

THE TORCHBEARER

NEWSLETTER 40.

"56ers 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 40653223
Secretary/Treasurer	Bill Cummings	Tel 07 40312888

PRESIDENT'S COMMENTS

Greetings all members and partners, a happy and healthy New Year to one and all. I would like to think that all our 56'ers living in areas affected by recent extreme weather conditions have avoided major damage. Cairns dodged a bullet and came out unscathed.

As our committee is still in holiday mode, I have no club issues to report but I can always rely on Dennis to compile an array of interesting stories.

Regards
Jim Vallely

FORMER OLYMPIC GAMES

Having started the series in newsletter 39, I wish to continue with Athens 1896, Paris 1900 and St Louis 1904 and London 1908.

Athens 1896.

These games were the first of the modern era. It all started by a French nobleman Barron Pierre De Coubertin. Coubertin believed that you couldn't separate mental and physical development. In 1894 he presided over a congress of 13 nations in the Sorbonne later 21 other nations pledged their support and resolved that:-

in order to promote physical culture and particularly to bring about a friendly intercourse between the nations, sports competitions should be held every fourth year on the lines of the Greek Olympic Games and every nation should be invited to participate'

As was said in newsletter 39 the athletic stadium was originally built in 330BC from marble and when restored would hold 50,000 people.

There was twelve track and field events and American college athletes took nine of these and Australia and Greece the other three - Ernie Flack (800m and 1500m) and Greece (the Loues marathon). Ernie Flack took part in the marathon and was leading the field but broke down a mile or so from the finish. The outstanding American was Robert Garratt from Princeton University who won the shot put and discus. With the discus event he practiced with a discus especially made for him (from library records-it was heavier than the one provided in Athens) and he surprised the Greeks by winning the event by 7.25 inches from the Greek champion, Paraskevopoulos. The marathon was won by Spirodon Loues a shepherd. As Flack retired a chap went up to him to give him support. He then relinquished the support to obtain a cover for Flack and asked a Greek standing close. The Greek in typically exited Greek manner hugged Flack to him. Flack being a tough Australian flattened the poor chap to the ground with his fist in typical Aussie style.

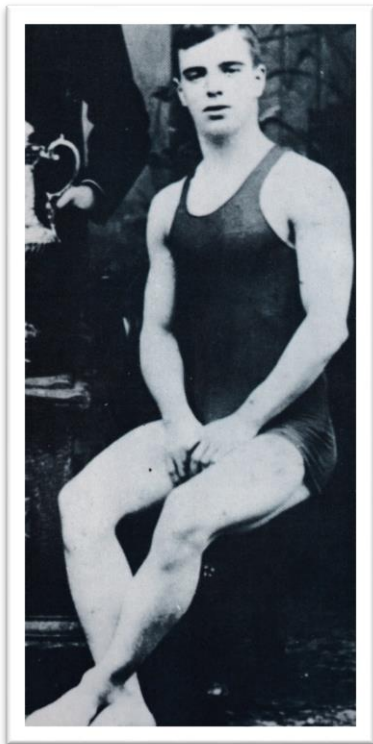
The winner of the marathon Loues received unlimited honors but Greece although represented in each game since has not won a track and field title.

Other Olympic events included Cycling, Fencing, and Gymnastics, Lawn Tennis, Shooting, Swimming and Weight lifting.

Paris 1900

The Paris games were a real mixture and various events were held. Exactly which events were true Olympics is debatable. Stan Rowley (placed third in the 60m, 100m and 200m) wrote home 'To treat the Olympian Games as world championships would be really an insult to the important events they were supposed to be. They were treated by most competitors as a huge joke. 'The tracks were the worst grass tracks that Rowley had seen for championship events. The starter was a Frenchman and all the foreigners would persist in dancing on their marks and invariably beat the gun by some yards. In the other heats we all decided to do likewise. Alvin C Kraenzlein of Pennsylvania was the most outstanding competitor winning four events 60m dash, 110 and 200m hurdles and the long jump. What a mix of events.

Other events included a standing high jump, standing long and hop step and jump, a team 5000m race and would you believe a tug-of-war won by Denmark, Sweden. Swimming included an underwater swim (the winner swam 60m) and an obstacle race of 200m won by an Australian Freddie Lane.



Freddie Lane Swimmer at London Olympic Games

St Louis 1904

Some sort of Olympic celebration was held in St Louis between May and September in conjunction with Louisiana Purchase Exposition. The games apparently took second place to the exhibition. Of the 23 track and field events the USA won 22 with Canada winning the 56lb weight throw. The marathon was marked by exhaustion and pranks. There were 31 starters in the race and because of the hot day and dusty roads only 14 of the starters completed the run. One Fred Lorz gave up 9 miles into the event, cadged a lift, recovered and ran the last 5 miles and was hailed a hero until the prank was discovered. He was banned for life from Olympic competition but took part in and won the Boston marathon in 1905.

Interim Olympic Games Athens 1906

The Greek organizers of the 1896 Athens games sought a permanent staging of the games in Athens but Coubertin believed that they should be fully international in character. The Greeks were disappointed but received permission to hold a game on the 10th anniversary of their revival. Twenty-four athletic events were held and the American team was selected for the first time on the basis of tryouts. They won 11 events. Germany won the tug-of-war. The standing jumps were continued. A Greek won the throwing the 14lb stone some 65ft 4inches. Women played lawn tennis and there was an event called the Rope Climb of 10m.



*Jean Georgantis throwing the stone
(14lb) an impressive 65ft 4inches*

London 1908

Two strange events occurred during these games held at the Shepherd's Bush stadium. The first was the winning of the 400m with Lieutenant Wyndham Halswelle by running over. The race was not run in lanes and one of the American runners Carpenter edged Halswelle wide as they entered the straight. The British officials shouted foul and broke the tape before the finish. Carpenter was disqualified. A rerun was ordered but the other Americans did not take part so Halswelle ran over in 50.0 seconds to be declared the gold medalist.

The other event of note was the marathon when the favorite the Italian Dorando Pietro became exhausted in the stadium and collapsed-officials lifted him to his feet and assisted him over the line. This of course disqualified him and John Hayes from America who was over a half minute behind Pietro, crossed the line for the medal. Pietro's gallant effort so impressed Queen Alexandra, the wife of Edward VII, who in her youth in Denmark was a great sports woman, that she presented him with a special gold cup.

The number of Olympic events almost trebled for the London games and included women. Tennis was played on lawn and covered courts. The tug-of-war was continued and

was won by Britain. Australia won the Rugby and Lacrosse by Canada. They even played polo on bicycles.



Opposing tug of war teams



Bicycle Polo.

The boxing events were a clean sweep for the home country with a future cricket captain of England, Johnny Douglas winning the middle weight gold medal.

Great Britain was a significant winner of gold medals in archery, athletics, boxing, lawn and covered courts tennis, motor boats and rowing and swimming and yachting. The summer sports ended with a ceremonial prize giving by Queen Alexandra.

The next newsletter will contain a story on Jim Thorpe the American whose medals were taken from him through playing professional baseball.

Rio De Janeiro 2016

Advancing a little ahead the news letter can thank Leo Solinas (45 miles South of Tully) for an email showing the proposed Olympic Flame structure for the 2016 Rio Olympic Games. What a magnificent structure it will present.



View by airplane or ship as you enter Rio De Janeiro .



The flame alights with the view from the Rio beach.



WE SHOULD NEVER FORGET THEM.

In this newsletter I would care to remember Herb Elliott, Raelene Boyle and Robert DeCastella.

Herb Elliott

Herbert James Elliot was born on the 25th February 1938 in Perth Western Australia. He attended Aquinas College in Perth a school that is renowned for its sports culture. He also attended Cambridge University in England.. There are not too many athletes that exercised such strong authority as Elliott did in middle distance running during the years 1957 to 1961. He never lost a 1500m or mile event.

He broke the four minute mile barrier on 17 occasions.

Herb Elliott won gold in the 1960 Rome Olympics, gold in the 880 yard and mile events in Cardiff in 1958.

Elliott credited his visionary coach Percy Cerutty with the inspiration to train harder and more naturally than anyone in his era. Cerutty bought his athletes to his Portsee training camp where he made them sprint up the sand dunes until they dropped. Faster-Cerutty would say-it's only pain.

Elliott served as Deputy Chairman of Fortesque Metals and was non-executive chairman until 2007 he was CEO of Puma North America and a board member of Ansell between 2001 and 2006.

In 1964 he was appointed a Member of the Order of the British Empire and in 2002 he was appointed Companion of the Order of Australia for service to community and sport, continuing support of the Olympic movement, and benefactor of charitable organizations for youth.

Herb Elliott attended an Olympic fund raising event in Cairns accompanied by Marlene Matthews and Norman May where he autographed over a picture in the book 'Olympic Saga' showing Vladimir Kuts winning the 1956 Olympic 5000m event.



Herb Elliott putting in the hard yards in winning one of his hallmark runs.

Herb Elliott has been ranked in Western Australia's 100 most influential people. He is an Australian living treasure.

Raelene Boyle

Raelene Ann Boyle AM, MBE was born on the 24th June 1951 in Coburg Victoria and educated at Coburg High School.

Following strong performances in the 1968 Australian Championships and Olympic trials Boyle was selected to represent Australia at the 1968 Olympics in Mexico where she won a silver medal in the 200m event- she was only 17 years of age. She was placed 4th in the 100m event.

At the Montreal Olympics she was placed fourth in the 100m event but was disqualified for breaking twice in the 200m .

A subsequent video replay showed that she had not false started on the first start.-unjust!! She did however carry the Australian flag at the closing event-the first Australian woman to do so.

Her Commonwealth Games achievements are legend. She won gold in the 400m and 400m relay events in Brisbane in 1982. silver in the 100m event in Edmonton in 1978, gold in the 100m, 200m and 100m relay in Christchurch in 1974, and gold in the same events in Edinburgh in 1970.



Raelene developed breast cancer in 1996 and ovarian cancer in 2001 and became a tireless

worker to raise breast cancer awareness and an active member of Breast Cancer Network Australia from 1999.

She lives on the Sunshine Coast in Queensland.

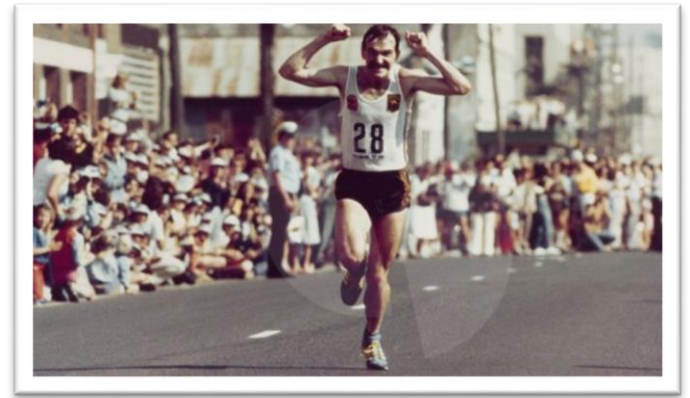
Robert De Castella

Robert De Castella MBE was born in 1957 and is affectionately known as DEEK. His amazing runs in the 1980's drew many people to watch or participate in marathon running. He was correctly acclaimed as the No 1 marathon runner in the 1980's.

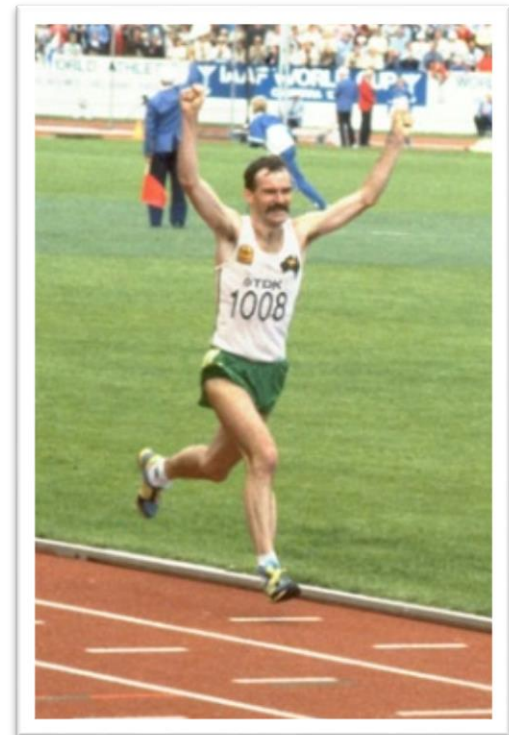
He began running at the age of eleven and was an outstanding school boy athlete at Melbourne's Xavier College where he was taught by a 1962 Commonwealth Games representative Pat Clohessy. They both became close knit as coach and athlete a relationship that continued throughout DEEK'S career.

Although still a junior he took on the seniors in the 1975 National in Adelaide and finished sixth in 5000m event in the time of 14.14.6. Later that year he won the National Junior Cross Country championship. In 1976 he improved his placing in the 5000m event to 5th with a time of 14.03.5. DEEK set his sights on the Moscow Olympics and in the trials in Adelaide he was selected as one of three athletes to take place along with Gerard Barrett and Chris Wardlow. He finished tenth in 2.14.31.

In the 1982 Commonwealth Games marathon was one of DEEK'S most memorable performances. Towards the end he was headed by two Tanzanians-Sharanga and Ikanga but slowly and surely he over took both champions and won the gold medal in 2,09.18.



Robert de Castella winning the gold medal at the Commonwealth Games Marathon, Brisbane, 1982



Robert De Castella triumphal wins a marathon.

There was great speculation in world athletic circles as to De Castella's standing was it DEEK or Salazar? Both were invited to attend the Rotterdam Marathon in April 1983. The race was televised live throughout the world as marathon running had reached significant heights in popularity. Castella won in 2:08.37 from Portugal's Carlos Lopez in 2:08.39 and Mexico's Rodolfo Gomez 2:09.21-Salazar finished fifth in 2:10.08- a very close marathon indeed.

Robert De Castella competed in Moscow, Los Angeles, Tokyo, Seoul and Barcelona Olympic Games as well as many National and World

cross country championships and various marathons such as the New York and Boston marathons.

Rob was appointed Director of the Australian Institute of Sport in 1990 and maintained that position until 1995. DEEK lives in Canberra when he is not training indigenous athletes in the joys of marathon running. He took a team of indigenous athletes to the 2011 New York marathon and all completed the race-a wonderful achievement for him and the athletes.

THE 50th ANNIVERSARY OF THE MELBOURNE OLYMPICS 2006

It has come to my attention that some club members who attended these celebrations did not attend the launch of Marcus Marsden's book 'Carrying the Torch'. Apart from the beautiful launch by Anne Marsden, Ron Clarke was also present to assist.



Ron Clarke at the book launch at the MCG, following which he signed the Torch book and received the over due medal.

56ers who did not attend and other recipients of the newsletter will not know that Ron was presented with the torch bearers medal and signed the medal book albeit 50 years late. One would guess that in the confusion surrounding the lighting of the Olympic flame

this simple procedure could easily have been overlooked. This was a magnificent revelation much to the surprise of all attending. The medal book is now in the archives of the Olympic museum at the MCG resplendent in its completed form.

56'ers CORNER.

THE OLYMPIC MILE ON THE CAIRNS ESPLANADE

Our local members will be aware of the existence of this mile distance being marked on the Esplanade walking / jogging running / exercise track. The markers were the idea of our then committee Con, Jim, Keith and Bill. The initial marker was placed in cement close to the magnificent monument of ours and was declared open by Con Verevis and Terry James on the 50th anniversary of the arrival of the torch in Cairns.



Councillor Terry James deputy mayor Cairns City together with Con Verevis declaring open the then start/finish of the Olympic mile. The interviewer is Pat Morrish a former ABC announcer. Note the Olympic torch that is housed in the Cairns Regional Council Chambers in Spence St.

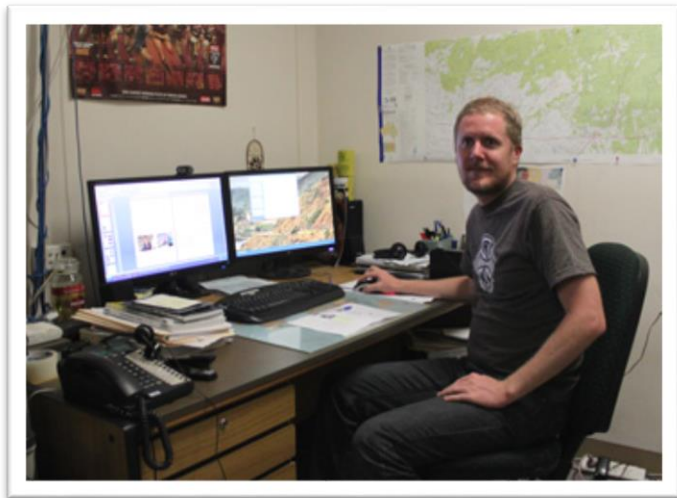
However since 9th November 2006 the council has modified the esplanade and relocated the markers - the start/finish plate is now at Muddies (a children's playground and fish shop

on the esplanade and the half mile turnaround is located one half mile North of Muddies. So 56'ers you are invited to Cairns to follow the Golden mile on the esplanade. If you can do the mile in less than half the time you took in 1956 then you are deserving of a fish meal at Muddies.

Acknowledgement is made to Vern Tomasich for both photos on page 7.

Andrew Cummings

Andrew who is Bill and Janet's son has been a part of the editorial team since the very start. Keith Barratt was not backward in using Andrews's skills on the computer to design magical productions such as our shirt logo the fridge magnet and many other items. Andrew flowed into the sub editor's job very easily and takes about an hour to reassemble my scrawl into an interesting readable newsletter. Many thanks Andrew your assistance is much appreciated.



No Other Stories

Apart from the story of Ron Clarke receiving his torch relay medal 50years late there are no contributed stories from members. There must be 100's of stories like the crocs on the Murray Flats to contribute to the newsletter advising us all about memorable experiences. Please respond to President Jim (0740532150), secretary/treasurer Bill on email at cummings@cummings.net.au or myself at the email address below.

JOKERS CORNER

The Scottish Blonde

On a bitterly cold winters morning a husband and wife in Glasgow were listening to the radio during breakfast. They heard the announcer say 'We are going to have 8 to 10 inches of snow today you must park your car on the even numbered side of the street so the snow plough can get through' So the good wife went out and moved the car as instructed.

A week later the radio announcer said 'We are expecting 10 to 12 inches of snow today; you must park your car on the odd numbered streets so the snow plough can get through'. The good wife went out and moved her car again.

The next week they were having breakfast again when the radio announcer says 'We are having 12 to 14 inches of snow today you must park your car.....'. Then the power went off.

The good wife was very upset and with a worried look on her face said 'I don't know what to do. Which side of the street do I need to park?

Then with all the love and understanding in his voice that men who are married to blondes always exhibit the husband replied 'Why don't you just leave the car in the garage'.