

MOTIVATIONAL MOUNTAIN BIKING

Nerves were ripping my stomach apart as if they were a dog with a bone. Mrs Wareing handed me a mountain bike as I watched the rest of Group 6 circle around in front of camp base, Mount Hutt Retreat. I looked over to the steep track and dreaded the next two painful hours.

Now the challenge was handed to me, to push my bike up the stairs. I felt like I had conquered the world when I was on the first step. I then looked up and saw the rest of the hill and that sense of achievement was squashed.

Finally, after completing the steep, slippery stairs, we reached an intersection. Mrs Wareing told us we were to go right. I looked right. It was a vertical drop. Charlie and Ryan went down like a breeze, but I wasn't feeling anywhere near as confident.

Now it was my turn. I was a fish out of water as I went down the slope. Feathering my brakes obviously didn't work as the skids multiplied behind me. *'Just another few metres,'* I thought, *'Hang on.'*

The ground was now levelling out and I pedalled along the narrow track through the natives. I could hear nothing but the 'chirp chirp' of the birds. We all kept going until we reached the Awa Awa Rata Reserve. Mrs Wareing was cleaning up Neil, after a crash, and challenged us, "Go find the track with the bench and bike it."

We found the track and I saw the terrain. I got off and pushed my bike until we reached a downhill bit. I clambered back onto my bike and sped off. Seeing a clearing, I knew that it ended soon. I was enjoying the pure, peaceful Pudding Hill track until I saw the steps... Everyone in front of me had made it down okay so I thought, *'Why wouldn't I?'* Jiggling down the stairs with no vision, I made it down great. When I regained eyesight I realised that I was going to crash into Olly. Slamming on my front brakes, I flipped over the handlebars and landed with a breath-taking 'Thud!' I heard my team laughing. "Are you alright?" questioned Jenna. "I think so?" I replied.

After I caught my breath we were off on a nice easy ride home. Speeding down the farm track I felt the wind whipping wildly at my hair and clothes.

Next we turned right and I saw camp. I thought to myself, *'Almost there. Just push on.'* But my legs cried to me otherwise. They were sore beyond belief and I tried my heart out to make it back to camp. I couldn't describe how great it was to slide down the waterslide afterwards.

Even though I was nervous at the start of the rotation, Mountain Biking was by far the most satisfying activity. I would do it again without holding back as much and recommend it to anyone who is up for a fun challenge.



Miss Hanson after she fell off her bike.