

CATWALK

NEVER SAY NEVER

SPINAL CORD INJURY RESEARCH TRUST



THE OFFICIAL MAGAZINE OF
The CatWalk Spinal Cord Injury Research Trust



La Loire Cycle Tour June 2019 on pg. 12 & 13


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PRINT: Mirage Visual Limited
MAILHOUSE: Western Mailing
COVER: La Loire et CatWalk


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Founder's FOOTNOTE

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

It's time to celebrate the success of a truly fabulous two year FUNraising project that's just come to an end!

It all started with thanks to a lovely friend **Charlotte Inglis** who decided to invite her friends to the CatWalk Remarkable event in Queenstown as part of her 50th birthday celebrations. One of Charlotte's equally lovely friends, **Anita MacKenzie**, kindly offered their gorgeous chateau as an auction prize for the evening. In turn, this was sold to a generous CatWalk supporter **Peter and Nicola Jeffares**.



Anita and James with the painting by mouth artist and CatWalk board member Grant Sharman MZNM

At the end of the evening and after a few more glasses of wine, I explained to Anita how much we all loved these wonderful CatWalk dinners but how after 18 months work they were all over in 5 hours, and I so wished they lasted longer!

Finally, I got up the courage to ask her if she'd consider something a bit outside the norm: would Anita consider loaning her chateau to CatWalk for a month so we could sell off week long cycling adventures to our loyal CatWalk supporters? A two-fold purpose, not least because cycling in France has always been on my bucket list and also the thought of fun for a whole

month rather than five hours was rather appealing. Anyway, it may have been the wine but without hesitation Anita said "yes, she'd be delighted."

Two years on, a completely full chateau of guests each week with a total of 76 paying guests ranging from my English godson Sam aged 14, to others who were "70-ish, and it's fair to say MISSION ACCOMPLISHED.

Anita and James MacKenzie, our chateau's owners deserve the biggest high five for trusting us with their beautiful holiday home and for preparing it to such a high standard, even suitable for three intrepid wheelies! Our support personnel **Ginny Warby** and **Kirstie Rushmore** who were my arms and legs - along with my husband Sam and good friends **Shane Keating, Kane Sanson and Georgia Lovelady** who were the extended arms and legs - were a magic constant in their ability to all turn their hand to anything and everything with a smile and this incredible energy at all times. We had adopted extra 'hands on deck' **Nicholas, Beatrice, Lou, Susie, Nadine, Enzo and Alexandre**. Without the support of this whole team we couldn't have achieved what we did.

A special thankyou also to our Loire based Kiwi **Nicky Goupil de Bouille** who worked closely with our **CatWalk team** (Meg Speirs, Chris Lovelady and Donna George) to create a very special itinerary. It included visits to France's largest truffle farm, up close and personal with a local French vineyard owner, meetings with the owners of some of the biggest and most famous chateaux in the valley and lunches in specially renovated art spaces just for us.

A guest in week one asked me "what's your definition of success for this event?" Well, that was easy: "I just want every guest to have the very best week in France possible."



Anita with Charlotte Inglis

Sam and I personally had a magical trip however it's our guests I wish to thank the most. You trusted us with one of your special weeks holiday... it is you who made it memorable for all the right reasons. Thank you so much for supporting CatWalk.

The CatWalk FUNraising continues and so does my focus on my body and the grind of the gym, gait training and strengthening. Keep an eye on all the upcoming events, whether it's a marathon (NY/Auckland or somewhere more exotic), a mid-winter dinner, or an intrepid adventure there's bound to be something that appeals so you can support the very best cutting edge spinal cord research. If not then please feel free to create your own, we love the creativity of our CatWalk supporters!

Stay warm and well!
Much love,

A handwritten signature in cursive that reads "Catrina".

Team CATWALK 2019

Running so others can walk

Marathoning for Spinal Cord Injury Research

CatWalk has had a growing presence in the marathon scene and 2019 will be no exception with teams entered in 2019 for both Auckland (20th October) and New York (3rd November).



Auckland

2018 saw a team of 78 take to the streets for the ASB Auckland Marathon. This was the first year of involvement for CatWalk as a selected Charity Hero team. Led by team captain David Pretorius, the athletes walked and ran in the four categories – 5km, 12km, 21km and 42km, with CatWalk founder Catriona Williams taking part in the inaugural wheelchair category race.

It was a brilliant day that concluded with the team and their supporters all sharing some legendary CatWalk after match hospitality at the finish village. Fundraising topped \$130,000 with CatWalk topping the ASB team and individual leader-boards with this great

effort. We are now looking for team members for the 2019 event being held on the 20th October. As part of Team CatWalk, and in return for fundraising, you receive:

- Free entry into the category of your choice
- Free transportation to the start line from designated pick up points
- Charity Hero Commemorative medal
- Charity Hero branded race bit
- Legendary CatWalk hospitality

For further information and to register to become part of the team please visit catwalk.org.nz



New York

CatWalk have fielded a team in New York since 2010 and this year will be David Pretorius 5th entry into this iconic event. Last year our team of 19 athletes joined the field of 53,000 runners who took to the streets of New York to be cheered along by screeds of people as the circuit goes through Manhattan, Brooklyn, Queens, the Bronx and Staten Island.

Fundraising last year totalled \$163,000 which was an amazing effort from the team, and a huge boost to the funding of spinal cord injury research.

Entry into the New York Marathon is only available through accredited agents, and CatWalk are grateful to the team at Marathon Tours who support and escort our team. Marathon Tour's Managing Director, Paul Forward, was one of the runners in 2018 and looks forward to assisting 2019 team members to realise their goal of competing in New York.

For further information, and to register to become part of the team please visit catwalk.org.nz

“Come along and join TeamCatWalk'19 in either Auckland or New York, don the famous 'broken spine' running shirt, and prove to the world that you can use your legs for a good cause!”

- Chairman Dave

Chairman's REPORT

I am delighted to present this report of the progress of the CatWalk Spinal Cord Injury Research Trust for the year ended 31 March 2019.

Our vision is a world free from spinal cord injury paralysis, and during this financial year, we received some incredibly good news regarding our goal.

CatWalk received a significant bequest to the tune of a remarkable \$1,163,400. This generous gift was from the Estate of John Gregory Douglas, all in support of spinal cord injury research. The legacy this contribution leaves is transformational.

As a result of the generosity of our donors, the Trust generated a net profit of \$1,021,538 on revenue of \$2,075,615, after the granting of \$648,317 during the year. These grants, our highest level ever, with detail given below, were given to four scientific research projects of an exceptional nature. As well as these efforts, CatWalk reaffirmed our ongoing commitment to building a cadre of specialised spinal cord injury researchers through ongoing funding of state-of-the-art facilities, sponsorship of educational programmes and the assurance of funding continuation following researcher proof-of-concept.

RESEARCH PROJECTS

- Under the leadership of Dr. Simon O'Carroll at the University of Auckland's Centre for Brain Research, Dr Sheryl Tan continues the investigation into **the use of gene therapy in combination with Hindlimb-specific rehabilitation in a chronic model of spinal cord injury**. A grant of **\$85,292** went towards Dr Tan's work to repair the damaged cord with stem cell implants. The development of a method to express a "scar busting" enzyme within the injured cord, along with exercise rehabilitation, aims to improve outcomes with particular emphasis on chronic injury.
- As part of a three year trial (2019 – 2021), an initial **\$99,800** was allocated to the **Riluzole in Acute Spinal Cord Injury Study (RISCIS)**. Being run out of the University Health Network (Toronto, Canada), this multi-centre, randomized trial aims to prove the safety and efficacy of riluzole as a neuroprotective agent for acute traumatic spinal cord injury. The principal investigator of this study is **Professor Michael G. Fehlings** - a senior spinal neurosurgeon and world leader in spinal cord injury research. The trial is an active international research effort already enrolling subjects in Australia, Canada and the United States. Thanks to donor funding, the addition of two New Zealand sites (Auckland and Christchurch) means the trial will increase its enrolment, which in turn is now expected to be completed one year earlier.

- **PhD student Connor Clemett** has been working in the Spinal Cord Injury Research Facility in Auckland on a two-year study to combine gene therapy with cell therapy. Connor will inject cells into the injured cord that wrap around nerve cells and improve the connection with other cells. This approach aims to make the new connections that occur stronger leading to even better outcomes. A grant of \$114,777 was approved for this project.
- **\$75,000 was granted to Dr James St John at Griffith University (Brisbane)** for his project looking into **optimising the cell combination for three-dimensional nerve bridges**. Dr. St John is investigating methods to repair the injured spinal cord by rapidly growing a "nerve-in-a-dish" that replicates the supporting structure of nerves within the body. This means that nerve bridges with pre-formed stable connections can be transplanted into the injury site resulting in better survival and integration, which hopefully leads to improved functional outcomes.

SPINAL CORD INJURY RESEARCH FACILITY (AUCKLAND)

A number of existing and new projects continue to progress in the lab and **under the leadership of Dr. Simon O'Carroll, together with his team of specialist researchers**, additional funding from other sources is now occurring.

CatWalk approved an amount of \$167,107 to cover the costs of a Technical Manager to manage the day-to-day running of the Facility and provide expert technical support and training. This funding also allowed for a Student induction programme to introduce undergraduate biomedical science and medical students to the fields of spinal cord injury research.

JOINT FUNDING PARTNERSHIP

The Health Research Council of New Zealand (HRC) and CatWalk have formed a strategic partnership to fund research into spinal cord injury. Working together, the goal is to support further innovative research into treatments and an eventual cure for spinal cord injuries.

This exciting initiative will provide project awards to support high quality biomedical and clinical research that will help improve the quality of life of individuals with spinal cord injuries, potentially reducing the impact of these injuries on healthcare services.



David Pretorius

The total budget for this partnership is \$500,000. This funding comprises a 50% contribution from government funds via the HRC and a 50% contribution from CatWalk. An initial sum of **\$91,270** was approved in early 2019.

SPONSORSHIP

The Trust once again contributed **\$15,000** towards sponsorship of the **Brain Bee Challenge**, a competition for high school students in year 11 to learn about the brain and its functions, discover the latest discoveries in neuroscience research and to find out about the exciting career opportunities brain research has to offer. Previous Brain Bee alumni are currently working within the SCIRF as part of the Studentship programme, while others are completing their PhD and Postdoctoral studies.

FUNDRAISING

Taking place in October 2018, the **Auckland Marathon** was significant for two reasons – it included CatWalk's inaugural team participating in the event, and it was the first time a wheeled category race was held. With a massive team of 78 athletes, TeamCatWalk'18 raised the most funds of all charities involved, eventually reaching a magnificent \$130,000.

In November 2018, I proudly led TeamCatWalk'18 in the **New York City Marathon**. Our group raised over \$170,000 and had one heck of a trip telling whoever would listen about CatWalk and spinal cord injury research. Special mention goes to team member Alice Pritchard who raised over \$55,000 alone in support of her father David.

The collective total raised through these two marathons totalled just over \$300,000, and involved over 100 people running various distances in the name of charity, plus a small army of volunteers and friends. We, the CatWalk board, were deeply humbled by the generosity of our followers and the commitment shown by our athletes. It was quite simply heart-warming and inspiring to be involved in these two events, to

OTHER NOTABLE HAPPENINGS DURING THE YEAR INCLUDED:

- Ongoing partnerships with Mitavite, an equine nutrition company, **Magnum Industries**, which manufactures and supplies walkers, stables and hardware for the equine and agricultural industries, and **New Zealand Agriseeds** selling bags of a specialist horse pasture seed mix exclusively for sale by CatWalk.
- **Eion Kemp**, a long time supporter, completed the gruelling **Mongol Derby** in support of CatWalk and raised over \$30,000 for his efforts.
- Our **Pot of Gold** raffle was another success thanks to the donated prizes from Six Senses Fiji and Kauri Cliffs with \$42,000 raised from ticket sales.
- The **Auction for Action** dinner run by **Eventing Canterbury** raised over \$23,000 via silent and live auction.
- **Waikato Diocesan** selected CatWalk as the school's Charity of Choice for 2018 and raised \$9,600 through various community initiatives.
- **Bell Gully** and **Findex** again provided pro-bono legal and accounting services respectively. Their services in-kind save the CatWalk Trust thousands of Dollars, which go straight back into research projects.
- Three significant donations were received from generous donors, of which we give ongoing thanks: Dorothy Cutts, Scarlet Trust, and Derek and Christine Daniell.

witness the momentum behind us all, and I will personally be appealing to everyone involved to re-commit for the 2019 events where we hope to reach similar heights. Thank you to our Board of Trustees and Founder for their unwavering commitment to CatWalk. Thank you also to the CatWalk team - Meg, Chris and Donna - for their endless hard work and sincere interest in the cause over the past year. Thank you to our Patrons and Ambassadors for their dedication.

But most importantly, I would like to thank you, our donors. We cannot make a difference without you. Thank you for your help in funding and helping to find a cure for spinal cord injury.

David Pretorius
Chairman | CatWalk
Board of Trustees



CatWalk Progress Update July 2019

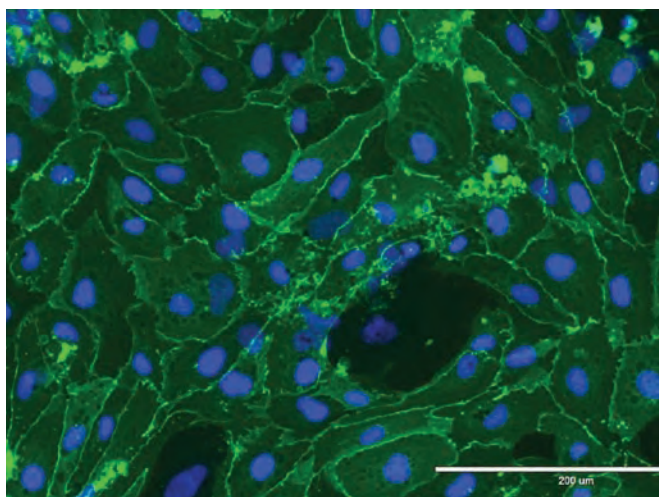
Blocking inflammation

Work is currently underway testing a new drug to block the inflammation that happens after injury, as a way of reducing the amount of damage. This drug works in a similar way to the peptide that we have developed, but is more stable and can be taken as a pill and so will make it much more useful as a potential future treatment for injury.

Gene Therapy

The project using our gene therapy approach to remove scar tissue in chronic spinal cord injury has now been completed. We are in the process of analysing the data which will be completed soon. The PhD project, being carried out by Connor Clemett, to combine this approach with the use of cell therapy is underway. 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.

Connor is currently determining when will be the best time after injury to inject the cells. He is also growing the cells and programming them to be the specific cells we want. The next step will be to inject these into the cord along with the gene therapy. In future we hope to use a new technology where we can grow these cells from an injured persons skin cells and by using their own cells increase the chance that such an approach will be successful.



SCIRF Blood vessel cells

In the future we believe it may be possible to use these to replace lost cells in the damaged spinal cord and repair the damage that has occurred.

Use of multielectrode arrays for guidance of nerve cells

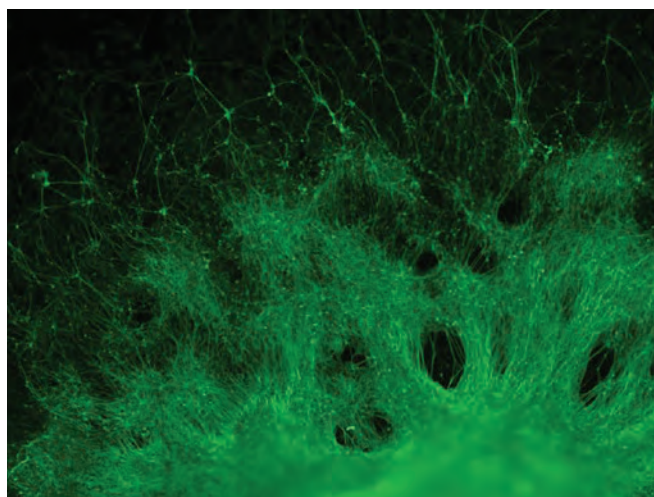
This work, being carried out by Dr Sam Paritt and Dr Zaid Aqarwe (a holder of the prestigious Neurological Foundation O'Brien Clinical Fellowship) and a PhD student Anusha Dravid is looking to use electrical signals along with growth factors to promote nerve cell growth in the cord. We have two new members of the team who are working on this project.

Dr Brad Raos is working on a part of the project to turn human stem cells into spinal cord nerve cells to see how they respond to injury and the treatments. Dr Bruce Harland has joined the team to help us develop the method of placing electrodes on the spinal cord that will allow us to determine how the signals change with injury and then use electrical stimulation to return the signals to normal.

Protecting the blood vessels

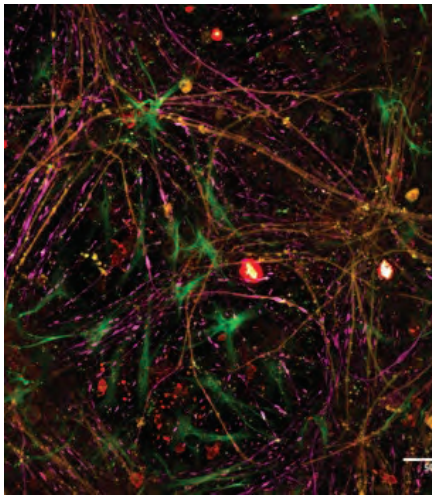
Based on a previous project where we were able to use drugs to protect blood vessels, which are damaged by injury, we are now using stem cells to grow human blood vessel cells. In the future we believe it may be possible to use these to replace lost cells in the damaged spinal cord and repair the damage that has occurred.

Simon O'Carroll
(on behalf of the Spinal Cord Injury Research Facility team)



SCIRF nerve cells

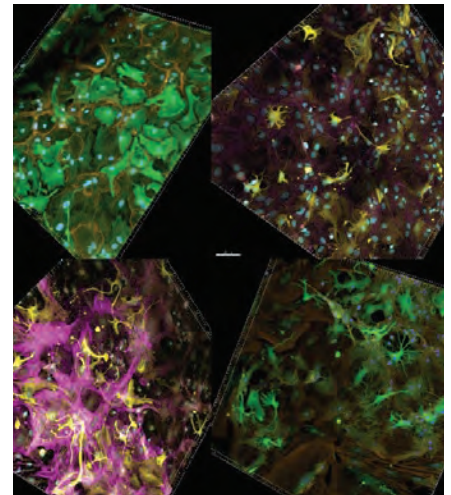
Griffith University Update



2D culture of spinal cord cells forming myelinated neural networks, this method forms the bases for the development of the 3D nerve bridges



Dr Aaron Gilmour received his PhD from UNSW, Australia and his undergraduate degree and master's degrees from Massey University, New Zealand



Studying and developing methods to study the interactions of glial cells in vitro, prior to translation into 3D

The Spinal Injury Project team at Clem Jones Centre for Neuroscience and Stem Cell Research at Griffith University, Queensland, Australia, has recently developed a novel multicellular nerve bridge for the treatment of spinal cord injuries.

The nerve bridges are an improvement on a platform previously developed by the team to generate small three-dimensional aggregates of glial cells. Glial cells are cells that provide support for neurons (nerve cells) and they are essential for aiding regeneration of the injured spinal cord.

Transplanting glial cells will help replace the lost cells and lead to the development of a bridge across the injury site to allow the neurons to grow across and make new connections. Improved outcomes can be achieved if the glial cells are transplanted in a three-dimensional format as this will lead to better cell survival and integration. The glial cells of particular interest are olfactory ensheathing cells, which can be easily harvested from the nose. These cells have strong regenerative capacity and have been shown to be effective in repairing the spinal cord.

“The glial cells of particular interest are olfactory ensheathing cells. These cells have strong regenerative capacity and have been shown to be effective in repairing the spinal cord.”

However, glial cells do not act alone and the team has now determined that combining olfactory ensheathing cells with fibroblasts improves the formation of the nerve bridges.

Currently the team is focused on refining the procedure for producing the bridges and validating their potential for promoting nerve regeneration. One of our PhD students Mo Chen has successfully piloted this method with glial cells harvested from both rodents and humans. Dr Aaron Gilmour has working with Mo to further improve the nerve bridge production by increasing the complexity of the cell combinations

and changing the dimensions of the nerve bridges. Looking to the future of this project, the team is focusing on validation of the nerve bridge with a range of laboratory tests, whilst simultaneously developing the required surgical methods for translation of this device into the patient.

More information about the Spinal Injury Project can be found here: www.sipishope.com



Dr Jarred Griffith – from Auckland to Bonn

“I am very fortunate to not have money as the main limiting factor in my research. I also now have the connections to the world-leading experts in spinal cord injury research which will prove to be invaluable over the next few years.”



Dr. Jarred Griffith

I have recently made the big move to Bonn, Germany, where I am now a Postdoctoral Researcher at the German Center for Neurodegenerative Diseases. If you think that is a mouthful, try to say, “Deutsches Zentrum für Neurodegenerative Erkrankungen”!

To be given the opportunity to conduct research at the German Center for Neurodegenerative Diseases (DZNE) is a great privilege. The DZNE bundles excellent, worldwide expertise as well as state-of-the-art technology and facilities within a single research institution and, understandably, it is highly competitive to get a position here. It is also a great honour to work for my new supervisor, Professor Frank Bradke. He is a distinguished scientist and was the recipient of the prestigious Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz Prize worth €2.5 million. He is very encouraging and allows me to independently explore any path of research that I think is valuable.

This institute itself obtains most of its funding from the German government. This is virtually unheard of for any other research institute in the world and I am very fortunate to not have money as the main limiting factor in my research. I also now have the connections to the world-leading experts in spinal cord injury research which will prove to be invaluable over the next few years.

Frank and his team here made the discovery that molecules called microtubules within axons are essential for initiating neuron polarity and axon regeneration. He showed that using drugs called ephrins, which act to stabilize these microtubules, could greatly enhance axon regeneration and functional recovery after spinal cord injury in rodents. These were just two of his many important contributions to science that led him to win the Leibniz Prize. Frank and I share a goal to complete translation studies. The primary goal of my research here will be to further develop the clinical translation

for the ephrins drugs for spinal cord injury. This will involve me combining the treatment with the rehabilitation strategy that I developed in Auckland, and later, with other treatments to tackle the multi-faceted problem that is spinal cord injury.

I have not left my research in Auckland looking. I will also remain active in supervising the progress of the study looking into the combination of my gene therapy with rehabilitation in a chronic injury model. I am also interested in continuing this work in my new laboratory. Frank and I have recently discovered a novel molecular link between the scar tissue molecules and the synapses that form between neurons. This target could possibly provide a more directly acting therapy. Though these are still early days, however, I am excited for the future of my research of this.

Without the support of CatWalk and the generous donors I would not be able to get to where I am today. I would therefore like to greatly thank everyone that has been a part of CatWalk for the last 6 years that I was funded by them and say that I will always remain part of the CatWalk team. Mit besten Grüßen!

Dr. Jarred Griffin

*Deutsches Zentrum für Neurodegenerative Erkrankungen (DZNE)
German Center for Neurodegenerative Diseases*

Health Research Council Announcement

The Health Research Council of New Zealand (HRC) and The CatWalk Trust have formed a new partnership to fund research into spinal cord injury.

CatWalk and the HRC are working together to support further innovative research into treatments and a cure for spinal cord injuries.

Launched in May 2019, this exciting initiative will provide project awards to support high quality biomedical and clinical research that will help improve the quality of life of individuals with spinal cord injuries and reduce the impact of these injuries on healthcare services.

The total budget for this partnership is \$500,000. This funding comprises a 50% contribution from government funds via the HRC and a 50% contribution from CatWalk.

The key goals and objectives of this partnership are to:

- Fund biomedical and clinical research into a cure and to help develop tools, techniques and treatments to alleviate the effects of spinal cord injury.
- Improve the health and wellbeing of New Zealanders and the efficiency of the health system by improving the quality of life and productivity of individuals with spinal cord injury, thereby substantially lowering associated healthcare costs and the impact on healthcare services.
- Promote and engender a culture of scientific excellence, relevance, innovation and technological advancement in this area of research.
- Encourage meaningful engagement and partnership with key stakeholders.
- Facilitate the development of New Zealand's health research workforce by identifying and developing the best people to conduct only the highest quality research.

A number of exceptional applications have been received and the scientific integrity of these submissions are currently undergoing a comprehensive external review process by independent national and international experts.

We're excited to be announcing successful outcomes around October 2019.

The total budget for this partnership is \$500,000. This funding comprises a 50% contribution from government funds via the HRC and a 50% contribution from CatWalk.



La Loire Cycle Tour June 2019



Sharon Honiss

As luck would have it, I got to be one of the “lucky last” attendees aka Week 4, of the fundraising Chateau d’Oyre experience hosted by the CatWalk Trust. What a FABULOUS TIME we had! The venue was outstanding and a big thankyou to the generous owners Anita and James MacKenzie for sharing the chateau with us.

A huge thankyou to Shane, Georgia and Kane for all their humour, organisational skills and hard graft over some long days. Thank you also to Nicholas our “in-house” chef with Alexandra and Enzo ably helping out.

It’s hard to pick a highlight but here is a few special memories. After some interesting cycle rides, we viewed gorgeous castles, ate fabulous

sumptuous lunches and dinners at castles, hunting lodges, wineries, art galleries, truffle farms and on river cruises.

Oh and the resident toad in the pond was sooooo cute! Bertie, aka the travelling baguette, was lots of fun when you passed Bertie on to the next recipient, and no-one got him twice! Sadly he was a bit brittle and crumbly by the end of the week. The Sunday night show was full of talent and humour. I learned so much about scallops – Thankyou Jon. That was a wee gem for me!

All too soon it was over. I did hear a whisper that may be a repeat in 1 or 2 years time. So watch this space!



Sharon Honiss

Polly Ayles & Sam Alvin



Sam Alvin

We knew it was going to be an amazing trip just looking at the itinerary for Week 1, but our predictions did not do justice to what the CatWalk team had achieved. James and Anita’s Château and grounds were just stunning and we couldn’t have felt more welcome. The whole CatWalk team, including Kane, Georgia, Nicolas the chef, and the French kiwi Nicky, deserve a massive thank you for making the week a once in a lifetime experience. In the midst of cycling and kayaking through breathtaking scenery we met the owners of private chateaus, truffle farms and vineyards who all gave up their time to make it a very personal visit. “The best bit? Sam now knows what an incredible godmother he has!”



Paul and Rosie Collins - Week Three

Paul & Rosie Collins

Our heartfelt thanks to everyone involved in organizing this amazing, once-in-a-lifetime, priceless experience, and for making it happen. The beautiful, lush, rose-covered Loire Valley, with its magnificent old trees and picturesque villages was the perfect location for our cycling adventures.

High-lights included visiting Chateau de Villandry, Chateau d’Usse and the Baron de la Truffle farm, with special, personalized access not available to the

public. And the FOOD...oh la la! A Michelin star restaurant, an 11-course river cruise degustation dinner, gourmet picnic lunches, long vineyard and truffle farm lunches, crispy-based apple tarts that took our breath away. AND, gastronomic “at home” meals at our magnificent Chateau d’Oyre.

Our home away from home where we formed lasting friendships with our Chateau flatmates. Catriona certainly does put the FUN into fundraising.

Brad Hayward



When I heard about the CatWalk Trust cycle week in La Loire staying at Chateau d'Oyre, I said to myself what a great opportunity to go to Europe for a holiday and meet new people. I'm the sort of person when an opportunity is put in front of me I jump with both feet (excuse the pun!). Travelling with a disability can be challenging but as long as you research and plan well there's nothing stopping you from having amazing experiences around the world. You've also got to have a positive attitude so that if there's any little hick ups on the way you just roll with it. We were picked up from Le Mans train station on the Monday with a wheelchair accessible van. It was refreshing to hear a Kiwi accent as our van driver of course it was Sam Williams. When we turned up at the chateau awaiting us on the front lawn was the welcoming party and champagne on ice! I knew from that point I was going to have a wonderful experience.

Having the opportunity to stay in a 600-year-old privately owned Château was once in a lifetime opportunity. The history and the architecture was breath-

taking and myself and 22 other guests all supporting spinal-cord injury research were going to enjoy this for the next seven days. We were shown to our rooms to freshen up and during the afternoon everyone slowly turned up and it was great to meet and greet our fellow guests which now I can say are friends. Our first day out we did a cycle around the narrow road ways and lanes in the countryside nearby and stopped for lunch at picturesque spot by the river. That night the group went to dinner at Le Moulin des Quatre Poisons which is a one Michelin Star French restaurant. Amazing food! The next day saw us visiting Chateau de Villandry located at Villandry, lunching next to the Loire river and cycling to Chateau d'Usse with its fortified ports to shoot at the enemy when they were attacked. What amazing Architecture and stunning gardens. Thursday we took the vans to visit the Royal Abbey of Fonterraud, followed by Chateau du Petit Thouars winery. We had a beautiful lunch then the owner Sebastian showed us the cave cellar and then we had wine tasting. We then cycled to Saumur. What stunning scenery along the way. After we finished the ride we got on a traditional French boat for a boat ride on the la Loire river for dinner.

Friday we visited the Château du Lude. It has been inhabited by the same family for the last 260 years and they actually live here. Had a very relaxing afternoon returning to the Château for lunch and few red wines and some time to play pool and enjoying the beautiful surroundings. Saturday we went into Saumur to look around the Saturday markets. It was great fun tasting all the food and of course I had to try the lemon crêpes and

Rose for lunch! After lunch we did a short cycle along the la Loire river to Ackerman champagne to explore the champagne caves and champagne tasting. Sunday we visited Baron de la Truffe, one of the largest trufferies in France. Owned by Serge Desazars and his family which was started 64 years ago by his father. The property is now a small village encompassing 13 adjoining properties plus farm buildings, stables, caves and laneways. Harvesting is from Nov until Feb, 7 days a week during the season, all by hand using dogs to sniff the truffles. Périgord or Black truffles sell for approx €2,000 kilogram. We had a tour around the trufferie, had lunch and wine with Serge and his wife then had a quick lesson on cooking with truffles. We learnt that you never cook truffles over 60°C otherwise they lose their flavour!

Sunday was our final night with a group dinner at our chateau with prepared by our in house chef, Nicholas, which included asparagus with caviar, and sea bass tartar with truffle sauce amongst other delectable dishes! We were entertained by Nicky a Kiwi girl who lives in Saumur, who played the piano and sung for us.

The week was such an amazing experience, with wonderful people that we have created memories and friendships for life. I can't thank enough the whole group for helping me out during the week.

The whole week was so well organised by the CatWalk team. I'm just so appreciative of all the hard work to make it possible for myself to have a seamless holiday experience and a big thanks to Catriona.

Dale & John Lambie

What an outstanding week we had in the Loire staying at the beautiful Chateau d'Oyre so generously lent by Anita & James Mackenzie. CatWalk functions are always meticulously organised and this was no exception - Chateaux, Vineyards, Wineries, Truffle Farms were visited, e-biking by rivers, pretty villages & Art Galleries were explored, as well as a wonderful evening sailing 'La Loire' whilst being given the most divine food miraculously presented, all the time having fun and great companionship.

We were spoilt! To have our 2 wheelies cycling beside us was very special and certainly made us reflect on the importance of CatWalk Research Programmes. A wonderful week & we were blessed to be part of it.



Dale and John Lambie

Special thanks to Triumph & Disaster

Special thanks to CatWalk Patron Dion Nash, founder of Triumph & Disaster for generously donating a \$50 voucher for each week of Le Loire et CatWalk for a guest who had a triumph in France! www.triumphanddisaster.com - 100% Natural and Bespoke NZ Ingredients to craft the Best Men's Care Products. Award Winning Products. Attention to Detail. Bespoke Formulations. Clean & Green Science. Animal-Friendly. Quality with a Difference. Uncompromising Quality. Large Range. Nature and Science.

**Triumph
& Disaster**



Brazen Beau filly



Brazen Beau

The Journey of Filly-Anthropey

This story begins back in 2018 when Godolphin's Sheikh Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum, generously donated a service to Brazen Beau for the auction at the CatWalk Remarkable event held at the AJ Hackett Bungy Centre, Queenstown. Head of Sales at Godolphin, Alastair Pulford, was on hand at Remarkable to see long-time CatWalk supporters and owners of Valachi Downs Stud, Kevin and Jo Hickman, secure the service with the winning bid.

"Kevin and Jo are wonderful people and very generous" says Alastair. "Speaking to Kevin after the auction he told me that they had been very keen to provide support for CatWalk for some years and to do so via the purchase of a nomination donated by His Highness Sheikh Mohammed in Darley's hot young stallion Brazen Beau gave them the perfect opportunity. They were never going to be beaten at the auction on that Remarkable (literally) evening and were very happy to pay well above the listed service fee for the nomination. In typical Kevin style he did not make a big fuss about it and diverted the focus on the excellent work that CatWalk is doing. The story is an inspiring one and a reminder to us all of the importance of the need to support Catriona and her CatWalk team."

The decision was made to send their mare Stepanova to stud, resulting in a beautiful filly being born at Sledmere Stud in the Hunter Valley. Stepanova is a Danehill Dancer mare whose dam, Dance On By, is a full-sister to six-time Group One winner and champion sire High Chaparral. "It's a beautiful, strong family," Valachi Downs Stud Manager Jonathan Scully said. But Kevin and Jo were not finished on this journey of giving. Their generosity continued when at the 2019 Karaka Sales, Kevin approached CatWalk founder, Catriona Williams, with a plan. Valachi Downs will present the filly at the 2020 Karaka sales with all the proceeds of the sale being donated to CatWalk for spinal cord injury research. As one can imagine – Catriona was

"It's a beautiful, strong family."

overwhelmed by this offer and by the ensuing offers of support from others in the industry. "I was incredibly emotional when Kevin proposed the idea. CatWalk's continued support from the thoroughbred industry is indicative of a want to support the very best cutting edge research, like us. Surviving an injury is one thing but as a wheelie we want so much more. Personally, I want to dance again - these donations bring us a whole lot closer to making this possible." says Catriona

"New Zealand Bloodstock have confirmed that they will waive the entry and commission fees, which is great, so all proceeds will go directly to the CatWalk Trust" says Scully. "Hopefully we might get someone prepared to stump up and pay top dollar for a quality horse and hopefully we can get them to go a bit further because it's all going to a charity. "Our vets and farriers are all coming onboard and everything they do for the horse is going to be at no charge, as a donation from them. We have got the full support across the board, so that is a great asset."

The filly and her dam returned to Valachi in Mid-December and in early March began the foal handling process followed by weaning. Reports are that she is a confident, curious and intelligent filly with a correct, well-balanced and strong frame. The plan is to have her brought into the barn every 4-6 weeks for assessment and further education leading up to her final sale preparation which will commence in November. We will be watching her progress with great interest and will share her developments and milestones via our website and social media page as the build up to the Karaka 2020 sales continues.

www.catwalk.org.nz
www.valachidowns.co.nz





This philanthropic foundation started by the Lindsay family, aims to support those that selflessly aspire to help, guide and assist others.

The Lindsay Foundation's Mission is to support Kiwi individuals and organisations who aspire to make a positive difference in New Zealand. We are proud to be partnered with CatWalk through the Spinal Cord Injury Research Facility (SCIRF) and share in the common theme of 'never say never'; supporting Dr Simon O'Carroll and the team as they pursue projects developing treatments for spinal cord injury.

www.lindsayfoundation.co.nz



Dr Simon O'Carroll (left) with Prof Louise Nicholson

“It really is an honour to be involved in something for CatWalk and I am genuinely looking forward to the next 4 months of training and to sharing it with you all.”



Alice Montgomery

RIDE ACROSS BRITAIN

I have definitely embarked on this challenge completely backwards.

The order in which my decision making went was;

1. Decide that I would love to do something for the CatWalk Trust
2. Discover there is an organised 9 day bike ride from the bottom of England to the top of Scotland which covers roughly 180km a day
3. Email CatWalk and explain that I would like to do this bike ride to raise money for the brilliant work they do without actually giving much consideration to the fact that if they agreed I would have to take up cycling
4. Receive an email from CatWalk saying they would be thrilled for me to do it
5. Enter bike ride
6. Buy bike
7. Take up cycling

The point at which my younger sister (who for perspective has just completed a full Ironman in under 12 hours) said ‘Alice that is a bloody long way,’ really reinforced the fact that this was perhaps a step too far for someone who at that point didn’t even own a bicycle and so, through what can only be described as total terror, I thought there was probably no time like the present to actually buy a bike and get on with it. That was six weeks ago and it has definitely been a learning curve.

A quick google for someone who knew more about bikes than me (it’s not hard) showed that there was actually a bike mechanic less than 500m from my house in Somerset. When I think about my phone call he really must have thought I was a bit mad as I very calmly explained to him I needed a by a bike because I was going to take up cycling and cycle over 1000 miles in nine days. ‘What sort of bike did I want?’ What a stupid question, one with two wheels and some handlebars obviously. He could have run a mile however he duly spent a few hours searching, found a bike

he deemed suitable on ebay and sent me off to collect it. When I arrived to collect the bike I was posed with the question of whether I wanted to take it for a test ride, I was about to part with the best part of £1000 and I think the guy, concerned about keeping his ebay feedback at 100% positive, wanted to cover his backside. As far as I was concerned, it had two wheels, some handlebars and it wasn't a hideous colour so it ticked all the boxes.

Having collected the bike I delivered it to my new friend Rob, the bike mechanic, as apparently it needed a service and I needed wider handlebars. I was then posed with more questions I didn't know the answer too. 'What type of tape did I want on my handlebars?' I don't know, the sticky kind? 'What colour did I want my drink bottle holders to be?', um, let me see, I DON'T CARE, 'Was I happy with the seat? Was is comfortable?', no, but then I couldn't see how any bike seat was going to be comfortable for a period of any longer than 15 minutes so we may as well stick with the one we've got.

Rob carried out the necessary adjustments and then told me he was part of a cycling club in my village that met at the weekend and I should join as cycling by yourself is a bit dull, (FYI, he wasn't wrong). This was on Friday. 8.30am on

Saturday morning I found myself outside the town hall in my village as male after male arrived on their bikes for a Saturday morning ride. As we left on this ride it occurred to me that it was literally just 7 men and me. These 7 males led me up what can only be described as the side of a cliff. I fell off 4 times, had to push my bike up the last 1/4 and got to the top to be greeted by the comment, 'I thought you said you were fit?' to which I could only reply, 'It seems I've got a bit of work to do.'

We arrived back at the start where my final move was to unceremoniously fall sideways still attached to the bike because my legs were so exhausted I couldn't even bring myself to unclip my feet. I lay there on my back on the road with 7 slightly concerned male faces looking down on me and I just burst into hysterics. The only alternative was to cry and to be honest upon realising the magnitude of what I really had committed to the amount of work I was going to need to do it was pretty hilarious. The only thing better than the look on their faces while I was lying on the ground was the look on their faces when I turned up the next Saturday. Having completely finished me off the week before I think they really expected I would go running (or cycling as the case may be) for the hills however fear is the most powerful tool and the fear of failure outweighed any embarrassment that I might be suffering by turning up again and, let's be honest, they'd already seen me fall off, 4 times.

The previous Saturday had most definitely been their own version of an initiation, because I can confirm that in the last 6 weeks I have been on some tough rides but none of them have had anything in it that even comes close to the cliff face they made me scale on that first day. Whether it was conscious or subconscious, and I do believe it was subconscious, there was a rite of passage to the Castle Cary Cycling Club and since passing it I have found myself on a Whatsapp group with no less than 15 other males. Just 15 males and me.

You can now, on any given Saturday at 10.30am find me in a café somewhere in Somerset surrounded by a group of men affectionately known as MAMILS. (Middle Aged Men in Lycra). But these are my MAMILS and I can honestly say I

would prefer to be sitting with them at the half way point on whatever bike route they have plotted than lying in bed.

I am fast learning the lingo, the strange hand signals you have to use when you are riding in a group and the do's and don'ts of cycling fashion. I will, at every wedding this summer, be wearing a dress with long sleeves because the tshirt tan line is already worse than anything I ever got on a horse and I have been told in no uncertain terms am I ever to turn up to cycling in a sleeveless top. That is a cycling fashion faux pas. (I was told this by a 130kg guy in a cycling jersey with Star Wars on it but I'm still not willing to take the risk). Why am I putting myself through this you may

ask?! Good question. I do, and always have, liked a challenge and there is not a day that has gone by in the last 3 years that I have not been grateful to have a body that will allow me to do such ridiculous things.

At the end of July 2016 I fell off a horse at a one day event and made a total train smash of my body. I broke both my collarbones, 7 ribs, shattered my pelvis, broke my femur, punctured my lung and was unconscious for 10 minutes. Fortunately, I was wearing both an air vest and a rigid back protector- without them the outcome would have been much worse. I am lucky, I may be weighed down by some fairly substantial metal work but there is no lasting damage. I am, for all intents and purposes, as good as new.

There are so many people for whom the work of CatWalk gives hope and I could, so easily, be one of those people. So, come September when I'm 5 days in, half way up a mountain with screaming legs and unable to breathe the thought that I am raising money for such an incredible charity doing such important work will spur me on.

It really is an honour to be involved in something for CatWalk and I am genuinely looking forward to the next 4 months of training and to sharing it with you all.

- Alice Montgomery

“The point at which my younger sister said ‘Alice that is a bloody long way,’ really reinforced the fact that this was perhaps a step too far for someone who at that point didn't even own a bicycle and so, through what can only be described as total terror, I thought there was probably no time like the present to actually buy a bike and get on with it.”

Remy Officer



Robert Hartopeanu



Robert Logan



Megan De Lambert

THIRTY EIGHT IN 38

Robert Logan was part of our inaugural Auckland Marathon team, and contacted us recently about the next challenge set for himself as part of a team of thirteen young adults, who would like to contribute to the fundraising for spinal cord injury research.

We aim to climb Mauao (Mount Maunganui) 38 times - the equivalent vertical height of Mount Everest - to raise awareness about CatWalk's work and fundraise money to support their efforts. To this end, we will push the limits of what we can do on our own feet, so that someday more people will be able to get back on theirs.

For those not familiar with Mount Maunganui, it is located on a peninsula to the north east of Tauranga in the Bay of Plenty Region of New Zealand, has a height of 232mts, and is a very popular tourist and athlete destination.

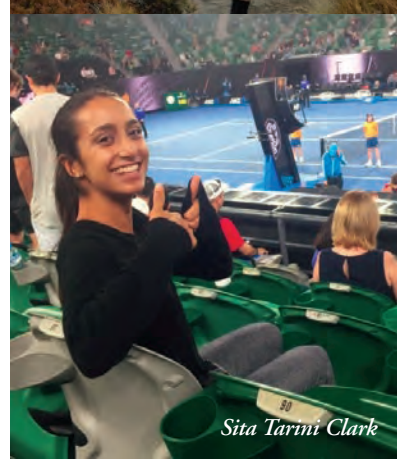
For further information visit www.catwalk.org.nz



James Parton

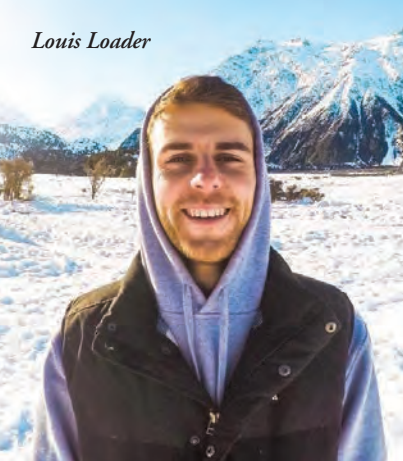


Alex Morreau



Sita Tarini Clark

Louis Loader

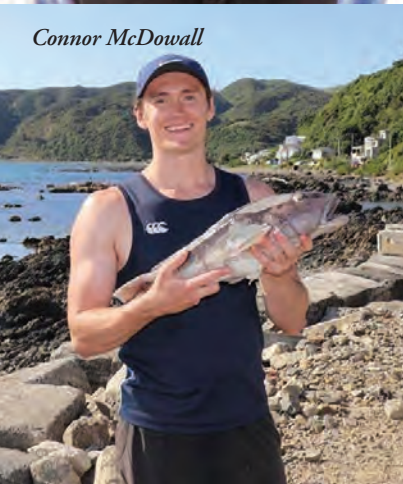


“We are all excited and daunted by the task ahead but we know this doesn't compare to the difficulties faced by people with spinal cord injuries; we hope to help give legs to those who can't yet use their own.”

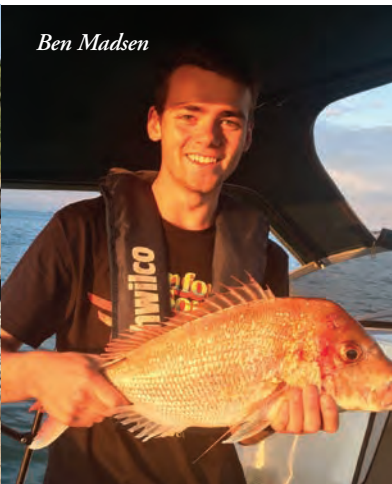
Idris Jones



Connor McDowall



Ben Madsen



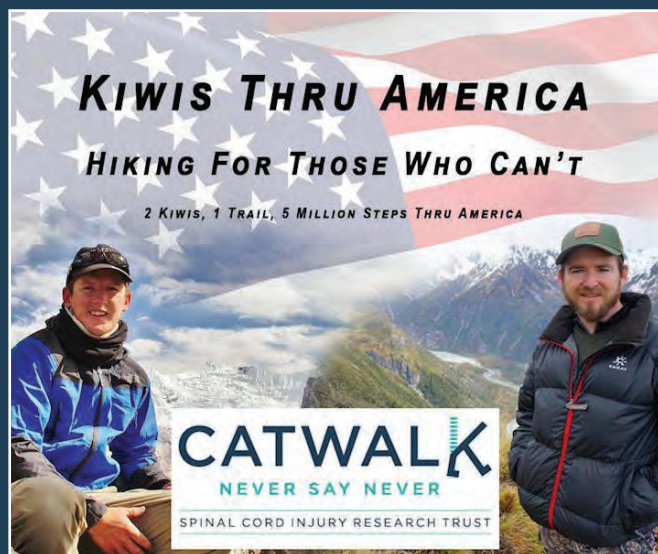
William Cook



Grace Walker



HIKING FOR THOSE WHO CAN'T



Kia ora CatWalk friends! We are a couple of ordinary, everyday kiwis, doing something epic... we are 'Kiwis Thru America!'

Kiwis Thru America are two kiwi mates who are setting out to hike the Pacific Crest Trail (PCT) on May 5th 2019. The PCT is a 4,270km hike from the US/Mexico border to Canada. The fact that we can even consider doing this hike is such a privilege, especially when there are so many people who can't even consider walking to the bathroom or to their mail box, let alone over 4,000km. With this in mind, we want to help support the CatWalk Trust and 'hike for those who can't'.

Who are Kiwis Thru America?

We are two kiwi mates with a love for the outdoors. Brent Thurlow (32), is a Wellingtonian currently working in Sydney. Brent received a Bachelor of Laws and a Bachelor of Economics from the University of Otago. While studying he worked as a Fox Glacier Guide during the summer holiday period over two seasons. In 2010, 2011 and 2013, Brent worked as a hunting guide and on commercial salmon boats in Alaska for 6 months each year. From 2015-2017 he then worked in law for the Commonwealth Bank of Australia, based in Sydney. He is currently working as in-house Legal Counsel for AMP in Sydney, who are supporting him in this adventure!

Tom Winlove (32) is a Hawke's Bay local, received a Bachelor of Recreation Management from Lincoln University. Worked for Mountain Valley Adventure Lodge and Tongariro River Rafter over the summer holidays as well as working in the building industry. Finishing Lincoln, Tom worked for Hawke's Bay Fish and Game for 5 years as a Field Officer, working in trout fisheries and wetland management along with running junior fishing and hunting programs among other things. He then left to travel all over, from the USA, Europe, and Nepal. In between travels, he managed Backpaddock Lakes wakeboard and waterski complex for two summers and he has worked in the building industry, building new residential housing and doing renovations. He is now back working with Hawke's Bay Fish and Game.

What is the Pacific Crest Trail (PCT) and thru hiking?

The act of walking end to end in one continuous hike along the PCT and other similar long trails, like the Te Araroa Trail in NZ, is referred to as 'Thru Hiking'. Thru hikes are long distance hikes which usually cross a state, country, or even continent. Some stats on the PCT... everyone loves some good stats!!

- 11th longest hiking trail in the world at 4,270km in length.
- A hike from the Mexican border to the Canadian border.
- 1,200km longer than the Te Araroa Trail in NZ (Cape Reinga to Bluff)
- Averaging 32km a day it will take us about 5 months.
- Only 6,627 people are recorded as completing the trail since 1952.
- Lowest point of trail is 43m asl, highest point is 4,003m asl.
- Longest stretch between resupply points, about 8 days.
- Longest stretch between water sources, about 50kms... in the desert!!
- The route passes through 25 national forests and 7 national parks.
- Made famous when Cheryl Strayed's memoir 'Wild: From Lost to Found on the Pacific Crest Trail' was published in 2012 and reached #1 on the New York Times Best Sellers list. That was followed by the movie in 2014 'Wild', with Reese Witherspoon.
- We will go through about 4 pairs of shoes and our feet will potentially grow a half size or more. People have reported feet growth as much as two sizes! (due to swelling and flattening out)

Why are we hiking the trail?

Because it's there and, because we can!

Our connection to the CatWalk Trust?

We guess it's lucky we don't have a direct link to the trust in that we don't have good friends or family with any spinal cord injuries. However we have both met plenty of people who have. Working at Backpaddock Lakes and being involved in the NZ wakeboard scene, Tom followed and watched first hand Brad Smeele's rise into the international pro wakeboard scene and has since followed his journey following his tragic accident. In his last year at high school in 2004 Tom also listened to a stellar speech by Catriona. So there is at least a small connection. But ultimately, we both thought that if we are going to hike for 5 months solid across the US, we should do it for something else than just ourselves. Doing the hike for those who can't, yet, consider doing such a journey, seemed like a natural fit and this naturally lead us to the CatWalk Trust. No doubt we will have numerous times on the trail when we are just hating the trail and want to give up, so knowing we are doing this for others will give us that extra motivation we need when times are tough.

Follow Brent and Tom's adventures on Facebook – Kiwis Thru America and you can also donate through their Givealittle page:

<https://givealittle.co.nz/fundraiser/hiking-for-those-who-cant>



Elise in her Mongol Derby kit

ELISE STABLES

- Youngest Kiwi to ride the Mongol Derby -

You square up to 1000 km of Mongolian steppe on semi-wild horses, changing steed every 40 km.

You navigate and survive on your own wits and skill, living among the herders. It's you and your horse vs the wild. There's no marked course, no packed lunches, no beds to sleep in. That's the whole point. It's just you, your team of horses and a thousand kilometres of Mongolian wilderness.

Elise Stables is riding the race to raise funds for spinal cord injury research -

helping kiwis and those worldwide get back on their feet!

Elise is now in the final stages of her training. "I am flying out to Mongolia on the 31st of July. I have been working riding around 15 racehorses a day along with working my show jumpers at home and completing long rides in the Mongol saddle I have been supplied with by a past derby rider, all to make sure I am as riding fit as possible.

Along with this I have been running or swimming every day in order to be my

fittest possible self when I step into the start line. With less than a month to go it is now a matter of breaking in and testing the last of my kit, preparing my mental game and making sure I am fit and healthy"

The Derby starts on the 4th August and we will be tracking Elise's progress and wish her all the best!

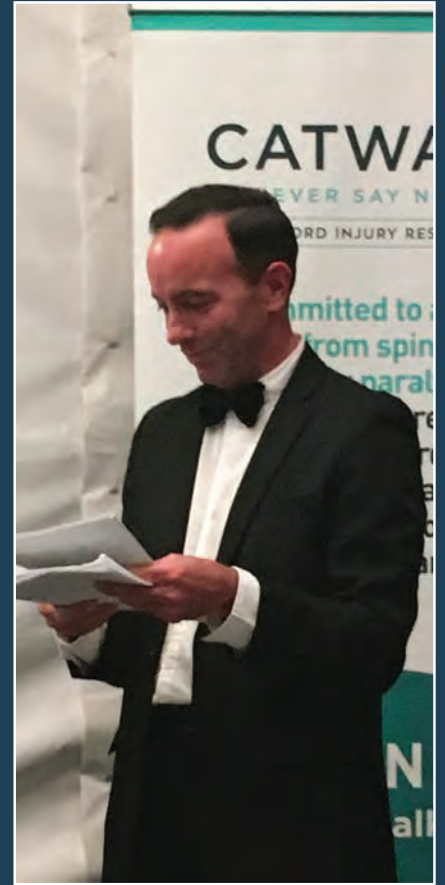
For further information follow Elise on Facebook – Elise Stables Mongol for CatWalk.



Catriona with Jonelle and Tim Price



CatWalk Ambassador Kate Lambie & Founding Trustee Pip McCarroll



Warwick Allan



Catriona and Tiny White



Kerre models the AB Shirt



Catriona and Kerre Woodham

Horse of the Year

The Land Rover Horse of the Year is the pinnacle event on the NZ equestrian calendar. CatWalk was approached by Marketing Manager Alisha Neilson with an offer to support spinal cord injury research through a charity auction at the Hall of Fame Awards dinner, and we were very pleased to accept!

Founder Catriona Williams has ridden at HOY many times, with her name etched on the Pony of the Year, Norwood Gold Cup and the Lowry Medallion Rider of the Year amongst many others. Catriona was also inducted into the Hall of Fame in 2014.

“I love Land Rover Horse of the Year! Although I haven’t competed for 16 years I’ve been almost every year since as the electric atmosphere is the addiction you just can’t get enough of! It’s where dreams come true and even bigger goals are set. It’s where you realise anything is possible and gives you the confidence to aim for international stardom.

“No matter what, a title here is etched into NZ Sport Horse history forever and it’s these titles that make this show unique and incredibly special.”

The evening was expertly MC’d by the amazing Kerre Woodham who had the audience laughing as she regaled the stories of her pony mad youth!

Special VIP guests for the night were eventing super-star couple Tim and Jonelle Price who had flown into Auckland and were competing in the eventing section on borrowed horses. Catriona joined them on stage and conducted an interview which covered their growing up in NZ through to the big move to the UK and their road to success. It was inspiring to hear how these two riders had worked so hard to achieve their dreams and now represent NZ so successfully.

The auction included some very special items and eventing memorabilia which raised \$13,600 for spinal cord injury research. The Richie McCaw signed All Blacks jersey was beautifully modelled by Kerre and this helped to raise the bids for this and two rugby balls to a staggering \$3,500.

Thank you to HOY, the donators and bidders and to all the supporters on the night who helped make this such a successful and fun event.



“I’m very thankful to my loved ones, our community, and life.”

Dinesh and friends

New Year’s Honour Award Dr Dinesh Palipana

We congratulate Dr Dinesh Palipana on being awarded the Order of Australia (OAM) in the 2019 Australian New Year’s Honours List.

Dinesh was profiled in our December 2018 magazine where we shared his story of qualifying as a doctor after a vehicle accident midway through his studies left him a C6 tetraplegic. He is the second person with quadriplegia to graduate as a doctor in Australia and the first with spinal cord injury.

Not only is Dinesh a practicing doctor, he is also a part of the spinal cord injury research team at Griffith University and an adjunct research fellow at the Menzies Health Institute of Queensland with particular focus on novel rehabilitation techniques.

Dinesh says he feels humbled to join some incredible Australians in this honour. “It not only makes the journey worthwhile, but empowers me to push on to do more for our community. I’m very thankful to my loved ones, our community, and life.”



Dinesh and Mum

Thank You

We are always grateful to our supporters who are so generous



TRUST HOUSE
FOUNDATION

Thank you for the contribution towards our website upgrade

Trust House is a community-owned company. Their aim is to enhance the wellbeing of people in the region, by funding local events and organisations and running great local businesses.

www.trusthouse.co.nz

ROYAL EASTER SHOW

Thank you for you continuing to support CatWalk through a donation from entries in the Equestrian Section of the show.



Special thanks to Brian Broom and Donna Yarrall for their generosity in supporting La Loire et CatWalk with transportation of supplies to France and returning Catriona's bike safely home. www.verticallogistics.co.nz

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

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Please debit my credit card: VISA MasterCard Amount: \$

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www.catwalk.org.nz/help-us/#donate

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- In the Internet bank field called "particulars" put [YOUR NAME]



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