

September 1999 Document

Triple Treat.

William Flockton.

On Sunday, 19 September, YODA is having another spectacular event, "The Inaugural Triple Treat Orienteering/Run" or simply "The Triple Treat".

Similar to the "Graveyard Gallop" of previous years, the courses have been designed mainly as running rather than navigation. The event combines the Ross Creek, Town Belt North and Town Belt South maps. At this stage courses will range in length from approximately 20kms (in one big loop around all three maps), 10km (with a loop of two maps) and the usual 5kms (one loop of one map) There will be an orange, yellow and white course of each of these. However, because of the high number of controls that need to be placed out, the short loop courses will not be as well designed as those of larger nature.

The start place will be on the Ross Creek map at the junction of Burma and Wakari Roads. As the courses will be a loop, you will start and finish at the same place. The start time will be a little earlier than usual, probably around 10.00am to about 11.30am, so that everyone will have enough time to complete their course before closure. As there will be three maps, costs will also be a little higher, but at this stage they have not been confirmed. There is also a possibility of prizes for first, second and third place, but these will be advertised closer to the event.

It is not known at this stage whether you will be given all three maps at the start or have "Map exchange points" dotted around the city.

Please be warned, there is quite a distance between the Ross Creek and Town Belt maps, which is not mapped. There will be a map at the start showing the route you MUST follow to get between maps.

Overall, it will be a very enjoyable event, I hope to see you all there!

The Great Queenstown EPIC.

12 hour endurance event around Queenstown area on Saturday 9 October,
10am until 10pm.

The EPIC is a cross country navigation race.

For more information contact

Steve Foote vyper@es.co.nz

Bruce McLeod bmcleod@es.co.nz

or Jennifer for an entry form

THE PRESIDENT'S REPORT

Bruce McCormick

Running at Akatore is always a challenge for me - it's the vertical height that I find most difficult. The next most difficulty is the trees, they hide everything! My plan for Sunday, 22 August was to develop more confidence in this environment and I decided to do this by not referring to my compass, while doing my course.

Initially, the sun was shining through the trees and this gave me the much needed confidence at the start of the the course. Without a compass, one needs to stay in contact with the map and for about two thirds of the course, I managed very well. . Most of the time my distance estimation was way short.

Bob Cunninghame had set some interesting legs on Course 3 and I was enjoying myself - if only travelling slowly. When the sun went and it started to snow, it was wonderful. At this stage I was in touch with the map and as I finished a control, I could quite easily reset the map to north and continue.

In the latter parts as I got tired, I started to get my directions wrong (generally through the light green areas that didn't have a lot of obvious spots on the map. It was at this stage I found I was much too low and off course when I found Kev Knowles (or was it the other way around)! Thanks Kev for pulling me back onto the right direction. I was determined to get all controls and while it took a time I was pleased to finish!

My lessons from Akatore: use a compass, but ensure I stay in touch with the map; go higher when contouring; and all the distances are further than you expect. Now, I need another event to put this into practice! Thanks, Bob and your team. A great idea to have just red courses (occasionally, anyway) and great practice for improving skills at Orienteering.

Our financial year is nearly up (30 September) and soon we will be closing off for the year, putting together the accounts and having our Annual General Meeting. This is planned for Tuesday, 30 November 1999 and is to be combined with a social event. More about this later.

LETTER TO THE EDITORS.

Dear Editors,

These are some thoughts from a new member, with some questions and suggestions. I have just joined the Dunedin Orienteering Club, after accompanying my son to the secondary school events earlier in the year, and

getting involved myself. I have found the club members friendly and helpful, and do not want to be critical. But there are perhaps some things which might be different and/or better.

I thought the letter a couple of months back about coaching, or lack of it, was an excellent one. I agreed with the sentiments, as I was getting frustrated by my lack of knowledge and skills, not to mention ending up in the wrong direction too often. I thought the letter might serve as a wakeup call, but see no sign so far. Most activities I have tackled have come with an initial high proportion of instruction/coaching at the start, tailing off as experience builds up.

Orienteering seems to work on the "sink-or-swim" theory, with map and compass skills learned by trial and error. Trial and Error are good teachers, but can lose a few along the way. After tackling my first orange course at Seacliff this year, I felt frustrated enough by my lack of progress to chuck it in, but my son's enthusiasm has brought me back for more. He is now giving me a refresher course in compass theory, based on what he can remember from the packaging that came with our new compass. True! We appreciated the tips and help during the Akatore event last weekend, and I learned more in the one day than the rest of the year combined.

I just cannot understand why the club does not arrange some formal coaching. The lifeblood of any club is its new members. DOC does well catering for members of the public at most events, but maybe needs a strategy to maximise the experience of those starting out, to retain as many as possible as new members. Information and feedback to prospective members would go a long way towards this. Information to new members is also a bit thin. Many Clubs send out a formal acknowledgement of acceptance of membership application, along with Club rules, and sometimes even a handbook. Apparently with DOC, if you receive the DOCument newsletter, then you know you are in. Somehow a bit roundabout, and excellent though DOCument is, it does not explain to me many of the mysteries of orienteering. Like what the colours mean for courses. I'm gradually piecing this together, but cannot enter the Masters Games yet as I have no idea what the grades are about. The codes for checkpoints really intrigue me. I can see the need for clarity and brevity. But where is the key to the symbols used? Maybe there is a good instructional book I can buy. Is there a recommended one?

Orienteering seems a bit of a secret society for a start, like many other clubs. The Club is well-served by friendly organisers and members. But the club and event officials seems content to be anonymous. Why not a "Hello, my name is Chuck, and I'm your Course Planner for today" badge for all those with official roles. Or even better "Hi, my name is Cindy, and I'm your Coach for today".

The DOC Strategic Planning process sounded an interesting one, and I decided it might be useful to pass on some of my observations as a new member. Sorry to say, I was five minutes late, and then discovered Kings High School was not where I thought it was (the story of my orienteering as well). After finding and consulting the car map (which I noted came without contours) and touring the neighbourhood, I found the meeting place 10 minutes late. With growing confidence I found the main entrance, but it was locked. There was a sign though, as follows: "DOC meeting is in the library. If you don't know how to get there, WAIT HERE to be shown." No map, no bearing, nothing. I tried some of the required waiting, but it gradually dawned on me I had just joined a club which invites members to open meetings in secret locked locations.

Still, my family thought it was a huge joke, specially the getting lost bit. I'm happy to discuss any of the points I have raised, and hope they come across as helpful suggestions.

Sorry about the length of all this, but I did try to make the comments verbally.

Ross Davies

EDITOR'S MESSAGE. (Jennifer)

Articles and information for DOCument to be submitted on or before the 20th of the month please. Otherwise there is no guarantee of inclusion.

WORLD CHAMPS 99 - INVERNESS, SCOTLAND.

Bruce McLeod

Having shaken an annoying stomach bug, fended off several strong team contenders and saved enough pennies, I found myself well on the way to Scotland.

First stop was France, where most of the team met up in Bordeaux to race the French 5-Day. I was using this event as a build-up, both technically and physically. With over 12km courses on 4 of the 5 days, the physical side was well covered. Technically I was getting used to racing again, trying to be smooth and precise on the fast sand dune forest. By the end of the week the team was tanning well with hot afternoons spent relaxing on the beach.

Next stop was Aberdeen, Scotland, where the team crammed into Greg Barbour's house and began a couple of weeks training in the Scottish forests. One or two exercises were planned on a map each day, and the team was soon getting to grips with the intricacies of orienteering in the Highlands. The terrain was perhaps tougher than we were used to at home. Often the forests were quite tough running, with lots of branches on the ground and on tree trunks, which paid no mercy to the legs, arms and face. Knee deep heather, chest deep bracken, and the ever present tick (small sucking insect) and midge (small vicious biting insect) also had to be contended with. Technically I found the maps slightly harder than home, although not daunting. The only trouble I was having was with my compass. I would like to blame my equipment, but I fear it was my shoddy compass technique that was letting me down. Something to work on.

After a solid two weeks training the team was ready for a break. We had one week before the big events, and most used this time to relax and freshen up. I was fortunate to be able to stay at a friend's for the week, taking a couple of sight seeing excursions into the Highlands and doing some short sharp runs to keep the legs fired up.

Finally the big event arrived and we moved into the official accommodation (which felt more like a prison camp, but that's another unfortunate story). After the best WOC opening ceremony on record (as it was the shortest, and the skydiver carrying the IOF flag never arrived so they hoisted the Silva flag in its place !!) the first event was the Classic Qualification. The NZ team had a great first day, with 7 of the 8 team members gaining top 30 in their heats and qualifying for the final. Perhaps it was due to the wonderful support from a large number of NZ supporters cheering on the sideline (many having travelled to Europe to compete in the World Vets in Denmark).

With seven of us in the final the kiwi supporters had plenty to cheer for on the main day. It was going to be a tough race for me (15.8km), and my goal was to pace myself, run clean and solid. I was getting very tired at the end, and beginning to lose concentration. In fact I would have missed the last control which was half way down the finish chute if the crowd hadn't screamed at me and pointed towards it. That was lucky, it would have been a long way to run to miss the last !!! Ending up 45th I was just happy to have completed my first World Champs Classic.

Next race was the Short O qualification. Many came unstuck on an area which was deceptively tricky, with some interesting rock detail and cunning course planning. Two women and two men from the team were fortunate to progress through to the finals, with others narrowly missing out. I had snuck into the final, placing 13th in my heat (top 15 qualify), and I prepared to lift myself for another race. It seems that racing in WOC is very taxing, especially mentally, and it was becoming more difficult to pick myself and crank out a peak performance. My race in the Short final was a tad rough technically and I was a bit disappointed with 49th, but I was content with the fact I was able to mix it with the guns.

The final event was the Relay. The terrain for this was an interesting mix of sand dune style contours (moraine) covered in heather, silver birch and bracken. Strong and fast runners led the way, but it was tricky enough to split the pack early. The NZ men all had solid runs, but lacked the pace of the Europeans, finishing 16th. The women also placed a solid 15th, but were a bit disappointed as things didn't flow as well as they might have.

Wrapped up with a great WOC banquet and much Highland dancing, WOC 99 was one of the more successful for the NZ team. Although we had no real stand

out performances, the team showed a solid depth this year and proved we can foot it with the best in the World.

ALL'S WELL THAT ENDS WELL, OR:

HOW I STOPPED WORRYING AND LEARNED TO LOVE THE FOREST

Wayne Patrick.

First, the formalities. As some of you may know and some of you may care to know (while others of you – doubtless – don't care at all), I'm starting my Ph.D. at the University of Cambridge on October 1. As far as you're concerned, there are two immediate consequences (and as far as I'm concerned, there are many more). The first is that August's Akatore event was quite possibly my last on New Zealand soil for a good many years, and therefore worthy of an article (which, like it or not, you are now in the process of perusing). The second is that I'm having a wee farewell bash, to which you are all invited. OK, so it might be bigger than "wee". The fact remains, however, that if you'd like to say goodbye or good riddance, or maybe if you just want an excuse to drink free beer, keep the evening of September 11 free. The venue? Almost definitely 205 Leith St. (South), but I'll be in touch – if I'm not, and you really want to come, give me a call closer to the time.

Right. On with the article.

Jim was forecasting snow to low levels come afternoon. I anxiously tuned in to 4XO to listen to the cancellations, but there was no mention of orienteering. Under-35kg rugby, maybe, but no orienteering. Off to Akatore, then. On arrival, Bob was brief: "You'll be doing Course 1, Wayne. Bruce took 48 minutes." I protested that Bruce had just returned from getting 45th at the World Champs. I secretly aimed to take twice Bruce's time – would that make me 90th in the world?

Jim was wrong. It started snowing before afternoon. Before 11.57am, in fact, because it started snowing before I started running. Well, not necessarily "running" per se, but moving as fast as possible in order to try to generate some body heat. So fast, as it turned out, that I ran straight past number 1 – too low on the hillside, I was. Strangely, I was also unsurprised. Being in a state of complete exhaustion (umm....no comment) before beginning your course is decidedly sub-optimal. The "running" plan went out the window altogether on the way (uphill) to number 2. Good route choice to number 3 – over the hill versus down to the creek and around. I chose the former – in hindsight, a mistake. See, I told you I was tired! Numbers 4 and 5 – going on instinct across tree-clad hillsides, mainly. Mental note: "hill" is a recurring theme here.

The long leg from 5 to 6....ooooh, baby. Time to sit back and enjoy the ride on the long, lazy descent down the spur. Went into a bit of a daze, enjoying the scenery and composing a newsletter article along the way. The extra-casual approach failed rather badly on the next leg – arriving too high up the gully, what did I do? Turn and head even further up it, naturally. Dumb, but I was still on target: 48 minutes, and half the controls under my belt. Bruce, you're a legend. Unfortunately, I'm not, and I was only getting tired. The proof of the pudding was in the 10 minutes spent relocating and generally bemoaning my lack of a brain at number 10. Incidentally, number 10 was a control site that I'd spiked at the Otago Champs. Or was it NOC98? I forget. The sun may have been trying to shine by now, but my navigation was content to stay in hibernation. Fooled by a foolproof parallel error at 11 and by the vagaries of the map at 13. But wasn't the run down into the gully from 12 sweeeet?

It ended much as it had begun. It was snowing (again). I was considerably more exhausted than I had been precisely 100 minutes earlier. I had failed in my quest to break into the world's Top 90, but didn't mind much. Blizzards aren't particularly conducive to socialising, so I went home – to thaw, and to think back over my last minutes in the New Zealand forest. Conclusion: \$5 well spent (indeed – better value for money than for Bruce, it could be argued).

Finally, I'd just like to thank the planner, Bob Cunninghame. True, it was one of the harder courses I've done (both physically and mentally), and yes, it was some of the coldest weather in which I've ever orienteered. But I've been looking for One Last Memory to take away with me of orienteering in Otago, and, to be honest, I'm more than happy for that to be the run through the open forest down that long spur to number 6 (the McLeod boys will know what I'm talking about).

Snow falling gently through the branches, fantail flitting away from under my feet.....sigh.....