

Roto Harakeke event (Sunday 8 July 2018)

First, the name. David Fisher suggested that the new map be called something other than Flaxmere as we had a much older map by that name. It was last used with the metal plates and clippers that we used for park events.

Harakeke (the NZ flax) was the obvious name choice. Keen observers of street signs will already know that the Maori name for Flaxmere is Pa Harakeke. The roto part was my own addition as it means lake, giving us Flax Lake or Flax Mere. You spotted the lake early in your run on Sunday.

Mrs Google tells us that the flax bush represents the family. The new leaf at its centre is the child, and leaves on the outside are older relatives. It's a symbol of a child-centred nurturing community. As such, it is the symbol for the village and is the emblem used by Flaxmere College.

Sunday's event came about when the map planned for 8 July was unavailable. Rather than cancel, we rushed the, at that point unfinished, new map into service. I had completed the fieldwork and Will Tidswell was working on the cartography in Open Mapper with no particular deadline and as much as anything as a learning exercise for Will. With Will's selection for JWOC, a sudden unexpected deadline for map completion wasn't fair on him, so David took over the task.

Final field check of the map was completed only days before the event, with some newer additions like the exercise stations in the park that were still only concrete pads a week out.

Getting necessary permissions can be road blocks which could stop a last-minute event like this one, but everything sailed through so smoothly that the event was obviously meant to be.

First Murray Franks got Hastings District Council permission immediately. This was no small thing given the usual exchange of application forms, health and safety plans and the like can take some time. The council then gave Murray a scare by asking for our application for a food vendor licence, complete with application fee. An exchange of phone calls and a reinterpretation of the rules solved that one when council decided that a barbecue for participants at a sports event wasn't what was meant to be covered by the rules on public sales of food.

Other permissions fell into place so smoothly we were obviously blessed. The Age Concern ladies told me the empty section next door was council's and they would pass on the message that our start would be there on Sunday but the churchgoers using the building could park on the grass as usual.

Principal Margot Morris at the kindergarten was happy for us to map it and use it on the day. She arranged for a staff member to come down and unlock the alleyway gates.

And Peterhead School principal Martin Genet is one of the good guys. He gave me the gate keys and he says that we are welcome to use the school any time.

A lighter moment. David asking the owners of the Indian grocery store if it was OK to put a control on the corner of their building. They had no idea what he was talking about.

Runners on Sunday will have noticed a large open space on the north west part of the map. Yes, it should have been cut out or marked out of bounds, although it wasn't a logical route choice for anyone (except for Derek). This is the Flaxmere College campus, which deputy principal Shelley Arnold says we are very welcome to map and use. That mapping project is on hold as the college is to receive a total rebuild with only the gym and hall to remain standing. The bulldozers were to move in back in February but are yet to start. Once the new school is mapped it will be an excellent addition to the map.

And so to Sunday.

Huge thanks to Faye and Pamela for running the caravan, the Stones for control collection and John and Tui for control patrol. John spotted one young fellow hide a control and then lie in wait to watch any reaction.

Well done to those who supported the event. There was plenty of discussion afterwards about route choice. That's always a good sign.

It was good to see members like Ken and Cairn introducing what I assume were young family members to the sport.

The Spirit of Sport Award goes to Lorcan. From my station at the start I saw him stop his run across the park to help some newbies on the white course and get them back in the game. Then he took off again at a full sprint.

We weren't the only event going full noise in Flaxmere that morning. At 8am as I was putting controls out there were cars for Africa filling all the parking spaces near Flaxmere Waterworld and two or more deep on the grass along the length of the driveway. A massive turnout.

A sombre reminder of death in the midst of life: the small group standing around a floral tribute on the grass behind the TAB — where local resident Kelly Donner was recently found dead.

On the subject of tributes, the feature for the first control on the sub and the full courses was a small concrete plaque. Who stopped long enough to see who is the subject of that tribute?

Roto Harakeke is an urban map which is varied and interesting and I hope we continue

to use it. The additions of Flaxmere College and possibly also Irongate School will give it even more scope.

My special thanks to David Fisher whose initiative and drive made this event possible. I hope he found his padlock key. If not, his car may still be attached to the club caravan.

Steve Armon

The plaque in Flaxmere Park is a tribute to Norman Kirk who died in office on 31 August 1974 after just 20 months as Prime Minister.