

NEWS ITEMS ON HMC WEBSITE – 2013

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Blueberry Fun Run and Walk 013 (10 Feb. 2013)

As is the tradition, Hamilton Marathon Clinic kicked off the 2013 Summer Series with 'The Blueberry' on Sunday 10th January. This year saw a couple of course changes. The 17km option had been axed and the 5km, 10km and 15km courses all started and finished at the same point.

The land below Ohaupo School was shrouded in fog when the early volunteers arrived to set out the course and get the school hall prepared. Club members had completed their

races on the previous, very hot, Sunday and turned out in force to help ensure that this year's event was a well organised success. Shortly after 7.00am participants started arriving and soon there were good numbers lining up at registration to sign in or to make a late entry.

The fog had lifted by the time the walkers who had entered the 15km event set off at 8.00am. The remaining walkers and all the runners started at 8.30am and by this stage it was obvious that we were in for another hot day. It was also obvious that this field of runners and walkers was large. The country roads were crowded with runners and walkers of all ages and it was great to see so many family groups. Marshalls were kept busy ensuring that drinks were available at the drink stops and all competitors were pointed in the right direction.

There was lots of energy expended and sweat lost, but everyone seemed to enjoy the event. There were plenty of smiles from competitors at the finish line as they took on welcome water before retreating back to Ohaupo School to relax under the shade of the trees beside the netball courts with a blueberry pie and hot or cold drink. It turned out that over 420 participated in the event, well above the entries for previous years. The large number of spot prizes provided good recognition to the large field, although female recipients outnumbered the male prize winners!

The first three to finish in each event were:

5km walk: Erin Cooper 36.39; Ken Morris 44.06; Norman Tofaeono 44.45.

5km Run: Dane Ladbrook 21.21; Daniel Morris; 23.24 Kaitlyn Oliver 23.27.

10km walk: Maria Barr 1.20.16; Lee Manson 1.24.04; Annette Tofaeono 1.24.04.

10km run: Peter Robinson 38.08; Anthony Hanley 38.12; Andrew Ellis 41.50.

15km walk: Ross Morpeth 1.11.04; Andrew Flay 1.12.14; Brian Gordon 1.14.25.

15km Run: Stephen Blair 57.51; John Charlton 57.56; Kevin Knowles 59.54.



Hamilton Marathon Clinic acknowledges the sponsors who support this event: Blueberry Country, Oxford Pies, The Shoe Clinic, Newstalk ZB, The Helm Bar. Thanks also goes to all members of HMC who again helped ensure the success of this event. Last, but certainly not least, the club thanks all those who entered the Blueberry Fun Run and Walk. We value your participation and hope you enjoyed the event.

Check out www.hammarathonclinic.org.nz/gallery/blueberry-fun-run-and-walk-2013 on the HMC website for the Photo Gallery of this event of this event, and we look forward to seeing you next year.

Congratulations Martin and team

Again you excelled in your care and organization of a great event. It's a pleasure to participate. All your hard work is greatly appreciated.

Kind regards,

- Margaret and Jeff Stott

Kakepuku Report (5 March 2013)

Another very hot day dawned on the morning of the annual Kakepuku Fun Run/Walk for 2103. Why they call it a fun run I don't know. Its bloody hard work!

Another very hot day dawned on the morning of the annual Kakepuku Fun Run/Walk for 2103. Why they call it a fun run I don't know. Its bloody hard work!

Got myself out of bed after trying to talk myself out of going at all.

Driving out, you pass the turn you will make about 3km into the race and you then drive downhill to Pokuru School and the start. The realisation that I would soon be running up these hills brought tears to my eyes.

Once at the school and with tears wiped from sight, the friendly faces of our Clinic members help ease the tension of knowing what was coming up and how hot it was going to be.

It's like putting off the inevitable - no matter how many hellos you get or laughs you conjure up - the realisation that you have to run 14ks in 24+ degrees just won't go way. As we walk down to the start line the thought of a dead man walking runs through my mind! I made the mistake of thinking back to 2006 when I went round in 53 odd minutes but choked back the tears again and told myself to not ruin it before it started!

Then we were on the line listening to the mindless gibberish of the safety plan. Would be more safe if we just went home, I thought.

Bang! Off we went. Across the field then a hard right and up that bloody hill! It's very quiet going up that hill and I don't think I have ever heard a word muttered in all the times I have been there. On we went, working our way up the hill. A small trickle of runners with about 10 of us leading the group up to the first turnoff.

The weather was very hot, but it's further along this course when the sun hits you and the wind leaves you. Then it is a struggle to keep going at a good pace.

The drink stations were welcome, plentiful and friendly.

It wasn't long before the halfway mark was reached and then I told myself that each stride was a stride closer to the finish line.

With the walkers going out 30 minutes earlier, it was neat to pass familiar faces and the encouraging words of others were always received well.



The temperature was rising steadily as we worked our way out of the valley and up to the main road. You know that commitment you always make before starting at Kakepuku? 'When I get to the that turn off I'm going to pin my ears back!' Forget the ears! When reality sets in on this course you are lucky to pin anything back!

So, dripping in sweat, with a face like a smacked arse, I run down to the front of the school to be met by that steep driveway up to the finish line. It's the final killer.

This event is hard, It is hilly and hot, but it's a must if you are serious about where you are as a runner or walker. 14k isn't long but the Kakepuku 14k has its own personality and is a vital event in the Summer Series of fun runs/walks.

After crossing the finish line and cooled down, it was great to see Noel, Malcolm, Nikkole and the other runners coming in. Our walkers had done well once again with Ron and Carol winning their races. Green HMC tops were everywhere.

The Marathon Clinic members always have a great time when they travel and compete in events around the region. It's a heap of fun.

My time? Well let's just say 2006 was a long time ago!

- Martin Poppelwell

Mt Taranaki/Egmont Summit Climb (19 March 2013)

Ring! Ring! Was that the alarm going off already? It was 4.15am. Today, Saturday 23rd February Raewyn, Wilf, Maureen and myself were about to join approximately 200 other people climb to the summit of Mt Taranaki. We had registered for the Taranaki Alpine Club's annual open day. The weather forecast looked good unlike 4 years ago and we were keen and excited to conquer the mountain.

We arrived at the North Egmont visitor's carpark at 6am as instructed, just in time to squeeze into the last available parking spot. In the pitch black we set off up the stoney vehicle track which took us through bush which opened out to alpine tussock. We took our time to watch the dawn break and the sun to rise and shower the mountain in golden light. Just beautiful! The rough concrete 4WD track rose steeply to the telecommunication tower and on to Tahurangi Alpine Lodge. After an hour and a half we were ready for a hot cuppa at the lodge.

As climbers arrived at the lodge they were put into groups of 20. By 8am we were allocated our group, - group 5. The solitary toilet (long drop of course) just below the lodge was doing a roaring trade. I need not have worried as there were plenty of unofficial spots along the way. Top marks to Wilf who waited patiently as Raewyn, Maureen and myself joined the long queue.

Mike, our guide explained what weather conditions to expect and the type of terrain. He advised to wear gloves for climbing the rocks. He said that it would take about 5 hours from the lodge. Surely it can't take that long I thought, we have already climbed for an hour and a half and covered about a third of the distance. Two other Alpine club members Lois and Kyle were part of group 5, with Lois assisting climbers in the middle and Kyle was tail-end-charlie.

We were all keen and impatient to get underway by 8am. The track from the lodge was single file along the side of the hill. This quickly turned into a gully filled rock track which led to well constructed stairs. Some detailed person in the group counted 1120 steps. Maureen and I were thankful we had the foresight to practice stairs at Brownlee Avenue the week before.



Raewyn of course was already fit due to her marathon training. Wilf seemed to take this in his stride. What we didn't realise was this section was just a cruise compared with what was to come!!

Because of the size of the group there were frequent stops to rest and to allow the slower ones to catch up. Our first resting stop was the "Watering Hole". Mike explained this place got its name because the early explorers passed along this route and at that time there was a supply of fresh water, so it was a good place to stop, rest and have a drink. The spring had long since dried up with no sign of moisture to be seen. So out came our water bottles for a well earned drink and snack.

From this point the scoria scree began. We were told by Mike to try to walk upright as this helped to keep the body balanced and also to help prevent sliding backwards. This was easier said than done. It was very slow going for everyone. The steep gradient and the fear of sliding back down into the person following meant that it was full on concentration. Those climbers who had walking poles did not fare any better than those of us without poles. I found it was a natural instinct to bend over especially when my feet began to slide. After what seems a long time we stopped to rest at a rocky outcrop to regroup. By this stage climbers in our group were strung out over a hundred meters or more. The track changed direction and we found ourselves on a northern slope. This scree section did not seem so daunting.

Around this time we noticed the rescue helicopter coming and going and learnt that someone from another group had broken an ankle. The helicopter had flown up to the helipad above the scoria scree section to pick up one of the medics stationed further up. Perhaps half an hour later the helicopter returned and the medic was lowered to the helipad while the craft hovered about 20-30 feet above the ground. It was interesting to see that once the medic was a few feet clear of the helicopter he then went into a horizontal position until almost to the ground. This was a great opportunity for photos with climbers scrambling for their cameras.

Onwards and upwards we climbed. The views were wonderful with cameras not able to do justice to what the eye could take in. The scree eventually gave out and the rocks began. Distinct layers of volcanic rock could be seen as we climbed higher. Alpine daisies and other dainty alpine flowers and plants were growing in crevices.

I assumed the advice to wear gloves was for the cold, but soon realised it was to protect the hands, in particular the fingers. I was pleased to have my thin merino gloves however they very soon had holes in all the finger tips. Better to have holes in the gloves than no skin on the fingers. To one side of the track were small pockets of soft snow. This I assumed was all that was left. But no. After an hour or so scrambling up and over rocks Mike our leader announced that we were nearing the crater and that it would be covered in snow.

It was an interesting contrast to see barren rocks on both sides of this snow covered crater. These summit rocks prevent the sun from melting the snow in the crater which is present all year round. We were surprised to see 2 tents pitched on the snow. We learnt that several Alpine Club members had stayed the night and placed a string line to make it easier for climbers to get up to the summit. From the crater it was a 40 metres (15-20 minute) climb to the rocky outcrop at the very top. Group 5 had taken a good 4 ½ hours from Tahurangi Lodge to the summit.

Wow! It was worth the climb. The 360 degree views from the summit were stunning. It was a clear cloudless day enabling us to see Mt Ruapehu, Mt Tongariro, the Taranaki coastline and the South Island. All around the mountain there are many rivers with deep sided ravines. An Alpine club member from one of the other groups pointed out a south west rocky face which climbers also use to reach the top. This mountain face had very unusual rock formations.

What with group photos, taking in the views and chatting there was not a lot of time to eat lunch. After 25 minutes our leader Mike was rounding up the group for the downward journey. Should be a lot quicker going down I thought. Wrong!! A head count was taken by our guides. Two missing!! We waited while a quick search was made of the top area with no success. It was decided to walk down to the crater and assemble. Twenty minutes later after exploring the entire crater the missing climbers arrived and we set off on the downward journey

Climbing down large rocks is just as hard and slow as going up. Perhaps not as energy sapping but making sure your feet are on firm rocks took concentration. We had frequent stops to regroup as less fit climbers were tiring at this stage. One of the rest stops was particularly long and most of us were keen and impatient to carry on. Once we reached the scoria scree section most were able to slide or skate down much quicker than going up. I discovered there was a real art to this.

The previous evening while out walking from our cabin at Belt Motor Camp we discovered a restaurant near the boat ramp called Bach on Breakwater. It was ideal as it was only a short walk. Estimating that we would be back in New Plymouth at around 6pm at the latest we booked a table for 6.45pm for a celebratory dinner. However, with rest stops the walk down took the same time as going up. Arriving back at Tahurangi Lodge it was a pleasant surprise to receive a personalised certificate of our achievement. After a quick cuppa we set off at a good pace for the carpark. We covered the distance in just under an hour arriving at the carpark at 6pm. We had taken 12 hours to complete our goal. We drove to New Plymouth, had the quickest shower ever to arrive at the restaurant only 5 minutes late. Dinner and wine has never tasted so good. We were all proud of our climbing achievement.

The next morning we were all invigorated and keen to give our muscles a work out. So we set off to climb Paritutu Rock - a rocky outcrop south of the Port. To top off a wonderful weekend we stopped at the Three Sisters south of Mokau to walk around the coast line at low tide.

- Lois Bydder

Walking the Queen Charlotte Track (23 April 2013)

Queen Charlotte Track (71 km from Ship Cove to Anakiwa)

A flight to Blenheim and a short bus ride to Picton saw the start of an awesome trip walking the Queen Charlotte Track. We departed Picton at 7.30am, headed out to Motuara Island, a native bird sanctuary, where we climbed the track to the trig to view the surrounding inlets and waterways. We were lucky to have seen a Little Blue Penguin, a Robin, Southern Oyster-Catcher and a Fantail but the Saddleback kept well out of sight. A short boat ride took us across to Ship Cove and the start of the 71 km walk to Anakiwa.



We viewed the monuments and read some of the history of Captain Cook's visit and the early settlers before heading up a steep incline for approximately two kms, before it evened out and we were on the well-formed track. It was a bit of a misty day with light rain and a cooler wind. We passed Resolution Bay, then onto Furneaux Lodge, our accommodation for the next couple of nights. We stayed in the backpacker accommodation, which was quite sufficient but no-where to prepare or cook food as they

assume that all people will eat in the restaurant. Our luggage was picked up and dropped off by Beachcomber Cruises to fit in with our itinerary.

The following day we walked up to the Antimony Mine and further up-hill until we arrived at the top of the ridge which gave us unlimited views of Port Gore, Cape Jackson and the Titirangi Saddle. Then, back at Furneaux, we watched helicopters arriving and dropping of people and later found out that they had flown in from Wellington for a corporate lunch? We had a kayak around the bays out from Furneaux which gave a different concept to the view you get from walking in from the track.

An easy walk the next day, over the swing bridge then we passed some of the other accommodation places which were available and then onto Punga Cove. What a beautiful stunning and easy walk. We rewarded ourselves with a pizza and a beverage at the Boatshed Café on the waters' edge. I thought this place was really lovely and could have stayed on for a few days. Punga Cove is very popular for weddings and they were actually setting up for a wedding the following day. I had a swim in the sea, followed by a spa and a few drinks – really awesome. The single room backpacker's accommodation was situated on the highest point and we had the most amazing views out into the bay and onto the wharf below. There were plenty of wonderful facilities for backpackers.

With lunches packed, we headed off to Portage, the longest day of the tramp with a 24.5 klm walk, steep tracks, stunning views and possibly the hottest day of the tramp. It took us six hours, but we stopped for photos, viewed the weka and lunched along the day. The wekas seemed to appear out of nowhere when you stopped for photos, at camping areas and also where picnic tables were located. Upon arrival at Portage, we dropped our gear in our upgraded room (from a backpackers room to a hotel room) and headed for a dip in the pool, followed by dinner of fresh fish 'n chips and a drink or two in the bar, which overlooked the bay - beautiful!!!!

We had decided to stay another night at Portage and headed out along the road to the Gap, where we swam, explored the coastline and back to the pool again and all of a sudden it was Happy Hour again, which we had to indulge in again.

The following morning, with bags packed and at the door waiting for the water taxi, we headed off towards Lochmara where we were to stay the next night. What an absolutely fabulous place, another place where I could have stayed for another night. It is a very popular spot for people to come out from Picton for breakfast or lunch and I can tell you, they had the most amazing food, some of the nicest that I have tasted. Lochmara has 11 acres of arts and crafts and you just wonder round and look at all the interesting arty things. There was a full sized mosaic lounge, a set-up of Crumpy's camp, hammocks, punga carvings, large insects made from bits and pieces of old metal – these are just to name a few. We saw the feeding of the eels, fed the parakeets and both Jayne and I had a go on the flying fox, really neat but the ride was over so quickly.

We left Lochmara and headed off on our last day to Anakiwa and the end of the Queen Charlotte walk. We took a small detour up to a trig and had 360 degree views of the sounds, truly magnificent. We walked down to Mistletoe Bay, a lovely gentle spot, very serene and walked on up the coastal track towards Anakiwa. This part of the track was really lovely and the colour of the water was aquamarine and so clear. We reached Anakiwa 2.45pm with the water taxi departing at 3.30pm for the short trip back to Picton. I decided to have a little look around Outward Bound and what an amazing set up they had. As we were boarding the boat, a group of girls arrived by sloop and they had been out on the water for the past three days as part of one of the Outward Bound adventures.

I enjoyed every minute of the tramp and would highly recommend it to anyone who would like to see the sights of the Queen Charlotte Sounds and surrounding waterways.

You would have thought we would have had enough walking, but the following day we headed out from Picton along the Snout Track which basically follows the harbour out

towards the sounds. It was a long three hour walk and yes after that extremely hot day, a cool drink was had on the way back to the Backpackers. We stayed at Tombstone Backpackers, which is right over the road from the cemetery and would you believe the front door is shaped like a coffin. The motto is 'Rest in Peace'. It was a lovely clean establishment and breakfast was also thrown in with the nightly cost. They had a spa which overlooked Picton harbour and we sat in there and watched all the vehicles come off the ferries and head off on their journeys. I would recommend Tombstone Backpackers as a place to stay in Picton.

The following morning we were picked up at 8.00am and headed off to Havelock North, where we met the Pelorus Mail Boat and headed out for a day on the Pelorus Sound, dropping off mail and supplies to the folks who live out there and don't very often get to town. There is only boat access to some of these remote places in the Pelorus Sound, but apparently a lively group of people live out there who all have stories to tell. One lady who we dropped off mail to, met us by boat and she had been possuming out there most of her life and her companion was 'Ziggy' a black and white fox terrier who rode up the front of the little boat which came out to meet the mail boat. Ziggy barked as the mail boat approached and he was so cute. We picked up a wedding dress, which one Mum had made for her daughter and took it back to Havelock. We viewed possibly one of New Zealand's most remote toilets with a most fantastic view of the sounds. Back to the wharf and an hour trip back to Picton and into the hot tub.

We are heading back to Blenheim now to pick up the bikes as we are doing a cycling tour of some of the wineries in Blenheim. I can tell you, it has been a long time since I had ridden a bike and the next day, there were some sore muscles in places I didn't know existed. We cycled to Makana Chocolate Factory, then out to a couple of wineries and picked up some food items on the way back. The following day, we were at the winery by 10am and Jayne was into the sampling well and truly – a bit too early for too many samples for me. We didn't want to get drunken-charged on a push bike. So by lunch time, I think we had had enough of the sampling of wines and had a bottle each in our backpacks for Jayne to bring home. We ended the holiday with lunch at a winery, a beautiful meal, glass wine and I can only say; a really awesome holiday in a truly magnificent part of the country.

- Helen & Jayne

Rotorua Marathon 2013 (5 May 2013)

Six nervous HMC members lined up for the start of the 49th Rotorua Marathon on Saturday 4th May. Anita Aitchison, Helen Baldock and Fay Kett were entered as walkers. Ash Parmar was about to experience his first marathon (as was Anita), while Ron Pedder was aiming to make it into the prestigious 'Survivor's Club'. Jenny Brady was about to circumnavigate the lake for the 26th time.

The half marathon field set off half an hour before the marathoners and it included HMC members: Nicola McMahon in the run as well as Ross Murphy and Kirsty Mojel-Murphy walking.

There was great support for all our runners and walkers. Martin was keeping a close watch on Ash, Ron had great family support and those 'Women-in-Wigs made sure everyone knew when a HMC competitor was passing. (However, it should be recorded that one W-in-W was not averse to providing a personal massage, with Tiger Balm, to the selected limbs of well-tuned male runners in need.)

Conditions were close to perfect and while the course does not get any easier or shorter, all HMC runners and walkers were finishers, all did their very best on the day and all had impressive personal times.

Results:

Half Marathon Run:

Nichola McMahon 2.00.59

Half Marathon Walk:

Ross Murphy 2.21.48 (4th place)

Kirsty Mojel-Murphy 2.41.24

Marathon Run:

Himanshu (Ash) Parmar 4.57.30

Ron Pedder 5.49.22

Marathon Walk:

Helen Baldock 5.44.42

Faye Kett 6.01.06

Anita Aitchison 6.37.27

A Great Offer (25 May 2013)

The Hamilton Marathon Clinic plans to really celebrate the 50th Rotorua Marathon that will be held on Saturday 3rd May 2014.

The committee has decided to offer all HMC members free entry into the 2014 Rotorua Marathon and to provide free transport for them and their supporters from Hamilton to Rotorua and back on the day of the event.

Past President Martin came up with this idea and presented it to the May meeting of the HMC committee. Following discussion it was passed unanimously. The committee felt that Martin's proposal was a great way to give something back to our members, to promote the marathon as a real and achievable challenge and to ensure that the Hamilton Marathon Clinic has a presence at the 50th anniversary of New Zealand's premier marathon.

Hopefully this initiative will be well supported by club members and will provide an incentive for some to train for a first marathon or for others to get back to the marathon distance. It may also encourage ex-members to return to the club and attract new members who want to complete a marathon as a runner or walker. The club will provide all potential marathon entrants with programmes, advice, and companionship to support their training. Being part of the HMC team at Rotorua in 2014 will certainly give all entrants every incentive to make it to the finish.

There are some conditions to this generous offer:

- Participants must be financial HMC members on race day.
- Only members with full HMC membership qualify - not interclub membership.
- Club members need to make and pay for their own entries. HMC will subsequently refund the basic entry fee. (Late fees or any additional costs will not be refunded.)
- Participants must wear the new club uniform at Rotorua to qualify for the refund.
- This offer only applies to club members competing in the full marathon.
- Members will need to start this event to qualify for the club refund.
- The bus transport to and from Rotorua on race day will be free to participants in all Rotorua distances and their supporters, but marathon runners and walkers who choose to make their own travel arrangements will still be eligible for the marathon refund.

So set your sights on the 2014 Rotorua Marathon and let others know about this generous offer and encourage them to come along to the club on a Tuesday at 5.30pm or on Sunday at 7.30am. We will help them achieve their marathon dream.

A New Life Member (10 June 2013)

A Special Meeting of the Hamilton Marathon Clinic was held following the 10km championships on Sunday 9th June 2013.

Dr Denis Friedlander had been nominated for a life membership to the club. Andy Galloway spoke in support of Denis' nomination. He explained that Denis was one of the founding members of the club and was inspired by a marathon clinic in Honolulu that had been formed to help patients who were recovering from cardiac disease.

Bernie Fitz-Gerald and other club members also spoke in support of Dr Denis and no one present was surprised when Denis was elected as our latest life member. In thanking the club for honouring him, Denis explained how he and Andy Galloway came to establish the Hamilton Marathon Clinic in 1978.



10km Championships 2013 (11 June 3 2013)

The HMC 10km championships were held on Sunday 9th June.

In order to foster good will and camaraderie between clubs, we had invited the Hamilton Hawks and Hamilton Road Runners to join us at our 10km Championship this year. We had also moved this event forward a week so that it did not clash with the Te Awamutu Marathon Clinic's half marathon scheduled for 16th June.

Inviting fellow clubs proved to be a very good decision and it was great to compete and socialise with runners from Hamilton Road Runners and a Hawk. However, we may not have decided to move the champs forward a week if we had known how wet Sunday the 9th would be.

It was raining when we all woke up and the temptation to turn over and go back to sleep was undoubtedly very strong in others beside myself. But we are a dedicated lot and so staggered out of bed, got prepared and drove through the rain to gather damply in the clubrooms. First the walkers, and later the runners, huddled together at the start line for a course briefing before heading into the 'big wet'.

On the way out towards Cobham Bridge I tried to skirt around the bits of the path that were covered with water. I also tried to remember the course description, follow the blue arrows and locate the green markers that helped guide me through the gardens. Special thanks must go to Ash and Bernie who braved the elements to provide a water stop and to man a strategic corner on the course as it headed down into the gardens. (Martin and Noel also provided encouragement, but from the dry warmth of Martin's van!)

Once out of the gardens I could relax and forget about directions as I knew the way home. I had only made one relatively minor navigational error – not like one poor Road Runner. So I stomped right through all the puddles and thought about the hot shower that was calling me.

We compared experiences over tea, coffee and a great supply of food. Then sat back and learnt of the significant contribution that Dr Denis Friedlander had made to the club.

It had been a memorable day. And thanks to our visitors for joining us - we will try to sort the weather next year.

Owen Nicholas Warner (6 February 1938 – 23 September 2103)

Long time HMC member and club supporter, Owen Warner passed away on 25th September 2013.



A young Owen Warner

To many club members, Owen was the quiet guy who turned up with his wife Angela at special club events. But unbeknown to most current club members, Owen had an impressive athletic past and had been one of New Zealand's top race walkers.

Owen won the New Zealand 20mile road walk championship in 1969 and 1971 – the 20Km road walk champs in 1969, 1970, 1971 and 1972 – and the 50km championships in 1970, 1971 and 1972. In 1971 Owen set a New Zealand record for the 20km road walk with a time of 1hr 34mins 28.0seconds.

On Tuesday 1st October, Hamilton Marathon Clinic members held a minutes silence to remember Owen and to reflect on his amazing achievements. The sincere best wishes of all club members go out to Owen's wife Angela.

Maratoto Challenge (15 Nov 2013)

I have had this event on 'my radar' for a few years – 2013 was going to be the year!

With some reluctance a 'certain Irish club member' also agreed to join me in doing it.

This event is very much off-road and is an annual fundraiser for the country school of Hikutaia. They were a bit down on numbers this year apparently, around 200, when they generally get about 300. The event offers half marathon and 10km courses for walkers, runners and bikers and also a 5kms team event for school children.

I had done my homework with regards to the terrain and toughness of the course. Therefore I was aware of its challenges - or so I thought. And what a challenge!!

It is a 'Triple Peak' course over farmland; predominately through paddocks, farm tracks and beautiful bush. I swear that each of the three peaks had three peaks of their own. One of the organisers told me that they used to offer a marathon distance as well but 'takers' dwindled so they ceased offering it.

The weather was perfect and the enthusiasm mounting for the 08.00hrs start from the school grounds. The local community and school committee are all behind this event with farmers opening up their farms and along with their families, marshalling and manning the drink and chocolate stations. Yes chocolate. I would not usually take chocolate on board even though I am a choc-aholic, but I did this day, and it worked a treat. Thanks guys.

A little bit of orienteering was required in order to spot the green and red triangles on fence post and trees etc as you twisted and turned on the course. You also get your feet wet, not only from stream and fiord crossings, but also from the long grass. But this was a welcome relief as it was getting hot by now. Our shoes dried very quickly on this warm day.

Sheep and dairy cows looked at us in utter amazement as we passed by. At the top of the first peak the views back over the Hauraki Plains were amazing, once you had gained you breath and focused to see of course.

Following these massive climbs you do get to descend eventually, and the last couple of kms are on a farm cattle race complete with very fresh manure.

This is a wonderful event and I recommend it, but perhaps not for novices though. It is one that I thoroughly enjoyed despite its challenges.

P/B's no, but stamina and endurance building stuff, fresh air and countryside yes. Also seeing the cyclist come in was a bonus, but how they mastered it I don't know.

Just to give you an idea on its toughness - I would normally race walk 10kms in around an hour. Well I felt I had done 5-6 kms but when I looked at my watch I had only done 1.7kms. At 10kms it



said 1hr.25minutes. So I knew this was going to be a three hour journey. I just made it with 2hrs 58 mins and felt pretty good at the finish.

A swim in the school pool finished my event. My Irish friend came in a little later, but despite his cursing, I know he enjoyed it as well.

There were freshly made filled rolls, sandwiches, hot chips and even Mr Whippy to replenish the body.

This was a great one to have ticked off my 'bucket list' – but I do think I'll do it again. Both Wilf and I received gorgeous medals for 1st male and female home.

How about a group from the club getting together in 2014 and master the Mighty Peaks en masse?

You don't have to go all the way to China to take on some great challenges right at our back door.

- Raewyn

Jago Cup 2013 (27 Nov 2013)

On Sunday 24th November, Hamilton Marathon Clinic hosted the annual relay competition against Hamilton Road Runners and Te Awamutu Marathon Clinic. Teams from the three clubs were competing for the Jago Cup.

There were four in each team and the runners headed south from the club rooms along the river path on 5km legs. The walkers took the path north for 2.5km legs.

The weather was perfect, though a bit hot out on the course. There was a great turn out from all three clubs, although HMC did have more teams entered which did give an advantage. However, our running and walking teams dominated the top placings to ensure that the club retained the Jago Cup for both events.

Following morning tea, Bernie Fitz-Gerald was presented with the Percy Lawn Trophy. This trophy is presented by the club hosting the event to a member who has made a significant contribution to the club. Bernie was a very deserving recipient.

HMC Mystery Christmas Trip (11 Dec 2013)

Very early on the Sunday morning of the first day in December we all gathered at Raewyn and Noel's house in Anglesea Street. The storage section of a large coach was loaded with Christmas goodies, lunch, tables, camp chairs and personal gearbags. Thirty three club members, including two cheeky Christmas Elves boarded the coach and we were on our way – destination unknown. Everyone had sweets and a wee gift on their seat, a Christmas questionnaire that required answers during our journey, and the questions weren't that easy; eg: 'how many points does a snowflake have?' and 'how many gifts in total would you have from the Xmas carol 'The Twelve Days of Christmas'?' The Elves (Jenny and Robyn) kept us entertained and did their best to get everyone carol singing along the way!

First stop was for morning tea at the 'The Cheese Barn' at Matatoki on the Paeroa-Kopu Highway. A delightful place where organic cheese products are made and sold. Welcome hot drinks and muffins awaited us, and then a wander around to see the farm animals in the nearby paddocks.

Back on SH26 to Thames, our main destination. A warm sunny day compensated for the tide being out! Those who wanted to walk or run were dropped off at a Reserve near the sea on the north side of town. From there we followed the 3.5km coastal walkway back into Thames and to where the bus was parked near the band rotunda and the local bowling Club. What a delightful walk that is, flat and interesting with lots to see along the way. How about the different artworks painted on the concrete path itself!

Under large trees, tables were set up and an excellent lunch had been laid out. We helped ourselves to croissants, sliced ham and cheese, salads, fruits and cold drinks. Santa arrived (a very slim version, I might add) and handed out gifts to everyone. Much laughter and smiles all around with the Elves keeping us entertained, and one of our youngest travellers sang a Christmas carol. After short impromptu speeches, a yummy dessert of mixed fresh fruits and chocolates was served with plenty for 'seconds'.

Eventually we packed up and headed home, back in Hamilton by 4pm, after a thoroughly enjoyable day out. Many thanks to all involved in organising this great day for us; including Raewyn, Helen, Robyn, Jenny, Mike, Diedre, and Don who drove the coach for us. It was a great start to the festive season!

Carol Downey