



MT VICTORIA

Historical Society News

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Extracting the History from LINZ Records

Sunday, May 15 at 2.00 pm
Crossways, Elizabeth St

Hear Bob McDougall on the value and uses of LINZ land registry and survey records in learning more about family histories.

A former Lands & Survey staff member and an historian, Bob will give examples of what you can find once you have some knowledge of the system. The talk will have its serious genealogical aspects and some humorous moments as well.

Mountain Running on Mt Victoria

This year Mt Victoria is the scene for two sporting firsts in Wellington. In the middle of the capital city, and almost literally in our backyard, Mt Victoria will provide the course for the New Zealand Mountain Running Championships for 2005 on May 15 and then, on September 25, for the World Mountain Running Championships.

Approximately 350 athletes and officials from 30 countries are expected to converge on Wellington for the 21st annual World Mountain Running Trophy. It is only the second time that the World Trophy will be staged in the Southern Hemisphere.

The World Mountain Running Trophy is the official world championships for mountain running. The first World Trophy was held in 1985 in San Vagilio, Italy. Beginning in 1993, the World Mountain Running Trophy has alternated in style each year. On odd numbered years, the event is an uphill and downhill course, while on even numbered years, the event is an uphill only course.

The strength of the sport has traditionally been in Europe and the United Kingdom but as interest in it has increased, teams from all over the world participate in the event.

Both the New Zealand Championships and the World Trophy races start on Oriental Parade before going over the mountain. For details of the course, times and best place to see the action, see

www.mountainrunning.org.nz

HISTORICAL NOTE

Sports Pages

Mountain racing on Mt Victoria

By David Colquhoun

This newsletter is not usually a place for sports writing, but sport does play a large part in the history of Mt Victoria – as can be seen by the many eccentric little sports club buildings and grounds around the mountain, everything from croquet to badminton clubrooms, a cycling velodrome, bowling greens and more. In those days, encroachments on the Town Belt were not viewed with the concern they are today.

This year Mt Victoria is the scene for an international sporting event that is much more environmentally friendly than the noxious motor race some of our councillors seem determined to foist on us. In September Mt Victoria is the scene of the World Mountain Racing Trophy 2005.

Mountain racing is a rather remarkable sport. Fully grown and intelligent people run as fast as they can up a mountain, and then down again. New Zealanders, and especially Wellingtonians, are very good at it. Local boy Jonathan Wyatt is the current men's world champion and Melissa Moon has been women's world champion in recent years. Both are determined to be world champions again this year.

Mountain racing has quite a history on Mt Victoria. Every year the Vosseler Shield takes place up, over and around the peak. It was named after Frederick Vosseler, a prominent Wellington businessman early last century, who helped found the Wellington Harrier Club in 1903. In 1923 he presented the Vosseler Shield to his old running club for an annual cross-country race. Vosseler was also a keen trumper, and there is a Mt Victoria connection there too. He helped form the Tararua Tramping Club in 1919 and when he died in 1959 he left the Club enough money to purchase the old Seventh Day Adventist church hall in Moncrieff Street, which is still the Club headquarters.



The Vosseler Shield Race in 2003, the first hill on Mt Victoria.
Photo by Rowan Greig.

The Vosseler shield mountain race is an annual event. It starts down by the Badminton Hall on the far side of Mt Victoria, winds its way up and down past the cycling velodrome and then up the steep track to Alexandra Road, up the grass verge beside the road and then sharply downhill to the little park at the top of Majoribanks Street and then along tracks back up to Alexandra Road. It then winds back down through various tracks to the site of the old military and public works camp near the bottom of Alexandra Road (the subject of a latter article in this newsletter). Then they do another lap, before finishing back at the old camp site.

In its early days the Vosseler Shield race started at Lyall Bay and went around the hills above Moa point. It became a Mt Victoria event in the 1950s, when Wellington Harriers shifted their clubrooms, firstly to Evans Bay, and then to its present site on Alexandra Road.

Dates of the Mountain Running events on Mt Victoria

15 May - New Zealand mountain running championships, on the world championship course

21 May – Vosseler Shield race

15 September – World Mountain Running Trophy.