

# 2010 - The Original Re-enactment

The day after the 25th anniversary Merida Karapoti Classic, 17 starters shrugged of fatigue to take on the ultimate retro race... A re-enactment of the inaugural 1986 Karapoti.

The original 38k course hasn't been raced since 1986 and had only been ridden at all by the odd mountain biking trespasser. It started at Akatarawa Saddle, which is approx 20k further north up the Akatarawa Road. The course was in good condition on a mix of farm tracks, 4wd and logging access, with some nice single track thrown in for variety. But starting at 460m above sea level, the Original route is significantly easier than the now traditional Karapoti course.

It undulates along through private farmland to Menin Reiki peak before dropping down into a logging valley and then climbing up to meet the current course at the Rock Garden at 500m above sea level. It then followed the traditional course down the Rock Garden, up Devils Staircase, down Big Ring Boulevard and over Dopers Hill to the traditional finish back at Karapoti Park.

## Original Re-enactment - 2010



As much as this was one of those occasions for posterity, it was still a race that saw long-time local mountain bike stand outs Jonty Ritchie, Rob Kilvington and Alex Revell battling it out for almost the entire distance.

After a stellar 19<sup>th</sup> in the Classic the day before Alex's legs didn't match his motivation, so it looked like it would come down to Jonty & Rob, both of whom have been in the Karapoti top-10 several times over the years. But a run-in

with a motor bike left Rob on the track side for a few minutes and gave Jonty a good lead, until Karapoti Gorge where a puncture with only 5k to go left him wondering what might have been as first Alex and then Rob came romping by.

When the dust had settled 16 of the 17 starters had made it back to Karapoti Park, with Alex claiming the win in 1hr 55min 03secs, 2min 30secs clear of Rob, with Jonty a bemused 43secs further back.

## Original Karapoti - 1986



Comparing the times below with the 1986 finishers it is obvious that mountain biking has come a long way in 25 years.

In fourth place Mike Thompson held off Simon Kennett by two seconds in 2rs 09min 4secs. Simon, of course, was second in the inaugural Karapoti and won the 1998 race. In 1986 his finish time was 2:35:30, so bikes technology aside it appears that being 42 years old is faster than being 17 years old.

Further back were a few tails of the race that got away. Kirk Austin, who also raced the Classic the day before, was a dnf after losing his brakes on the Rock Garden. Claire Sherrington had a lonely race after missing the start by two minutes due to a bout of car sickness. But she still finished.

Carl Patton and Phil Etheridge were also notable in the mid-pack, sporting retro rides in celebration of the quarter

century since this course was last raced. Carl rode a 1983 Specialized Stump Jumper, which was the first mountain bike available on a truly global basis. Phil was on a Shogun Prairie Breaker, which was one of the first mountain bikes available in New Zealand, although Phil's was of late-80s vintage.

The most fitting retro element of the Karapoti Original, however, was the people organising it. Just as they did in 1986, Paul Kennett started the race, Jonathan Kennett rode as Tail End Charlie and Simon Kennett marked out the course the day before then vied for over-all honours in the race. While the age old temptations of the mountain biking trespasser will no doubt see this route ridden in the future, the 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary Karapoti Original may well have been the last time that the inaugural Karapoti course is ever raced. Only time will tell.

## Results - Karapoti Original Re-enactment

1	Alexander	Revell	1:55:03		Wgtn	M19-39	1
2	Rob	Kilvington	1:57:34		Wgtn	M40-99	1
3	Jonty	Ritchie	1:58:17		Wgtn	M19-39	2
4	Mike	Thompson	2:09:42		Wgtn	M40-99	2
5	Simon	Kennett	2:09:44	1986 time 2:35:30	Wgtn	M40-99	3
6	John	Randal	2:12:02		Wgtn	M19-39	3
7	Carl	Patton	2:23:14	Stumpjumper	Wgtn	M19-39	4
8	Gavin	McCarthy	2:31:57		LH	M19-39	5
9	Ash	Sparks	2:33:46		LH	M40-99	4
10	Michael	Lee	2:33:47		LH	M40-99	5
11	Phil	Etheridge	2:34:53	Shogun Prairie Breaker	PNth	M40-99	6
12	Gordon	Macdonald	2:36:53		LH	M40-99	7
13	Mark	Southworth	2:55:46		Wgtn	M40-99	8
14	Steve	Meeres	2:56:47		Kapiti	M40-99	9
15	Mark	Harris	3:00:16		Wgtn	M40-99	10
16	Geoff	Lawn	3:00:17		Wgtn	M40-99	11
17	Claire	Sherrington	3:46:38	Only Lady	Wgtn	F19-39	1
	Jonathan	Kennett	4:08:21	Tail-end Charlie	Wgtn		

LtoR: Placegetters 2010 - Rob, Jonty, Alex.

