

THE TORCHBEARER

NEWSLETTER 38.

"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

PRESIDENTS COMMENTS

Greetings Fellow Club Members and Partners,

With the present year closing in, I would like to remind Torch Bearers our combined AGM and Luncheon at the RSL on 3rd of November is only a matter of weeks away. A repeat of last year's numbers would be very encouraging and both Bill Cummings and myself will be only too happy to take confirmation of your attendance. Dennis has taken to his editorial position with gusto and is tapping in on many great memories of the golden years of Olympics, which is appreciated by all.

Looking forward to our gathering at the RSL.

Regards
Jim Vallely
President

My Olympics in 1956

From Col Morwood

Well it's been a while coming, but as promised first to Keith Barrett in 2009 and then to Dennis Stevenson on 2/2/2012, here now are a few of my recollections of 1956 - both as a torchbearer and as a gymnastics judge.

The inspiration finally to get "a round tuit" has I guess come from having just watched the excellent TV coverage of the opening of the London Games, 56 years on from "our" event in 1956. I was invited by my IET (Institution of Engineering and Technology, based in London) LinkedIn group to "post" (on the web) my comments, and maybe my fellow 1956 Torchbearers would be interested. They were as follows:

I watched the opening ceremony this morning on Channel 9 in Brisbane 5.30 am to 9.45 am AEST. Well done, London, most impressive. For me, the

most outstanding item was the speech by organising committee chairman (and of course 1500 metre gold medalist at Moscow 1980 and Los Angeles 1984) Sebastian Coe - articulate, meaningful, and superbly appropriate. Even the TV broadcast conveyed the pin-drop silence and absolute attention he commanded. It was suitably followed by an excellent speech by the IOC President (an orthopaedic surgeon and also a former Olympian representing Belgium in yachting at Mexico City 1968, Munich 1972 and Montreal 1974) Jacques Rogge which was also highly appropriate. With this pair the Games are in good hands!

I would have preferred a daylight ceremony (as were the ones I have attended personally as a gymnastics judge Melbourne 1956 and Rome 1960) which gives better definition of the traditional items such as the release of pigeons (now apparently referred to as doves) barely evident against the night sky and the parade of athletes (one could hardly call it a march these days!) where some detail was lost. But I guess the night programming was essential to all the whizz-bang high-tech lighting effects which went on and on. The portrayal of the Industrial Revolution and of Britain's contribution to world progress (especially technological) was well done, and it was good to see the sustained reference to engineer Isambard Kingdom Brunel and to the engineering profession generally. But I thought that the time given to the development of so-called "music" centered on night-club scenes was very much overdone. And, probably against mainstream opinion, I could have done without Paul McCartney at the end. To me it was an anticlimax.

And finally, please permit me to have a local grouch about the Australian Channel 9 presenters who constantly referred to the cereMONY (US pronunciation) rather than CEREmony (British pronunciation). Australia's heritage is with Britain,

not the United States, and I cringed every time I heard "cereMONY" mentioned! I hasten to exempt the lead presenter Ken Sutcliffe who did the right thing (bless his heart), but the others - from Eddie Maguire downwards - should have known better!

I remember the 1956 events as though they were yesterday. I was 26 at the time, single, had just bought a new VW Beetle, and was working as an electricity supply engineer in the Ipswich area some 26 miles west of Brisbane. I'd been in the Queensland gymnastics team 1952-53-54 (greatest claim to fame was as State high bar champion 1953, and captaining the winning team at the National titles in Sydney 1954), but on moving to Ipswich at the end of 1954 found it impossible to keep up the training hours (no facility in Ipswich, and just too much travelling) and so took up judging. Things moved fast, and I was at the right place at the right time to be picked as one of the three Australian gymnastics judges for Melbourne 1956 (the others were Frank Caton and Jim McConchie both of Melbourne).

At the time I was still secretary of the QAGA (Queensland Amateur Gymnastic Association as it was then), and as such it fell to me to organise the four torchbearers to which the Association was entitled. And it was surprisingly difficult to find four established gymnasts who could run a mile in six minutes holding aloft a four-pound weight! Gymnastics training is basically anaerobic, requiring relatively short time-limited bursts of energy, and there were several who tried and just couldn't make the grade which as you all know was strictly enforced in those days. I expect Graham Bond and Warren Moore would have been OK, but they were in the Olympic team and already in Melbourne when the Torch went through Brisbane. So I picked myself, plus Graham McLeod who was the only other established gymnast I could find who was available and could qualify, and filled up the remaining two places with my younger brother Alan Morwood and Warren's brother Keith Moore both of whom had athletic histories and were happy to be in it. As will be seen on Page 148 of Marcus Marsden's excellent publication "Carrying the Torch" we covered the last four miles into Southport, in the early daylight hours of Friday 16 November, along the old two-laned Pacific Highway at the time lined with trees and not much more. Not much in the way of spectators except for

the last little bit into Southport, but all went well and we all very much enjoyed the occasion.

Another early start the following morning, and into my trusty blue beetle and off to Melbourne after collecting Gordon Pryor, his wife Betty and their ten-month old son Robert. Gordon was a better gymnast than either Graham or myself, but despite serious training had run out of puff in the Torch selection trials. He had however volunteered for and been accepted as an Apparatus Attendant for the Games, so off we all went to stay with Gordon's elder brother Dave - another good friend, with whom I'd been in the same form for four years at Toowoomba Grammar School 1944-1947 - who had settled with his wife Alma in Balwyn, a reasonably close-in Melbourne suburb. Amazingly, 50 years later for the reunion in 2006 I stayed again with Dave and Alma who were still in the same house.

With a ten-month infant in the car we couldn't do big daily distances, and stopped en route at Gunnedah (17/18), Bathurst (18/19), Mittagong (19/20) and Bombala (20/21), arriving in Melbourne on Wednesday 21 November in good time for registration, issue of uniforms and so on (I still have, in good wearable condition, the blue socks with a white symbol of the torch and the five Olympic rings) before the opening ceremony on Thursday 22 November. Fortunately the gymnastics competition didn't start until 3 December, following judges' meetings, courses and testing sessions which took place from 1 December, and I had time to attend other events (mainly athletics in the main stadium) and go the rounds of the various gymnastic training venues to get a feeling for who was who and what the standards were like. The main, and lasting, memories of what I saw in the athletics stadium were Vladimir Kutz with his loping, almost hunchback, style winning the 10,000m on Friday 23/11 (and later the 5000m on Wednesday 28/11), Chilla Porter's memorable second in the high jump so late in the afternoon of the same day (Friday 23/11) it was almost dark, Bob Morrow's win in the 100m on Saturday 24/11 with Hector Hogan coming in third - the first ever Australian Olympic sprint medal, golden girl Betty Cuthbert's win in the women's 100m on Monday 26/11 with Marlene Matthews third, Shirley Strickland's win in the 80m women's hurdles on Wednesday 28/11 Norma Thrower third, and

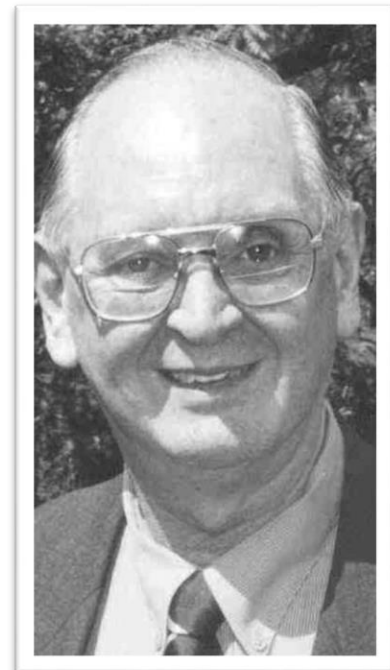
Betty's win again in the women's 200m on Friday 30/11 with Marlene again third and Norma Croker fourth. The last day of the athletics, Saturday 1 December, clashed with gymnastic judges' meetings and training sessions so I was sorry not to get to see that great 1500m final in which the first eight home all finished within two seconds of each other with all of them easily beating the previous Olympic record, or the Australian girls winning the 4 x 100m relay in Olympic and World record time. The 1500m field included Irishman Ron Delany who prevailed at the end, John Landy who was recovering from tendon trouble and was running uncharacteristically last for much of the race but put on a tremendous burst at the end to take third place, plus fellow-Australian Merv Lincoln and New Zealander Murray Halberg each of whom was leading the field at one stage. What a race! Probably the greatest "mile" in history, five of the finalists already having done the mile in less than four minutes. Delany's time of 3-41.2 for the 1500 metres equates to 3-57.3 for a mile.

And so to the gymnastics, which after all was my reason for being there. A most concentrated and fascinating time. At 26 years of age I was by a long way the youngest judge (the others were mostly in their forties or fifties) and by the time the 50-year reunion came round in 2006 I was the only one who made it. My two fellow-Australian judges had died, and it wouldn't surprise me if all of the others had as well!

For me, the most fascinating thing about the men's competition was the difference in approach and style between the Russians and the Japanese. The Russians (or USSR as it was then, with the Cyrillic "СССР" appearing on all singlets and tracksuits) had won the team event in Helsinki four years earlier and were dominating the world scene; and Japan, which went on to build a gymnastic dynasty in the sixties and seventies, was just starting out along that road. In those days the judging for each sequence was out of 10, with five marks allocated for execution, 3 for difficulty and 2 for variety. And no matter how difficult or risky the routine was no more than 3 could be given for difficulty - there were no "bonus points" as there are today. And if the routine had the prescribed number of "C", "B" and "A" movements (in decreasing order of difficulty, as defined in the published "Code de Pointage") - from memory it was at least one C

and four B movements - then it had to be given the full three marks. The Russians did that, exactly in accordance with the rules, and their routines were just sufficiently difficult to earn the full three marks. The Japanese, on the other hand, were crowd-pleasing bouncing india-rubber balls with difficult routines well in excess of the required minimum which couldn't be rewarded in accordance with the set judging rules. And the fact that they were more difficult, of course, gave rise to more execution errors and consequent deductions. Even with all that, Russia just squeaked home with 568.25 points (out of 600) to Japan's 566.40, fairly well ahead of Finland with 555.95. Australia, in its very first appearance in Olympic gymnastics, did well to score 477.15, with Queenslander Graham Bond scoring best with 96.4 out of 120.

The gymnastics finished on Friday 7 December, and then to the closing ceremony on Saturday 8 December and its highly poignant and lasting highlights. The mingling of the athletes of all countries in the final "march" which for the first time in Olympic history was not a march, and the emotion-charged voices of the multitude singing to the lingering lilt of the old bush air and its cry of "Good-bye, Olympians; Good-bye, Olympians" followed by "Will ye no' come back again?" has forever lived in my memory and always will.



Col Morwood Gymnastics Judge 1956 and 1960 Olympics.

Four years later in Rome 1960 I did much the same thing, with many different but often similar sorts of experiences. The gymnastic events were held outdoors in the old Roman baths the famous Terme di Caracalla - the organising committee had come under criticism for scheduling the contest outdoors, but had responded by saying "it NEVER rains in Rome in August". They were right, it didn't!

Then I was invited to judge again in Tokyo 1964 but wasn't able to accept because by then I'd acquired a wife, two children and a mortgage - in those days officials were not paid travel and accommodation expenses and the only sponsorship (and quite minor at that) was from the Rothman Foundation promoting the sale of cigarettes! In Melbourne and Rome I received a free uniform and a free pass to all venues including the Olympic Village (not accommodation, but good for many a meal in great company).

Great memories, and for anyone who's managed to read it to the end I hope you've enjoyed it too.

THE LONDON OLYMPIC GAMES 2012

Well the London Olympics are by now a wonderful memory. And the spectacular opening ceremony will live long in our minds. The opening ceremony was memorable because of its down to earth representation of historical life in Great Britain. Fancy the Queen leaping from a helicopter to join the opening ceremony!? Lauren Jackson was a deserving bearer of our flag and bore it well showing heaps of typical Australian joy and happiness. What a wonderful win the swimming girls had with the 4x100m relay. Pity Libby couldn't grace the winner's podium with her infectious smile.

The Para Olympics were an absolute inspiration to us all and the individual performances of our Australian athletes were magnificent.

Later on in the newsletter I've spoken of the discrimination against Peter Norman Olympian and champion sprinter. Did anyone notice the entry of Islamic women in the heats of the 800metre race at London? At first I was dismayed to see two women dressed in Islamic clothing enter a race against women dressed in western type track and field clothing but more amazed to note where they were placed in the event. The women were almost

lapped in an 800metre event. I thought how could they even qualify for an Olympic event with performance like that but later I thought that the Islamic nations they represented have lifted the discrimination veil against women in Olympic events and that is a positive move.

WE SHOULD NEVER FORGET THEM.

In this newsletter I wish to present to 56'ers a history of Hector Hogan, Betty Cuthbert and Herb Elliott.

HECTOR HOGAN.

Hector Hogan was born in Rockhampton and passed away in Brisbane on the 2nd September 1960. Hec and his wife Maureen were listening to the live broadcast of the final of the 100metre sprint at the Rome Olympics. The starters gun sounded and a little over 10 seconds later Hector Hogan passed away from the cursed leukemia. He was only 29. What a tragic end to the life of one of Australia's finest sprinters. Hec was listening to the final of a sprint that he should have been a participant. Hec Hogan was one of Australia's greatest sprinters. He was seven times Australian 100 yards champion and he equaled the world record for the 100 yard sprint on a grass track in Sydney.

As we all know Hector was placed third in the 100metre event at the Melbourne Olympics. Video footage of that race showed Hogan getting off to a good start, falling back in the middle of the race to be just pipped by Thane Baker for second place on the line. Later in the press conference he walked over to greet his wife. It would never be that good again.

It was less than two years later he began to feel unwell but continued to compete and was part of the bronze medal winning team in the 4x100metre relay at the 1958 Cardiff Commonwealth Games. Hec knew that something was wrong with his health but no one could tell him what was wrong. It was finally a doctor in Townsville who diagnosed leukemia but by that time it was too far gone. The Hogans had no money (not like sportsmen today) and wife Maureen said later that her mother had made Hec's running shorts for the Melbourne Olympics from bridal satin.

Historian Harry Gordon described Hogan as 'laconic, and very laid back but once he got down

on the blocks to compete he just exploded. The way he could synchronize his start with the gun was amazing; his instincts were superb'.

Hogan was an old boy of Marist Brothers College Rosalie and was a very handy Rugby player and a world-class long jumper.

Maureen said that the first time he took me out he asked if I would like to see him run. He won the 100, 220, the hop step and jump and the relay.

The Hogan's had a son Mark who was 4 years old when Hec passed away and he has no memories of his dad, but has all his medals, spikes and starting blocks which he will pass onto his children one day. Hec Hogan has been largely forgotten but Rick Mitchell a three time Olympian has said he should be remembered as one of Australia's greats.



*Hector Hogan, Bobby Morrow, Thane Baker
Third, first and second in the Melbourne
Olympics 100 meter final.*

BETTY CUTHBERT

Betty Cuthbert will forever be known as the Golden Girl of the 1956 Melbourne Olympics, where she won three gold medals and entered herself in collective affection of a nation. She was 18 years old and bolted into the public consciousness from virtually nowhere. She thought so poorly of her chances of representing Australia that she purchased tickets to attend as a spectator.

However she began to show real form just before the games and went on to overshadow her world record -breaking team -mates Shirley Strickland and Marlene Mathews.

In nine days she won the 100m the 200m and anchored the team that won the 4x100m relay. Betty was the first Australian to win three gold medals at one Olympic Games. Murray Rose did similarly in Melbourne in swimming but later in the games.



*Betty Cuthbert at the 2006 50th anniversary of the
Melbourne Olympics (photo by Vern Tomacich)*

Cuthbert retired but she reemerged for the Tokyo Games and won the 400m.

Betty Cuthbert was a woman of great religious faith and she won the 400m by saying that God took over her feet 'He picked them up and I put them down.' Betty learned in 1969 that she had multiple sclerosis. Her devoutness and rare strong spirit she has always possessed have sustained her greatly. This strength was all too obvious when my wife and I approached her for a chat and autograph at the 2006 50th anniversary of the Melbourne Olympics. Given her debilitating affliction she showed significant grace and courage to all who approached her.

HERB ELLIOTT.

Herb Elliott exercised absolute authority in his middle distance running. In 42 races from 1957 to 1961 he was never beaten over 1500 m or a mile. Testimony to his greatness lies in the fact that his time in winning the Rome 1500m event in 1960 would have been winning times in Seoul, Barcelona and Atlanta.

Elliott traveled from Perth in 1956 to be a spectator at the Melbourne games. He had been a school champion and the events in Melbourne awakened commitment, and a desire to be the best. He was inspired by the Russian Vladimir Kuts and his winning performances in the 5,000 and 10,000m events. Elliott's training was taken over by Percy Ceruty an eccentric visionary trainer. He influenced Elliott into conquering himself rather than opponents. This formula worked as he set records in the mile and 1500m events in 1958 and 1960 Rome Games. His winning margin in 1960 was 20metres.



Herb Elliott in full flight in a mile or 1500 event.

Herb along with Marlene Matthews and Norman May attended a pre Sydney Games fund raising function in Cairns in 1999 and the autographs of these eminent Australians was recorded on my copy of Olympic Saga the track and field story from Melbourne 1956. Norman May of course gave a hearty reproduction of his now famous call of GOLD! GOLD! GOLD.

Acknowledgment is made to historian Harry Gordon AOC, for some of the key data in the above stories.

A 1956 TORCH BEARER REMEMBERS.

Bob Chester (15 miles south of Cairns) has fond memories of the historic Torch run he made many years ago. 'I can well remember the time at the lead up to the running of the Olympic torch, when a run from Cairns along the Bruce highway was trialed. My then start was from peg 16 South of the old bridge over the Mulgrave river.

The organizers were accompanied by Bill Fulton Mayor of the Cairns City Council and later an MHR. 'Bill Fulton commented that I was the fastest of the runners to date -inspite of the fact that I had a hill to overcome.'

'On the official day I started from peg 15in Gordonvale next to the Mulgrave mill. There were numerous school children and others to see me off. The rousing farewell gave me a great lift and I probably completed my mile in better than record time.'

(Editor's note. The distances covered by Bob are well known to the editor having spent many years growing up in Gordonvale. The hill was indeed difficult but no longer exists due to road realignment.)

Bob was a champion miler always winning his events except when Doug Hunt from Yungaburra was a participant, when he always came second. Both Doug and Bob were entrants in the Cairns Athletic championships in 1957-58 and entered as hot favorites. Tragically both were beaten by a chap from Mossman who was also a 1956'er. Bob cannot recall his name. Perhaps the gentleman maybe a recipient of the newsletter and identify himself.

THE ARRIVAL OF THE OLYMPIC FLAME IN CAIRNS 9TH NOVEMBER 1956.

With thanks to Bob Chester and Keith Barrett our former secretary, Torchbearer records have yielded a copy of the front page of the Cairns Post 10th November 1956 recording the arrival of the Olympic flame lit in Greece.

The RAAF Canberra jet bomber carrying the flame in a Saarlander miners lamp swooped out of the overcast sky and flew over the aerodrome at six minutes past one on the 9th November 1956 but just prior to that it was uncertain that the relay would start in Cairns at all because of the inclement weather. (Our lord and maker must have been looking over us all and provided a gap in the clouds to allow the aircraft to land.)

The Canberra taxied to a stop in front of the ANA hanger where a group of officials including Mayor Fulton, reporters and movie and TV cameras were waiting to greet

Squadron Leader NH Nixon as he stepped out with the lamp. He walked through a guard of honour of air force cadets to the ANA lounge where Mayor Fulton took the lamp, lit a second lamp and then the first Olympic torch in Australia.

As we now well know the first torch bearer's were Constantine Verevis an Australian born Greek who ran through cheering crowds to the Edge Hill sawmill where the torch of Anthony Mark an Australian aboriginal was lit by Con. Anthony Mark then ran barefoot for another mile and two other runners (Dennis Nash, and Kenneth Jensen) carried the torch to the Cairns City Council Chambers for a civic welcome. Following that Keith Berzinsky commenced the 2,830 mile torch journey to Melbourne.

PETER NORMAN-HERO AND OR FORGOTTEN CHAMPION SPRINTER.

Most 56'ers will be well aware of the death of Peter Norman Olympian and champion Australian athlete. Peters funeral in 2006 was attended by former US sprinters Tommy Smith and John Carlos the winner and third place getter of the Mexico 1968 200m event-Peter Norman was placed second.

All athletes appeared on the Olympic dais wearing Olympic Project for Human rights badges but only Smith and Carlos made black power salutes-Norman was passive.

The controversy that followed evolved about the IOC rule about non national symbols appearing on athletes on the medal presentation dais. The three athletes breached this golden rule. A story by Jennifer Robinson indicates that Carlos and Smith were banned for life but recently vindicated and are now internationally and locally celebrated for their role in promoting the civil rights movement and their Olympic idealism. Norman was reprimanded by the AOC and made a pariah by the Australian media. He was not selected for the 1972 Olympics despite ranking fifth in world ratings. He left athletics in protest. At Normans funeral a letter was received from US track athlete Michael Johnston where he declared that Norman was one of the biggest heroes and the US track and field federation declared October 9th Peter Norman day. The US Olympic Committee on hearing that the AOC did not invite Norman to the celebrations for Sydney 2000 invited him as part of the US delegation. It

seems that an Australian athlete has been severely discriminated against for doing something that nations in 2012 strive to achieve- Protest against discrimination. To further quote Jennifer Robinson ' Peter Norman the hero too many of us still don't know.' I certainly support that view.

JOKERS CORNER

Three Australians and three Kiwi's were traveling by train to a Rugby match at the World Cup in England. At the station the three Aussies buy three tickets and the Kiwi's one between them. How are you going to travel on one ticket ask the Aussies? Watch and learn replied the Kiwi's.

They all board the train and the Aussies take their allotted seats but the Kiwi's fit into the toilet. Eventually the conductor reaches the toilet and calls for tickets. The door opens a little and a single arm emerges with a ticket. The conductor takes the ticket and moves on.

The Aussies think this a clever idea so after the game they decide to go one better on the return trip and save some money. Again the Kiwi's purchase one ticket and to their amazement the Aussie's don't buy a ticket at all. How will you travel without a ticket ask the perplexed Kiwi's? Watch and learn answer the Aussie's.

When they board the train the three Aussies cram into a toilet and the Kiwi's in another and the train departs. Soon after one of the Aussies leaves the toilet and walks over to where the Kiwi's are hiding. He knocks on the door and says, tickets please.

DM Stevenson

menafalls1@bigpond.com