

# Footprints

# 2020



# Contents

- 1 - Captain's report
- 2 - Environmental report
- 4 - An ode to tree planting
- 5 - Basic bush 1
- 7 - A very damp Pouakai Circuit
- 10 - Makorako II - The Makorakoing
- 16 - Whirinaki Forest
- 17 - Margaret's leap
- 19 - Dartbash
- 24 - Basic bush 2
- 26 - Skyline Ridge
- 27 - Advanced snow school
- 30 - Girdlestone, Tahurangi and SSBRI
- 37 - Photo competition winners

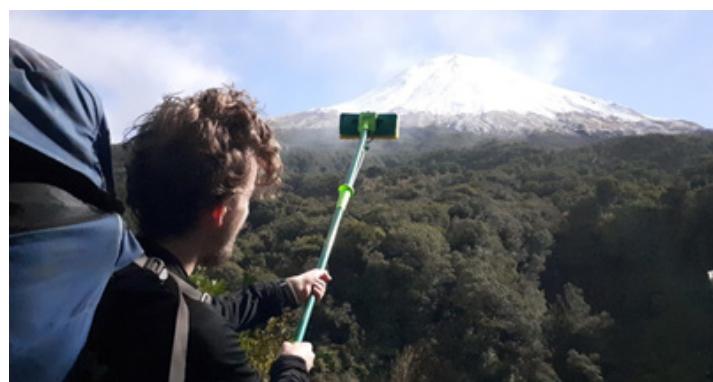
# Captain's report - Andrew Battley

What a year! We've had a rollercoaster of one with massive highs – including the largest O-Camp in the history of the club – and the low everyone has been facing – a global pandemic. In spite of the fluctuating restrictions, as a club we did fairly well at still managing to slip some trips out when it was safe. During the lockdowns our incredible Socials team kept us entertained and engaged, with a wide range of activities that also gave us the opportunity to hang out with our friends in the other outdoor clubs.

We managed to run both of our biggest annual events – Orientation Camp and May Camp, thanks to the tireless work of Mike - our incredible Socials officer, and the rest of our committee. Our instructional courses also went ahead, (albeit with several pandemic-related date changes) and a great number of other trips led people to explore our beautiful country!

Other exciting developments this year included our renewal of our lease for Ongaruanuku, our hut in the Waitakere Ranges. While Kauri Dieback means we unfortunately still cannot access the hut for purposes other than environmental work or maintenance, this gave us an opportunity to also advocate for development of a safe access route through Auckland Council's planned track development programme, and the responsiveness of those with whom we raised the ideas brings me hope that one day we'll be able to engage again with this important part of our club history and identity.

The club's impressive resilience is a testament to all of the members, and especially the hard work of the committee that has supported me throughout the year, and for this I would like to thank you all! Thanks in particular to Anoek and Elisabeth, our fantastic Secretary and Treasurer for the year, who did most of the important background work to keep the club running so smoothly, even through such challenging times. Good luck Anoek, Ngaire and Mike for 2021! Here's hoping it treats us a little more nicely.



# Environmental report -

## Sean Thomson

Although the pandemic certainly put a damper on many of our club activities, against all odds AUTC has come out of 2020 more engaged with conservation than ever before. Lockdowns aside, as a club we ran 17 trapping trips, we took part in two baiting operations, and this year I coordinated tree planting to help bolster restoration projects throughout wider Auckland.

Soon after taking on the Environmental role for 2020, I was contacted by a former club President: the now expert volunteer trapper David Gauld. He approached AUTC with an offer for the club: renewed kaitiakitanga [guardianship] in the ngahere [forest] around Ongaruanuku-our Waitakere club hut. Threatened by constant possum, rat and stoat incursions, our section of bush stands along the front line protecting the heavily managed 'Ark in the Park' network (home to kōkako, toutouwai [NZ robins] plus other vulnerable indigenous species) from the pests plaguing the wider Waitakeres.

So began my task of assembling a team. My calls for interest were met with immediate enthusiasm, and soon we had members from all backgrounds attending Ark in the Park trapping inductions. David Gauld gave us a tour of our 'AUTC Trapline', and from here onwards we have maintained ongoing pest control around our club hut. Of course, multiple lockdowns threw in the odd spanner, but trapper enthusiasm and willingness across the board have and, indeed do now, keep us on the track to conserve what precious little remains of our local biodiversity.

While trapping is a recent addition to our club conservation efforts, three times each year we also run baiting trips, restocking stations in that same ngahere. Lockdowns meant we could only field two trips, which in turn were further postponed by tropical cyclones (what a year!)... however club members leapt into the saddle with but moments' notice, ever ready to bush-bash for conservation's sake.

And finally, AUTC showed its proud support for wider conservation efforts regionwide, by taking part in various planting days. I was lucky enough to attend a planting day at Shakespeare Regional Park, where we enjoyed a sausage sizzle, a midwinter swim and some bird-watching, in addition to helping restoration efforts.

All in all, I'd like to think that 2020- for all its horrors- was a good year for our environmental scene. Now let me ask you: what does 2021 have in store for us? And what can we each do to help our environment?

None of our conservation successes would have been possible without the time and sweat shared by our members (fortunately no blood and tears though!). It's been a real pleasure applying my studies into our wider club activities, and I was enabled only by your own enthusiasm for nurturing a healthier planet. In closing, I list the following names in recognition of their efforts and ongoing support they've shown me throughout the year (and sincerely apologise to any I've missed out!):

Monica Hing	Master Trapper
Jenni Gordon	Master Trapper
Winston Teo	Master Trapper
Sahmay Abplanalp-Ellis	Master Trapper/Baiter/Planter
Campbell Foskin	Master Trapper
Aidan Sarginson	Master Trapper/Baiter/Planter
Mina Cullen	Master Trapper/Baiter/Planter
Ellen Jose	Trapper/Baiter/Planter
Jess Peart	Trapper/Baiter
Abbey Browne	Trapper/Baiter
Ryan Tan	Trapper
Amber Turner	Trapper
Theresa Boyd	Trapper
Ana Menzies	Trapper
Stephanie Thomas	Trapper
Jackson Morgan	Trapper
Madeleine Ball	Trapper
Carl Barnhill	Baiter
Varun Narasimhan	Baiter
Varun Keri	Baiter
Katherine Masters	Baiter
Ngaio Balfour	Baiter/Support
Richard Cai	Baiter
Jack Hopman	Baiter
Zachary Collier McCabe	Baiter/Planter
Ella Walmsley	Baiter
Parham Alishahi	Baiter
Emma Tyson	Baiter/Planter
Nicola Gatland	Baiter
Rosanna Rov	Baiter
Andrew Battley	Baiter/Planter
George McSweeney	Baiter
John Blomfield	Baiter
Drew Gordon	Master Baiter (nice)
Catherine Meyer	Planter
Jimmy Yin	Planter



# An ode to tree planting

## Andrew Battley

I dug hole  
I plant tree  
I dug up tree  
I place fertiliser under tree  
I replant tree  
I redug up tree  
I took plastik off tree  
I rereplant tree  
I ate snag  
I walked away  
I saw chonky birb  
Cliff made water  
I saw rare birb  
I saw cow  
We all got wet together

# Basic bush 1 – Kaniwhaniwha Reserve - Laura Jacks

The people:

Laura jacks, Riley Knoedler, Anoek Grosmann, James Truter, James Brown, Brook Dyer, Emma Tyson, Giovan Widjaja, Jimmy Yin, Johanna Le, Li-wen chen, Toby Williams

The trip:

The basic bush school was originally planned for Karangahake gorge but due to bad weather was changed to Kaniwhaniwha reserve. The trip happened on the 17th-20th of july 2020. We met at the clock tower at 6pm - 6:30ish pm (i was late). We stopped at huntly for something to eat around 7:30 pm and made our way to the reserve. After arriving we found a suitable place to pitch tents and have yarns until everyone was tired. Around 7:30 we woke up, made breakfast, cleaned the campsite and headed up toward Tirohanha track off Corcoran road. We then left our cars and went up on the first day to the pahautea hut for the night. One first day we did map navigation, compass readings and how to just tramp in general (or at least look the part). The second day we did a simulated river crossing with the three instructors laura,riley and anoek along with some first aid teaching and penguin dancing. On the way back to the cars we used a lot of rock chains which kept everyone on their toes. We arrived back at the cars around 5pm back down the Tirohanha track on the sunday to head back to auckland.



## The Memes:

The ability of some group members to successfully bounce after numerous falls has led to some debate about whether a human ass can successfully mimic the qualities of rubber.

Some instructors displayed an amazing tolerance and comfort for the cold by carrying out acts such as walking around barefoot in an uninsulated cabin in the middle of winter. This was awe inspiring to some newbie trampers and left them questioning if they were indeed human.

The penguin dance is a spectacle to people who don't know what the hell you're actually doing twirling and waddling around on a deck at 8:30am whilst singing like its 3 am karaoke.

The meals we made out of ignorance of what 20 dollars can really get you in countdown, think mash and pasta.



# A very damp Pouakai Circuit - Anoek & Aidan

28/06/2020 - 30/06/2020

Attendees: Anoek Grosmann, Aidan Sarginson, Aiden Leddy, Cheng Kai Jin, Corinna Uhr, Kristina Vitek Parham Alishahi and Shane Maguire

Trip plan:

Day 1: Drive to Taranaki and enjoy a short walk to Maketawa hut.

Day 2: Take the sub-alpine route along the Pouakai circuit to the famous Pouakai hut.

Day 3: Enjoy the views of the tarns and walk back to the car and drive to Auckland, having enjoyed nature and an escape from lockdown.

What actually happened:

Day 1:

As we arrived at Taranaki, the heavens opened up, and what did it present? Not sunshine and rainbows, no, what it presented was the brewing storm that had been forecast in the region for the next few days. We put our packs and rain jackets on inside the visitors center, we were then warned by the DOC worker, who was behind the desk all dry and warm that we may have to turn back if the Ngatoro stream had become flooded.

For some reason, we pushed on down the Maketawa track, the rain ever getting heavier. We made it to the river, and to our luck, it hadn't gotten flooded. Yet... Cue an impromptu river crossing course by Anoek and Aidan (semi-official bush school instructors). After which, we crossed the river and made our way up the ridge. The track gradually became more of a river, the water flowing down onto every next step. We hereby called this torrent on the track 'The Lake Of Despair'. Finally, Maketawa hut came into view, and we were relieved, and so were the two families inside, who sought pity on us seeing how drenched we all were.

Since we had a small epic making it to the hut, by now Aidan and Aiden already had some healthy rivalry as to who was better Aidan/en. Thus the only way to settle this was to have a cook-off. This involved the planned dinner of nachos and thus there was an epic battle of who could heat up cheese and beans in a pot the fastest. It was close (not really), But Aidan came out on top, being crowned Aidan the first.

After dinner, the only coping mechanism we could think of was Mafia. Eventually, we murdered enough of our own in horrific ways that we had to extend the scheming to the two other families, who happily joined in the chaos. Aidan "the first" took on the role of Narrator,

and was inspired to evict group members \*cough\* killing them \*cough\* was drowning them in the Lake Of Despair, which became the ritual killing spot for the mafia.

### Day 2:

Not feeling optimistic about the weather, we reluctantly put on our rain gear and planned to walk to Pouakai hut via a shorter route on the other side of the mountain. We could not walk the same way back to the car, as we were certain that the river was flooded. So, we walked up the ridge only to be hailed on, as the weather gods decided 2020 wasn't enough on its own already. It was a fun (not) road walk out to the visitors center, where the same DOC worker was stationed, with whom we shared a laugh.



At the next car park, with one goon box and a few pies and sausage rolls heavier, we enjoyed the very damp but beautiful forest walk up to the hut. Thankfully, this track was wonderfully board-walked for the majority, which almost.. almost.. made up for the weather.

Unfortunately, as this hut is frequented by day walkers, some people left the door to the hut open during the storm. This led to us piling already wet wood as little hopping points across the lake-like floor. The night was filled with more games of Mafia, trying to get dry and our precious goon, which carried us through the night and to the next morning.

### Day 3:

Wait, I can see a ridgeline? We finally got to enjoy some of those much-advertised views a short walk away at the Pouakai tarns!

We then walked back to our cars thinking we could get out nice and early and drive back to Auckland. Of course, it would so happen that we had to wait an hour for CK to be able to

open his car, as the torrent of rain and hail and caused his electronic key to stop working.

Overall, we didn't see much, but we had a great time with new friends. :)



# Makorako II - The Makorakoing

## Jason Rose & Laura Jacks

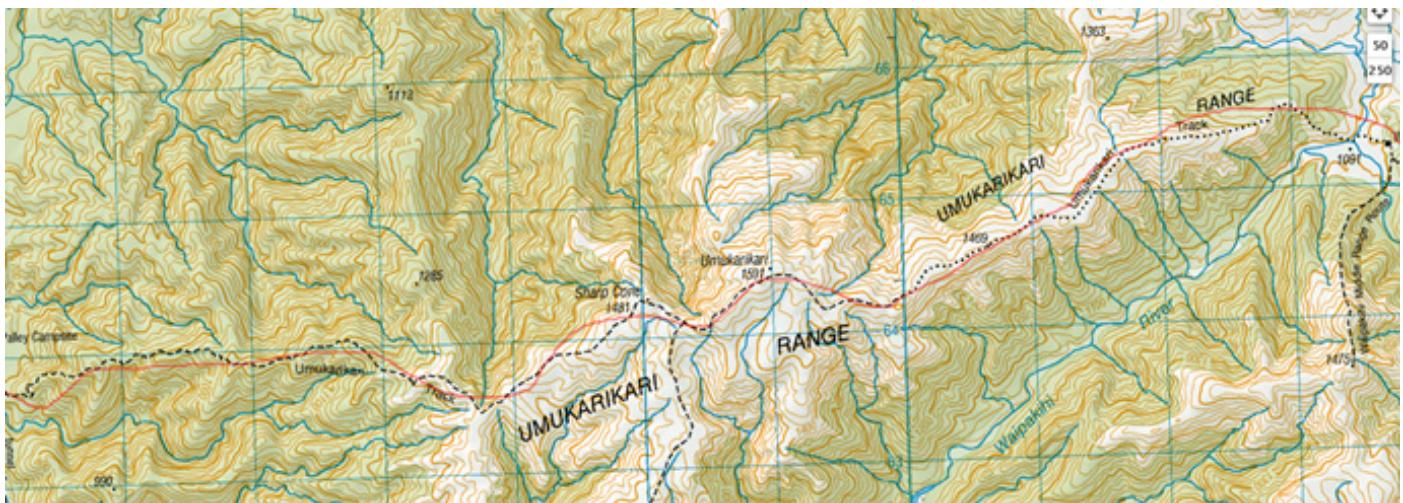


Makorako & The Island Range

Few things make you reconsider your life decisions more than sprinting 400m up a mountain half naked, straight out of bed, after getting 4 hrs of sleep - because all your food is gone. Why, you ask? I blame Toby, he lent us his car. Without him, this wouldn't have been possible. I blame Laura. She's an extremely supportive partner and frankly her enabling has gone too far. But TBH, I blame me the most for having the stupid idea of going to Makorako in the first place. Honorable mention: Helisika's private block

It all started seven months ago when I was just minding my own business climbing on the Tukino side of Ruapehu, and I happened to notice a rather gorgeous pointy fella in the direction of the Kaimanawa. It was a beautiful, isolated pyramid, covered in snow and standing proud above all of the other mountains I could see. I later found out that it was a 1727m peak called Makorako, the sixth highest mountain in the North Island, and by all accounts an utter pain in the ass to get to. Naturally, I tried to work out if it could be done in a weekend. The plan would be to walk into Waipakihi hut on Friday night, after driving from Auckland. It's a reasonable tramp, 14km and 1100m+ elevation gain, ~4hrs at a steady pace.

Following this, we would climb Junction Top, bushbash down into the Rangitikei, bushbash up out of the Rangitikei to the Island Range, then gap it to Makorako and return the same way to Waipakihi hut, where we would presumably drop dead on the floor, having OD'd on chips, bush lawyer and contours. Then we'd walk out and drive back to Auckland the



"I'm going to go to spookers instead" - Max Jenkins



"Have you done Intentions?" - Max Jenkins

following day. Solid plan, right?

**WRONG.**

Like most plans, it's bloody made up. After successfully walking into Waipakihi at 2AM, 4 hrs after leaving the carpark and 10hrs after leaving Auckland, we passed out in our tent in front of the hut, so as not to wake people up. Like a good ex-gear officer, I left my food (8 packets of chips in a tupperware in a drybag) in the hut so rats wouldn't eat our shiny club tent. Given our late bedtime, we resolved to be up by the ungodly hour of 9AM, in preparation for our minimum 12hr day the next day. I woke up naturally sometime around 8, overheard some talk about chips (ominous foreshadowing) and continued sleeping until 9, when our alarm went off. When I walked into the kitchen for breakfast, I was quite alarmed to discover that all of my beloved chips were gone, my rations for the next 2+ days. After politely interrogating the people still at the hut, I found out that some dirty thieves community spirited people, that left an hour ago back along the Umukarikari track, thought that it was trash left at the hut and had resolved to carry it out, tupperware antd all. After a lot of \$#&#!@ing, I ran half naked with an empty drybag in my hand like some sad santa, back up Umukarikari in the hot sun. They had at least a 45min head start on me, so I knew I had my work cut out.

Luckily for me, I've made a habit of being late for labs and having to sprint up hills to get to get to them. After ~20mins and ~400m, looking and dripping like a naked mole rat in a sauna, I caught the chip thieves. Clearly intimidated by this power move, they profusely apologized and handed me my lunchbox (yay!) and, unfortunately, only 6 packets of chips (poooooo). The trip was potentially still on, but I'd added 400m of elevation and 4km to my already long day in the hot sun. Jogging back my hamstrings started to cramp up and I decided to walk, deciding that Makorako today was now probably unrealistic. After a big breakfast, a lot of water, even more foam-rolling and an obligatory tasteful nude photoshoot (DM me :D) we set off at 12 up to Junction Top.



The ridge we'd have to bushbash 500m up, with Makorako poking just above

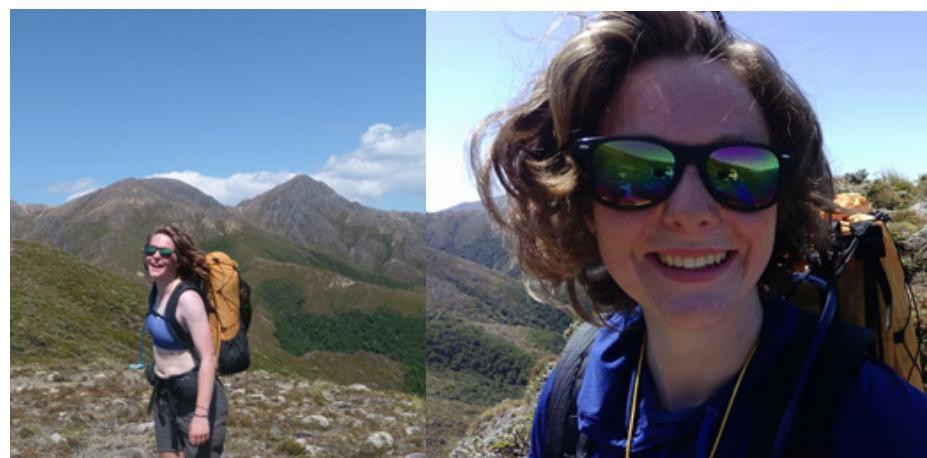
An hour and a bit later, we arrived at the top and began searching for suitable looking ridges to get in and out of the Rangitikei. We decided on a rather spiky looking one, because it looked fun and was the closest. The bush down to the Rangitikei however was rather stimulating. Humongous hedges of bush lawyer atop rotten logs, perched perilously above clay cliffs, conspiring to force you off the ridge into gullies where their similarly spiky comrades awaited eagerly in ambush.

Four glorious hours after entering the bushline, we'd managed to descend the required 300m to the river. We decided to make dinner and camp there after having a peek at Rangitikei Hut, seeing that it was covered in deer poop, and resolving to respect their private property rights. Access is a privilege, folks.

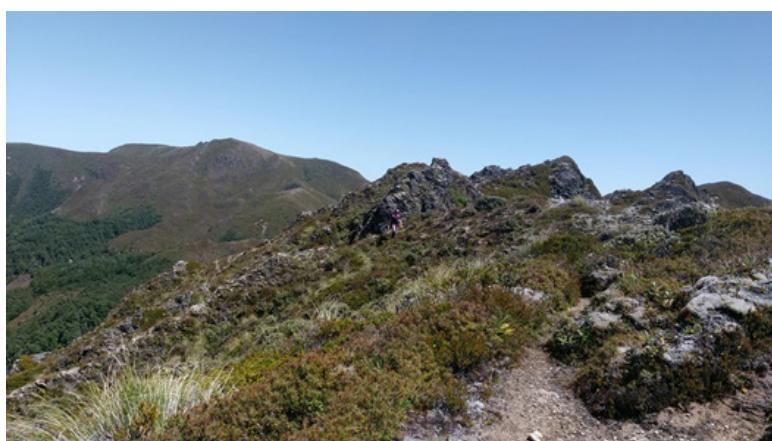
After starting walking again at the ungodly hour of 9AM in preparation of our 12hr+ day, we charged up the ridge to the Island Range. Somehow, although I suspect it was all of the cliffs we climbed up, as well as being unburnened with all of the excess skin, clothes and sleeping mat lost the previous day, it only took us 1.5hrs to bushbash to the bushline.



The ridge we climbed up made for some enjoyable scrambling



Makorako and the Island Range, ft. a massive cutie



On the saddle along the Island Range, looking back to where we climbed onto it



Me, chuffed, ft. Makorako

After a bit over an hour groveling in the blistering heat along the ridge, we'd made it. Makorako. HALF WAY, BABY! Naturally, much faffing and all sorts of shenanigans occurred on the summit and we dedicated a rock to our dear friend Toby, without whomst our suffering would not have been possible.



We <3 you Toby, ft. Phred, the highest tussock in the Kaimanawa

Realizing we'd run out of water, we began our march back down to the Rangitikei. Unfortunately, something which was a recurring theme of this trip, our downs ended up having a lot of up. There was a large pringle in between the ridge we'd ascended and Makorako, quite a few of them actually. After some more groveling in the midday heat for an hour, we arrived at the bushline. We charged down the ridge with fearsome yet invigorating velocity, the many cliffs clearly sensing our dire need for moisture and offering their full support. A couple of hours later, we were swimming in the lovely, cool Rangitikei. Very aware that we had a challenging

bushcrash back up to Junction Top ahead of us, we continued faffing and had some noodles. They were alright.

For the second time this trip, we set off up a hill at 8:30PM. We'd decided to take a different ridge up to Junction Top, because the last one had proven a little bit too clingy and we needed space. Laura took point, navigating by hand torch we'd picked up from the Tūrangi New World for an extortionate \$15 on the way down. This proved to be a good decision, because moths and flies had nothing better to do than lodge themselves by the hundred in all of your facial orifices simultaneously the moment you turned on your head torch. I am rarely one to turn down free protein, but I considered the expense of all the counselling and therapy I would require afterwards and concluded it was out of my budget. After much groveling, scrambling and impenetrable birch thickets, we finally arrived at the ridge to Junction Top after 5 hrs.

We frantically emailed Helisika to let them know that we were clear of their land. We messaged our friends to let them know the haps, then charged off to Junction Top and Waipakihi hut, a thrilling headwind taking the spring out of our step on our midnight stroll. We arrived at the hut at 3AM, after 18hrs on the go, and passed out on the floor, having OD'd on chips, bush lawyer and contours.



The next day we woke up at 11AM, in a surprisingly small amount of pain. After breakfast, much faffing and manic laughter, we left Waipakihi at 1PM and charged up Umukarikari for the second time this trip. Our feet were a little annoyed at us, and we got to the car in 3 hrs something, having ran a reasonable chunk of the track from the bushline to the car. This entire time we were worried: would the bottle of first cold pressed extra virgin olive oil that we'd left under the car still be there? Fortunately, it was, and we feasted on the finest of caprese salad and pasta in Tūrangi and Taupō on the drive.

# Whirinaki Forest - Ellen Jose

Date: 29/06/2020 – 01/07/2020

Participants: Emma Tyson (Leader), Seán Thomson, Jacob Paul, Sahmay Abplanalp Ellis, Emma Hjorth, Ellen Jose

For six keen trampers, their Whirinaki adventure started at 7:30am on a Monday morning, when before hopping in their cars to start their drive they trustingly sampled a wild Auckland leaf that was assured to be edible. Although all participants managed to make it to the start of the track, the team arrived with only seven out of the eight tires they began their journey with; a problem, the team decided, that could be dealt with later. Spirits were high as they began their journey along the flat and scenic route to Central Whirinaki Hut. Whio and waterfalls were pointed at in delight as the group made their way toward Vern's camp, where rain started falling and the trampers shared around snacks. From here, it began to get colder and darker and I'm not gonna lie, spirits did experience a drop. Upon arriving at their destination, the group welcomed the sight of the hut and consumed the most delicious pasta that had ever past their lips, followed by delightful brownies and average at best jokes.

On the second day of their journey, the trampers were once again joined along the river by Whio as they set off for Mangamate hut. Unfortunately for the team, they never reached their destination, as a combination of looming tire changes, problematic knees, unfortunate illnesses and very cold feet (both literally and metaphorically) saw them return to their old friend Central Whirinaki hut. Caves were visited and explored, and the firewood pile was well and truly restocked.

On the third day, the weary trampers said goodbye to their new-found home and successfully changed tyres before setting off on their return journey to Auckland. In celebration of their cold and whio filled journey, the group stopped for Duck Island ice cream (would absolutely recommend) to conclude their adventure. Fun and friendships were made, and warmer socks were bought upon return.

# Margaret's Leap

04/09/20-06/09/20

Company: Jason Rose, Laetitia L-bschr, Abi Hill, Connor Hines, Sascha Wise, Kyle Zhao, Lucy Chen, Kuan Chen, Alex Marsden, Anoek Grosman, Sophie Jenkins and Alison Spera

September had come and it was time for the Snow School Students to reconvene once more... as Snow School Graduates! We left Auckland at around 8pm and arrived at Jenkin's bach in the crisp hour of 1am. I went on a side mission to drop Max off at the base of the Whakapapa Ski Field at this silent hour and was blessed by a sea of cloud below the white cloudless mountain of Ngauruhoe, shrouded by a blanket of incredible stars.

The next morning, we arose with the sun and made our way over to Tukino with our trusty 4WDs. Mt Ruapehu rose proudly before us. Gearing up for the short journey ahead, we reached Marget's Leap following the ridge. The day was sunny, windless and warm. The anchors were set, looped around sturdy boulders with ropes tethered to impressive cams wedged between the weathered rocks.

We perched happily upon 60 meters of hanging ice, and hidden waterfalls, in our safety sling we trust. Lowered by the Munter hitch to the base, we were blessed with mountainous silence and perfect ice. All one could hear was the dripping of water from icicles and the soft rush of the waterfall hidden behind a veil of crisp blue ice. I remember having the wall to myself at



one point, a brief moment alone with the mountain. The snick of the axes catching the ice, my feet kicking firmly into the snow. Above, disturbed snow fell, pattering against my helmet. I blinked them away and grinned.

As I climbed, the ice shimmered a brilliant blue. The waterfall behind the vibrant white wall gushed. My arms swung behind my head, driving the glinting axe in and I pushed myself up with my legs, bringing me higher up the wall. Kick, kick, swing, kick, kick, swing... I fell into a rhythm, existing nowhere but on the wall. My partner steadily pulled in the rope and soon I crested the edge, grinning stupidly at the camera but not really seeing it; for I was simply enjoying the climb up the ice wall.

We ate our lunch under the warm bask of the sun, admiring the barren land surrounding the mountain. The more experienced souls attempted a particularly difficult climb, and us recent graduates could only admire and say Soon, that'll be us. We stayed until 4pm, before making our way back down to the cars.

That evening, our day was complete with a delicious cooked dinner, and alcohol to share around. The room was alive with banter, warm with laughter and soon after silent with a satisfied crew having drifted to sleep.



# Dartbash - Jason Rose

Definitely Just Trampers: Jason Rose, Christine Borland, Emma Strack, Ivan Andrews



"If you fail to plan, you plan to fail." - someone who's never gone tramping, probably.

Like all good times, this one started with leaving Auckland. After my arrival in Christchurch airport I was picked up by my friends Ivan, Emma and Christine. We had originally planned to walk into Plateau Hut in Aoraki. We'd stay there for a week using it as a base for climbing, but a surprise NWer vetoed

the idea categorically. After much consulting with the weather gods, and numerous entrail divination of squashed possums, we decided that fleeing further south would be our best option for something more resembling a tramp than an involuntary canyoning trip.

After a mind-numbing 7 hour drive to Glenorchy later, we passed out in a campsite. We resolved that Ivan and I would climb up the stunning Pluto peak, having climbed up Mt. Earnslaw together a couple of years ago, with Christine and Emma keen to climb the latter. The plan was to walk up the Dart valley until Sandy Bluff, then proceed to bushbash uphill for 800m, negotiating our way to Pt. 1626, crossing into the Bedford valley and then up to Esquillant Biv at 2240m. Given our starting point near Paradise at 400m, the largely untried and arbitrarily obtuse nature of the route, this was an ambitious notion. This was to say nothing of carrying four days of food and climbing gear with us.

The day began with some amount of faff, a healthy quantity of skepticism re my 40L pack and extreme suspicion of my chip only diet. Further concerns were raised about my apparent total





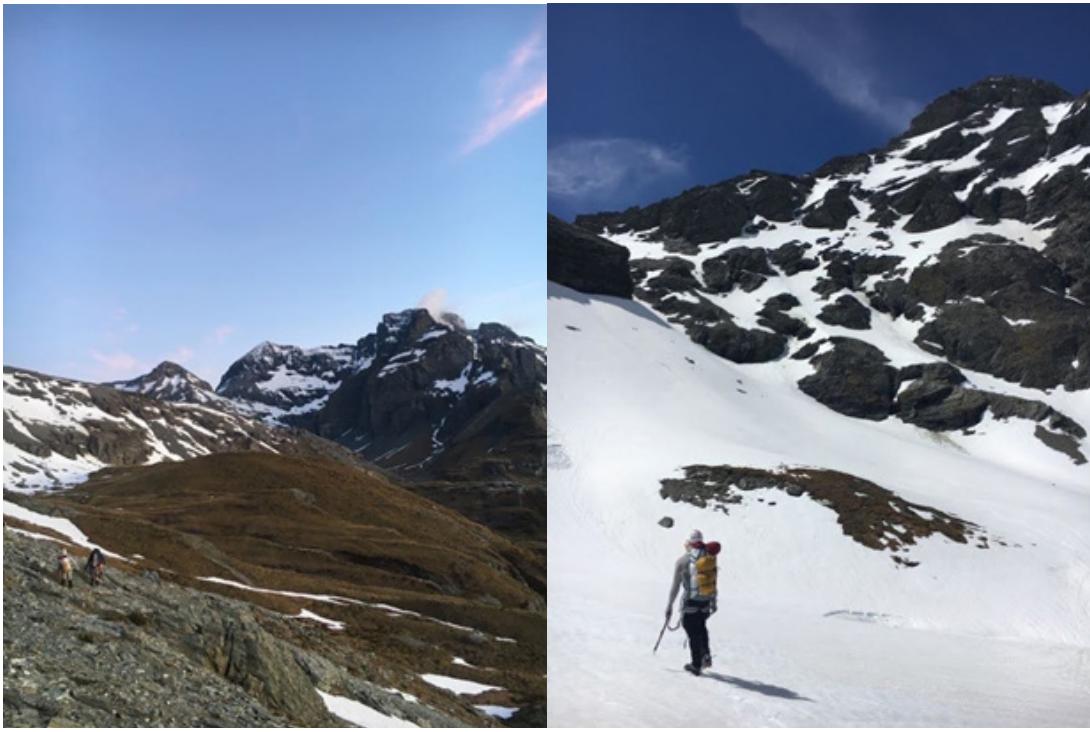
lack of water consumption, which I suspect is why some people believe that I am secretly a pile of potato chips in a trenchcoat.

Such concerns were hopefully put to rest following what ended up being a strange combination of 1200m of bushbashing, hounded by sandflies the whole way, cragging and desperately grasping at vertical speargrass and dracophyllum until we reached the most noble of peaks: Pt. 1626. It was starting to get dark by this point and our ability to find apparently every single bluff, crag and cliff in the South Island on the bash up hadn't helped. If y'all one of those rock climbing weidos, check it out! Fabulous cliffs, literally everywhere. You can't miss them if you tried. Trust me, we did.

We had hoped to get to Esquillant Biv that night, but the route from the Bedford up to Wright Col wasn't obvious, with what appeared to be thin snow over slab. It would have probably gone just fine with the evening freeze, but Ivan had unfortunately contracted some sort of plague and was rather keen to head off to bed, and there was little point pushing on. Both routes did not seem to be in anything approaching passable condition, so we decided to camp in the stunning Bedford valley. Our energy levels were also compromised from the exsanguination inflicted upon us by the swarthy hordes of sandflies, speargrass and dracophyllum. I got to put to the test my 550g synthetic DIY quilt as well, which performed excellently in our 1800m bivy spot.

The next morning after even more faff, we headed off up slopes to Sir William Peak, taking a moment to chill at Shepherd's Pass. Ivan's plague had continued to get worse, so we had no choice left but to bust out the big guns: Ibuprofen and Paracetamol. It was with a heavy heart and a heavier hand that I dispensed those bitter pills, but the situation was clearly dire. Ivan was no longer in front charging up the slope. Something needed to be done.

Fortunately this worked, possibly too well, and we found ourselves engaged in engaging some



engaging grade 2 tramping. Chossy, blank and exposed slabs up to Luncheon Col provided no obvious route up, and Ivan couldn't seem to suss one. After some meandering, I managed to work out a route past the crux, bashing in my lucky piton at the top to throw my rope down for folks to use as a handline. We had a spot of lunch at Luncheon Col, and the summit of O'Leary Pk was enjoyed.



We resolved to sleep in Esquilant Biv that night, given how cute it is, and began our descent of the South East face of O'Leary. Unsurprisingly, we were bluffed out constantly. We eventually managed to find a steep snow-ice slope down to the Birley glacier, but most of us weren't comfortable soloing the down climb. Ivan and I dug a T(ramping)-slot, using his walking axe that he got for his 21st as an anchor. With everyone having rapped past the steep section, I gathered the walking axe and flaked the rope over my shoulders, and began the airy traverse above the Birley glacier and bluffs. It was my intention to downclimb a slightly less steep section, given the fact that one of my crampons were held onto my annoyingly bendy tramping boots with prussik cord. I ended up encountering a brief section of 50-60deg water ice on the traverse, which proved rather engaging. But the hardness eased and provided excellent shaft

plunging conditions down to the Birley glacier, even if the steepness persisted, something that was well appreciated given the regrettable setup on my feet. Wouldn't have volunteered to do it though if I wasn't comfortable with it, there's nothing wrong with leaving gear to rap off, folks.



I suspect the others were a bit worried about me though, and Ivan perhaps a tad embarrassed that I'd done it all to rescue his walking axe, so I was pleasantly surprised to find that he'd climbed up partially to kick me a platform to grab the rope off me. Thanks Ivan! You didn't have to <3

With that whole affair having taken up much of what remained of the daylight, we plonked up over to Esquillant biv. Some lovely Glenorchy locals did an amazing job to accomodate all of us in the extremely small biv, and we all got a cozy night's sleep. Except Ivan. He slept in the tent outside and was very cold. Poor fella :(

The original plan was for myself to accompany Emma up Earnslaw early in the morning, then proceed to kea basin then up over Lennox pass, all the way along the ridge down to the Earnslaw burn track. An ambitious day, but pretty on-brand for us at this point. When Emma and I got up, the mountain was covered in clag. It was a no-go, and we slept in instead. After the requisite amount of faff in the morning, we charged down to Kea basin where we had a critical morale crisis - the NWer from Aoraki had found us! It was raining all along the high peaks and the clag was thick. There would be no high traverse today. With reluctance, we charged down the Rees valley, dreading the 40km roadbash ahead of us if we couldn't cross the Rees river. After a stupid amount of roadbashing and some failed crossing attempts, some encounters with barbed wire and twisted ankles, we surrendered and camped along the rees Valley road. Emma and Christine would attempt to hitch back to the Dart to grab our car and pick us up.



Fortunately for us, the Glenorchy locals were absolute sweeties. Emma and Christine had great luck getting a ride to the car while Ivan and I developed tolerance to sandfly bites. I might have gone slightly overboard with the tolerance bit, ended up getting hives and a wheeze with all of the bites - but Christine once more came to the rescue with antihistamines. Fabulous trip, 10/10 would trip again.

# Basic Bush Skool 2: A tale of 'venture and lernin'

Captin': Andrew Battley

Officers: Ellen Jose and Aidan Sarginson

Crew: Lucy Douglas, Alicia Craig, Devon O'Connor, John Blomfield, Holly Jameson

Now matey, let me tell ye a tale as old as time itself. Settle thyself in, for tis a long 'un, but tis a good 'un.

A club, we arr, at a place of lernin'. It beseeches unto we therefor, that we lern some people some things. When out in the bush, for instance, if ye cannae find yerself, yer in a spot of worrisome, and if ye get caught by a ragin' torrent, then yer truly stuffed. But arrr, we be gettin' ahead of ourselves. Where to start this wild tale? At the start, mayhaps.

'Twas a rainy winter day, as the Captin' and his officers prepared the citylubbers for their venture out into the wilds. As a party of vagabonds naturally formed, the 'xcitement was surging through their hearts. Alas! All across the lands, a plague and pestilence suddenly spread, waylaying the noble party, laying siege to their plans to gather and plot out their journey to the promised lands.

Of course, as ye well know by now, the lands were 'ventually cleansed by the glorious saviour, Bloomin' Ashley of the Fields. Thar battle ain't won yet though, sonny, but we wer' free enough! Alas, in the fray we lost a few of our crew, who sought fairer shores to make them thar wealth and joy. But the remainin' few journeyed valiantly on!

The citylubbers began their careers o' pirating with a training evening, where the Captin' and his officers went over all sorts of things that aspiring pirates need to know you see, such as navigating the treacherous seas by map and compass, what rags to wear and type of hardtack to eat to sustain their bodies for battle. Special focus was put on not gettin' in a spot o' bother with the water, as this thar be of import in these parts.

The day of reckoning arrived finally, the group arrived at Dickeys Flats after a long sail through the night, spotting off at the port of Paeroa for some hardy feeds, and pitched the tent in a swarm of small flying creatures, then retreated into the comfort of their new found home, going over the map to see what awaited them on their adventures the next day.

The next day the resourceful group of wanderers fueled up on partially reheated chips from the night before and set off up the Mangakino stream, testing the waters by following a meandering path into the wilds of the Karangahake gorge. But this taste of adventure was not enough for the toughened group of rapscallions who split from the safety of the path and waded into unknown waters where the stream would be their new commander. The citylubbers began to feel at home in the water as the captain and his officers showed them the ways

of navigating treacherous waters passed down by generations of scallywags before them. But this journey too grew tame for the fearsome bunch who knew it was time to venture away from the stream by the markings on their trusted maps, and so they began the long march up the side of the gorge to seek lands rumoured to be held in the belly of the wilderness. These were the flourishing guts of the wilds and the group faced many a foe along their quest, none quite as chilling as Captain Supplejack who sought to halt the adventurers in their paths. But lo and behold, a clearing appeared, belonging to a friendly pirate named Daly who served them delicacies beyond their wildest dreams and provided shelter to see them through the long cold night.

At the sight of this beacon of hope within the wilderness, the Captin' panicked, and fled from the all too civilised abode, taking with him one of his officers. The two ventured back along their all-too-familiar route in search of dropped treasure, before returning dejected to discover that them thar treasure had not been lost in the first place! In their absence, the remaining officer had valiantly instructed the crew to get themselves lost on a well-formed trail, in order to train them in the ways of navigating the high seas and wilderness.

The now calloused crew felt a storm coming in their bones and knew their homes were calling to them once more to return. Donning their finest rain vests, the crew charted a journey back to civilization where they would part company and return to their boats left moored at the dock. The captain and his officers watched on, burying their bubbling up emotions (as any good pirate does) for they knew their crew were citylubbers no more and would one day go on to captain their own journeys back into the wilds. "Arr maties, I'll be hope'n the tides 'ill guide our ships back t'gether" said the Captin' as he sailed off into the night.

# Skyline Ridge

## Laura Jacks and Jason Rose



The trip started as most alpine trips do. We looked at the weather, said “lets do it”, and posted on the Snow School Graduates Facebook Page the night before. The idea was to cram in my first summit to the highest point of Ruapehu, right before we were due to meet up with a group of friends in the Ruahine ranges. We headed down in the evening, so we would be able get a few hours sleep before summitting the next day.

The conditions were perfect, which allowed us plenty of time for me to slowly get up, testing my nepals on slab for the first time. Everything went smoothly and according to the plan. It was a blue bird day and the rock was lovely. As we neared the ski lifts we stopped in briefly to say hi to the repair guys and enjoy the great music they were blasting through the speakers. Around the same area we also found evidence that someone else had stopped to enjoy the view, in the form of a rusty old nang cracker. We continued on and only needed crampons once, for the single band of ice you'll find on the mountain in mid-summer. The top few hundred metres are noticeably steeper and provide some pleasant “choose your own adventure” scrambling. Eventually you veer left, up the final ridgeline traverse that takes you round the rim of the ice plateau to the summit. However, you would be mistaken if you were expecting a view. It wouldn't be Ruapehu without it's classically thick white fog that shrouds its peaks. This reputation remained untarnished on our journey too.

All in all it was a nice day trip that I would recommend to any snow school graduates that are looking to dip their toes in.



Jason in their dapper glacier shirt



The nang cracker we found



# Advanced Snow School

(14.07.20-19.07.20)

Company: Sophie Jenkins, Tim Johns, Alex Marsden, Sascha Wise, Kuan Chen, Lucy Chen, Kyle Zhao, Campbell Foskin, Laetitia L-bschr, Connor Hines, Abi Hill and Alison Spera



What an incredible journey!

Despite the spanner that was COVID-19, we were blessed for Advanced Snow School to go ahead. And what a learning curve that was!

For someone with limited climbing experience (and didn't even know what an anchor was in the context of climbing) I was one of the oblivious trampers who had less than 4 weeks to get up to speed with the ways of lead climbing, abseiling, and rope management!

After equipping ourselves with the essential gear (me having never owned a harness, let alone prusiks, ATC belay devices, slings and carabiners) and having a few practice runs of lead climbing and abseiling at Stonefields, we were ready to begin our snow school adventure.

A long night's drive jamming to good tunes and lengthy yarns saw us at the Jenkin's bach in the heart of the National Park. Our first glimpse at the weather showed a high of -1°C, cloudy, light snowfall, fairly dry conditions and low to no wind. We headed up the ridge, heavy with our 5 days' worth of food, rope, and gear. A quick lunch launched us straight into our lessons. We watched closely at Alex's teaching of slab recognition, understanding snowpack conditions, and absorbing our new elements.

That night, the wind picked up, roaring a gale around us as we slept through the whirlwind of snow and ice. It was to be a theory day - yet it was productive and insightful, the knowledgeable instructors schooling us fundamental skills in the alpine environment. Here, I brushed up on my avalanche theory, understanding the factors that can impact a mission (wellness,

sleep, fitness, experience...) and making use of the hut beams where we hammered in our rope work for crevasse rescue!

The next few days were just action-packed with putting theory into practice. We learned to walk roped up to avoid falling into precarious crevasses, and how to safely recover our fallen comrades. Admittedly, the instructors got quite cold lying in the snow as us students slowly figured out the process in setting up effective pulley systems - sorry! We also homed in key skills like daggering, multi-pitching, and abseiling off anchors. Anchor building was also a huge part of our lessons and I couldn't believe something as small as a lip balm jam-packed in snow could hold an entire person's weight!

Our nights were filled with hearty laughs, games, and awesome yarns - vibrant and full of activity. I recall well the night we shared the sweet goon, playing games against strangers and having rope climbing competitions.

I'll never forget navigation day; what was promised early morning a day of sun soon fell into white oblivion, ice crusting our jackets and our breath fogging our goggles. But here was ingrained within us the art of leadership and teamwork, always on the alert for the safety of the party. We huddled over the map like penguins, yelling over the roar of the wind: "Where is Sophie's blob?" And then the sky cleared over and the lay of the snow-laden land stretched before us. I loved that walk back down to the hut.

Most memorable was our go at ice and mixed climbing. Rappelling ourselves down to the icy wall where we met with rock and powdered snow, our ice axes glinted as we drove it home, making use of every inch of our crampons and picks. We climbed well past nightfall, our torches beaming as bright as the grins on our faces for every climb we conquered in rock and ice.

And on the day of our descent back down the mountain, where we enjoyed practicing more climbing and crevasse rescue, the sky broke into a brilliant blue - congratulating us on the success that was Advanced Snow School 2020.





# Girdlestone, Tahurangi and SSBRI

17 October 2020

Trampers Climbers Yes: Kyle Zhou, Jason Rosinger, Lucy Chen



Press x to doubt

The middle of October isn't generally the time you go to Ruapehu for ice climbing, so the general mood when I proposed doing exactly that was one of confusion and disinterest. It hadn't been the most snowy season, and lockdowns had made off with what little of it had been. It seemed like folks were happy to call it a day and just go back to sport climbing.

Fortunately, I managed to swindle some friends of mine into coming down with me and having a go. There was a recent storm and consistent southerly winds had kept freezing levels low since then. But more importantly, a window for nice winter conditions (and lovely windslab) had presented itself nicely from Saturday 3AM to the evening. It was a bit of a tough sell convincing folks to get up at 3AM after driving down to the maunga and getting to bed at 11PM, and unfortunately as our friend Sascha had come down with something nasty he couldn't make it. Kyle and Lucy seemed skeptical, having never had enjoyed the dubious honour of an alpine start before, relatively fresh from their advanced snow school.

When the alarm went off at 3AM, I was hoping to be out the door 5 minutes later having packed and prepared everything the night before - but no plan seems to survive first contact with the enemy. Some time later, we began our trudge up the bare skifield at 4:15.



The glow of dawn raced us to the top of the high noon at 2300m. After some puffing, we'd made it there by 6AM. We racked and layered up in the lift house, had a brief snack and trudged off to the base of girdlestone. The off-piste conditions were inspiring, bare blue alpine ice covered with waist deep powder, and delicate wind slab in places. After some swearing and an awful lot of postholing, we arrived at the base of the south face at 6:30.



Kyle immediately charged off up an icy gully, probably equally out of being very cold and very excited. It was steep, hero ice and seemed a lot more fun than the relatively shallow snow and powder plugging.

The swinging and frontpointing continued, the hero ice allowing us to make steady progress up the south face, enjoying and clambering up every steep gully we could find. The crux of the face, albeit a reasonably contrived one given the presence of a much more chill snow slope, was a steepening gully with the top 4m being 70deg ice. It was gorgeously exposed, a number of bluffs and the south face dropping away from under us for 300m. The ice was so good that no rope was necessary, but the going was still relatively slow as we were forced to go one at a time through these chutes and wait for the others, a theme that would continue for the rest of the day.



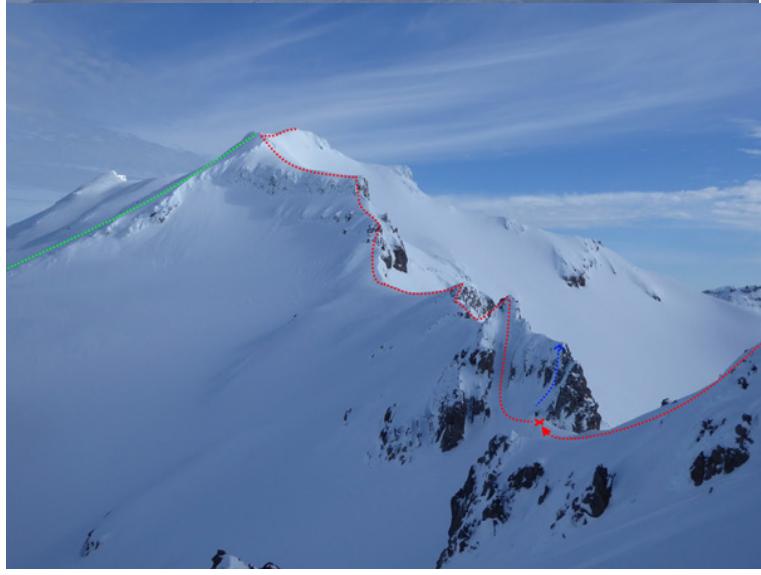
After some more modest ice gullies, we reached the summit at 8:30AM. It had turned into a giant cornice, which made for a very comfy seat once we'd busted out the bothy bag. A detail I've neglected to mention until now is that it was our friend Lucy's birthday, which we now celebrated by lighting a candle on a cake inside the bothy while singing happy birthday. It was outrageously cute and probably the highlight of our trip.



Luckily for us, we still had a lot of route ahead of us. The downclimb from girdlestone onto the ridge, the infamous Gendarme and Mangaehuehu headwall. Most parties choose to bypass these obstacles by sidling onto the Wahianoa glacier, but that didn't seem to be quite in the spirit of things and it wasn't like we were running out of daylight. As we got closer to the Gendarme, it looked like it would offer a variety of excellent climbing opportunities, and Kyle decided he wanted to climb a line of ice on the Wahianoa side (marked in blue). It was about 15m of staircase rime ice, with some 60 degree bulges. It wouldn't get us over the top but again, we had a lot of time having pitched nothing up until this point. A suitably bomber boulder was found to sling, and Kyle set off on his first ice lead.



The ice proved itself to be sunbaked rotten rime (SBRR), and regrettably finding a single trustworthy placement for our single screw proved difficult. A topclip was attempted, then followed in favour of a ruapehu classic - slung frozen choss. It was with some confusion as Kyle proceeded up that I noticed a stake appear right next to me, having embedded itself in the snow. Eventually, he topped out and realized that there was nothing that could be used to rap off, deciding to downclimb a parallel snow gully and clean gear on the way down. It was with some confusion as Kyle proceeded down that I noticed an ice screw appear right next to me, having embedded itself in the snow. After another chip-stop, we put away the rope and boosted up the central steep ice gully of the Gendarme, topping out back on the ridge. Some suffering through 40deg powder later and ice gullies, we'd reached the Mangaehuehu headwall.



It looked like it would go, but it wasn't a very confidence inspiring solo. 8m or so of rotten, 80deg rime, with the Mangaehuehu and Wahianoa dropping away rapidly underneath, but made somewhat less strenuous in places by the ability to chimney slightly between the rime bulges. It was clear that the rope needed to come out. Even if one of us got up there safely, who knows how much of the rotten ice would be left by the time the last person had to climb up.

We bashed in a topclip and with wary excitement, I tied in and charged up the rime. It was a delicate lead - as most rime climbing tends to be. Swinging as hard and as gentle as you dare, for fear of the entire thing breaking off or your placements randomly blowing and having to hold on with what little remains. I had to be very careful to keep my placements far apart, so that the dinner plates from whacking would leave my other placements uncompromised. It was no surprise when a gentle whack in search of a confidence inspiring pick sent a beach ball sized chunk of rime down range. In an airy bridge between rime bulges I attempted to place our lucky ice screw, but all options inspired no confidence - with no amount of digging helping. After some engaging climbing, I hauled myself over the top bulge, sinking my axes into the solid hero ice in the gully above. It was nice to be climbing such a predictable medium after the SBRII3. My excitement was moderately tempered as I traversed under a rime tunnel, losing the ability to swing my axes with any meaningful force for fear of shattering the ice behind them, and getting peeled off. Eventually I got to the easier ground on the ridge to Tahurangi, bringing up Kyle and Lucy on a topclip equalised with a bomber axe, putting the rope away.



"ATTACKING" - Lucy, probably

What remained was the relatively boring but exposed walk along the ridge to Tahurangi. We almost couldn't be bothered, but did it anyway, enjoying the lovely wind that comes along with being on the highest point on the highest mountain on the island. The clag started coming in as well as we descended skyline ridge to the skifield, a surprisingly engaging descent featuring blue ice covered (or not) in varying thicknesses of powder snow, at an awkward and inconsistent angle between frontpointing and flat footing.



After all manner of wacky hijinks, with many skiers and snowboarders wading through the powder above the ski field in a seeming attempt to summit, we were back at the high noon at 2:30PM, greeted by some very confused mountaineers who didn't have packs and strapped planks to their feet and yote themselves down the mountain. Also, chocolate.

After pointing out the hazards of the limited visibility, the sheer volume of skiers and all of the spiky things attached to us, RAL begrudgingly gave us a lift half way down to the carpark. The next half proved to provide outrageously good boot skiing (but apparently too crap for actual skiing) so I ended up getting to the carpark a bit ahead of Kyle and Lucy (and apparently faster than people on the lifts) where I immediately passed out.



Right: The author, BTFO.

# AUTC Photo Competition winners



Above the bushline - "Above the clouds" - Sascha Wise - Overall winner



Native Flora and Fauna - "Fungal Fingers" - Sean Thomson



Below the bushline - “Red roof and Rainbow” - Rosanna Rov



Camp life - “Walking up to the mountains” - Lawrence Pascual



Comedy - “Protect the Endangered Species” - Lawrence Pascual



Native birds - “What’re you looking at?” - Kyle Zhou



Outdoor Landscape - "Where the sea meets the land" - Lawrence Pascual

# Escape - a poem by Linda Kerr

for my mother

I will put up the red tent under my apple tree  
and imagine a new world:

Here I am in wild Fiordland again  
where the kea cry out their songs of fire and anarchy  
ringing from mountain to mountain –  
Where the whio coo and clack their haunting love duets  
and korimako chime like bells in the misty forest  
Where robins sit pertly on my boots  
kiwi scream in the night  
and owls echo

echo

While here in this world we wait for the daily count of new infections  
We queue like sagging puppets for food  
Spaced out around the Countdown carpark

passive      obedient      confined

I will put up the red tent and steal away  
The wildlands are still out there  
The rivers still run clear  
Morning mist still rises  
and mountains do battle with the sky

Even the weather must do their bidding

