

## Berwick Outdoor Experience for 2019 (10th – 18th May).

For the second year in a row, we started the course on a sombre note with the recent passing of long term committee member and instructor Peter Banks. However, we know Pete would have just said “stop moping and feeling sad and get on with it,” and so we did. The success of our 28th annual course can only be described as simply fantastic, the absolute best way in which to honour Pete!

As if the program we have set is not taxing enough the weather for the week just added to the challenge. It was pretty foul for much of the course, but not one complaint was uttered by the participants.

Six weeks out and we had a full course and a waiting list, we have never had so much interest in the course, ‘what could possibly go wrong!’ Well, plenty it turns out, I think we had 10 withdrawals in the last three weeks, very, very frustrating but to be fair the majority had genuine reasons. It is what it is, deal with it, and we did!

While it is unfair to single anyone out I must express our appreciation to the efforts of Barry Vessey (Ashburton Lions), Jeannie Jack (Primary ITO) and of our own Rob Urquhart to try and get us back on track and end up with 38 participants. We lost one during the course with illness but otherwise incident-free apart from the usual blisters and bruises.

There are so many people to thank, starting with those organisations and clubs who have sponsored participants.

It is a pleasure to work with you to get participants along. I know how hard it can be and it is shoulder tapping and personal contact that makes the difference. Without your efforts, ours would be in vain!

I do however think that some sponsoring Lions Clubs are missing an opportunity to foster their cause. While it is appreciated that the sponsorship is forthcoming in many cases this is where it stops. We are finding that some participants don't know who their sponsor is and they have had no contact with each other either before the course or after, a missed opportunity I feel!

After 27 years Jenny Scott the Warden at the Berwick Lodge had her last day in charge during our stay. Jenny joined us for a meal and following concert performance. We then made a small presentation to her to say thanks for being so accommodating and understanding of our needs over all those years.

To the Taieri Lions Club team whether it be the BOE committee under Rob Urquhart or the team charged with the logistics and BBQ, another outstanding effort.

Many lend equipment, vehicles and allow us to use their facilities: Cooke Howlison Toyota, Trust Power- Waipori Power Generation, Wenita Forestry, Gold Pine, Pak’N’Save, Kann’s catering, Harraways Mills, Honda Outram, Taieri College, Positive Signs (Mosgiel) and the Berwick Community Swimming Pool and Otago Bike Hire among them.

We always say that the only recompense we require is that the participants give us 100% effort and we surely have been well paid again this year.

BOE works because of the make-up of the personal in each watch. It is of great relief to me when the mix that sponsors send along has a wide spread of age, gender, abilities and experiences.

So my plea to sponsors is to remember this course is for everyone, for it is the mixing and learning from each other that makes it so successful. So it should be taken into consideration that it is not just what they may gain from the course but also what they may be able to give back to their Watch members and their community.

One participant who had a high management job was heard to say he was going home to reevaluate his work-life balance proving there is something in the course for everyone!

The last couple of years we have added Goal Setting for the future and this is proving popular with some good feedback coming in.

Mental Health is another thing that has become more prominent in recent years. It has now become more acceptable to talk about these issues and a significant number of applicants are open about this issue on their applications forms.

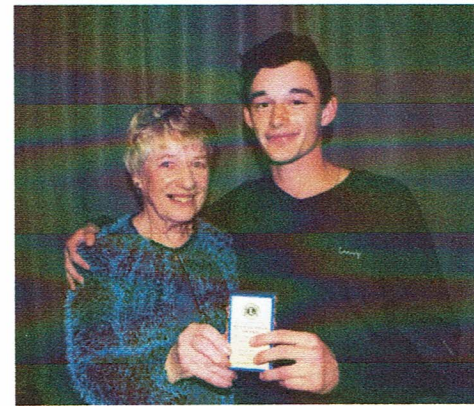
Our team has also become more aware and understanding of this problem.

Team Leader Scott is an ambassador for The Key to Life Charitable Trust – I Am Hope. The response to this short talk just emphasised how big a deal this issue is out there in the general public.

Thanks must go to Margret Dunbar for joining us for a meal and presenting the Dunbar Award. What that award meant to recipient Callum Graham was plain for all to see and well deserved. Finalists, Diana Bell, Tiriana Shearer and Karen Nicolls were equally proud of their achievements.

That leaves our instruction team, it is such a moving and inspiring experience to be part of this group; Scott Weatherall, Callum Kingan, Leeann Smith, Lee Hart, Jules Haldane, Blair Harcus, Simon Smith, Amie Manning and Dan Napier. These are special bunch people who give of their time so freely. “I know I don't have to thank you as I see it in your eyes and faces, but thanks anyway, you make me so proud!”

Thanks so much, everyone from the BOE team and we hope to have your support again next year 9th-16th May 2019.



Kevin Moore  
Coordinator for BOE