

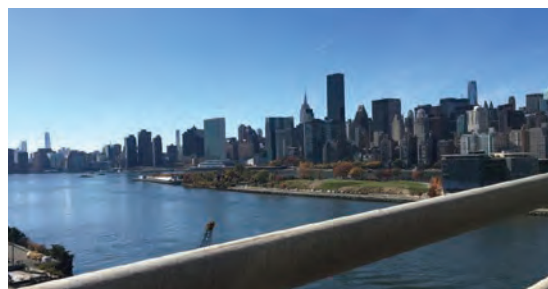
# CATWALK

NEVER SAY NEVER

SPINAL CORD INJURY RESEARCH TRUST



THE OFFICIAL MAGAZINE OF  
**The CatWalk Spinal Cord Injury Research Trust**



The New York Marathon on pg.8 & 9

# THIS ISSUE

## December 2018

Founder's Footnote.....	3
A Message from our International Patron .....	4
Professor Louise Nicholson on Sunday TVNZ .....	5
The Movement Collab.....	5
Auckland Marathon Marathon .....	6
New York Marathon.....	8
Profile: Dr Dinesh Palipana.....	10
Griffith University Research Grant .....	12
Spinal Cord Injury Research Facility.....	13
La Loire et CatWalk .....	14
Auction for Action.....	16
Golf Day & Charity Auction .....	17
From Singapore to Amsterdam .....	18
Alice Pritchard.....	19
Mongol Derby .....	20
Magnum Industries increases support to CatWalk.....	22
Puinui International Three Day Event.....	24
Pot of Gold 2018 Prize Review .....	25
Thank You .....	26
Marathon Tours .....	27

*A special thank you to our supporters who help us produce this magazine*



# Founder's FOOTNOTE

Research is CatWalk's focus. Research that makes a real difference to those living with a spinal cord injury.

It's not long until we cycle our way through the Loire Valley thanks to the generous donation of Anita MacKenzie and her stunning Chateau d'Oyre. Anita has not only donated the chateau but altered a room to make it accessible for the wheelies on this adventure, as well as giving the chateau a wee makeover with new beds, kitchen, grand piano and a touch of paint to make it really special for everyone coming. But wait there's more - Anita and her husband James are also joining us - two magic CatWalk supporters!

CatWalk began in 2005 thanks to a group of friends who wanted to make my life better. It started out as an idea to help me but we very quickly changed into something to benefit everyone who wanted to walk - or in my case - dance again. Research is CatWalk's focus. Research that makes a real difference to those living with a spinal cord injury.

About 18 months ago I stepped away from the CatWalk board to step up my own personal physical training ... it was a really big decision but one my body has enjoyed! Six months ago I told our incredible team at the helm that after 13 years I wanted to step up my physical training even more, as well as assist Sam with Little Avondale. I felt



Catriona with Patron Duane Kale, ONZM

my reward for effort to CatWalk would be best served this way.

Meg in the office would often explain to people who enquired about the makeup of CatWalk that I was the heart, the energy and craziness behind the ideas and all that CatWalk does - and she was the lungs to keep it all breathing. CatWalk is now so much more. The team at the office with Chris, Donna and Lisa, along with a highly motivated and proactive board led by David Pretorius who is "Mr Energiser" and then there's YOU - the runner, the scientist, the carer, the donor - YOU are the arms, legs, kidneys, liver and blood that flows through the veins to make CatWalk so unique and successful now.

What I've learnt is that prior to my accident I was Ms Independence ... I didn't rely on anyone for anything because I could do it. I was going to the Olympics ... drive, determination, competition, attitude ... I could get there. After my accident I was suddenly dependent on everyone for everything, even going to the bathroom and getting dressed. So ... I had to adapt and I learnt that communication is the key to success. Talk to people (what do I need, what person can help, how to share the load, how to share the fun, pick up the phone, send a message) ... communicate, communicate, communicate. Your friends do change ... not because they don't love you but because their world is different. I have been so fortunate to have so many great people around me both prior to my accident, 16 years ago now, and since.

CatWalk is always my first thought every morning, not least because my next thought is always dancing with Sam, on my feet! As we go forward remember to pick up the phone, include people, walk the talk don't just talk the talk because it's so much more fun working with and in a great team whatever your project.



Catriona with Dr Dinesh Palipana

CatWalk is in great shape and I'll continue to support in every way possible and I want you to too. Because, one of the reasons for this shift sideways and why I wanted time to put more into my body is that I can see how close we are to a serious breakthrough. I want this body ready for that imminent clinical trial...strong bones, skin and general health. FUNdraiserers, Researchers, Doctors, Scientists ... Keep at it, because, WE ARE READY.

PS. This part of my footnote is written after a tough couple of weeks in early July. A winter where we lost some really great mates in particular Renata Apatu and Guy Irwin. With a twinkle in their eye every day both gave so much to their families, their friends, as well as many they may have only met once. Both also gave an immense amount to CatWalk in a variety of ways and me personally. I cannot believe I'm adding our thoughts to Prue and Tim Wallis to this. To lose two sons Matt and Nick is just not right. It is with tears cluttering my vision that I'd like to thank their families for sharing them with us all ... we will miss them more than anyone will ever know.

A handwritten signature of Catriona in cursive script.

# A MESSAGE FROM OUR International Patron



*Meg, Zara and Donna*

## Dear CatWalk friends and family

**M**ike and I have had such happy family times recently and that spirit of family is also what I love about CatWalk. I really enjoy hearing about the energy and enthusiasm behind your New Zealand 'family,' This support is reflected in everything CatWalk does towards finding a cure for Spinal Cord Injury.

I well recall hearing about Catriona's first plans to tackle the 2010 New York Marathon, and it's hard to believe it was eight years ago now that my friend Mark Todd joined her on that crazy adventure. For any doubters who wondered about how the CatWalkers would fare - how wrong could they have been.

Of course they both finished the epic adventure in fine style, Catriona possibly in better shape than Mark. And what it really meant was paving the way for others to follow, Eight years later that's helped result in 2018's record breaking effort which you'll read about in this issue.

I still have a way to go to match Catriona's efforts in regards a marathon, but I do know we all share in the sense of pride at what the team has achieved. I'd also like to thank you for the very kind messages of welcome to Lena. Mia is quite delighted to be a big sister!

**Zara Tindall, MBE**

### NATIONAL PATRONS

Sir Brian Lochore, ONZ, KNZM, OBE; Richie McCaw ONZ; Dr Rick Acland, Dion Nash; Lance O'Sullivan, ONZM; Aaron Slight MNZM; Toni Street, Sir Mark Todd, CBE; Sarah Walker, Duane Kale ONZM; Dame Lowell Goddard, DNZM, QC.

### TRUSTEES

David Pretorius (Chair), Vikki Maclean (Deputy Chair), Emeritus Professor Louise Nicholson, Tonia Cawood, Deb Haworth, Kim McWilliams, Grant Sharman, Tom Brady

# Professor Louise Nicholson on Sunday TVNZ

We are making scientific history. One of our leading scientists is determined to change the lives of millions by helping to find a cure for spinal cord injuries.

Professor Louise Nicholson is on a mission to get people out of wheelchairs and back on their feet. But she's doing it while fighting a health battle of her own.

[www.tvnz.co.nz/shows/sunday/clips/never-say-never](http://www.tvnz.co.nz/shows/sunday/clips/never-say-never)



## OUR GOOD FRIEND

Brad Smeele is starting a Movement and we're backing him all the way!



**The  
Movement  
Collab.**

**Watch this space...**

[www.themovementcollaborative.com](http://www.themovementcollaborative.com)

Instagram: @movementcollab



*Brad Smeele*





# Auckland Marathon review

The ASB Auckland Marathon 2018 edition is significant for two events – it was the first time CatWalk has had a team of charity heroes participating, and the first time a wheeled category race was held.

The first Auckland Marathon was held in June 1936, using an Auckland waterfront course. Then in October 1992, the course was changed to include the now-famous “Harbour Bridge crossing”, thereby becoming the first sports event to cross the Auckland Harbour Bridge. The event is run by Ironman who are synonymous with multisport events. Part of the Auckland Marathon is the Charity Hero programme, where selected charities are chosen to be official partners, who then create fundraising opportunities through team runners.

This year, and with grateful thanks to Rachel Smalley, we made our first application to be one of the 16 Charity Heroes and were accepted. Our initial application was for Silver status which entitled us to 60 runners. This soon grew after promotion through our advertising channels and the lovely voice of Brad Smele on the radio encouraged 78 athletes to sign up through the CatWalk website.

Our team covered the full spectrum of distances from 5km through to the full 42km. Also taking part was our Founder Catriona Williams in the inaugural wheeled category pilot event. It has taken many years of lobbying to allow wheelchairs and hand cycles to compete, and it was a resounding success from all angles. We hope that this will now continue as an open category every year. Fundraising was managed through an Everyday Hero Team page and the dollars very quickly rose as the team members created fundraising events, and encouraged their friends and family to donate funds. The day dawned a little wet in Auckland

on the 28th October with the wheeled category setting off at 5.55am closely followed by the full marathon distance runners at 6.00am. The showers cleared and temperatures stayed at a pleasant level for the athletes. The speed was impressive with the first wheeled athlete, Brendon Stratton, crossing the finish line in 1:32:17. Catriona had a flying finish to come in at 1:56:44 closely followed by Neil Cudby 1:56:45 and Brad Hayward at 1:56:54.

It was special to see so many of our team kitted out in their 2XU CatWalk branded singlets, shirts and the now infamous ‘CatSuits’! Emeritus Professor Louise Nicholson completed the half marathon being shadowed by the crew from Sunday TVNZ who had been following Louise on her build up to the marathon as part of their programme on the research being undertaken at the Spinal Cord Injury Research Facility at Auckland University. This programme screened on TV1 on Sunday 18th Nov and can be viewed at this link: <https://www.tvnz.co.nz/shows/sunday/clips/never-say-never>

Once finished, the athletes made their way to our CatWalk marquee to share stories, congratulations, refreshments and to receive their special Charity Hero medal – and we have it on very good authority that the CatWalk marquee was the place to be with the ‘best vibe’ around! Team CatWalk will be back in 2019 so if you are keen to join the team, please check our website on how to register.





# A great fundraiser

A massive contribution from all team members and supporters has seen over \$130,000 raised for spinal cord injury research.

Not only was this a great fundraiser but also a great “friend-raiser” with so many new people learning about CatWalk and our mission of getting people out of wheelchairs and back on their feet.



Team CatWalk will be back in 2019. Check our website on how to register: [www.catwalk.org.nz](http://www.catwalk.org.nz)







Dinesh is now employed full time by the Gold Coast University Hospital as a Resident Doctor.

*Dinesh and Mum*

## PROFILE: DR DINESH PALIPANA

Recently I had the pleasure of meeting Dr Dinesh Palipana while visiting the Gold Coast where he is currently living and working.

**D**inesh is a likeable young fellow from the get go, he speaks quietly and humbly about his personal achievements in life. His major achievement is how he has managed the curveball he was thrown to be able to march on with his original Life plan - the life plan that he had imagined before suffering a Spinal Cord Injury and being confined to a chair.

In 2010 while in the early part of his third year of Medical School at the Griffith University, Dinesh was commuting from Brisbane as he did on a daily basis when he lost control of his car in the wet conditions on the Gateway Bridge. The simple single vehicle accident resulted in Dinesh receiving a C6 neck injury resulting in Tetraplegia. Dinesh's life changed dramatically on that day and all hopes of becoming a Doctor were dim.

After seven months in the Princess Alexandra spinal unit Dinesh returned home to his new life living with his parents in their Brisbane home. The life changing accident continued to take its toll as his parents marriage suffered and eventually they separated under the pressures of dealing with a son in



*Dinesh at work*



a chair, in his own words 'Dad simply slid off.' Sadly this is another example of how many casualties in total there actually are when a loved one suffers these debilitating injuries.

After rehabilitation of both body and mind Dinesh was keen to continue his studies back at Medical School. Disregarding any qualms as to why he could not be a Doctor in a chair, 2015 saw him relocate to the Gold Coast and with his rock solid mother by his side he recommenced his degree. Sheer determination and hard work saw Dinesh complete and graduate from his Doctor of Medicine degree in 2016. Not bad for someone who had had a few years away from the medical jargon.

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## The simple single vehicle accident resulted in Dinesh receiving a C6 neck injury resulting in Tetraplegia.

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Dinesh is now employed full time by the Gold Coast University Hospital as a Resident Doctor. The majority of his time is in the Emergency Department of the hospital where he is quick to say that he loves his place of employment as it is a great place to work. His colleagues, both nursing staff and fellow Doctors are very supportive and willing to lend a hand when needed.

Never has Dinesh had a patient that hasn't been acceptive of his presence. The chair goes unnoticed in critical situations which allows Dinesh the confidence to go ahead with consultation and treat as required. There is not a great deal that Dinesh cannot manage in his day to day role. Obviously consultations are easy, he has conquered dressings and sutures and all things that an emergency situation entails but does admit that Gynaecology and Rectal examinations are challenging and for the patients sake he calls on someone else to help if these procedures arise. (This was probably not for publication but after laughing out loud myself I thought it was too good not to share!)

When Dr Palipana has time off he keeps himself occupied by catching up with friends and is an avid music fan as well as his fondness for cars and aviation. His other this occupation that he is very passionate about and one very close to his heart is the SCI research he is currently working on. Who better to research SCI than a Doctor in a chair himself?

Dinesh is working on a new way of rehabilitating and restoring function to all that that have suffered a Spinal Cord Injury. He hopes that through his studies patients will be able to regain function to a degree of making day to day life simpler and with dignity.

At the Griffith University across the road from the GCU Hospital Dinesh and a team of other researchers are busy trialling a specialised helmet. The helmet is equipped with electronics that supply Electrical Stimulation from

Dinesh Palipana is a Doctor with a difference and is endeavouring to make a difference to the people currently experiencing their life in a chair.



the brain to the lower limbs in hope of rewiring the actual cord. This mechanism is to encourage a thought process that in turn will then promote function by rewiring the spinal cord. In conjunction with the helmet, Buspirone a drug which works on the central nervous system will be administered. The team are using this approach as they have followed intently over the years the effect that this exact drug has achieved when working with animals. They would like to expand on this early work that has shown great promise.

When I asked if there is anything that your project requires to go full steam ahead, Dinesh replied that they actually need time. Time to test, time to trial. He would also like to see that one of his colleagues who he described as a World Class Researcher receive funding to stay in the team as he is the driving force behind it all and it would be at the detriment of the trial if they were to lose his expertise. Dinesh Palipana is a Doctor with a difference and is endeavouring to make a difference to the people currently experiencing their life in a chair.

- Ginny Warby



“We truly hope to bring this therapy into the clinic as soon as possible.”

*Gold Coast campus Editorial credit: / Shutterstock.com*

# Griffith University **Research Grant**

Dr Aaron Gilmour: From the sweet potato (kumara) farm to spinal cord repair

I grew up in the small town of Dargaville, New Zealand. In 2004 I moved away to attend university where I completed a Bachelor of Science and then a Master of Science in Physiology at Massey University.

I started a PhD at Massey University but then transferred to Australia to continue my PhD at the University of New South Wales and completed the PhD in Biomedical Engineering in 2018. My research experience has given me the passion for understanding the nervous system and how we can improve the quality of life for individuals who suffer from traumatic injury or diseases of the nervous system.

Thanks to the funding from the Catwalk Trust to support the Spinal Injury Project at Griffith University, Queensland, Australia, I have now joined the team of 35 scientists who are working on delivering a cell transplantation therapy for spinal cord injury with the hope of commencing clinical trials in 2020.



*Dr Aaron Gilmour*

The Spinal Injury Project team works across two of Griffith University’s campuses, the Nathan campus in Brisbane and the Gold Coast campus.

Most of my time is spent at the Gold Coast campus which is right next to the Gold Coast University Hospital to give us close connections with clinicians. Importantly too, we can see the beaches and the hinterland from our laboratory’s windows so while we work intensely in the lab, we can be looking forward to the weekend’s activities in this wonderful area of south-east Queensland.

My role is to study and understand how a combination of special cells taken from the nose can be used to facilitate wound healing in the spinal cord. In particular, I am working on optimising the spinal bridge implant through the inclusion of the best combination of cells. While the current nerve bridge transplantation technique produces good results, we are always trying to improve it. We truly hope to bring this therapy into the clinic as soon as possible.



# Spinal Cord Injury Research Facility

PROGRESS UPDATE - NOVEMBER 2018



*The SCIRF Team*

It has been another exciting year in the Spinal Cord Injury Research Facility (SCIRF) as the team works on a number of projects developing treatments for spinal cord injury.

It has been another exciting year in the Spinal Cord Injury Research Facility (SCIRF) as the team works on a number of projects developing treatments for spinal cord injury. This is due to the support from the Catwalk Trust in establishing the Facility, which has allowed us to develop a team of researchers and attract funding from other sources to develop and grow our research.

## Blocking chronic inflammation

The project to test an existing drug (Tonabersat) to stop chronic inflammation, being carried out by Sheryl Tan and Barbara Fackelmeier and an MSc student Miran Mrkela, is almost complete and we will have results by the end of the year.

## Gene Therapy

A number of projects are underway to test gene therapy approaches to treat spinal cord injury. Following on from his PhD work that used gene therapy to break down scar tissue along with exercise rehabilitation, Jarred has now started a project using this approach after chronic spinal cord injury. If this shows the same benefit as his previous study, this has real potential for people currently in wheelchairs, as well as those with new injuries. A PhD student, Connor Clemett, has started a project to combine this approach with cell therapy. Connor will inject cells into the injured cord that wrap around the nerve cells and improve their connection with other cells. This approach aims to make the new connections that occur stronger, leading to even better outcomes. In future we hope to use a new technology where we can grow these cells from an injured person's skin cells and by using their own cells increase the chance that such an approach will be successful.

## Use of multielectrode arrays for guidance of nerve cells

This work, being carried out by Dr Sam Paritt and Dr Zaid Aqarwe (a holder of the prestigious Neurological Foundation

O'Brien Clinical Fellowship) and a PhD student Anusha Dravid, to use electrical signals to promote nerve cell growth in the cord is progressing well. We have developed ways of testing the effect of electrical signals on nerve cells taken from the spinal

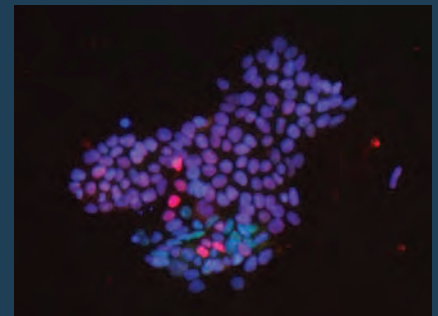
cord and we are able to place out electrodes onto the spinal cord and take readings before and after injury. We will now study the changes in signals that occur with the goal of stimulating the spinal cord to return the signals to normal.

## Targeted drug delivery

A project, carried out by an MSc student Julia Newland, to test the use of small packages (called liposomes) to targeting drugs directly to the site of a spinal cord injury has been completed. This approach means drug will not be broken down in the blood stream and smaller doses can be used, which will mean that unwanted side-effects are less likely. We found that we are able to target these liposomes to the cord. The next step is to further develop these to improve targeting to the cord and then test drugs known to protect the spinal cord after injury to see if targeted delivery gives better results or means we can use lower doses.

## Simon O'Carroll

*(on behalf of the Spinal Cord Injury Research Facility team)*



*Image of cells that are being grown by Connor Clemett that will be injected into the spinal cord to protect the new growing brain cells*





## Auction for Action EVENT REVIEW

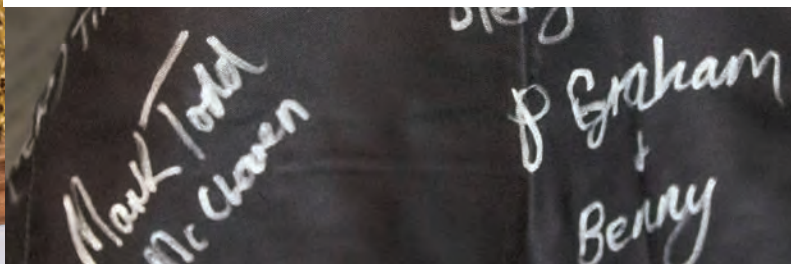
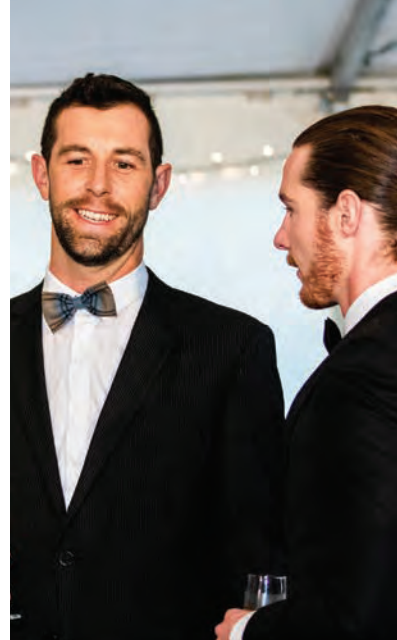
On Thursday 11th October, Eventing Canterbury were humbled to host 'Auction for Action 2018' at the South Island National Equestrian Centre. 110 guests were treated to a 3 course meal and international award winning wine sponsored by Takapoto Estate Wines, truly bringing the black tie auction to life!

The evening began with a very real message from CatWalk SCI Trust Ambassador, Hamish Ramsden, who engrossed the entire audience with his journey and what it would mean for him to be able to walk again, followed by Catriona Williams sending a heart felt message from Making Strides. The fast paced live auction then took place with auctioneer extraordinaire, Ben Lill in full cry with assistance from former Black Cap and MC for the night, Chris Harris. The silent auction winners were then announced, leaving the magazine subscriptions till last which had the whole marquee drum rolling in anticipation!

We would like to thank all those individuals and businesses who donated an item to the auction, or sponsored, partnered, supported and supplied to the event and making it possible to run. Lastly, thank you to all the guests who attended the evening. Without all your generous bidding and donations, we would not be able to proudly announce we raised \$23,632.39 for the CatWalk Spinal Cord Injury Trust.

Eventing Canterbury hope this will make a difference and further research and support for the CatWalk SCI Trust.

*Photography: Mel Moments - M & M - Photography*







# Golf Day & Charity Auction

It was a 20 degree day, blue skies and very little wind when over 80 golfers gathered at Whitford Golf Club, Auckland for a Golf Day & Charity Auction in support of CatWalk and Shaun McGivern's New York marathon fundraising effort.

Most commented that this was a perfect way to spend a Friday! The course itself was in outstanding condition after having been flooded only two weeks before and the standard of golf ranged from the weekend hacker to on occasions, the sublime. Given the format was ambrose (i.e. a team of four choosing the best shot and proceeding to then hit their next shot from there) it was an attractive and relaxed format for a number of people. There was a lot of good natured banter between the teams and as a result, continuous laughter could be heard all over the course.

Intermixed with the golf was a betting hole where the gambling golfer bet an amount of their choosing that they could land their shot within a set radius surrounding the hole in order to double their money. Golfers were also given the opportunity to

further part with their cash in a putting competition where they were required to beat Shaun in a putting competition (not that hard) and go in the draw for a chance to win a \$250 restaurant voucher kindly donated by Broadbent Insurance.

The competition was hotly contested and in the end was won by Mark Pusinelli, Ben Smythe, Alex Lancaster and Ben Hawkins. Closest to the pin was won by Gerard Peterson and longest drive by Paul Gray.

The auction was extremely well supported by a number of generous individuals and in the end, the day managed to raise \$20,000 for CatWalk. A huge thank you goes to Shaun McGivern, Matt Reilly, Shona Winterstein, David Pretorius and Sarah McGivern who worked tirelessly to make the day a great success.

## SPECIAL ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS:

**Hole Sponsors:** Haigh Lyon Lawyers, Broadbent Insurance, CKL, The Business Advisory Group, Bayleys and Unlimited Potential.

**Auction Items donated by:** Broadbent Insurance, CKL, The Business Advisory Group, Bayleys, Unlimited Potential, Haigh Lyon Lawyers, The McGivern Family, Luv a Pie, CSM Sport & Entertainment, Warner Bros, Aja Rock, SkyCity, Pita Pitt, David Pretorius, and Triumph & Disaster



# From Singapore to Amsterdam

Last magazine we shared the beginning of an epic journey by two intrepid travellers Mark and Kent who planned to travel from Singapore to Amsterdam on their trusty motorcycles.

This all came about after Mark had spent many hours travelling “over” countries in a plane – how good would it be to actually see these countries first hand.

With their self- confessed lack of mechanical knowledge, first aid or travelling long distances on a motorbike – this trip was always going to be one to remember.

Now settled happily back in NZ, Mark is proud of their achievement in reaching Amsterdam and in relatively good condition apart from one motorbike which gave up on the last day 60k from Rotterdam.

The memories they have brought back are priceless. The vastness of Mongolia, the starkness of the mountains in Tajikistan and the friendliness and willingness to help from the people they met. Iran in particular stands out as a place with overwhelming friendliness and hospitality. “We only had to stop for a minute before the locals were

“New Zealand is known by many of the people we met – especially those in Georgia who are great rugby fans and love the All Blacks!”

coming out to chat, offer us refreshments, assistance with our bikes or even a roof over our head for the night”.

While communication was difficult with not a lot of English spoken in some areas, Mark said they were still able to converse. It’s amazing what sign language you can do with your body – hands and feet can speak volumes! If you want some chicken – you flap your arms and make a noise like a chicken – easy!

A lot of people they met were concerned with how their country is perceived in the outside world. The majority of people are hard-working and want nothing more than to provide a safe and happy life for their families.

While there were some trying times along the way, both Mark and Kent would not have missed this adventure for anything, and they were also happy to receive donations for CatWalk through support from their friends and family raising

\$3335 for spinal cord injury research.

*Their full blog of the trip can be found at <https://singaporetoamsterdamcatwalk.wordpress.com> and makes for really great reading and viewing!*





# Alice Pritchard

Alice Pritchard had a very special reason to be part of Team CatWalk for the New York Marathon 2018.

Ten years ago our lives changed, we started on a journey none of us could have foreseen when Dad was left as a high level tetraplegic. My family has come back from the initial shock and trauma of having our father go from an active full of life 61 year old, to a man who only has movement and sensation from his shoulders upwards. He is totally reliant on others (90% my mum) for absolutely everything, from having a drink of water to sitting in his wheelchair. He is a living inspiration with his attitude of making the most of everyday, enjoying people and everything he experiences.

Alice has been truly phenomenal by fundraising \$55,000 for spinal cord injury research. One of her fundraising events was held in Wellington and Alice tells us about it here:

On the 1st of September this year I held a black-tie dinner as a fundraiser for CatWalk Trust.

The function was held at Dockside in Wellington and we had a fantastic turn out of over 100 people. Everyone turned up in their glad rags – who doesn't love a chance to dress up, especially coming out of a dreary winter!

We had a gorgeous flower wall from Blush & Co, which was great for photos and really helped make the room look special.

The Master of Ceremonies was Charlie Meyer and he did a fantastic job, he was engaging and witty, together with a brilliant speech from Cat Williams herself making the formal part of the evening really interesting.

But the highlight of the night would have to be the auction. We had Daniel Coulson from Bayleys as the auctioneer – he was flown down especially from Auckland by Bayleys and was the top man for the job. We auctioned off about ten items, from luxury holidays, executive luggage to golf and rugby packages and the participation was amazing, bids were flying round the room. We raised \$26,000 through the auction itself and a total of \$30,000 for the evening.

There was good food and wine, great company and new memories made but most importantly a very successful fundraising event for CatWalk Trust, so that's a win for me!





Eion Kemp

# Mongol DERBY

In the last issue we previewed Eion Kemp who was taking on the Mongol Derby and raising funds for CatWalk. Eion completed the derby and has given us a first-hand account of what this epic event entailed and some of his personal experiences.

Some time has passed, and I have been able to reflect on the Mongol Derby and can now fully appreciate what an amazing adventure it was. A once in a life time experience that I would whole heartedly recommend. The Mongolian people, their hospitality and the natural untouched landscape are truly outstanding.

As we headed out I started to get an appreciation on how vast and untouched Mongolia was. You would go for miles without seeing fences, towns were just a blip and were very run down with shanty type buildings. Gers - a portable, round tent covered with skins or felt and used as a dwelling by nomads, were dotted around the country side with no set pattern and at times few and far between.

A couple of days at the start camp entailed sorting and stressing about our 5kg of gear that we were allowed to carry, briefings on the course, horses and especially how to hobble them if you were intending on camping out – which came in use a couple times. We also had a medical briefing from the medics – most of whom

came from Military backgrounds or war zones. They were all very highly trained and did a brilliant job.

After all the briefings we finally got to ride the infamous Mongolian horses. My first experience of this was, Wow if this is what they are going to be all like I will love this. However, the saddle took a bit to get used to. So, after a very uncomfortable ride, feeling like I had not found my balance or my comfort level the ride finished.

Race Day – excited, gear ready, nerves running, everything packed and now to weigh out our gear. 5kg was all we could carry for the Derby I got through with 4.7 Kg. As we were getting saddled we were advised that the start had been delayed for 24 hours due to a satellite issue meaning our spot trackers wouldn't work.

The highlights of the derby – some positive and some not so much were. My first horse on the first day was not keen on moving particularly fast. It was a painful and frustrating 5 hrs



mainly at a walk. About an hour into the 3rd leg with a fresh horse, the heavens opened with great gusto. It was pouring down at a rate of knots with golf ball sized hail added to the mix. Visibility was shocking, and all the pony wanted to do was stand still and all I wanted was to keep going as we had an 8pm cut off to make and I was trying to get to HS3 before then. The track I had been following on the GPS was no longer viable as the gully now had a fast-flowing river flowing through it. A couple of times I went to go across the rivers but I could feel my horse legs been pulled down stream while trying to cross, so we got out of that very quickly. I was pleased to walk into HS3 bang on 8 pm that night, I can say that I have never been so sore after a day's riding.

Day Three saw me heading out in pursuit of the large group that passed me as we were all trying to get to a house that was about 12km into the leg to spend the night there. Unfortunately, I didn't quite make it by the 8pm cut off and spent the night sleeping under the clear Mongolian sky. The pony and I spent the night on top of a flood bank, with the pony hobbled and loosely tied to me so I didn't lose him. We spent a pretty wakeful night. I was very surprised by the number of planes that fly over Mongolia - they were constant.

Day Four had me riding solo through some of the toughest country side that we had experienced on the Derby so far. The next leg which had 2 big climbs reaching peaks of around 1800m above sea level. I picked out a Nadaam (Mongolian Racehorse) horse, who began to struggle as we neared the top of the first climb. I hopped off and walked him for a bit, to let him recover, but when I tried to ride him again he did not want to be ridden so we started to walk the remaining 15-18km. After about 5-7km of towing my horse I could see I wasn't going to make HS 15 in time for the 8pm cut off. At this point I knew I was dealing with a sick horse and I pushed the button for vet assistance and began a long wait. After 3 hrs of waiting I stopped a local, using sign language I convinced him to let me use his mobile to call the Operations Base. It turned out my help signal had not gone through and they had lost my tracker signal. I ended up walking back about 1.5 km to meet up with some other competitors staying with a local family and waited for the vet to come in the morning to look after the horse.

Day six I set out with 3 others. Part way through the day I needed to adjust my stirrup length. Sounds straight forward but these horses don't have a lot done with them and my boy started to spin himself around. After having his bum pointed at me a few times I decided to let him go, thinking with 3 other horses here he wouldn't go far. Big Mistake!! He took off at a rate of knots, all I could think of was bye-bye gear and horse!

As I stood there looking dumb struck as my supposedly trusty steed was galloping across the vast steep of Mongolia, one of our group started galloping off towards a Ger and found a group of 4 herders sitting around having a smoke. JD waved around a 50K (\$25) note about and persuaded them to help us catch the horse. One whizzed back to pick me up on his motor bike and the other three jumped on bikes and sped off over the countryside to help us to try and catch the renegade horse. It took about 10 minutes to find him. We did a lot of zig zagging across the countryside so anyone watching my tracker would have wondered what the heck I was up to and wondered if the ribbing they gave me about getting lost was coming true.

Day seven was where we encountered one of the best stations on the Derby as one of the herder's wives could speak English. Boy, had she laid it on! Fresh bread and good bread not like the stale donut type of bread that we had had for the last 4 days, jam and the best thing of all a block of chocolate!! Being a huge chocolate fan (code for addict) this was a sight for sore eyes, and best of all we were first there!! We sat around and chatted to our host who was most interested in us, our names and where we were all from. By the time we had finished the Derby she had found us all on Facebook and had friended everybody.

The final day of the derby started off in bleak weather which cleared as we drew closer to the finish line. We rode off to our last leg of this amazing adventure in high spirits and as we drew closer to the finish line the excitement ramped up another level. As we approached the final corner three of us rode in a line as we galloped to the finish line. We could hear all the organisers, crew and previously finished competitors all whistling, yelling and cheering us over the line. We dismounted while shaking hands and receiving congratulatory hugs and a beer was place in my hand. That

did go down well! We waited for our horses to cool down and have our final vet check, there was a lot of catching up with fellow competitors.

This was one of the hardest things that I have ever done in my life and in lots of ways the most rewarding. The Derby was a twofold challenge, the adventure itself and the fundraising component. I am pleased with the results and to hand over \$30,000 to CatWalk Trust. The people I have met through this adventure, the Mongolian people and their hospitality, the beautiful landscape will always stay with me".

Thank you Eion from all of us at CatWalk for taking on this challenge and making such a generous donation towards spinal cord injury research!

“We sat around and chatted to our host who was most interested in us, our names and where we were all from. By the time we had finished the Derby she had found us all on Facebook and had friended everybody.”



# Magnum Industries increases support to CatWalk

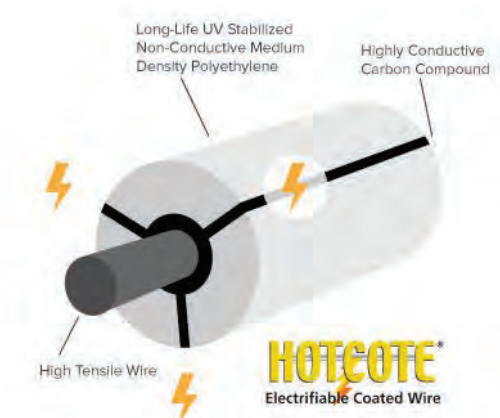
Magnum Industries have been a generous supporter to CatWalk and are now extending that generosity with the following offer on the very popular Hotcote® fencing wire.

Hotcote® uses high tensile wire, coated in a highly conductive carbon compound which can deliver electric shock. It can be used as your entire fence or in conjunction with Horsecote® and/or Horserail® to create the exact look you desire.

Hotcote® was designed predominately as an Equine Fence Wire but can be used for various stock applications along with its great appeal as a sighter wire. Installation hardware features a patented procedure for attaching, joining and tensioning the coated wire providing a clean, neat look while being safe for both horse and rider.

There is no stripping, crimping or notching needed and the end result is a properly installed fence with no exposed wires.

- Available in black and white.
- The wire is available in 400mt rolls at a price of \$0.95c per metre plus GST and Freight / \$380.00 per roll plus GST and Freight.
- All YOU need to do is visit the Magnum Facebook page [www.facebook.com/magnumindustriesltd](https://www.facebook.com/magnumindustriesltd), “Like” the page and place your order to enable this donation.





Magnum® are manufacturers and suppliers of quality Horse Walkers, Aqua Walkers, Horse Stables, Stable Hardware, Feed/Water Bins, Mare and Foal Crushes, Horserail and Gates for the Equine and Agricultural Industries. They have spent many years perfecting their products and work closely with their customers to ensure their exact needs are met.

They take pride in being innovative, flexible and committed to quality workmanship. A solid reputation has been developed over the 20 plus years of operation with all products bearing the 'magnum® Built' label meeting their guaranteed standard of being rugged, reliable and built to last.

Their generous ongoing support enables CatWalk to continue funding the critical spinal cord injury research that is being undertaken and we are extremely grateful. If you are thinking of purchasing any fencing or equine supplies – please support Magnum!

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We always strive to provide the safest environment for our horses – that is why Magnum Hotcote® is used extensively around Little Avondale Stud.

- Sam Williams, Little Avondale

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## Hotcote Specifications

- 1 Strand of 12.5 gauge (2.5mm) electrogalvanized ASTM class 3, high tensile wire, 180,000 PSI, min. breaking strength 1,320 Lbs, medium density UV stabilized polyethylene plastic
- 3 conductive strips
- Overall diameter: .295" +/- .005"
- **Roll length:** 1320' (402 m)
- **Weight:** 70lbs
- **Dimensions:** 25" x 25" x 5.5" (64cm x 64cm x 14cm)





# Puhinui International Three Day Event

Puhinui International Three Day Event is again thrilled to be joining with CatWalk in celebrating and delighting in the iconic event which is “Puhinui”.



*Ewan Kellett*

This has to be one of the most stunning locations for eventing in the world – a view shared by FEI President Ingmar de Vos when he visited the Puhinui Reserve on a trip to New Zealand in 2015. He was impressed by the sea surrounding the cross country, and the planes flying overhead added a novel dimension.

CatWalk founder Catriona McLeod, as she was then, was 2nd at Puhinui in 2001 by 0.1 to the winner, CatWalk Ambassador Kate Lambie. Catriona competed every year up until 2002.

“Puhinui is a special event for all sorts of reasons and one very significant one for me – Sam proposed to me while in Auckland for the 2000 event!” Eighteen years on and a lot of changes have taken place but CatWalk is now a well-established partner of Puhinui International Horse Trials.

With a few kiwis having headed over to Adelaide for the 4\* competition there, the field for the Honda New Zealand 3\* competition is wide open but few people would bet against Samantha Felton finally pulling off the big win. Last year Sam campaigned in Australia but this year her stable stars will be out in force at home. She may have three starters in the big class, and two more in the 2\* so she will be hard to beat.

Sam has been an Event Ambassador for Puhinui and featured regularly on the Puhinui Facebook page. It has been fascinating for followers hearing her insights into the lead up to the big event. Nothing ever goes 100% according to plan but Sam has revised campaigns and remained on track.



*Sam Felton*

The biggest stars at Puhinui will be the entire Price family. World number 3 and 4 riders Tim and Jonelle Price and their future star - son Otis - will be at the event all weekend. The Prices will be available to talk, walk and generally engage with all who care to visit the Puhinui reserve on the special weekend of December 8th and 9th. This year Puhinui has a new course designer in Australia's Ewan Kellett who has been involved in Asian Games and designing some major Australian Events. He has also competed up to CCI2\* level.

Ewan has been busy in the past few weeks making some exciting changes to this year's cross country tracks, building on the wonderful work of Tich Massey who has taken some time off this year. We thank Tich for an outstanding job over many years.

But most important of all is the special VIP hospitality on offer supporting CatWalk. On Saturday you can share the thrills and spills of cross country while sitting in the superb setting of the VIP hospitality enjoying fine fare just meters from the water jump and on Sunday there's a gourmet lunch while watching the nail biting finale of the show jumping for all classes. There are limited tickets (cost is \$110 per person) which can be obtained by emailing [savannastirling@gmail.com](mailto:savannastirling@gmail.com) or [elise.power42B@gmail.com](mailto:elise.power42B@gmail.com).

Make your way to the Puhinui Reserve for the Puhinui International Three Day Event on December 8th and 9th and enjoy the spectacle of eventing while sharing great food, wine, and the joy of supporting CatWalk – NEVER SAY NEVER!





# Six Senses, Fiji Out of the Ordinary

Other than the odd meat tray, I've never won anything, so it was hugely exciting to win a 5 night stay in a Beachfront Pool Villa at Six Senses Resort, Fiji in the CATWALK Raffle. Located on Malolo Island, just a 45 minute speedboat trip from Denarau Port, this is the latest of 11 Six Senses Resorts and 20 Spas in some of the world's most unique and beautiful places.

**M**y travelling companions were two 15 year old girls who were intent on getting a tan so I didn't tell them about the forecasted cyclone looming over the South Pacific a few days before we left. A kind friend had also sent me an article entitled – "Six Senses Fiji wellness resort offers a solution for stressed out insomniacs" and I was starting to feel slightly apprehensive that we were in for a wacko wellbeing experience. What if I couldn't even get a wine?!

I needn't have worried. It is the ultimate in Fijian beach holidays – the Villas are beautifully appointed with their own private pool and ours was set directly on the beachfront overlooking the crystal clear waters. The girls had plenty to do, including kayaking, snorkelling and tubing. A highlight was going by speedboat to Cloud 9 - a floating platform with surround sound, wood fired pizzas and pristine turquoise water for snorkelling – a hit with teenagers.

With three dining venues to choose from, the restaurants use fresh organic produce and locally sourced ingredients, many from their own impressive herb and vegetable garden. They have a strong commitment to sustainability and interestingly, one of the largest off-grid solar installations using Tesla battery packs, in the Southern Hemisphere.

Six Senses Fiji has done a great job in appealing to everyone and if you are looking for a world class Spa offering massage and specialist therapies then Six Senses, Fiji will not disappoint. To read that they could guide me on a personal path to finding harmony and balance from the inside out made my eyes glaze over – but who knows, maybe I'll go down that path next time. Tip: do not take any notice of Fijian weather forecasts, the weather was glorious and the girls got their required tan lines.

**Leanne Hegan**  
[www.sixsenses.com](http://www.sixsenses.com)

# Thank You

We are always grateful to our supporters who are so generous



*Catriona Williams with Jamie Astwood*



**Waikato Diocesan School for Girls chose CatWalk as their charity for the 2018 school year.**

Many events were organised and hosted at the school which resulted in a very generous donation of \$9300 which was presented by pupil and CatWalk ambassador Jamie Astwood to Catriona Williams.

Our sincere thanks to all the pupils, staff, families and supporters for this generous donation.

## Corporate Supporters





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### Yes, I want to donate to spinal cord injury research.

Please accept my gift: (all donations of \$5 or more are tax deductible)

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OR

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