ashwyn’s homemade dehydrated backpacking dinner, which looked much more appetising. Following dinner, the cards were brought out. Rounds of President and Algae (a-hole or scum were too mean Lara said), and B.S ensued. After an evening of laughter and shivering, we checked the weather forecast and decided to leave bright and early at 7am to delay the rain as much as possible. As Justin, Louise, and Belinda rightly noted, saying we would leave at 7 really meant leaving at 7:30.

### **Day 3 (12km)**

As predicted, we left around 7:30am and the first 2 hours of our hike were surprisingly rain free! Sammie and I split up Joshua’s backpack, so we could get back to the cars as fast as possible! We stopped at a river near Holly Hut for a rest and water, taking turns with my LifeStraw.

We continued along the circuit, passing through perilous rock fall zones, slippery river crossings, and never ending staircases. It started raining again, but with

the mirage of the parking lot strong in our minds, we powered through.

Some of our group much preferred the downhill style of the last portion of our trek. Those of us with bum knees felt differently.

FINALLY, after pushing a relentless pace, we stumbled into the visitor centre just after noon. At last! We peeled off our soaking layers of clothing and changed into our dry ones. There also seemed to be some multi-level marketing scheme going on, cuz at least 4 people bought trekking poles?? At the end of our hike?? After like an hour processing in the visitor centre lobby, we packed into our warm, dry cars, and headed back towards Auckland. "I had a time with Ella this weekend" – Sammie. All of the cool people got kebabs on the way back.



Caving at

# WAIPU SHOW CAVE

Teresa Davenport 12 Oct

We left at the crack of dawn, 7:30am. We arrived all surprisingly on time and left off.

On the drive we chatted shit.

When we got there we suited up in our overalls, got our gumboots on, head torches on, majored fuffed around then we were ready to enter the cave (Showcave).

We took our clean picture then we entered the caves. It was suddenly dark and we put our head torches.

We walked in aw about the stalagmites and the underwater stream and I was in bliss as we walked in.

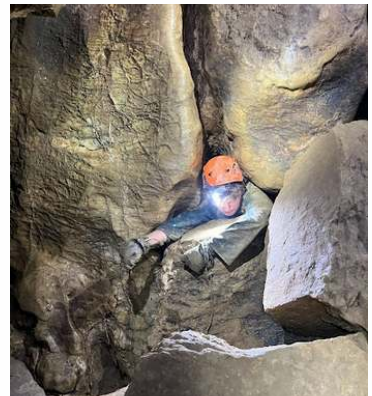
We went down looks of holes and squeezed through lots of cracks. I was very very sore by the end.

## the things I remember

Going through mad squeezes and bruising myself  
Getting so hangry and being so sore and hungry  
Going through a squeezed called the birth canal and I thought I was going to get stuck

Meanage glow worms  
Crawling in a river  
Getting water in my gumboots

Overall awesome trip. Rate going caving at least once if you're not majorly claustrophobic.



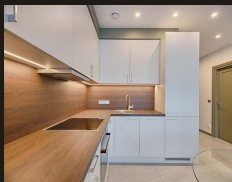
13 - 14  
OCT

TERESA DAVENPORT

# CAPE BRAT

CAPE. BRETT  
REMIX

365 SONG BY  
CHARLIE XCX  
REMIX, UP TO  
1:04 MINS



Wanna go real wild  
when I'm (Tramping  
that)

Meet me at the summit  
if you're (Tramping  
that)

3-6-5, Cape Brett girl  
(Tramping that)

French manicure, wipe  
away the dirt, it's true  
(Ah-ah, ah)

Push my hair back, I  
look hot when I'm  
(Tramping that)

No, I really don't stop  
when I'm (Tramping  
that)

Gonna jump when it  
drops, when I'm  
(Tramping that)

Dial 111, there's a snack  
break too (Ah-ah, ah)

Tramping that, tramping that, tramping that,  
tramping that

Tramping that, tramping that, tramping that,  
tramping that (Ooh)

Ah-ah, ah

Okay, okay

Okay, okay, okay

Here we go

Ah-ah, a— (Ooh)

When I'm on the trail, yeah, I'm (Tramping that)

When I'm by the beach, yeah, I'm (Tramping that)

365, hiker girl (Tramping that)

Should we climb a little higher?

Maybe catch some sun? (Ah-ah, ah)



Who the heck are you? I'm a brat  
when I'm (Tramping that)  
Now I wanna eat my snack, are you  
(Tramping that)?  
Till the hills crack, I'll be (Tramping  
that)  
No, I never go home, don't sleep,  
don't eat  
Just hike on repeat, keep (Tramping  
that)  
When I'm on the trail, yeah, I'm  
(Tramping that)  
3-6-5, hiker girl (I'm tramping that)  
Should we climb a little higher?  
Maybe catch some sun? (Ah-ah,  
ah)  
Wanna go real wild when I'm  
(Tramping that)  
Meet me at the summit if you're  
(Tramping that)  
3-6-5, Cape Brett girl (Tramping  
that)  
French manicure, wipe away the dirt,  
it's true (Ah-ah, ah)

## Leitch's Hut – Johnny Stavropoulos 19 – 20 Oct



Our journey to Leitch's hut got off to a slightly troubling start; while unloading cars at the track entrance on Saturday morning members of the group appeared hauling items such as an entire metal barbecue, a tent bag wider than its owner was tall, and a tote bag borne by one walker who appeared to have taken a wrong turn on her way to a yoga class in Remuera and arrived at a hut trail instead. Nevertheless, we shared out the load and made decent time down Leitch's Track – a fact we were kept well aware of by Sean's highly committed Strava tracking.

Fortunately, there was a river conveniently situated right next to the hut which we could use to wash off some of the sweat of the hike. Unfortunately, the river was about a foot deep, leaving little opportunity for coverage for one member of the group whose brightly-coloured boxers failed to leave much to the imagination when wet. This did not deter some good fun and splashing around in the river however, and with the dirt cleansed from our bodies we were ready to make camp for the night. Upon arrival to the hut, we quickly set about getting ourselves ready for an absolute feast.

Miles showed off his suitability for military life by taking up various weaponry to dispose of an unfortunate mouse and chop firewood, while our leader Will displayed commendable tenacity, spending about 10 minutes straight blowing into the fire pit until it was able to survive without him. Despite being a bit unwieldy to carry, our chilly bin was greatly appreciated when we poured out its cornucopia of sausages, pork, and chicken – all supported by a hearty helping of butter (with a bit of instant mash added in) and some questionably charred carrots – not to mention a couple of bags of goon that made several laps around the campfire.

Our high-class dinner also featured some musical accompaniment; despite shock at one international student breaching unwritten etiquette by bringing a speaker to a tramp, he was ultimately forgiven thanks to his compatriot's excellent playlist of "granola girl" music (a fascinating new piece of international slang). In the end, the hut proved somewhat superfluous, thanks to Lucas' 3-room, 12-person monster-tent (including a built-in awning for the entrance) – which managed to outdo the average doc hut in both capacity and classiness.



themselves sorely mistaken as they awoke on Sunday morning to the sounds of crazy frog, thanks to a liberal interpretation of our trip leader's instruction to make sure everyone was up at 8. Ears ringing, the group packed up and made a slightly more muted journey back to our cars - though with some impressive showings of speed from certain members despite their hangovers, showing just how motivating the promise of a chippy stop on the drive back can be. All in all, our trip to Leitch's hut was thoroughly enjoyed by all; sharing food, goon, banter and memories made for a wonderful evening of bonding, and the few hiccups experienced along the way were consistently met with good cheer and a spirit of communal helpfulness.

The hut did however provide for us with a couple of pairs of boxing gloves, which turned out to be perfect for settling an ongoing frenemies relationship within the group with some good old fashioned croc fighting, ultimately leading to a heartwarming reconciliation (though this did not lead to any less bickering the following day). As the evening turned to night and marshmallows and drinks were shared around, campfire music took a strange turn into the pop works of Chappell Roan and Olivia Rodrigo, but not to any less enthusiasm from the singers.

A solid hut in an excellent location, accessible with a relatively easy 3-hour tramp, Leitch's hut comes highly commended as a destination for trips aiming for a fun evening of bonding around a campfire. Thanks from the group goes to our trip leader Will Griffiths, various members of the group who supplied communal resources like barbecues and tents, and to everyone else for bringing excellent vibes to the weekend. Chur!

The revelries were only briefly interrupted when a member of the group turned up with feet covered in bramble scratches, prompting a quickfire medical response to get them back into walking shape by the next day. As was well in the end however, as our patient was not only ready for the walk back but even managed to make a return to the campfire to join in a line dance taught by an Irish international in a cultural exchange for some classic Kiwi jump jams.

Any who thought their musical experience was over by the next of the night found



# CROSBIES HUT

## Bianca Manzano

### 4 - 5 November

The combination of good weather and a totally unbooked hut easily justifies absence from uni on a weekday (during exam season no less!). Our little party of three were greeted by bluebird skies in the Coromandel. Definitely no regrets there. The Karaka track was a pleasant 15km and 830m ascent to Crosbies hut. Being dog-friendly, our furry four-legged pal came along for the adventure.

We were warned about the treacherous, all-season mud plaguing the track. Bianca made the most of it by (involuntarily) taking a waist-deep “mud dip” – she wanted to re-colour her clothes brown.

However, all that sweat and grime were well worth it when breaking the bush and reaching the hut. With 360° panoramic views of the Coromandel Forest, we were witness to both the best sunrise and sunset we ever saw. The wraparound porch made a perfect spot to sit back with a hot chocolate, pat a dog, and watch the colours change.



Jenny got the fire going, and we settled in for a warm dinner and restful sleep.



# WAIPAKAIHI HUT, UMAKARIKARI TRACK OUT AND BACK

We drove and had good chats.  
We camped on a lovely clear night.  
I forgot my hiking shoes and my raincoat.  
So I went for a quick trip to Taupo in the morning.

My forgetfulness will continue to curse me.

We initially walked through the forest.  
Then we walked through rather surprisingly, not barren by rocky terrain.

We walked up and then we walked down.  
We talked a lot then we got blasted by the bitterly cold wind.

I took gear from someone who brought too much.

We descended to our hut.

We all managed to get a spot in the hut.  
We enjoyed a delicious warm meal at the hut.

And a lovely sunset that we all relished.  
It was a cold night.



My sleeping bag kept me warm.  
I heard the person below me stir out of coldness.  
The morning was slow.  
We left and went up and down.  
Chitter chatter continued over the not barren but rocky terrain.  
Chitter chatter continued through the forest.  
My car was still at the otherside, phew!  
I was curious about blue pools so we went.  
Blue pools were cool.  
Cambridge dinner not the usual Tokoroa.  
We all made it home safely.  
We drove home.

# CHRISSY TRAMP TO WAIHAHA HUT

14 - 15 December 2024  
by Teresa Devonport

A Christmas tramp through forest deep,  
Where the Waihaha river sings and leaps.  
The weather smiled, the sun did gleam,  
A holiday hike, a festive dream.  
Cold swims woke us, sharp and bright,  
In nature's gift, pure delight.  
The hut was quiet, calm, and clear,  
A Christmas cheer we'll hold all year.  
Ho ho ho, Merry Christmas!

# NEW YEAR'S MADNESS ON MOUNT TARANAKI

31 Dec - 2 Jan  
Satyam Bhatt

## Day 1: Auckland to New Plymouth - Startups, Snacks, and Sunsets

On Tuesday, 31st December, Gordon and I hit the road just after 07:30, our brains running wild with startup ideas while we made our way south. We arrived in New Plymouth at around 13:00, enjoyed a hearty lunch in Fitzroy, then headed straight for the Te Rewa Rewa Bridge.

And what do we find? Clouds. Everywhere. Thick, heavy clouds completely shrouding Mount Taranaki. Our view of the mountain was more of an existential crisis than anything else. We weren't about to let that ruin our day, though. Gordon had the perfect suggestion: "Let's climb Paritutu Rock!" At 151m, it was about as much of a challenge as a puppy climbing a flight of stairs, but the panoramic view of the city and coast? Chef's kiss.

Next stop: Inglewood, where we checked into the motel (the campsite fees were practically the same, so why not?). After a quick nap and gear check, we decided we weren't about to spend New Year's Eve rotting in the room, so we set off to New Plymouth to embrace the chaos that is Festival of Lights at Pukekura

Park. If there was ever a definition of a "crowded place," it was Pukekura Park that night. It felt like the entire city of New Plymouth had decided to show up - which explains why the streets felt eerily deserted.

## Day 2: The Weather, the Summit, and the "Foggy" Future

We were up and at 'em early, arriving at the Dawson Falls Visitor Centre by 08:30 but the mountain was still in hiding, wrapped in a heavy cloud. After a brief tease of summit visibility (just enough to remind us that Taranaki does exist), we started our walk to the hut.

The fog was thick as we made our way, and the puddles from the night's rain turned into mini lakes for us to dodge. After a steady climb, we reached the Hooker Shelter at 1140m, where the clouds finally began to part a bit, giving us a peek at the scree slopes and a swirling cloud ring around the crater. We pressed on, navigating puddles and taking in the increasingly stunning views.

By the time we reached the final stairs just above the track to Kapuni Lodge, we were almost in "rain gear" mode, preparing for the oncoming weather. As we ascended, we passed some returning hikers who'd been turned back due to the winds the day before. But no turning back for us! And anyways as the phrase goes - When the going gets tough, the tough keep hiking.





As we kept climbing, we ran into a few more groups who gave us an alarming report: “The hut’s packed with 20 people!” Of course, this sent our hopes of a peaceful night in the hut plummeting. But we pushed on anyway, telling ourselves we’d figure it out when we got there. (They did assure by saying that hut was still half empty, after seeing our faces)

## The Summit - Or How We Got High On Clouds

We finally made it to the ridge leading to the hut which was, unsurprisingly, cloaked in dense fog. But hey, at least we weren’t cold! We dashed inside, claimed top bunks (because, obviously, we are that cool), and proceeded to make gourmet meals: instant noodles and peanut butter-tuna wraps. It’s the future of fine dining.

After a bit of chit-chat at around 13:30, the Irish couple that were the first one at the hut decided to push for the summit. Gordon and I went back and forth on it, weighing the weather, our energy, and the threat of not making it back before nightfall. We ultimately decided to go for it just after 15:30, since the weather wasn’t going to improve the next day, and we didn’t want to leave the mountain undefeated. In a quick succession, another couple (power couple; logan and his wife) decided to push for the summit as well.



Me and Gordon were taking it slow and trying not to go too far away in a wrong direction, while also worrying about getting down in what has now made visibility drop up to 15m.

Gordon accompanied me up to around 2150m, but by this point, the winds had kicked up a wee bit, and the visibility was low. Gordon, ever the voice of reason, decided to head back down to the hut, wisely opting for safety over summit fever. It was a tough choice, but we agreed it was the right one.

Just when we were beginning to get down, we heard the Irish couple from our far right. They were returning from the summit and reported good views from the top and exclaimed that we were not too far away.

After exchanging info on the routes, we took up and deciding which way down will be the least sketchy, it was concluded that the way we came up was the best way down. After yet another unsuccessful attempt to convince Gordon to accompany me up to the summit (we were able to make a rough outline of the crater wall by now), I decided to push for the summit as the clouds were really starting to disperse both above and below us, while Gordon joined the Irish couple on their way down.

As I continued my ascent alone, I encountered Logan and his wife – the power couple who had overtaken us on the way up from the carpark earlier (they were fast and impressive). I asked them if they were willing to wait for me, and while his wife chose to head back down, Logan decided to join me in pushing for the summit.

We pressed on, battling scree and steep slopes, until we finally reached the summit. It was an epic sight – the crater covered in ice, with the iconic “shark’s tooth” poking through the icy landscape. We took a few photos (because, you know, social media), enjoyed the fact that we were standing on top of a volcano, and then headed back down, knowing full well the scree slopes were going to make us regret every life decision that led to this moment. But hey, what’s the fun in descending if you can’t slide down the loose rocks like a kid on a Slip’N Slide? We slid down the loose rocks like we were in an extreme sport event, hoping our ankles survived the onslaught of loose debris.

We made it back to the hut at 19:45, a little banged up but victorious. It took us about 4 hours and 15 minutes – but we were greeted by our fellow hikers, who’d cheered us on during our summit push. It was a quiet celebration, but one well worth it.

We caught the sunset, took a few more photos, and settled in for a warm (ish) dinner. The rain, which began just after the sunset, was light enough to be manageable – just a few drops, not the deluge we had feared.

### **Day 3: The Descent and the Victory Lap**

The next morning, after being woken up by the commotion of those leaving early, we finally decided to get out from sleeping bags. After some much-needed coffee and some oats for brekkie, we helped cleaning up the



hut, packed our bags and made our way down to car. The rain was light, but it wasn’t letting up completely. We were lucky enough to get a weather window for some epic photos (obviously only after both of us took our time soaking in the views and looking down as if we were in some movie)– Gordon had a super cool recommendation for a pose, which, I must admit, was worth it.

We took a brief detour to Kapuni Lodge (why not?), before making our way back to the car park by midday. After exchanging some judgy looks on either side, we celebrated with surprisingly cold cans of diet coke (as one does after a tramp) and frolicked in the visitor centre for a while before getting back in the car.

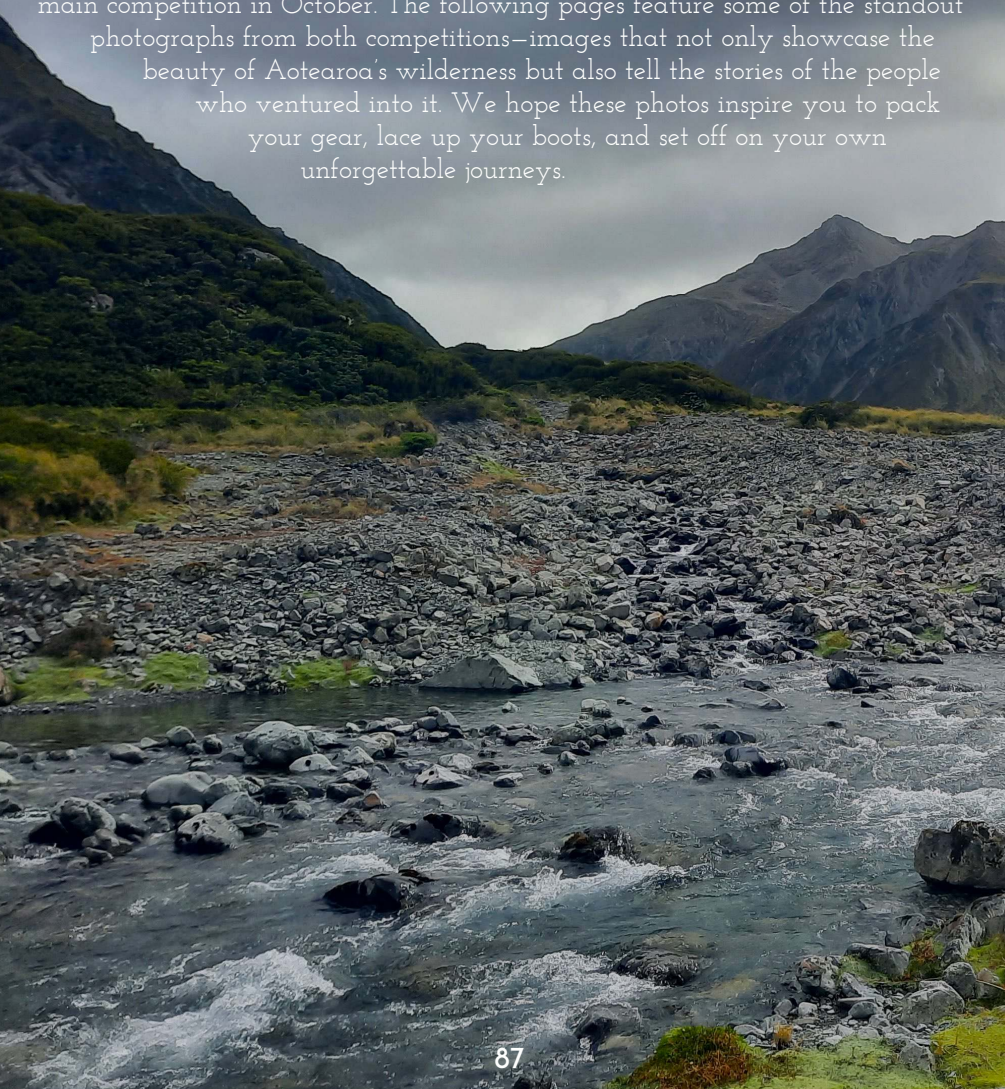
We made it back to Auckland by 21:00, tired but triumphant, with a couple of new stories and a serious appreciation for warm showers.

Until next time, AUTC – may your adventures be less scree-filled and more gelato-infused!

# AUTC Photo Competition

The Photo Competition is a long-standing and cherished club tradition that celebrates the breathtaking landscapes and unforgettable moments shared by our members in the great outdoors.

In 2024, we hosted two competitions: a “mini” photo-comp in April, and the main competition in October. The following pages feature some of the standout photographs from both competitions—images that not only showcase the beauty of Aotearoa’s wilderness but also tell the stories of the people who ventured into it. We hope these photos inspire you to pack your gear, lace up your boots, and set off on your own unforgettable journeys.



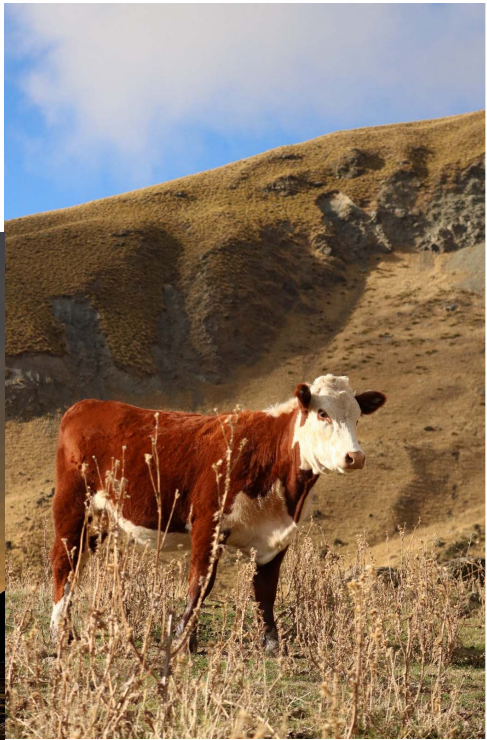


*Shades of grey*  
Rosanna Rov  
Edwards Valley, Arthurs Pass

*Moo-vel! >*

**Nikita Li**

On the way down from Roy's Peak  
This was taken to convince my friends that I  
rode a cow! I named him Cow-lvin  
*Mini Photo Comp Winner: Wilderness*



*<Awaroa Low-Tide Crossing*

**Anna Millar**

Abel Tasman Track

*Mini Photo Comp Winner: Adventure*



*Devil's  
Staircase,  
WeiChe Li*

Tongariro alpine  
crossing

*Featured*

*Submission:*

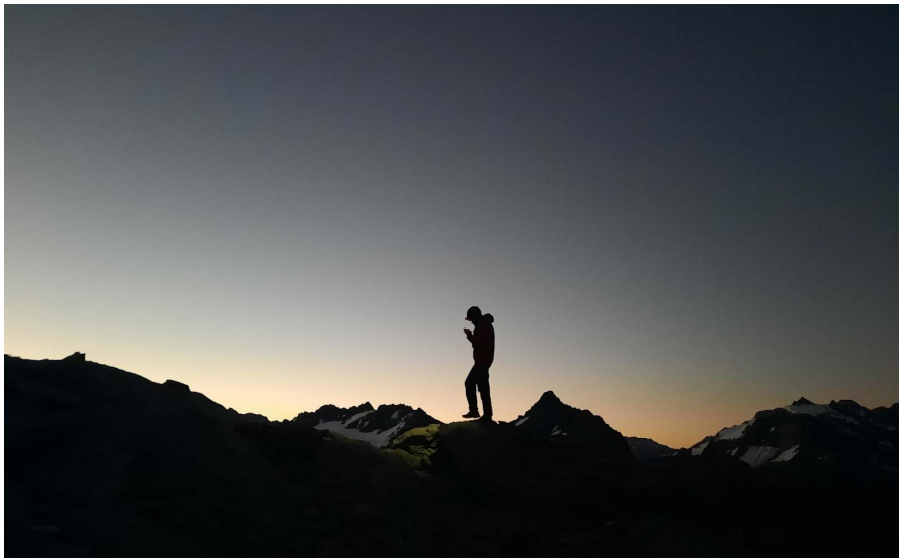
*Adventure*

*A Proper New Zealand Experience!*

**Amalie Chocholova**

*Featured Submission: Camp Tales*





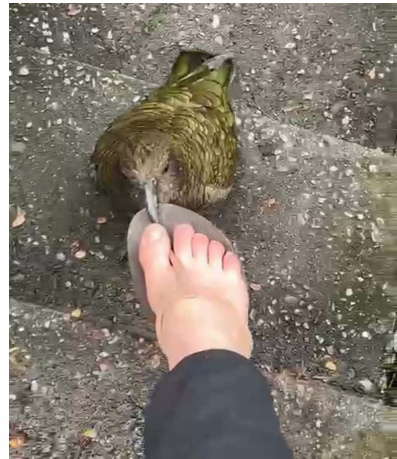
***First Light***  
**Rosanna Rov**

Next to Colin Todd Hut, Mt Aspiring. Not much to say besides being in awe of such a great place to brush your teeth!  
*Mini Photo Comp Winner: Camp Tales*



***Heartbeat***  
**James Hancock**

Whakapapaiti Hut on the Ruapehu RTM track, before the first snow of the year.  
*Featured Submission: Camp Tales*



***"Bastard Bird"***  
**Isabelle Witt -**

A couple minutes after I took this picture the bird broke it and I had to walk around Queenstown barefoot in 7\* weather..  
*Featured Submission: Wilderness*

## Category A - Above Bushline



### *Less Scary than It Looks - Isaac Hook*

Dominating the Slopes Deep in the Macaulay Valley  
Category Winner



### *Tree Pose - Emi Lipoth*

Kaimanawas

Category B Below Bushline



*Down by the  
Water*  
**Sarah Becker**  
Waiheke Island  
Category Winner



*<A Veil of Dawn*

**Anna Millar**

Oamaru Hut



*Another Season >*

**Frank Wang**

Waihaha River



*A Short Rest by the  
Cliffside*

**Joseph Kernohan**

Cape Brett Track

Category C: Camp Life



*The Tin Can*  
Will Griffiths  
Category Winner



*Tents, Tents, and More Tents!*  
Timothy Yang



*Opposite Page*

*Sunrise at Syme Hut,*  
Joseph Kernohan

*AUTC Baiting Trip,*  
Will Griffiths

*Solitude After Dark*  
Anna Millar  
Crosbies Hut



Categories D and E: Nature (Competition was split into No Birds and Birds)



*Hypholoma Mushrooms in the Stream*  
Sarah Becker

Franz Josef Glacier  
Category D Winner

*"We" Know A Spot*  
Sean McConnachie

Muriwai  
Category E Winner





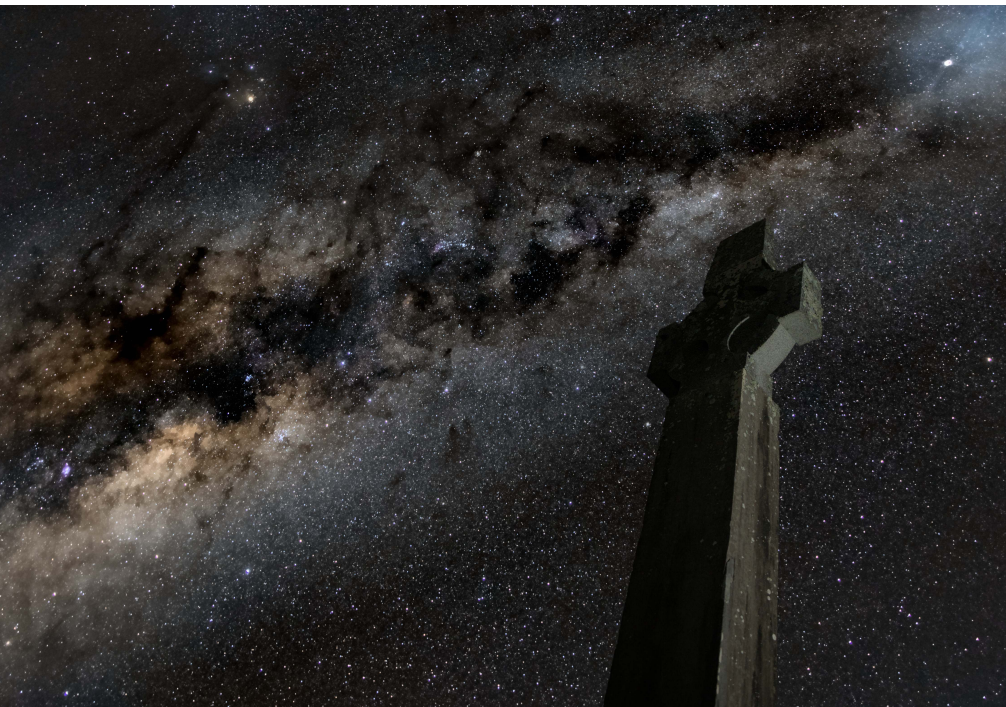
*Fur Seals*  
Timothy Yang



*Kokako Eating Leaves*  
Raphael Powis  
Tiritiri Matangi



*RUN*  
Gloria Manggalagita  
Wenderholm Regional Park



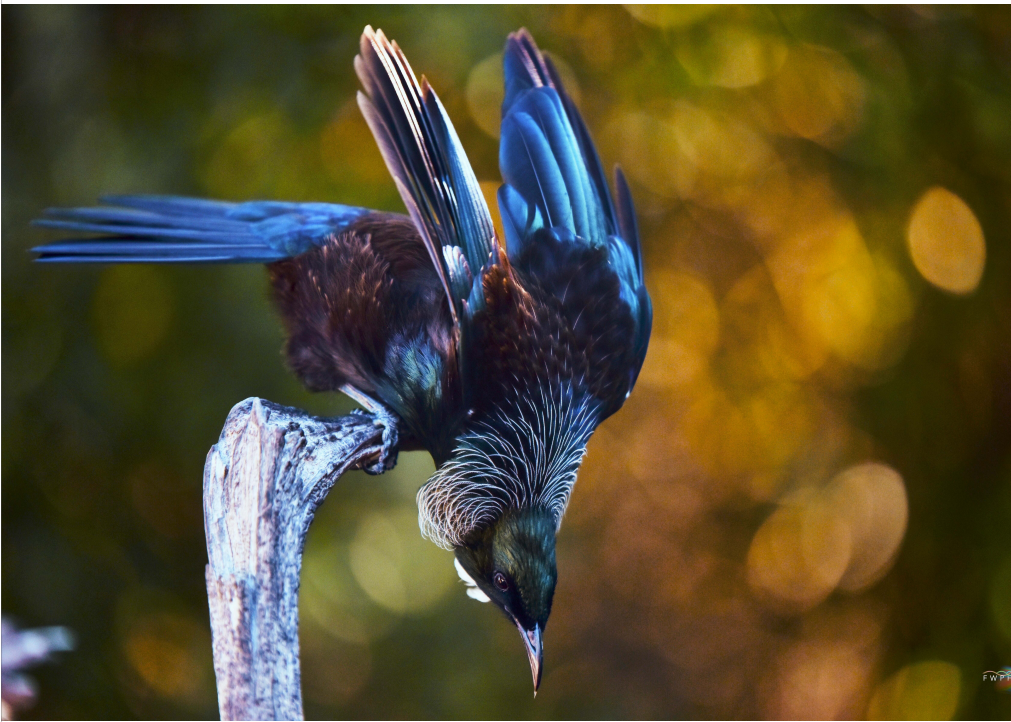
*Ominous Origins*  
Sean McConnachie  
Marsden Cross



*Kiwi*  
Sean McConnachie



*Hitching on Barrier*  
Teresa Davenport  
Great Barrier Island  
Open Category Runner Up



↑ *Tui Posing* Frank Wang  
Tiritiri Matangi

↓ *Bird Watchers* Timothy Yang

