



### Striders Christmas Picnic

**Welcome to the final newsletter of 2019.** We hope you find a few minutes at this hectic time to take a look at some of the last few months' activities. Everyone has been really busy sporting-wise (and a bit of partying too!) Striders cyclists and runners have taken part in events in locations ranging from the Coromandel to Taiwan. Striders played a massive part in the Kerikeri Half, with about 25 runners/walkers taking part and many of the cyclists marshalling. We'd love to hear about your sporting life—drop us an email to: [info@striders.co.nz](mailto:info@striders.co.nz). **By the way, if you change your email address, let us know so that you don't miss out!**

**Happy Christmas everyone, wishing you a fit and healthy New Year!**

### Sports Shorts

- **Andy Finch** has organised a Christmas hamper for less fortunate people around the community. Striders came good, and donated freely. Andy will be handing over the collection to the Kaeo foodbank at the Honey Café 9.10am on Saturday 21st December.
- **New club shirts** made Striders very visible at the Kerikeri Half, the blue shirt was a popular choice.
- Massive thanks to **Pete and Susie** for hosting the Striders Christmas bbqs for many successful years. This year we had a new venue for a Christmas picnic - Kingston House grounds. There was an impressive array of food to share, juggling, croquet (of a sort...), excellent company and a few beers too. Thanks to **Lis and Gerald** for cooking the ham—even I was tempted and I'm veggie!
- Two local events were popular with Striders runners— The Bay of Islands Walkers and Runners K2, Kawakawa to Opuā – choose your own start time to end at 12.00. A scenic run with a killer hill at the start. And the Okaihau Kaikohe Traverse, a 21k flat run along the Twin Coast Cycle Trail. Great training runs for the Kerikeri Half.
- **Half Marathon success** Some great results, especially for our youngsters who took part. Well done all.

### Stories featured inside

**Thanks to Bill for organising the Striders Training Day**—we had a great morning: swimming, cycling and running followed by a picnic. John tells us about it.

**Striders cyclist, Bevan Collins**, travelled to Taiwan to take part in the Taiwan KOM, he gives us the low-down.

**Chris and Debbie** ran in Queenstown with 12,000 others the week before the Keri half. A big contrast to Kerikeri!

**Pip took on the Kerikeri Half Marathon for the first time**— find out how she got on, and how she feels about the Striders!

**Penny and Kelly walked the Kerikeri Half**— they discovered another side of the event!



**Margie** took part in the original Kerikeri Half as well as this year's event

# Striders Training Day

## Striders Multi-Sports Training Day – 6<sup>th</sup> October

The weather gods behaved themselves and provided a beautiful sunrise and calm waters at Opito Bay to welcome the swimmers for the first leg of the newly resurrected Striders Triathlon training event. Bill Miles had devised a short and long course for anybody wishing to take part in this multi-sport event. The participants could do either the whole course themselves or compete in just 1 or 2 stages. The short course was a 300 metre swim, 13km cycle ride and 5km run and the long course was 850 meter swim, 25km cycle ride and 8.5km run.



Opito Bay looked so inviting even at 7.30 a.m. but somebody had forgotten to switch the heater on and make no mistake the sea temperature was pretty damn cold!! Safety briefing done and transition rules sorted it was time to get things going. Bill, Mark Lankshear and Stephanie Bartlett were taking on the long swim with Renee, Diana, Ted, Michelle & Isla tackling the short course. Maybe it was the sea temperature but these 5 were all out of the water in 6-8 minutes. Fantastic effort by all!



**And they're off, escorted by Tim in a kayak**



**Nice mum and daughter moment with Michelle and Isla**

At the first transition stage (or T1 to give it its technical name) Gary Watson took over as designated cyclist for Renee and Diana, Andy and Ted took off on their bikes, followed by Michelle and Isla and then Gerald, Shirley and Chris who all were doing the long course as part of separate teams. During a quick transition, Mark Lankshear put on his special go-faster socks. He was doing the long course as an individual and began pedalling furiously to start the climb from Opito Bay.



**Shirley and Gerald looking good!**



**Mark setting off like a rocket**

Gary had already arrived at T2 (the Stone Store car park) before the designated runners, Diana and Renee, however they quickly set about running and eating into the 5Km Rainbow Falls track. Andy appeared just as Diana and Renee set off and so leaping off his bike almost before the wheels had stopped, he quickly set about the transition into running attire and gave chase. Michelle and Isla cruised gracefully into the transition area and set off like a couple of greyhounds. Ted glided elegantly into transition and set about the run with the steely, determined look of a man who meant business and wanted to get the job done. Chris came in cool and composed and tagged Debbie who was having a go at the 8.5Km run for the first time. Gerald and Shirley came in amid mischievous rumours and counter rumours of “drafting” but by who wasn’t clear! Mark swept in and out of the transition to begin his third and final discipline. There was a scary incident involving a vehicle on a one lane bridge that didn’t stop for Gerald and Shirley but at least everybody made it safely to the Stone Store for the final stage. Gerald’s one training run three weeks before could have proved decisive in the final run in, however as he approached the finish line it was obvious his elegant, sleek, long loping strides had long deserted him and he was anxious to get back to the comfort of his bike.



**Gary, left,  
waiting for  
Di and  
Renee.**



**Gerald,  
right—on  
the last leg**

Bill and Renee had arranged for a sausage sizzle, drinks, coffee, soup etc to await the competitors as they crossed the line. There were some spot prizes, kindly donated by Hunters cycles which were awarded for “Best Socks”, “Youngest competitor”, “Not the youngest competitor”, “Best attire” and “Awesomest performance”. It wasn’t about time so everyone was a winner and a big well done goes out to Bill & Renee and to all the competitors and support crews. It was a great, well organised event enjoyed by all who took part and everyone is looking forward to the next one. So, if you’re interested, watch out for news on the website or facebook.



**Michelle with Isla getting ready for the swim, and Anne who was part of the awesome support crew**



**Debbie with her usual smiley finish!**



**Steph after her 900m swim, off to tag her dad Chris**

**Ted trying to catch Isla—it's not going to happen!!**



**Will it be a PB wonders Andy—YES Andy, its your first tri!!**



**Bill was the designated long course swimmer, then dashed to the Falls to prep breakfast.**



**Ted and Renee waiting excitedly for the start!!**



**After event calorie loading with Isla, Di, Andy and Renee**



Thanks to the support crew and everyone who turned up to cheer at the end!



Thanks for a great day Bill— here's to the next one

## Taiwan KOM Challenge—by Bevan Collins

I heard about the Taiwan KOM Challenge a year or so ago through YouTube videos. It claimed to be one of the toughest cycling sportives on the planet, starting at sea level and climbing to 3275 meters elevation with maximum gradients of 27% towards the end.

Six months ago I decided I would have a go at it. Mum (Maree) said she'd join me on the trip but not on the race. Since we lack any nearby mountains, training mostly involved many ascents of Martin Road hill in Kaeo, as well as long sessions on the indoor trainer.

We only had a few days in Taiwan. The first day, we picked up Mum's bike that she had organised to hire and the following day we went for an amazing ride around Liyu Lake.



The following day was race day. After studying the course and watching so many videos of the race, it was very strange to finally be at the start line. Mum wished me luck and took a spectator bus to the top of the mountain.

Although the first 18k of the race to the base of the mountain is flat and neutralised, it was still fast and there was a constant danger of pileups. Last year there were two crashes near the beginning as amateurs were trying to keep up with the pros. The race has a history of inviting professional cyclists. This year Marianne Vos and her CCC Liv team mates were there.

The first 60k of the climb is pretty gradual, about 6% but it is constant... no freewheeling, always pushing on the pedals. No one wants to go too hard because everyone knows that the last 10k are horrible. The views around Taroko Gorge are stunning, towering cliffs of rock on all sides. We go through many tunnels and then through clouds.



The jungle gives way to alpine forests. It is surreal to be looking over the side of the road and seeing clouds.



Then there is a steep 3k descent which is the first opportunity for a recovery since the start, but it is altitude that has to be made up and then some. At this point I was feeling pretty good. Everyone says the last 10k is the hardest but I was feeling a little disappointed... this is supposed to be a challenge! That all changed... this is where the race really starts. The last 10k has an average gradient of 10% with maximums of 27%. My legs start cramping 2k later. Everyone is weaving across the road to try to lower the ramps, some are walking. At 2.5k to go I could see the finish arch way up above in the distance and hear the loud speaker. This along with a small downhill gave some mental relief. The last 1k was back to high gradients, cheering spectators helped to keep going to the end.



After the cramping had subsided, I had an amazing sense of achievement and relief to finally finish.

4:26:28 (official timing starts from the bottom of the climb),  
110/551 place overall, 16/147 in M40 division.

I loved this race, and would love to do it again. *Bevan*



# Striders go to Queenstown

By Chris and Deb Bartlett



In mid November a few Striders took part in the Queenstown Half Marathon & 10k event. By far the biggest event I've been involved in & a great experience with a variety of road & trail to contend with. Around 12000 runners take over Queenstown & it's an amazing vibe even with the rain that came & went through the weekend.

The morning of the run dawned wet & cold. The start line was like the Keri Half on Steroids but the organisers did a great job of seeding runners so it wasn't a problem to start where you wanted...given time. It was a wet start but by the time we were off the road section & on to the shores of the Shotover River the sun appeared & it was a great run in to the crowds of runners as we ran through the Queenstown wharf area & on to the finish. Not such a great situation for a PB but an amazing sight & experience amongst that many runners.

Not a bad place for a well earned ale on the wharf afterwards.

Quite a change of climate when it snows in the nearby hills overnight following the event.

## Half Marathon

Chris Bartlett 1hr 34

Al Panckhurst 1hr 49

Mandy Turner 2hr 22

Hannah Watson 2hr 50

Kaylene Watson 2hr 50

10k

Debbie Bartlett 1hr 02

## Pip's first Kerikeri Half



Happy 'after' photo!  
From the left: Renata,  
Carol, Di and Pip.

Maybe it's because you're local? How many people told me that the Kerikeri Half is a boring run, boring in terms of challenge, scenery, I don't know but it couldn't be further from the truth. I've been running now for just over two years and this was my second official half marathon. Yes, it had its challenges. I knew for me, the first 7k was going to be crucial and of course the final 5 when you're weary and flagging. I don't care how many times you've run this route, those expansive views from the top of the hills and farmland is just pure kiwi and eventually getting to the finish line and being presented with a bit of bling was the icing on the cake. One toenail is totally purple and black and I got a bit of cramp at the end but I was elated. Absolutely worth it!

You can spot a Strider in their kit a mile away and never feel you're out there alone, they always smile and wave as they pass you. Perhaps just wear it a few more times than me and you'll avoid the underarm rash!!! You're a fantastic bunch, even those crazy ultra and marathon runners, you welcomed us with oodles of encouragement and friendship... it's been invaluable for us newbies to the Kerikeri scene!

*Pip Boye*

## Penny and Kelly have a lovely morning walk...!



After a fresh & early start, Kelly & I were ready & set for a 'lovely little' morning's walk. Just from Okaihau to Kerikeri. As one does, first thing on a Saturday morning. 'It'll be fun!' they said. 'You'll be fine' they said. 'Piece of cake!' they said. Well, hand on heart all the things 'they said' came true. Except maybe the 'piece of cake'... Rather a bit of hard biscuit instead. Especially when the training only included trail walking & no jogging.

Kelly set off at a blistering pace & never faltered from start to finish. Have to say, I took to jogging to play catch up on several occasions. The conditions were perfect. The breeze welcome with a promising 'heat-to-come' sun factoring in near the late morning mark. The water stops & en route encouragement were most welcome & quite the delight in places, ranging from exuberant dress ups, kiddies with jelly beans & farmers gruffly vocalising 'good onya's!'

Although the number of walkers was in minority compared to the Hybrid walker/runners, it didn't matter that our placings changed back & forward en route. The company was fun in amongst the serious. Word has it that one fun group had specialised forms of refreshments at the stops & still finished in a very respectable time!

The organisation right from the bus transport out (shout out to our driver who was less than au fait with where to go plus handling a clutch that was determined to be left behind...) to the domain set up, was on point.

Kelly & I promised ourselves to finish in under 3hrs & we did, with a few minutes to spare. A great result all round which included a birthday, actually finishing in one piece & achieving our goal. Winning! Nice to come away with a personal first 1/2 marathon medal too! Kelly, being the veteran 1/2 marathoner, added hers to the collection. Many thanks to her encouragement & support.

A final word to anyone reading who is thinking about stretching their goals out from a 5km/10km walk to a 1/2 marathon, find someone who is already on their way/tells you that you can & hang on to their coat tails. It'll be worth it.

Thank you Sport Northland

Penny Lawty  
Walker  
Kerikeri 1/2 Marathon 2019

## Kerikeri Half Marathon Memories—Margie Silich



The late eighties, Margie is second on the left, with Striders founder Heather Thomson.

### Kerikeri Half Marathon Memories

In the early 1980's the Moerewa Athletic club (now Bay of Islands Runners and Walkers) started a half marathon from Waimate north to Haruru Falls. In 1984 they offered it to our club, the Kerikeri Striders and Athletic club. However, in 1990, due to the increase in size and the safety of runners on a busy, narrow main road it was moved to Okaihau. Bryan Phillips came up with this course change when he realised that it was 21kms to Kerikeri, so would be a perfect (fast) half marathon course; taking into account that the first 7kms of climbing was offset by the final 14kms mostly downhill.

Along with Bryan, I was on the original committee that organised the first event 30 years ago. Being a point to point course it posed a few organisational headaches. However, with only a couple of hundred competitors it was doable. This proved to be a very popular choice and from a few hundred competitors it steadily grew through the 1990's. Leading up to the millennium, our major sponsor Fullers, and our committee made a huge effort to get "2000 for the year 2000" and we did! Big kudos to Mike Sim, managing director of Fullers and our hardworking committee. It was my third and last year as Race Director, so it was a real buzz to make it happen!. Our event was very well supported by local businesses as they could see the benefits of attracting visitors to our town for the weekend. From the bus company to ferry competitors up to the start; New World for goodies for the race packs. I look back to the huge job of collecting goodies then putting into bags in the old rugby club rooms the day before. But many helped and it made this chore a fun time.

We spent many hours deciding on the certificate and T shirt or singlet designs – there have been some super ones by Cecilia Russell, our famous local artist, that depicted our beautiful area well. Another innovation was getting local businesses to sponsor the water stops. We then asked local groups like scouts etc if they would “man” them for a donation. They were very keen and made their own themes that we judged and awarded prizes for. Competitors loved the distraction and looked forward to each one on their way along.

The walking division was included in 1997 or 1998, as well the Athletics North Half Marathon championships. This meant an accurate course had to be measured and thanks to a Measuring Wheel, we achieved this. The teams division was introduced in 2000 and is still part of the event. The hybrid division and 5km options have proved very popular too.

After this year’s event, Bryan and Marg Crooke and I reminisced about how it was for us and how it is now.....many changes like no race packs, however, that is great for the environment, no major spot prize like the trips that Trixie Newton Travel sponsored and Mystery Breaks from Air New Zealand and not as many place prizes/awards.

However, Sport Northland are doing an amazing job since taking it over in 2001 and it is fantastic to see it is still attracting 2000+ competitors; long may that continue!

So all in all, I thoroughly enjoyed the 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary event, even though I posted my slowest time of 2.53 and still have sore knees, but at 70 years young I am not complaining! I am looking forward to celebrating the 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary with you, not as a competitor, but at the Street Party!!

*Margie (Glentworth) Silich* – committee member 1982-2001 (then we went to Australia for 7 years, then moved to Nelson in 2013)



# Upcoming Events

**26th January**—Tussock Traverse, 6, 10, 21, 332km

<https://tussocktraverse.co.nz>

**1st February**—Puketi Forest Challenge—very popular with Striders

<https://puketi.org.nz/new/sp-content/uploads/2019/10/kauri-challenge-2020.pdf>

**22nd February**—The Fireco Kai Iwi Lakes Triathlon. This event is organised by Sport Northland and is back again at the stunning Kai Iwi Lakes. It incorporates two adult distances (one being a 'Try a Tri') and a children's event. Bill and Renee highly recommend this event.

If you know of any events you think Striders may find of interest, drop me an email at: [info@striders.co.nz](mailto:info@striders.co.nz) and I will put it on our website.

Massive thanks to everyone who contributes to the  
Newsletter