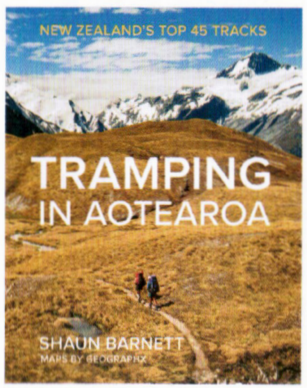
names, dates and deeds in quite some detail. At times I found this a dense read, but I appreciate that for those who have been a part of the Erebus story, this book will be a special treasure. And for readers like me, the liberal use of blue-paged sidebars makes it easy to skip some of the details without losing the main thread of the story, if you so wish.

For many New Zealanders, the air crash of 1979 allowed Mt Erebus to penetrate our consciousness. But there is so much more to the Erebus story than that. *Erebus the Ice Dragon* is historic, scientific, artistic, thought-provoking and fascinating; and in its hard-cover and generously illustrated format, it has been published to a lovingly high standard. Monteath sums it up well in his concluding remarks: 'Attracting the attention of scientific and artistic adventures, the dragon's guarded treasures are the phenomena of extreme nature. However, unlike the defeated and tamed dragons of northern legends, Erebus cannot be subdued. Those who venture near can only hope that the ice dragon sleeps long enough for her glowing heart to be admired.'

Thanks to Monteath, we readers can admire the glowing heart from the safety of our armchairs. I highly recommend it.

Tramping in Aotearoa: New Zealand's top 45 tramps

By Shaun Barnett, Potton & Burton, September 2023, flexibound cover, 180 pages, $49.99. Reviewed by Peter Laurenson, New Zealand Alpine Club.



First published in 2006, when it encompassed 40 tramps, the newly published third edition of *Tramping in Aotearoa* includes the Te Paki Coastal Track, the Hillary Trail, Old Ghost Road, the Paparoa Track and the Mt Somers circuit, bringing the total to 45. Since its first release, over 30,000 copies have been sold, making it New Zealand's best-selling tramping guide.

Although this edition has been diligently updated by Aotearoa's preeminent tramping author to ensure that information is as accurate as possible, Barnett still cautions readers always to check the DOC website for relevant updates and alerts before setting off.

The short but informative Introduction provides an excellent context within which to consider specific tramps. It covers maps, seasons and weather, huts, hut fees and etiquette, water and conservation, safety and equipment, and safety with wildlife.

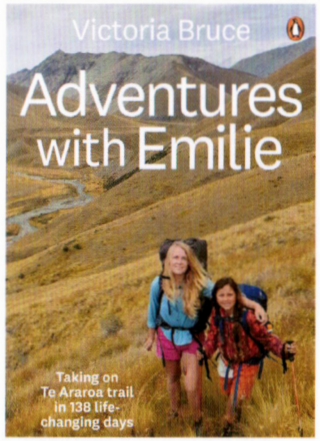
Each tramp has been thoughtfully selected and ranked by difficulty: 6 are easy, 11 easy/medium, 17 medium, 8 medium/hard and 3 hard: 'Most were chosen with the novice or casual tramper in mind; few of the tramps featured are beyond the abilities of a moderately fit person with modest experience. None involves any serious off-track travel, and generally the standard of huts and tracks is high.' Having been on about a third of the tramps described, including a few with Barnett himself, I can vouch for the practical, realistic and clear way that each tramp is described.

Tramping in Aotearoa unfolds geographically from north to south and devotes about a third of its pages to 17 North Island tramps and nearly two thirds to 28 South Island tramps. Each is supported by an easy-to-digest, three-dimensional map created by award-winning cartographer Roger Smith of Geographx. And of course, each tramp is further brought to life by Barnett's beautiful photos, many of which are new to this edition.

For many backcountry people, a copy of Barnett's latest book will be a must-have simply to keep their collection of fine Aotearoa tramping literature up to date. For those who are primarily looking for the most informative guide to the New Zealand tramps that will suit them best, look no further. If you already have an earlier edition, be assured that there is much new material to enjoy within the pages of *Tramping in Aotearoa: New Zealand's top 45 tramps*.

Adventures with Emilie: Taking on Te Araroa trail in 138 life-changing days

By Victoria Bruce, Penguin Random House NZ, August 2023, soft cover, 336 pages, $40. Reviewed by Jan Finlayson, NZAC and Peninsula TC.



In spring 2021, Victoria Bruce and her seven-year-old daughter Emilie headed south from Cape Rēinga on The Long Path, Te Araroa, which stretches the length of New Zealand's two main islands. Five months, 3,000 kilometres and 13 degrees of latitude later, they arrived at Bluff, the end of their on-foot journey – and a waypoint on others.

Adventures with Emilie is Bruce's account of this exceptional endeavour. It's a tale of derring-do, a paean to challenge and its returns, a love letter to nature. It's a meditation, an open-hearted gift of well-tuned language and life's lessons. A toast to hard-won strength and the possibility of serenity.

Driving the decision to take flight from conventional life for five months were the chance to live with nature on its own terms, for Bruce to escape from her unloved job, and the potential to find a means of stepping through the terrain of her post-traumatic stress disorder.

Victoria Bruce is a skilful writer. She deploys long-practised professional aplomb inflected with candour reminiscent of the naïve visual art style. She segues deftly between trail-walking practicalities, the joy and travails of Te Araroa, her little companion's sparkling character, her own backstory and the present, and turns these narrative ingredients into a book greater than the sum of its parts.

Te Araroa is the main, omnipresent character in the cast of *Adventures with Emilie*. Conceived in 1975 and opened, finally, in 2011, the trail was a labour of love and patience. Crossing around 60 percent public conservation land and the rest a mix of other publicly owned land and private parcels, it is sustainable because it's tough. No place for the unskilled, unprepared or seekers of luxury, its audience is naturally limited yet abundantly rewarded with experiences that can't be bought.

Soon after crossing Waiau Pass, an obstacle that, until achieved, had weighed on Bruce, the pair downed packs. 'And right there, building a snowman with my little daughter at some 1,700 metres, surrounded by jagged mountain ranges, eating peanut butter on crackers topped with squares of stale chocolate, there was no place in the world I would rather have been,' she writes.

Bruce is tramper, mother, naturalist. Among other features of her life's topography are a nervous system 'shattered' by trauma and an understanding that the hills offer perspective and healing. It's easy to put *Adventures with Emilie* in a 'parallel journeys' box: even Victoria acknowledges there's some analogy between her Te Araroa journey and her quest to quell her past and rebuild.

But her route through mental trauma isn't linear. While her story of the physical Long Path bubbles and trips along through fixed time and terrain, her history is splintered in the remembering and the retelling. It's revealed in glimpses as if into isolated, dark and complex pools and reaches. Bruce longs for a trajectory away from the scattergun pain. At the flooded Waimakariri River's edge she reflects, 'Maybe I could learn something from the river and allow myself to gracefully