



CAVERSHAM
HARRIER & ATHLETIC CLUB

cavy chat
nz road relays fielding

New Zealand Road Relays – Fielding Saturday 3rd October 2020



Masked up ready to board. NZ Road Relay Champs.

When we look back, we as a club refused to let it be disrupted with what was going on around us, then came the need to go further afield ... Fielding and the New Zealand Road Relays.

Let the journey begin ... the results were outstanding

In the beginning

*“ Our National Road Relays campaign began more than two years ago on reflection. **Kerry Rowley** and I were determined to have Caversham represented at this national event. We felt that a club of our standing and size needed to have a presence there not only to show the greater athletic community we were a force to be reckoned with but also as a catalyst to inspire our own athletes to greater things. Kerry as she does, spent a lot of time and effort cajoling people into teams. At one stage we had a very promising Master’s Women’s team ready to go until for one reason or another the team fell apart well before last year’s event. Eventually, all our efforts came to nothing and frustration set in for both of us. We were always aware that the major disincentive for most people contemplating being in a team was the high cost of getting to Feilding and that having a club subsidy of some sort was the only way forward. We had almost given up hope for this year’s relays until a knight in shining armour in the form of Ian McDonald came to the rescue. Ian brought his enthusiasm and back of an envelope costings to the general committee early this year and received unanimous support for his view that the club should heavily subsidise the costs for those who wished to race.*

Once unanimous approval was granted by our forward-thinking committee and strong advocate President Ken it took no time at all for all the pieces to fall into place.

*Our view was that we should send the best that the club could muster and selection of two strong teams didn’t take long once the process got under way with the help of our head coach **Dave Stinson**. Paula Cotter took up the reins to finalise all the travel and accommodation details*

so that our team runners had very little to do apart from pay their share of costs and turn up at the airport knowing that all was in place. Inspired leadership! On race weekend all our runners gelled as a powerfully focussed group and the joy, camaraderie and pride in their club colours was palpable in all. I am especially proud that we were able to send a Junior Women's team in conjunction with a Senior Men's team. In hindsight we could not have had a better bunch of athletes to take away to Feilding and with **Sophie Stokes** and **Donna Young** along as such supportive crew it seemed ordained that we could not go wrong. The results for both teams speak for themselves.

To me the whole positive exercise reinforces the lessons that being in a club bring. Our successful National Road Relays campaign only worked because of the passion and drive of many club members working together and who applied their various talents, abilities and commitment to a common goal. That is a powerful and important lesson I will not forget. Go Cavy!"

Stu McCormack – Manager



" The Road Relays are easily the best event on the NZ athletics calendar if you want to show some team spirit and get amongst intense competition. The quality of our Caversham junior girls team made it easy to get fully invested in the race, my voice was gone at the end of the day after cheering a bit too loudly for our Cavy runners through the little window in our van ! Paula organized the trip superbly, and Stu's photography/race documentation antics served as a trip highlight. I was happy to have achieved a breakthrough performance on my relay leg while running my heart out for the Cavy girls, rather than just in a race by myself! Can't wait for Takahe to Akaroa next year "

Maya Irving (25:45 - Lap 5 (7.2k) – 1st Fastest Time)



Maya start of Lap 5



Michael into Lap 6

“ I was proud to represent Caversham at a national event. I was quite happy with my performance and felt good about getting fastest time in the C grade for the sixth leg. My highlights were getting to hang out with the team, and handing over the baton to Nathan at the end of my lap knowing I had given my all. I thought Paula and Stu were very good. They not only managed the team very well, and managed and organised the whole weekend very well. We had a very good support crew too. The whole thing was pretty good. “

Michael Downe (39:06 – Lap 6 (9.5k) – 1st Fastest Time)

“ I was delighted to be part of the Cavy team for the National Road Relays – I felt extremely proud to show the Cavy colours to the rest of NZ !. Overall I was very happy with how I went in my leg as I had to battle into a relatively strong headwind from the start, after passing a few competitors I managed to finish strong. Some of the highlights from the weekend included accepting a Gold Medal along side my team mates, and being able to see and enjoy parts of the country I have never visited before. Paula and Stu did an incredible job of organising the entire trip, the dedication they showed to the two teams was impeccable and we are extremely grateful to have them. I thoroughly enjoyed being able to participate and represent Cavy in such a great event, look forward to doing it all again in Akaroa “

Ben Pigou (37.02 – Lap 3 (9.7k) – 1st Fastest Time)



Ben into Lap 3



Becky flying on Lap 4

“ The Athletics NZ Road Relays Champs was a thoroughly enjoyable , rewarding and memorable event. I was proud to be representing Caversham at the national level event, the management was fantastic and it was evident that much effort and organisation was put into making this event possible which we are all very grateful for, thank you so much Paula and Stu!. The run certainly was tough but the chats beforehand, cheering the rest of the team on and the enthusiastic support van driving past made it a lot more enjoyable than an individual race. I hope this is my first of many NZ Road Relays representing Caversham “

Becky de la Harpe (30.28 – Lap 4 (7.1k) - - 7th Fastest Time)

“ The National Road Relay it was harder than I was expecting and my performance was good enough. My highlight was having dinner together in Stu and Ian’s room, and going to the pub after the prize giving. I think Paula and Stu were great as leaders “

Leon Miyahara (36.17 – Lap 1 (9.4k) – 2nd Fastest Time)

“Representing Caversham at the NZ Road Relays was an awesome experience. We really stood apart from every other club with our matching face masks and shirts which showed our safety awareness and degree of seriousness. I was surprised by how many North Island clubs knew us, I was constantly being cheered on by vans and runners I’d never seen before, although this could have been to do with the quick spreading word of Stu’s near assassination of some competition. Our bright pink van could have also been a factor. Beside that I assure you that Paula and Stu did an excellent job before and over the weekend. Everything went incredibly smoothly, even the multiple short notice delays of our flights were ironed out with no drama. Stu also supposedly made many Facebook updates while driving although I can’t confirm that. Over the weekend, the support within the team was incredibly strong. Unfortunately, our van only had one window so you couldn’t hear it but you could definitely feel it. Both of our teams ended up doing incredibly well and we were very pleased with our results. Overall, the weekend was a major highlight of my holidays and I hope to be invited to run next year.”

Oliver “ Ollie “ Young (36.32 – Lap 1 (9.7k) – 1st Fastest Time

“ It was great to be a part of this event!. Thanks so much to Paula and Stu for giving us this opportunity. I loved being a part of such a positive team for the weekend. We had some great - had an amazing run, and it was really special to have Donna Young’s experience and wisdom there with us younger girls. Stu “ Cavy Masks “ were definitely a fashion statement “.

Caitlin O’Brien (37.23 – Lap 2 (7.1k) – 9th Fast Time)



Ollie Young



Leon Miyahara



Caitlin O'Brien

“ our trip to Fielding was an amazing experience. I really liked representing Caversham and it was awesome to wear the Cavy colours at such a big event. The whole event was very exciting and seeing all the other clubs, especially Ariki, made you want to run faster. The whole weekend was a really great experience, but my one highlight was our drive up to Fielding where we had a few scary moments when some boy racers from Wellington tried to take out the mini bus. But overall we wouldn’t have gotten anywhere if we didn’t have Paula and Stu with us, no matter what the weekend through at them they figured it out, from delayed flights, no where to eat dinner, they always made it work. Definitely a weekend to remember, hope I can do it again “.

Gracie Young (28.33 – Lap 3 (5.9k) – 9th Fast Time)

“ Leon took off on the gun whilst Ben and I were at the coffee cart getting our morning caffeine fix only to find that the speed in which they were making the coffee meant Leon was running a lot faster and the tension in the van was running high as they were wondering where the hell we were !. and at this rate Leon maybe finishing his leg wondering where the hell Ezekiel was who was our next runner. I flagged my coffee, Ben was running across the grass spilling most of his long black to get to the van, we beat Leon to the baton change, with 10 minutes to spare. On my run I thought I ran strong but by the end I was fairly spent, just gutted my leg wasn't 10k as it would have been a PB for sure. Highlights were how well both teams performed, our U20 female did superbly and all have heaps of potential. Oh and how good was that Thai meal we had on Friday night Ben Pigou ?, absolutely delicious, Nathan could have had seconds although my stomach didn't like it on our 25 minute shakeout an hour later.

Stu and Paula did a tremendous job. Looking after us, making sure we had everything we needed from, running shoes, club singlet, and to even out lucky undies !!!. Leon kept us all entertained and amused, excellent trip and awesome event.”

Nathan Shanks (30.57 – Lap 7 (9.1k) – 1st Fast Time)



Gracie Young



Nathan Shanks

“ Fielding was a fabulous trip and I thoroughly enjoyed being support crew for such an awesome bunch of athletes. It was a chance to get to know everyone on another level, and Stu and Paula did a wonderful job organising all the details. Together they were unflappable - even with last minute flight cancellations. We certainly drew some attention as we boarded the plane all wearing our Cavy masks, expertly designed, and produced by Stu. We were stylish and safe on the flight, and a great advertisement for our awesome wee club. Race day was all go, up early and in and out of the minibus warming up, warming down, cheering, cajoling and soaking up the exciting atmosphere that national events always hold. The teams were exceptionally competitive, and the course challenging. Each Cavy athlete did themselves proud, running their hearts out to get that baton to the next runner. Both teams placed so well, lovely celebratory evening of pizza, lots of laughs took place in Stu and Ian's motel room post-race. I'd like to thank the club for their continued support of our athletes, I think it's safe to say we were all proud Cavy members as we travelled home, tired but happy Go Cavy!!”

Donna Young - Assistance Manager

“ My delight at being permitted to go along as a supporter of the Senior Men’s team increased when we were introduced to our bright pink minivan in Wellington on Friday evening. It was a long, slow drive up to Palmerston North for the night, but Ian and Stu kept our spirits up with their constant banter and singing tunes nobody else in the bus recognised. We had an early start on Saturday morning, but we were on the road to Fielding by 7 as planned, and Paula, Stu and I received the race briefing from the event coordinators. We had missed out on Friday evening due to our slow journey up, but it appeared that we had not missed much. A lot has been covered on how the men and the girls, their performances and brilliant results speak for themselves. The Ben and Nathan caffeine was not going to be for Ian, but ibruprofen, lesser runner might have been deterred by the foot injury, but Ian was coping with it as he took off toward a rather steep, gravelly hill. The Junior women, who had already finished, and genuinely looked ready to go again post-race, where there with us, and our entire Cavy contingent were there, shouting and cheering and filming as Nathan crossed the line, what a fantastic moment. I had always been keen to participate in the Fielding relay, after what can fairly be described as my best and most favourite running experience at Akaroa NZ Road Relay Championships in October 2018. For me, this weekend was an incredible privilege, to be among some of our club's very best runners and watching them perform to their absolute best on this beautiful course. Even though I didn't fit into either of the teams, I got to be involved in this magnificent and historic day for our club, and I am very grateful to the organisers and the runners for letting me come along.”

Sophie Stokes – Assistance Manager



Assistance Managers – Sophie and Donna

These “ parents “ say “ thank you “

*“ Can I take the opportunity to thank Paula for all of her hard work on the successful NZ Road Relays trip, ably abetted by Stu and Donna. As parents, we felt incredibly grateful for your support of our daughter and have nothing but admiration for your organisational skills and kindness. Thank you “ **Jilly O’Brien***

*“A big thank you from me too. Becky had such a good time, and it was a great experience for them all. We are so glad we choose Caversham as her running club.” **Sara de la Harpe***

These “cavy” gave it their all



Ezekiel Stewart



Jordan Evans Tobata



Ian McDonald



Lahana Reeves

“ A second wave of Covid threatened to intervene, but when Level 1 was announced (with a huge sigh of relief from the team managers’ offices) it became apparent that this trip was going to happen “

Paula’s Report

“ On the 2nd of October we were prepped and ready for travel. A last-minute hurdle of cancelled flights by Air NZ was thrown at us, quickly resolved by the travel agent, and we were back on track. Most of the team gathered at the airport, in plenty of time to calm the nerves of the team managers. Limited edition Caversham Face Masks were handed out, and then we were boarding. At Wellington Airport we met the rest of the team, picked up the vans (one a light shade of bright pink) and we were on our way North, sort of. Wellington traffic meant the trip up to Palmerston North was a crawl at times. We arrived safely by 7.30pm where everyone made a beeline to the various food outlets nearby. A quick team meeting followed, the plan for the day was made and it was time for an early night. The next morning was an early start at 7am. We were in the vans on the way to the start line in Feilding. The Senior men were due to start at 8.30 and Junior Women at 9.00. Team packs were picked up, batons handed out, numbers on and we were ready to go. Leon started the men off, and the men’s team hopped in their van and followed, sort of, eventually. Once everyone got their coffee. Next up was Lahana for the Junior Woman.

“ Great to see the Cavy singlets in amongst those NZ’s best runners.”

Lahana did a fantastic job in the first leg keeping up with the pack ensuring that Cavy was right in amongst the action. Next up was Caitlin who did a superb job on one the toughest legs up the hill to the top, her strength of this leg was amazing. Caitlin met Gracie our youngest member who had a strong run back down the hill. The van load of 7 females always cheered loudly as we passed each of our team members. Becky was up next who had a strong run through the undulations of the back roads of Feilding. She had a commanding run passing to Maya who took off so fast that I actually wondered while we were following if we were going the right way. Eventually we caught her, passed, cheered (screamed) and got Jordan to the changeover zone. Note to all, warmups must be done with track pants off especially when Maya is flying downhill. It was the fastest change of the day with 100m out Jordan got the pants and top off shoes back

on and ready to change with seconds to spare. Jordan was off and with her middle-distance speed there was no stopping her, she finished strongly.

“ the girls gain Caversham a 6th place in the NZ Junior Women Road Relay Champs. Also, the only team from the South Island “



“ Maya also had the honour of Fastest Time for Junior Women on her leg, as well as Fastest Woman, all grades, Short Course. A fantastic effort and great to see a Junior Women team from Dunedin in the Road Relay. The first for many years and shows the strength in our club. The Junior Woman next saw the Senior Men team when their distinctive pink van pulled up at the finish line not long after we finished. We knew they were close. A quick team reunion and we readied to cheer on Nathan Shanks to bring in our team home. The suspicions were that our team were 3rd or 4th. Nathan came in quickly, a fast run on a fast leg, and with the live scoring open it became apparent that we were an unofficial 2nd in C Grade. A fantastic result for the team from the South full of Senior Men, Junior Men and one seasoned Professional. We made our way to the prizegiving later in the day and the announcement was made that the unofficial current winner of C Grade was moved to B Grade after one of their team members was a late import into the team which bumped their team time into B Grade. What did this mean for Caversham, with jaws on the floor at what this meant, we had to wait as the 3rd and 2nd were announced, and finally

“ Caversham Senior Men were awarded 1st place and a Gold Medal for the NZ Road Relay Champs C Grade “



5 of the 7 of this team also got fastest time on their leg and Nathan Shanks time was 1st in C Grade, 3rd in B Grade and 13th overall. One lesser known fact (but very important) is that Caversham were placed 16th place overall in the top club competition with the 10 points won by the Junior Women’s team. The team celebrated in style that evening at the motel and an early morning run through Palmerston North finished the time off nicely before we made our way south to Wellington and home to Dunedin that night. Thank you to the Caversham Committee for the commitment to send these teams to the Champs, my fellow manager Stu and assistant

managers Sophie and Donna, and thanks to the wider Caversham Club for their support before, during and after the event. The comments on Facebook as we progressed around the course were well received and we were glad you could be all part of it. Finally, a big thanks to all the runners. It was a privilege to take away 2 teams of supportive and committed runners, whose enthusiasm to go to the event and run beyond their ability was amazing to watch and be part of. “

Paula Cotter

Manager



“but wait there is more “

It can be said that there are times when what “happens on tour, stays on tour “, yes there was a “ pink van “, But a bit of mystery surrounds the whereabouts of a certain little black and white calf, last seen giving support to any runner wearing black and white that went by, ... it went missing from the paddock, last sighting, being, in the company of an athletic team as they prepared to depart back to Dunedin.

