

Who is James Kettlewell?



Firstly, he is better known as Jim and has been involved with the "*Walking Twice at the Same Time*" movement for a long time, in other words RUNNING at a varied speed to get there faster than last time. But always assisting others with the best methods of doing it.

It was his vision to set up Whangarei parkrun and with hard work he identified and measured a route that met parkrun criteria, including safety. The course was defined and obviously measured 5k to ensure consistency with all parkruns worldwide.

Jim enlisted help and volunteers from Hatae and that's where some of them came from on day one back on 13th February 2016! Hata Athletics & Harrier Club runners on the day Dennis LANGFORD, DJ GILLMING, Jim DORSET, Inthia LINDBERG, Lyndon GRIFFITHS.

Volunteers on the day were: Kim BASSETT, Judith BRADSHAW, Blandine CHILESE, Toni DALY, Jackie GRANT, John KENT, Maureen KETTLEWELL, Colin SMITH.

Parkrun may have started at 8am on that day but set up work had certainly started many weeks earlier.

Jim has gradually drawn in support of people to become Run Directors, hence the current team. Obviously his successor as Event Director Ron Crowhurst, together with Pauline Dinsdale, Colin Smith, Simon Charles, Charlie Land and Martin Harrap.

Part of any plan when getting things started is to foster good relationships with local community. Jim worked on the highest authority in Whangarei that of the Mayor Sheryl Mai, who was at the very first Whangarei parkrun and can be seen to take part fairly regularly. The other person to get behind the hard work has been DJ John Markby from More FM Northland a regular parkrunner as well and one can often hear him giving Whangarei parkrun a plug!

Confident in the parkrun brand and its' promotion, Jim has been a firm believer that the event did not need a 'hard sell' It would grow by its own virtue. In year one we attracted 1831 participants by our fourth year it was up to 6080 participants for the year, a massive increase of 333 percent. Difficult then to argue against his logic, (although some sterling work on social media has certainly helped!)



Our own "JK" and Maureen who I am sure will be pleased to see him a bit more

With Covid lockdown this has this temporarily slowed that growth. But not to deter Jim he maintained a "Hatea 5Km run" on a "not parkrun 5km route", thus keeping some momentum

Innovations at parkrun during Jim's watch have included:

- the introduction of pacers on a fairly regular basis, until Covid-19 interrupted.

- Holiday runs at Christmas and New Year



-The first NZ 'darkrun' celebrating parkrun's birthday by running at the exact same time as the UK were running their normal Saturday run...except it was late night over here!

-'Run your best parkrun' training programmes organised on a Wednesday evening over a 10 week series.

'Fun' elements that have crept in over the years include star jumpers and latterly 'Scottairplanes' Jim has also been very supportive of Colin Smith when it came to the annual Santa Run each December.



Obviously, Jim is hugely involved in Hatea Harriers and there has been great crossover benefit as a result. Hatea encourages its members to run on Saturday mornings, and in turn makes its' events available to parkrunners. Jim as club president is hugely instrumental in this.

An accomplished runner himself, let there be no doubt about that, but this is about Jim's role over four years in bringing Whangarei parkrun to where it is and setting it up for the future.

He has been ready to help and advise anyone who asked, whatever their ability, on running issues.

Jim may have been the leader behind the parkrun in Whangarei, but it was a full six weeks before he ran one himself, coming in at twenty-three minutes and fourteen seconds. After 140 runs he now has a PB of twenty-one minutes forty-six seconds. He is well on the way to the 250 mark.

Thanks, then Jim for being our first Event Director. Remember, he is not leaving us, he will be continuing as a Run Director, hopefully for some time! Well he has done the RD job FIFTY times and then on top of that volunteered another SEVENTY TIMES to include the following roles: Backup Timer, Barcode Scanning, Equipment Storage and Delivery, Finish Tokens, Funnel Manager, Marshal, Pacer, Photographer, Tail Walker, Token Sorting, Volunteer Co-ordinator and

Not forgetting Run Reporter



Thank you, Jim, for all the hard work from every one of the 16,671 runners, joggers and walkers. Along with the 2,047 volunteers that through your wisdom bought fun, joy and the sense of wellbeing every time we all got up and started another parkrun.



James Kettlewell: Man, of few words, but he makes them count

See you Saturday.....