

THE TORCHBEARER

NEWSLETTER 49

"56ers Torchbearers Club Inc"

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PRESIDENT'S COMMENTS

Greetings fellow torchbearers and partners.

With a New Year well and truly up and running, most of us with good intentions have already disregarded our New Year Resolutions.

Our Secretary/Treasurer, Bill Cummings, has done our club proud by receiving the Cairns Citizen of the Year Australia Day Award. Born and bred in Cairns, Bill has spent decades assisting civic organizations in Far North Queensland.



Bill Cummings receiving his Citizen of the Year Award from Cairns Mayor Bob Manning.

On a far more solemn note North Queensland has lost a larger than life identity in the form of Tip Byrne AOM, 1956 Torch Bearer who dedicated his life to local administration and sporting activities in the Tully District and a fine rugby league player to boot. Our sincere condolences go out to his wife Noelene, and her immediate family.

On the sporting front, Cairns has excelled in recent times with the locally based Northern Pride Rugby League side taking out the National Country Club Championship defeating Penrith in Sydney, and as our newsletter goes to print, the Cairns Men's Basket Ball Team, the Taipans, are on top of the NBL ladder.

Editor Dennis is appealing to members to share their personal stories of their Run in 1956 before they are lost forever.

I trust all are in good health and spirits.

Jim Vallely

President.

FORMER OLYMPIC GAMES

MUNICH 1972

On the 5th September 1972 the Olympic Games finally lost the battle to dissociate itself from the pernicious influence of world politics on sport. In the early hours of that fateful day, war came to the XXth Olympiad. And the considerable efforts by the West German organizers to present the largest, the most smoothly run, and the most costly Games were completely tarnished.

The Olympic Village became the platform for political propaganda of the most, cold blooded variety. A squad of Palestinian guerrillas invaded the Israeli team headquarters, claimed hostages in a violent struggle during which two members of the Israeli team received fatal injuries and demanded the release of 200 Arab political prisoners. The intensive world-wide interest in the games afforded them the maximum publicity for their grievance.

All athletic activity immediately ceased and for several hours complete cancellation appeared

possible. After a day of impasse the first positive move was directed at removing the impasse from the Olympic Village. At 10.00am three helicopters flew out of the village, two containing the guerrillas and the third had government officials aboard. Their destination was the airbase at Fuerstenfeldbruck. Here the tragedy was compounded. Shortly after 11.00pm news bulletins announced that the siege was over following an exchange of gunfire and the hostages had been safely recovered but this was in error. A group of crack marksmen had been delegated to shoot down the Arabs on their transfer to the jet they had demanded to fly them to Egypt. Four guerrillas moved to inspect the jet and whilst returning to the helicopter three were hit but one reached the helicopter and there was silence for one hour. The police prepared for an assault with armoured cars but it took too long. Just after midnight the hostages were murdered. Some as a result of a hand grenade tossed into one helicopter by a fleeing guerrilla the rest were shot. In all eleven Israelis had been killed and 5 Arabs and three were taken into custody-a policeman was killed by an Arab bullet. On Wednesday morning a memorial service was held for the dead Israelis. Avery Brundage in his last Olympics as president appeared to lack any sensitivity when he compared the killings to problems over the inclusion of Rhodesia in the games as 'commercial, political and now criminal pressure'. There was a hurry that seemed to be indecent about the resumption of the games.

In athletics there were no Australian place getters in any event but East Germany was a participant in the games. The USSR in the person of Valeri Borzov won both the 100m and 200m events. The USA won the 400m and 800m events with Vince Matthews and Dave Wottle. The Finn and policeman Lasse Viren won the 5000m and 10000m events. Soviet bloc athletes won 9 of the 14 women's athletics events. It was these games that Shane Gould Australian swimmer won three gold medals (and world records in the 200m and 400m freestyle).

She also won the 200m individual medley. Gail Neall and Beverly Whitfield won the 400m individual medley and 200m breast stroke respectively. The only male to win a swimming medal was Brad Cooper who won the gold following the disqualification of Rick Demont of the USA for taking

banned drugs. Mark Spitz a 22 year old Californian won 7 gold medals and accomplished this achievement over eight days.

Australians won gold medals in two yachting events with David Forbes in the Star class and John Cuneo in the Dragon class.

The games were not a real achievement for Australians.

MONTREAL 1976

In a number of ways the 1976 Summer Olympic Games in Montreal was cast in dark shadow from the very beginning. First off, to prevent an international out break, the IOC Awarded Montreal the honour of the 1976 Olympics in 1970 granting them victory over two international powers. Additionally the mayor of Quebec sent a letter to Queen Elizabeth¹¹ asking her to formally decline Pierre Trudeau's invitation. This of course was denied.

Furthermore 22 African nations boycotted the games as a result of the New Zealand rugby team's tour of apartheid South Africa. Taiwan was denied entry to the games under the name of the Peoples Republic of China as the mainland had already been accepted in that name. The combination of these matters left 26 countries out of the games.

The Summer Olympic Games in Montreal did not come cheap. The significant construction needed was affected by a loss of 155 work days at Olympic Park. The mayor Jean Drapeau said 'Montreal can no more have a deficit than a man can have a baby.' These words came back to haunt him later. But the cost of the Olympics was \$ 2 billion the debt was not cleared until 2006.

However despite numerous complications and drawbacks the games were quite monumental with 27 World records broken. Women's events in basketball, rowing and team handball made their Olympic debut. Field hockey was played on an artificial pitch for the first time. It was at these games that fourteen year old gymnast Nadia Comaneci of Romania was the true star of the games, earning the first ever perfect score of 10.0 .

Canada finished the games with five silver and six bronze medals. Australia did not win one gold medal but won one silver medal and four bronze medals. The Soviet Union won 49 gold medals East Germany won 40 and the USA won 34.

Thailand and Bermuda won the first medals in their Olympic history.

56ers CORNER **The Three Amigos!**



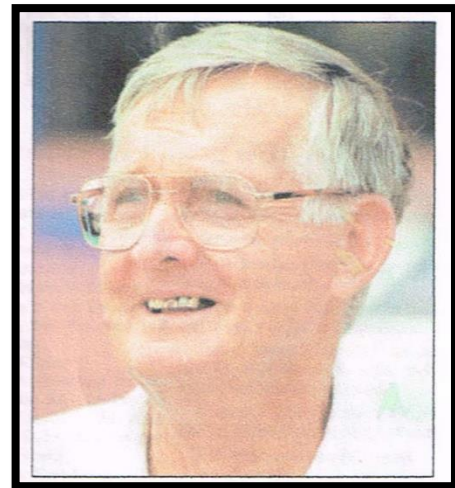
*The editor, Bob Chester and John Sheppard at Tumoulin.
Once handsome and fit 19 year olds.*

On a recent tour of the Tableland I visited Bob Chester (Gordonvale) on his farm at Toumoulin where he grows first class potatoes. John Sheppard (25 miles South of Tully) joined us and a great afternoon of reminiscences was joined. Both Bob and John have contributed articles to the newsletter and both take a keen interest in club matters. I might add that Bob presented my wife and I with some of his great potatoes. But the highlight of the afternoon was the tea/coffee and wonderful scones and cakes presented by Bob's wife Margaret for smoko.

Kauko Kaurila

56er Kauko Kaurila is a local surf legend in Ingham. He carried the Olympic Flame into the reception area at Townsville. His four brothers also carried the torch on the Ingham to Townsville stretch-most likely a family record in Olympic Torch History.

Kauko has lived his life under the lifesavers' tradition of vigilance and service. As a child Kauko and his brothers learnt to swim in the crocodile infested Herbert River near their father's farm. At the age of 16 in 1947 he obtained his bronze medallion while affiliated with the Mission Beach Surf Life Saving Club. Kauko competed against Forrest Beach members and later joined that club. He continued his title winning performances in North Barrier titles and State Surf Championships in 1952. During the Olympic year and 1955 he continued to be ranked among the top life savers in the state and a berth in the Queensland team for the Olympic Games Australian Championships at Torquay Melbourne.



Kauko Kaurila

As a result of beating the Australian champion Steve Wilkes to claim the honour of Queensland Surf Champion in 1955 he was awarded the sports honour of a 'Telegraph Blue'.

At a Forrest Beach carnival in 2001 Kauko received the medal of honour from a life member of the club. At the age of 70 Kauko was still swimming laps in his pool. Kauko and his brother Mauno both attended the 2014 RACQ Insurance Games in Townsville.

WE MUST NEVER FORGET THEM

The list of athletes who were at their prime in the 1950s and 60s is getting thin. There are a few left but I have chosen to list a more modern athlete in Cathy Freeman in this newsletter. Most 56ers will still remember the achievements of Cathy Freeman but some information below maybe new.

Cathy Freeman

Catherine Astrid Salome Freeman was born in Mackay on the 16th February 1973. She began her athletics career at a very young age. Her first coach was her stepfather Bruce Barber and she quickly collected regional and national titles in the 100m, 200m, high jump and long jump. In 1987 Freeman moved to Kooralbyn International School to be coached by Romanian Mike Danila. Danila became a key influence through her career.

In 1988 she was awarded a scholarship to an exclusive girls school Fairholme College in Toowoomba. During 1989 Freeman ran 11.67 in the 100m and Danila began to think about entering her in the Commonwealth Games trials in Sydney. In 1990 Freeman was chosen as a member of the 4x100m relay team for the 1990 Commonwealth Games in Auckland. The team won the gold medal making Freeman the first ever Aboriginal Commonwealth Games gold medalist. She was also one of the youngest at 16. She moved to Melbourne in 1990 and shortly after her manager Nic Bideau introduced her to Peter Fortune and he became her athletics coach for the remainder of her career. She competed in the World Junior Championships in Bulgaria where she reached the semi-finals of the 100m and was placed fifth in the 400m. At a second World Junior Championship in Seoul she won the silver medal in the 100m.

Freeman was chosen for the 1992 Olympics where she reached the second round of her speciality event the 400m.



1994 was Freeman's breakthrough season. It was in this year that she entered into the world's elite for the first time. She won gold in the Canadian Commonwealth Games in the 200m and 400m. She was also part of the 4x100m event winning a silver

medal. The Australian team in the 4x400m relay of Freeman was a member won the event but were disqualified.

In the 1995 World Championships in Sweden although a favourite she came fourth. During 1996 Freeman set many personal best Australian records and became the biggest challenger to France's Marie-Jose Perec at the 1996 Olympics. She eventually took the silver medal behind Perec in Australian record time of 48.63.

Cathy took a break for the 1998 season due to injury but on returning to the track in 1999 she did not lose a single 400m race. Her winning streaks continued into the 2000 season despite Perec's return to the track. Cathy was favorite for the 400m title at the Sydney Olympics but was expected to face off with Perec but the showdown never happened as Perec left the games following what she described as harassment from strangers where fear overwhelmed her. Freeman of course won the Olympic title in a time of 49.11. In winning this event she became the second Australian Aboriginal Olympic champion, the first being Nova Peres-Kneebone.



Close to winning the 2000 Olympic 400m final for women.

Freeman did not compete during the 2001 season but came back in 2002 to compete as a member of the victorious 4x400m relay team at the 2002 Commonwealth Games. She retired in 2003.

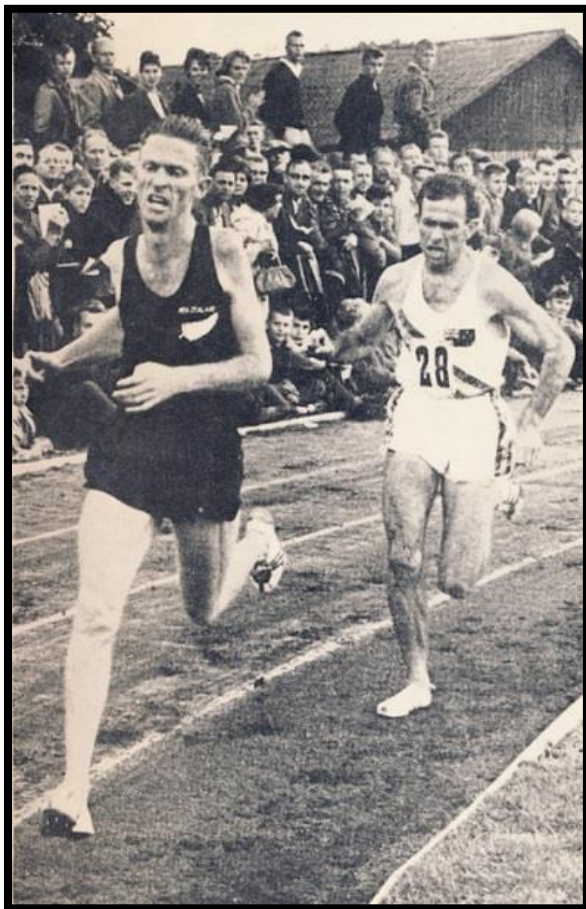
Since retirement she has been active in a range of community and charitable activities and is an Ambassador of the Indigenous Education Foundation.

A TRULY FABOULAS ATHLETE.

Dave Power

Dave was born in Maitland New South Wales on the 14th July 1928. Dave mainly competed in 10,000m events during his career. He competed in the 1960 Summer Olympics in Rome. He won the bronze medal in the 10,000m. He also competed in the 1958 British Empire Games in Cardiff and won gold medals in the mile and marathon events.

In his early career he ran for Eastern Suburbs Club in Sydney. In the early 1950s he developed into a good mile runner ranking sixth in 1954 he was also a top cross country exponent. When he ran 4.00.2 in 1960 he became the sixth fastest Australian miler of all time. Dave gained Olympic selection at the Australian Championships in 1956 running 29.32.2 in the 10,000m. In the 1956 Olympics he was competing against Vladimir Kuts a Ukrainian representing the USSR in the 10,000m : Kuts won the event but Power finished 7th in 29.49.6.



David Power in full flight behind Murray Halberg of New Zealand and showing the determination for which he was well known.

As mentioned earlier Power won the marathon in Cardiff beating the South African athlete Barnard by 11.8s at the tape. Herb Elliott was quoted as saying about Power. 'I was inspired by Dave Power- as I always am by courageous runners'. This win caused Percy Cerutti to keep reminding Power that he was a world beater. Up to then Power was second fiddle to Al Lawrence and Albie Thomas but Cerutti's comments caused him to start winning. He then looked forward to the Rome Olympics where he entered three events-the 5000m, the 10,000m, and the marathon. In the 5,000m he was placed fifth behind the trio of Grodoski, Zimny and Janke. In a time of 13:51.8 a magnificent performance. In the 10,000m with seven laps to go he reduced the lead back to five but he started too early but won the bronze medal in 28.37 and broke his personal best by 54 seconds. In the marathon Power contracted flu and was not able to compete- to his great disappointment. In the Perth (Australia) Commonwealth Games 34 year old Power was beaten by a 19 year old precocious Canadian Bruce Kidd into second place in the 10,000m event. He was not deterred however and took place in the 1963 Tokyo Marathon running 2:22 to be placed third. He was not able to make the 1964 Olympic team-Father time had caught up with him.

Dave Thomas was inducted into the Sport Australia Hall of Fame in 1999.

Dave unfortunately passed away on the 14th February 2014

The continued story of Lord Coe

In newsletter 48 a story about Lord Coe was suggested by Mark Rowell-that story is now continued. Eleven days after beating Filbert Bayi, Coe won the Coca Cola Games at Crystal Palace in a time of 1:44.95 a UK national outdoor record. Coe competed fiercely over the years 1978 to 1983. After recovering from an ankle injury in late 1978 he ran at a meet in Brussels and achieved another UK record of 1:44.26.

In 1979 Coe set three World records in 41 days. These were 800m in Oslo in 1:42.33, the mile also in Oslo and the 1500m in Zurich in 3:32.03. He was the

first person to hold all three records at the same time.

In 1980 Coe broke Rick Wohlhuter's world record for 1000m with a time of 2:13.40. He held all four middle distance records simultaneously-the 800m, 1000m, 1500m and the mile. But this was for only one hour as Steve Ovett broke his mile record. In the 1980 Moscow Olympics Ovett and Coe won each other's specialty events-Ovett the 800m and Coe the 1500m.

In 1981 Coe started with an indoor record over 800m. He created a world record in Florence over 800m of 1:46.0. A month later he set another record in a 1000m event and this lasted 19 years. He ended the season with gold over 800m in Rome in September.

1983 began with began with World Indoor records for 800m and 1000m. He spent much of that year battling health problems but was selected for the 1984 Olympics in 800m and 1500m and won silver behind Joaquim Cruz of Brazil but took gold in the 1500m with an Olympic record of 3:32.53. Coe was the only athlete to win successive Olympic 1500m titles. Steve Cram was moved to say; 'on the day there was only one man and on the day Seb Coe was that man'. Coe's Athletic career continued until 1989 when at the age of 33 he won the 1500m AAA title and was ranked number 1 over both 800m and 1500m. He ran the second fastest 800m of the year (1:43.38) and won the silver medal at the World cup over 1500m. He retired from competitive athletics in early 1990 having to bow out of the Auckland Commonwealth Games with yet another chest infection. He ended his career with eight different seasons of sub 1:44 800m times.



Lord Coe addressing the press following retirement.

Coe was elected a Member of Parliament for Falmouth and Camborne in 1992 for the conservative party but lost his seat in 1997. He returned to parliamentary circles as William Hague's chief of staff but was offered a life peerage in 2000. During this time he tried his hand at running a marathon-his time was 2 hours 58 minutes.

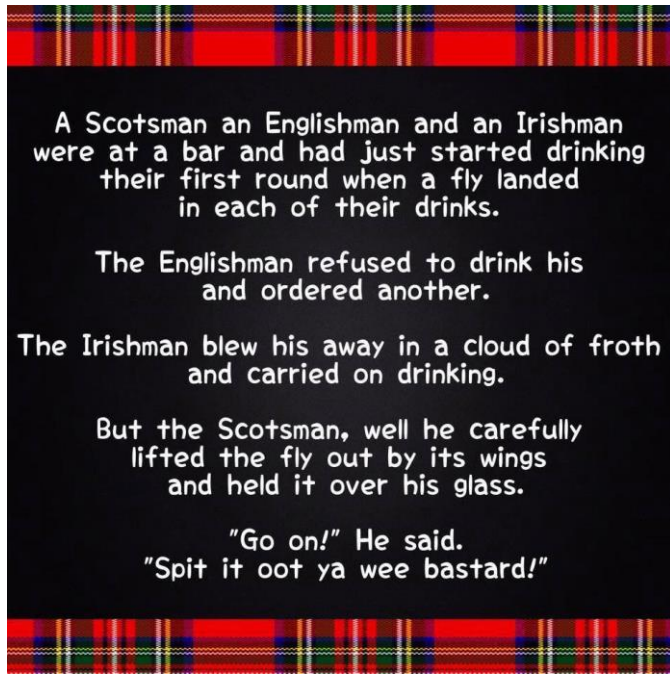
Sports administration then became Coe's interest. He was an ambassador for the planning of the London 2012 Olympics and when Barbara Cassani retired in 2004 he became chairman. Coe was instrumental in asking Queen Elizabeth II to star in 'Happy and Glorious' a short film featuring James Bond that formed part of the opening ceremony of the London Games.



Lord Coe pictured with the Duke and Duchess of Cambridge.

Coe in 1990 married Nicky McIlvaine a badminton three day champion and they had two sons and two daughters. The marriage ended in 2002 but he married Carole Annett a daughter of former England cricket captain MJK Smith in 2011.

JOKERS CORNER



SCOTCH ON THE ROCKS (Mt Fuji)



I see no good reason to act my age.

A tough old sheep farmer from Australia gave some advice to his granddaughter.

He told her that the secret to a long life was to sprinkle a piece of gun powder onto her porridge every morning.

The granddaughter followed this advice religiously until her death at the venerable age of 103.

She left behind 14 children, 30 grandchildren 45 great grandchildren, 25 great great grand children and a forty foot hole where the crematorium used to be!.

'Quote from the brilliant President of the USA (1801 TO 1809) Thomas Jefferson. ' The tree of liberty must be refreshed from time to time with the blood of patriots and tyrants.'

Communications by E-Mail

The Club is now set up to send out copies of the Torchbearer and send and receive communications by E-Mail.

If you have an E-Mail address and would like to receive communications via E-Mail, please advise on admin@56ers.org.au.



Kind Regards.

Dennis M Stevenson
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