

## **Kinloch Capers**

Once again seven hardy members of the Marathon Clinic made the two hour trip south to Taupo to take part in the Mizuno Offroad event in Kinloch on Saturday 4 September. There were Gerry and Wilf, the two staunch Ulstermen, one loyal to the core, the other preferring to sit on the fence (as long as the fence is comfortable). There was the Pride of County Leitrim and Waikato Hospital, your wee doctor woman Orflaith. Then there was the Kiwi contingent, Raewynn (of course), Sharon (for a change) and Helen (why not). Then there was wee Carmel tentatively trying the 10k after her tumble last time out.

Well this motley (what is the meaning of motley I ask myself and who was the motliest?) crew all piled into a large unit in the Holiday Park. Why the Holiday Park? Well it's cheap you see and some Ulstermen don't like to spend money. Anyhow some misunderstanding about the heating led to some people being as warm as toast and others freezing their \*\*\*\* off (that should narrow it down.) Nevertheless come the morn we were all up bright and early, some would say too early. We tucked into our healthy breakfasts and set out in convoy to Kinloch.

What a lovely wee place Kinloch is! I'd never been there before and I'll definitely be back. We jogged along the lake shore braving the howling gale, then huddled apprehensively against the boathouse wall. Soon the announcement came to make our way to the start. We reluctantly shrugged off our cosy jackets and joined the heaving throng. There were a lot of people there, so many we had to start in relays. Eventually we got away and after all it was not as cold as I feared. Raewynn, Wilf, Helen and I tackled the half marathon. It was a bit of an up and down affair all the way, up and down, up and down, relentlessly undulating you could say, (if you could catch your breath) right to the very end when the route wound its way alongside a stream. "When will this relentless undulation ever stop?" I sang to myself but nobody heard me (thank goodness). The views over the lake were marvellous though and the other competitors were so friendly shouting "Go on Hamilton" as they passed me in droves. Like vast herds of wildebeest they were, pounding breathlessly all around me. There were people passing me from far and wide, from Whanganui to Whakatane and from Wellington to Whitianga. There were even some from Palmerston North but I paid little heed to them for if truth be told they were rather boring. Funny that!

Anyway the sun shone and the sky was blue and as we rendezvoused back at the carpark around midday we were all in great spirits and Carmel was in one piece for a change. Then we heard about the earthquake in Christchurch of which up until then we had been blissfully unaware. Suddenly our little jaunt became less important. Here we were kicking back in an idyllic lakeside setting while a couple of hundred kms south others were gazing on the wrecks of their homes and businesses. I for one felt a tang of guilt as later on after a lovely soak in Debretts we all tucked into a hearty meal at Breakers. There but for the grace of God etc, etc. It could so easily have been us eh?

Makes you think, doesn't it?

*Gerry Duggan*