

THE TORCHBEARER

NEWSLETTER 52

"56ers Torchbearers Club Inc"

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Merry Christmas

President's Comments

Greetings once again Torchbearers and Partners

The 56ers Torchbearers Club AGM held on 7 November at the RSL with the Executive positions unchanged.

Two major points of discussion were the direction the club may take as our members move more into our senior years and the celebrations surrounding the 60th Anniversary of the 1956 Relay in 2016.

Our patron Margaret Cochrane has been on the front foot getting in early and booking a venue for a dinner to be held at the RSL on the Saturday evening of the North Queensland Games with the possibility of securing a prominent sports person to be in attendance.

Readers may recall that I mentioned the name of a young high jumper in our last newsletter. His name was John Dodds, and he has been selected to

represent Australia in the World Youth Games in Russia next year.

He is presently ranked No2 in the World as a 16 year old. Our club has unanimously agreed to assist the lad with his travel expenses to the tune of \$500. We will follow his progress with a great deal of encouragement.

As this will be our last Newsletter for 2015, I would like to wish one and all a Merry Christmas and what is most important, that good health be with you.

Yours sincerely

Regards
Jim Vallely

10th November 2015



EARLY NOTICE

60TH ANNIVERSARY DATE CLAIMER

The club proposes to celebrate the 60th Anniversary of the 1956 Relay in conjunction with the North Queensland Games being held in Cairns with participation in the opening ceremony on Friday evenings 26th June 2016, with a special anniversary dinner on evening Saturday 27th June 2016.

FORMER OLYMPIC GAMES

ATLANTA 1996

The games in Atlanta were the centennial celebration of the formation of the modern Olympic Games. As such they will be remembered for the references to both the ancient and modern games as well as a 'Southern style' hospitality.

At the Opening Ceremony spectators were treated to an extravaganza that paid homage to the history of the South as well as Ancient Olympic Games. The parade of nations took longer than normal to pass as it contained all 197 National Olympic committees then recognized by the IOC. The most poignant event of the opening was the sight of Muhammad Ali when he struggled to overcome the shaking that Parkinson's disease brought to his hands, lifting the Olympic Torch and lit the cauldron.



The Atlanta Olympic Torch.

A rather disturbing incident that had similar feelings to the Munich matter occurred in Centennial Park that was designed to allow for people to gather to enjoy the festive atmosphere. Close to midnight a bomb went off before people could head for home. Sadly one person was killed and 110 injured.

New Olympic events such as beach Volleyball, light weight rowing and mountain biking and a women's cycling road time trial were included. Team rhythmic gymnastics for women was also added. Marie-Jose Perec from France achieved the same 200m and 400m gold medals as Michael Johnson an American athlete.



Michael Johnson with his characteristic up right running style.

The Canadian 4x100m team won the gold medal in the relay and Donovan Bailey is pictured on his way to the gold medal.



Donovan Bailey assisting Canada to win gold in the 4x100m relay.

Ecuador won its first ever gold medal when Jefferson Perez walked his way to win the 20k event. Vebjorn Rodal was also instrumental in winning Norway the 800m gold medal and set an Olympic record. All flag bearers at the opening ceremony and each National Olympic committee took home a hand- made quilt that was part of the Olympic Gift of Quilts project.

Andre Agassi won the men's singles tennis event with gold.

SYDNEY 2000

I guess that most members will have vivid memories of the conduct of the Sydney Olympic Games. Many members ran with the torch to make it two torch runs but 44 years apart. The image of the torch will be familiar to members but is illustrated below for continuity of the series.

Those members who ran the Sydney torch will be able to draw the difference between the Melbourne run and Sydney.



The Sydney Olympic Torch.

The distance was one mile verses probably 500m with Sydney. Many torch bearers with the Melbourne run had to run in pitch darkness and face crocodile, owl and many other frightening noises whilst waiting for the torch to arrive with no body to enjoy the runners passing by. The Sydney torch run was held during day light hours with hordes of people watching every run. The number of torch bearers for Melbourne was approximately 2900 where-as for Sydney some 11,000 to 12,000 runners took part.

The route of the torch took it from the sacred Aboriginal landmark of Ayres Rock, the Barrier Reef, the Sydney Opera House. On reaching the Olympic Stadium a tribute was paid to Australian women sporting legends Betty Cuthbert, Raelene Boyle, Dawn Fraser, Shirley Strickland, Shane Gould and Debbie Flintoff-King by allowing them to carry the Olympic Flame around the stadium before it was passed to gold medal hopeful Cathy Freeman. Water turned to fire and the cauldron was lit.

Cathy of course won the women's 400m event running in luminous shoes. Ethiopian Haile Gebrselassie won the 10,000m event for the second Olympic title in that event. He has been described as the greatest long distance runners of all time.



Cathy Freeman on the winner's podium at the Sydney Games.



Ethiopian runner Haile Gebrselassie winning the 10,000m in Sydney.

Taekwondo appeared for the first time at the Sydney Olympics.

Ian Thorpe 'Thorpedo' set the water on fire in the pool by winning gold in the 4x100m and 4x200m relays, the 400m freestyle in world record time plus a silver medal in the 200m freestyle.

WE SHOULD NOT FORGET THEM

This section of the newsletter has concentrated on track and field athletes involved in athletics and covering a period generally associated with the sport between the Melbourne Olympics and relatively before the formation of the Torchbearers Club. I believe that most of those athletes have been covered. The president has assisted in continuing the series by providing the names of champion sportspeople in other disciplines of sport.

The first person that I have selected is Evonne Cawley (Goolagong) a champion tennis player.

EVONNE CAWLEY. AO, MBE

Evonne was born in Griffiths and grew up in the small town of Barellan. She was the third of eight children born to Ken and Melinda Goolagong. Evonne was able to play tennis in Barellan from childhood thanks to local resident Bill Kurtzman, who saw her peering through the fence at the local courts and encouraged her to play tennis.

In 1965 Vic Edwards the proprietor of a Sydney Tennis School was advised to visit Barellan to take a look at the Evonne and immediately saw her potential. He persuaded her parents to allow her to move to Sydney where she attended Willoughby Girls High School and completed her school certificate in 1968. She was coached by Edwards.

Goolagong won seven Grand Slam titles and reached 18 Grand Slam singles finals. She played champions such as Bill-Jean King, Australian Kerry Melville and Martina Navratilova.

Evonne is the only mother to have won the Wimbledon title since before WW1. In 1975 she married Roger Cawley and had a daughter in 1977. She made:-

- 7 consecutive finals at the Australian open winning four titles in a row
- After reaching the final of the French Open in 1971 and 1972 she did not compete in that event for a decade.
- She returned in 1983 for her final Grand Slam appearance but lost to Chris Evert.
- She did not compete in any other Grand Slam singles events and her last appearance at a Grand Slam event was a doubles event when she and Sue Baker were defeated in a first round appearance.

Goolagong was ranked No.1 in the World for two weeks in 1976.

Evonne spent some time touring professional at the Hilton Head Racquet Club in South Carolina before returning to Australia. She became a member of the Australian Sports Commission from 1995 to 1997. She was a sports ambassador to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Communities.

Evonne was awarded Australian of the Year in 1971 and appointed an MBE in 1971 and an AO in 1982. She was elected to the Sport Australia Hall of Fame in 1985 and to the International Tennis Hall of Fame in 1988.

Evonne and husband Roger and two children live in Noosa Heads. Daughter Kelly assists with tennis camps and son Morgan was a national Soccer league player.



Evonne Goolagong in action against Chris Evert at Wimbledon 1980.

THE PROGRESSIVE REDUCTION IN THE TIME TO RUN A MILE

We are all familiar with the history of Roger Bannister and John Landy's breaking of the 4 minute mile barrier but how long ago did the objective of reaching this barrier commence? In 1884! The following tabulation shows the amazing gradual reduction in the time taken to run a mile.

Year	Achiever	Location	Time
1884	Walter George	England	4-18.4
1895	Thomas Comif	America	4-15.6
1923	Pavo Nurmi	Finland	4-10.4
1931	Jules Ladourmegue	France	4-9.2
1933	Jack Lovelock	Born NZ but lived in England	4-7.6
1934	Glen Cunningham	America	4-6.8
1937	Sydney Wooderson : Congratulated by Walter George (1884 miler)	England	4-6.4
1942	Hagg and Anderson		4-6.2
1945	Gunter Hagg	Sweden	4-1.4
1954	Roger Bannister	England	3-59.4
1954	John Landy	Sweden	3-59.4

My wife and I recently spent 9 days in our caravan at Mission Beach. One of our fellow caravaner's was a retired sports news editor from Melbourne. His knowledge of West Indian cricketers was incredible but he asked me if I knew who was the first four minute miler? My reply was Roger Bannister to which he said 'no it wasn't'. He then said Bannister was the first sub four minute miler but it was an American athlete who ran 4.00 exactly. He mentioned a name that I have forgotten. I have looked up the internet without luck. Can any member answer this question?

NORTH QUEENSLAND SPORTS FOUNDATION

Submitted by Margaret Cochrane Patron 56ers and former chair of the Sports Foundation 2004-2014.

The North Queensland Sports Foundation was formed in 1983 as a not-for-profit organization, with the objective of improving sporting opportunities across North Queensland.

The Foundation has membership from all the Local Government Authorities except one in the region from Sarina in the South to Cooktown in the North and out to the Western Queensland boundary to Mt Isa.

The inaugural chairman was Bob McCullough, currently a life member, with the Board consisting of Mayors, Councillors and community members and has continued in this way for the last 32 years.

The aim of the foundation was to provide a higher level of competition for the community of North Queensland through the North Queensland Games on a bicentennial basis held on a rotational basis between Townsville, Cairns, Mackay and Mt Isa. This rotation continued until 2008 with a change being implemented in 2009. Due to the lack of support from coastal athletes to support the games in Mt. Isa a decision was made by the Foundation to exclude Mt. Isa from the North Queensland Games rotation but introduce the Great Western Games for the region on their own bicentennial basis.

The first NQ Games were held in Townsville in 1984 and have continued to be as successful as ever. Numbers of sports participating now reach 45 sports with 3500 athletes and just as many volunteers running each and every event during the games. The next games will be held in Cairns 2016 56'ers 60th anniversary year.

At each and every Games event the foundation hosts a nationally and internationally recognized athlete of either Olympic or National competition level. Some of these guests have included Dawn Fraser, Joe Bugno, Sarah Carrigan, Ji Wallace, Shane Webke, Wendell Sailor, John Connolly Wallabies coach.

The first Western Games were hosted in 2009, the foundation approached these Games with some fear and intrepidation, however, the first games exceeded all expectations and continued to grow across the Western Line from Charters Towers to Mt. Isa. The athlete numbers are over 2000 with up to 15 sports participating. With this response the decision was fully justified and the benefit to the western world of sports has certainly been justified.

Throughout the years competitors at the games have ranged from 2 years old-yes he rode a horse around barrels in Mt Isa and beat kids much older than he was! The oldest competitor has been 91-a swimmer.

I was privileged to be able to introduce the 1500m race into the opening ceremony of the North Queensland Games after much discussion with Keith Barrett a 56'er. The race was originally for the 'boys ' and was sponsored by the 56'ers providing \$1000 for prize money for which the foundation was grateful-I saw to it that 'the boys only' event didn't last long, the foundation introduced ' the girls' to the event and matched the prize money for the girls.



Keith Barrett justly lighting the flame for the 2004 Games in Cairns.

However the executive of the 56'ers soon took over the sponsorship for the girls as well and the foundation is very grateful for this contribution.

Montanna McAvoy who you have heard heaps about previously, the grand-daughter of a 56'er has been the recipient of this wonderful gesture from your organization. A photo of Montanna competing in this 1500m race in Townsville is for you to view.



Along with the Games the Foundation hosts the Sports Star of the Year Awards, at various centres across the footprint of the Foundation. The event recognizes the achievement of the top class athletes of the region. It is astounding the level of these athletes who are all generally on the world stage. There are always nominees who have received gold at world championships amongst the group of athletes at these Awards nights. It just goes to show the level of athletes in our region-World Champs no less!!

The games of years gone by have had such athletes competing before they became famous!! Cathy Freeman, Brad Bevan, Wendal Sailor, Natalie Cook, Kerry Polthurst, Dianne Reeves, Julie Majer, Zoe Tanks, Natarsha Williams, Karrie Webb just to name a few.

The categories included in the Sports Star Awards ceremonies include Senior Athlete, Junior Athlete, Athlete with a disability. The foundation also has a sponsored programme for Development Bursaries for current athletes, and Services to Sport Award, covering all aspects of the sporting scene.

The foundation also has a sponsored programme for Development Bursaries to current athletes, two from each Council. These bursaries have been sponsored by BHP Billiton in the past and are now

sponsored by Wingate Properties, each athlete receives \$500 towards their sporting development.

Hundreds of athletes have benefited from this avenue over the years.

Over the years a programme has been undertaken via State Government Funding for the Sports Tours throughout the footprint of the foundation. These tours have now been discontinued as the funding was cut for the programme. This programme served some 700 schools in one year, with 11,000 students benefitting from multiple sports. The Foundation representatives and professional coaches have travelled thousands of miles by car and plane to centres as far away as Mornington Island and Boulia and all throughout the regions. This is a major programme that has been lost to the kids where some schools have never seen professional coaches or even know that some of the sports existed.

The foundation also sponsors the North Queensland Athletics Championships held annually in Townsville benefitting Track and Field Athletes from all over the Foundation Footprint.

As you can see the North Queensland is a multi-faceted community organization, fully supported by Local Government Authorities, and totally focussed on providing sporting opportunities from the communities they serve. The foundation has been in existence for 32 years, has had only 6 presidents in that time. I have had the pleasure of being the longest serving President in that office, I feel very honoured and privileged to have been able to serve and develop Sport in North Queensland.

56ERS CORNER

VALE MAJOR MICHAEL van ASSCHE

Members will recall the story of Michael van Assche appearing in Newsletter 51. Michael ran his mile for the Melbourne relay 12 miles South of Ballarat. Michael's wife has advised that he passed away before the newsletter was distributed. We sorely regret not having known Michael and offer our condolences to Mrs. Van Assche and her family. Rest in peace Michael.

QUALIFYING AGE FOR TORCH BEARERS

My understanding of the age for qualification to run the torch was 16. Since writing the newsletter it has come to my notice that some torch bearers were of less an age than 16. One is a member – John Skennar who ran the torch 30 miles South of Innisfail who advised me on Saturday at the AGM that he was 14 years and 8 months old. Another member has long told me that he was 14 and ran 9 miles South of Newcastle. He was Tony Stevens.. Tony has advised me that he was 14 years and 10months old. So he has admitted defeat to John Skennar.

Can any members' improve on the youthful age of these torch runners?

THE BEAUREPAIRE TORCH RERUN TO PROMOTE THE MOVE FOR A SECOND MELBOURNE OLYMPICS

Many of us would recall this move to publicise a move to choose Melbourne for the 1996 Olympic Games. The company Beaurepaire well known for tyre production arranged the run that covered much the same course as the 1956 Torch Relay. Bill Mussared, Lance Andrews and Innes Garner took part in this run as well as carrying the Melbourne torch. They are pictured at a receiving ceremony at Gloucester NSW.



Left to right-Inness Garner, Bill Mussared and Lance Andrews at Gloucester with the torch used for the rerun.

Bill forwarded this photo to Bill Cummings who passed it on for use in the newsletter. The rerun also passed through Innisfail and many 56ers joined in the exercise. Pictured below is the editor and 56er John Lowe passing the torch North of Innisfail.



John and the editor passing the rerun torch. The accompanying runners on the left are not known but the chap on the far left was an Innisfail bank manager. The lad on my left is my son Brett who accompanied me on all the torch runs except Melbourne.

All runners stopped at the Beaurepaire centre had a drink and headed off to a civic reception at the Shire Hall led by Innisfail champion miler and 56er Jim O'Brien. Unfortunately Melbourne was not selected but Atlanta was.

JOKERS CORNER

Walking down the aisle

I'll never forget how happy I was when I saw my wife walking down the aisle towards me.

My heart was beating fast and the excitement unbearable.

It seemed to take an age, but eventually, there she was standing beside me.

I gave her a loving smile and said. Get the trolley over here love. They are doing three cartons of beer for the price of two!!

The Old Drover

An old drover walks into a barber shop in Black Stump Crossing NT for a shave and hair-cut.

He tells the barber he can't get all his whiskers off because his cheeks are wrinkled from age. The barber gets a little wooden ball from a cup on the shelf and tells the drover to put it inside his cheek to spread out the skin.

When he's finished, the old drover tells the barber that was the cleanest shave he has ever known but

wanted to know what would have happened if he accidentally swallowed the ball.

The barber replied, 'Just bring it back in a couple of days like everyone else does'



Famous quotes

John Glen. As I hurtled through space, one thought kept crossing my mind. Every part of this space craft was supplied by the lowest bidder.

Spike Milligan. The best cure for sea sickness is to sit under a tree.

Prince Phillip. When a man opens the car door for his wife it is either a new car or a new wife.

Mansel Rubenstein. Someone stole my credit cards but I won't report it because the thief spends less than my wife did.



I would join with the president in wishing all members and readers of the Torchbearers Newsletter a Holy Christmas and a Happy New Year and sincerely thank those members who have made contributions to the 4 newsletters for 2015.



Kind Regards

Dennis M Stevenson
menafalls1@bigpond.com

"The Running Scotsman"

ANNUAL SUBSCRIPTION : REMINDER

For those not already paid, the membership fee is now due. This was unchanged at the last AGM so still stands at \$10 per annum.

EFT: Bank details for electronic funds transfer : Bendigo Bank BSB: 633-108 Account:117343277
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The 56ers Olympic Torchbearers Club Inc

Secretary/Treasurer
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