

THE TORCHBEARER

"56er's Torchbearers Club Inc"

PO Box 2148, CAIRNS Q 4870

Committee:

Patron	Con Verevis	Tel 07 40914283
President	Jim Vallely	Tel 07 40532150
Vice President	Dennis Stevenson	Tel 07 4065 3223
Secretary/Treasurer	Bill Cummings	Tel 07 40312888

THE PRESIDENTS MESSAGE.

Hi fellow members and partners

I trust that you are all well and in good spirits. I am happy to report that the AGM and luncheon was a pleasing and well-attended event. What was encouraging was the number of members who took the trouble to either write or phone in their apologies, which shows there is plenty of interest in our special club.

Deputy Mayor Margaret Cochrane was in attendance and informed us that a major company had indicated that they would take on sponsorship of the North Queensland Games filling the void of the previous sponsor. An announcement would be made in February 2012.

I am sure that you have all missed our late secretary Keith Barrett's newsletters so I am happy to report that vice president Dennis Stevenson has taken up the challenge and will be our new editor.

Our patron Con Verevis is currently in the Freemasons Home Whitfield. I am sure he would appreciate a call or visit from 56er's.

Members attending the 2011 AGM inspected the slightly relocated (to the North) 56er's monument and a photograph was taken to commemorate the occasion and included Deputy Mayor Margaret Cochrane.

Jim Vallely
President



Left to right- Don Lowe, Bill Cummings, Trevor Keeling, Jim Vallely, John Low , Bill Dickenson, Dennis Stevenson, Margaret Cochrane. Bottom row - Ross Cavallaro, Vern Tomasich. November 2011.

THE FIRST FOUR-MINUTE MILES

Dr Roger Bannister.

Members will no doubt be familiar with the occasion of the first four-minute miles in history in 1954. The first was by Dr. Roger Bannister and the second by John Landy.

The track conditions at a university track in England defied all the predictions for a sub four-minute mile made by track coaches and sports psychologists for twenty years. The conditions that were predicted for the sub four-minute mile were:-

- The run would be made in the spring twilight commencing at 7.30pm.
- Temperature would be approximately 68 degrees F.
- The air would be absolutely still.
- The track would have to be clay to allow spikes to take hold and come out clean.
- There would have to be a large crowd to cheer the runner on in the final lap.
- Lap times would have to be 61,60,60 and 58 seconds each
- The first lap would need to be the slowest to allow the body to step up its oxygen to the maximum of 4.5 quarts per minute. (The normal human consumes 1/20 while resting.)

The Scandinavian countries were most suitable for the attempt but on the occasion that Roger Bannister broke the four-minute mile barrier, conditions were almost opposite to the above.

- The run was made some 10 degrees south of what the scientists predicted.
- Conditions were such that wind was blowing at 15mph.
- A relatively small crowd of 1500 spectators was present because no one expected a sub four-minute mile would be achieved.
- The first lap was run in 57.5 seconds the fastest of the four laps.

Bannister recorded a time of 3 minutes 59.4 seconds in the first sub 4-minute mile that put his name into the history books.

This surprised the psychologists but Bannister himself had friends such as Chris Chataway and Chris Brasher in the race and he asked them to go faster and faster and they did.

As with many great sporting events the race containing Bannister nearly didn't happen as rain was falling just before the race and he was all set to call off the big push but his friends Chataway and Brasher talked him into it and thus into immortality.



JOHN LANDY SETS A NEW SUB FOUR MINUTE MILE TIME

John Landy.

Sporting times and performances inevitably are bettered over time. So was the sub four-minute mile. Bannister's time of 3 minutes 59.4 seconds was lowered by John Landy (a butterfly collector from Australia), in Turku in Finland some six weeks later.

Landy entered Melbourne University as a serious entomologist but a casual miler. His time for the mile was nearer to five minutes rather than four. But by training hard he reduced his mile time to that which allowed him to qualify for the 1952 Olympics. He did poorly in the games but came home with new ambition and commenced a training plan that allowed him to run 40 miles a week and running on his heels to rest thigh muscles. In the spring he went to Scandinavia where tests by scientists in Stockholm tested his lung capacity to find that his capacity to absorb oxygen was greater than any recorded. Then in June in Finland with conditions just right he went after Bannister's mark.

Landy's opponents were four of Finland's best milers and Chris Chataway the Englishman who helped Bannister run the first sub four-minute mile. Conditions were perfect with a clear windless day and temperatures a comfortable 77 degrees F. The Turku track was well groomed and conditions were perfect. Landy ran the first lap in 59 seconds. At the half mile Landy moved ahead but Chataway stayed close. But when he felt Chataway close behind he said to himself. Now. He got on his toes and ran the last quarter in 59 seconds.

Landy crossed the tape in a time of 3 minutes 57.9 seconds. The time was rounded off to 3 minutes 58 seconds in accordance with the then international rules. This time was 1.4 seconds faster than Bannister's time set in England. Thus the second sub four-minute mile was achieved by an Australian.



Landy ahead of Chataway at ¾ of a mile.



Breaking the tape with a new world record.

Acknowledgment is made to Life international for the basic information in these stories and the assistance from Bill O'Neill and his discussions with John Landy.

The next newsletter will include a story on the 'Greatest Mile Race in History'.

56ER'S CORNER

I would hope to keep this section of the newsletter for reports from 56er's so gentlemen if you have any stories relating to your mile run or any other matter to report on please advise me or Jim Vallely or Bill Cummings.

Bill O'Neill's mile (Mirriwinni)

Just on dusk running conditions were perfect and a crowd had gathered along the Mirriwinni main road and around the Mirriwinni State School. The Army truck was waiting for me to hand over the torch and sign the register of runner's book. My number was No. 41 and I was very fortunate to get a run. I had qualified at the Cairns show grounds with a time of 5 minutes and 40 seconds, but missed the next trial due to being on holidays and this disqualified me. Then very close to the event Dennis Stevenson (my life long mate) offered me the position as he had taken a job in Mackay and was offered a run in that district. The organizers agreed and it was set.

In older age it is nice to hear the term elite athletes used to describe the runners. Without training I was fit enough to run the mile in the required time but worried about carrying the torch. So I found a broom handle and cut this to size and attached a jam tin to hold sand for weight and for a few days up to a week ran around the Mulgrave mill paddock carrying my practice torch. I didn't ask the neighbours what they thought was going on!

How we arrived at the starting point and got back home I cannot remember. A mile North of Mirriwinni I took the torch and ran hard until the Army personnel in the truck slowed me down saying that they were making good time at that stage. It was one of the most wonderful runs I ever did. Dressed in a pair of white shorts and tee shirt and a pair of sand shoes, I felt as if I was running about six inches above the ground. The run seemed effortless due to the excitement. As I turned into the Mirriwinni Township alongside the railway the locals had lined up to see the torch go by, and all too soon it was over and the torch was passed around the crowd for a while before the officials took it over and lit up a new torch for Colin Gray, who was also from Gordonvale.

The locals seemed to enjoy the atmosphere and were just as excited as I was. It was a privilege and a pleasure to receive the Olympic medal and this medal since mounted has been displayed in our home all these years. There was neither big deal nor fanfare about running - as time passed; the event seemed to be a distant memory. This was all revived when I was able to attend a 56er's meeting and learn of their aims etc, and to attend the 50th year celebrations of the Melbourne Olympics Games in 2006. This really sparked up the enthusiasm for the event and the history that is so well documented in 'the Book' and to be involved in just a little touch of Australian history that gives me great pleasure to this day.

Bill O'Neill.

Vern Tomasich attended the Centenary celebrations for the Melbourne Olympics and was able to capture some magnificent photographs of the events and people. Some are included in this newsletter. Many thanks Vern.

Ron Clarke and Con Verevis- the first and last torchbearers.



56er's enjoying a cuppa at the Melbourne Olympics Centenary at the MCG led by



Ron Entsch (nine miles north of Ingham), John Shepherd (twenty-five miles south of Tully), Kel Zeith (sixteen miles north of Gympie), Jim Vallely (two miles south of Cairns), Vern Tomasich (one mile north of Innisfail), and Keith Barrett (fifteen miles north of Ayr).



**Some members marching onto the MCG led by Con Verevis.
The empty chairs were soon filled with Olympians.**

OTHER NEWS

The 1956 Torchbearers Commemorative Club wish to advise of the following Nov 2012 function.



1956 Torchbearers Commemorative Club Inc.



23 Pillich Street
North Rockhampton 4701
Tele: 49361720

15th October 2011

Secretary
'56 Torchbearers Club
P.O. 2148
Cairns Q 4870

56TH ANNIVERSARY REUNION OF TORCHBEARERS OF 1956 OLYMPIC TORCH RELAY.

This club will be holding the 56th Anniversary reunion in Rockhampton of torchbearers of the 1956 Olympic Torch Relay from Friday 9th November to 11th November 2012.

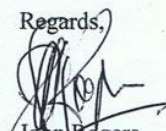
This event will be over the three days and will include an excursion to Croydon, some 204 K/M north of Rockhampton, to Croydon Commemorative Park which is the site of the first commemorative monument in Australia to the participants in the 1956 Olympic Torch Relay. A three course semi formal dinner on day two followed by a BBQ Farewell Lunch on the final day.

Other events are being considered to augment the program over the three days.

The organising committee wishes to extend an invitation to any of your members who would like to join with other torchbearers from all over Queensland to celebrate this unique event.

All they need to do is contact the organising committee secretary at 23 Pillich Street North Rockhampton, 4701 or telephone 49361720 to join the mailing list for further and up to date information relating to Reunion 2012.

Regards,



John Rogers
Secretary

Commemorating the 1956 Olympic Torch Relay 9th - 22nd November 1956.
Queensland Commemorative Trail - Croydon Commemorative Park.



Croydon Commemorative Park 204km north of Rockhampton

North Queensland Games 2012 – Mackay

The 56er's Club will again sponsor the prize for the 1500m Men's feature race at the North Queensland Games to be held in Mackay 22nd to the 25th of June, 2012.

56er's are normally on hand for the presentation. We do not have details of the time of the race yet but you might like to keep the event in mind and notify the secretary / treasurer, Bill Cummings, tel: 40312888 of attendance.

Dennis M Stevenson
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