

THE TORCHBEARER

NEWSLETTER 54

"56ers Torchbearers Club Inc"

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President's Comments

Greetings Torchbearers and Partners

Dennis, our Editor, has been working overtime to produce a newsletter before our Anniversary Lunch on 25 June.

Our apologies for having to change the Dinner to a Lunch as circumstances forced us to make this belated decision. We will contact each member who has already accepted as to the change and we sincerely hope this does not incur a major inconvenience. Should any of our members have any late minute enquiries please do not hesitate to contact either Bill, Dennis or myself.

Our Club will play an integral part in the Opening Ceremony of the North Queensland Games on 24 June with Montanna McAvoy, the granddaughter of 1956 Torchbearer, Joseph McAvoy, carrying the 1956 Torch fully alight up on to the dais and light the cauldron to officially open the Games.

I am pleased to report that our 2 assisted athletes, John Dodds and Montanna McAvoy have both recorded National Titles since our last newsletter with John Dodds booking his seat to the World Junior Games in Europe with a qualifying leap of 2.16 metres.

Looking forward to our gathering at the Anniversary Lunch on 25 June.

Regards
Jim Vallely



FORMER OLYMPIC GAMES

LONDON 2012

2012 was the third time that London has hosted the summer Olympic Games. In 1908 and 1948. The London Games push was led by Lord Sebastian Coe and the then mayor of London Ken Livingstone.



Lord Sebastian Coe-Games organizer.

There was nine entries by cities to acquire the games. London and Paris emerged as the frontrunners but London won the final ballot by 54 to 50 against Paris.

The Olympic Relay lasted for 70 days passing through the Isle of Man, Dublin, Guernsey and Jersey-it passed through Dumfries and Galloway on two occasions.

REMINDER NOTICE

60TH ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION

The club will celebrate the 60th Anniversary of the 1956 Olympic Torch Relay Cairns to Melbourne in association with the North Queensland Games in Cairns on 24th & 25th June 2016. (See reminder notice attached)



The Olympic torch passing (being walked) through Newport, the Isle of Wight.

The torch circled the arena and the Olympic Flame comprising of 204 petals (the number of participating nations) was lit.



The opening ceremony was called the 'Isle of Wonder' and included a comic film with James Bond and Queen Elizabeth acting as herself.

Women's boxing was included for the first time with 36 nominations and dispensation was obtained for shooting events to conform to UK Laws.

Mandeville and Wenlock were selected as the mascots.



Mandeville and Wenlock mascots for the London Olympics.

In athletics Usain Bolt won the 100m and 200m events in 9.13 secs and 19.32 secs respectively. Aries Merrett of the USA won the 110m hurdles in 12.92 and Kenyan Stephen Kiprotich from Uganda won the marathon in 2.08.01.

In the women's athletics Jamaican Shelly-Ann Fraser-Price was the 100m winner in 10.75-she was second in the 200m final. Australian Sally Pearson won the much sought after 100 m hurdles in 12.35.

Anna Mears took out the women's individual sprint in cycling.

The Australian men won the bronze medal in hockey.

In sailing Australia won gold in the Laser and 470 classes.

Swimming events were dominated by the USA and China with Australia's James Magnussen and Christian Sprenger winning silver in the 100m freestyle and 100m breast stroke respectively. The Australian women won the 4x100m freestyle relay and silver in the 4x200m freestyle and medley events.

The overall medal totals were:

USA 46 gold and 103 total, China 38 gold and total 88, Great Britain 29 gold and total 65, Australia 7 gold and 35 total.

WE SHOULD NEVER FORGET THEM

KEITH MILLER (continued).

Before continuing the Keith Miller saga I must relate a story about him that typifies the character of the man. Strange enough President Jim was also at this function in 1952. We did not realize it then of course as 14 or 15 year old boys.

An Australian cricket team was in Cairns playing a local representative team and Keith Miller was part of the Australian team. I am not sure in which capacity (school or scouts) I was present. Pom Lessina was a local chap who forever was present at football or other matches organized by the local schools-he was our cheer squad. I don't know if Miller had dropped a catch or it was his well-known electric personality but Pom went around all day calling out 'get a circus tent Miller' referring to a missed catch or just having a go at the man. I have never forgotten the occasion.

Now for the continuing story of the best loved cricketer Keith Miller.

WAR SERVICE

Less than two months after the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbour Miller was called to active service. He trained at Victor Harbour South Australia and gained his wings in late 1942. In December he was promoted to flight sergeant and quickly sailed to Europe. On the way he had a training stopover in Boston where he met his future wife Peg Wagner. By March he was stationed in Bournemouth in England and continued training. He was invited to join the RAAF cricket team where he had many brushes with death. Some of his mates were killed in a German air strike.

Miller played his first match at Lords against a team that featured past, current and future England players including Alex Bedser. The RAAF played eight matches with Miller reaching a top

score of 141 runs. During these matches he met his good friend England batsman Denis Compton.

In late 1943 Miller was based in Gloucestershire where he threatened to punch his commanding officer and was sentenced to three weeks disciplinary course with hard labour. He trained in radar at Newcastle-upon-Tyne. During his stay there he sustained a back injury that caused enduring problems to his bowling.

He was selected in a match at Lords and reached a century just as a V-1 flying bomb landed nearby. He was issued a commission as a pilot officer. On a trip to see former comrades, a night of drunken revelry saw him charged with eight offences and faced possible dishonourable discharge but escaped with a fine.

Miller flew Beau forts, Beau fighters and Mosquitos. He had a near death experience in a Beau fighter-the plane was repaired but the pilot who next flew the plane was killed when the problem recurred.



A De Havilland Mosquito bomber-the type flown by Miller during WW2.

Keith Miller was assigned to a Royal Navy destroyer as part of an exchange programme. During the term the vessel fought a German U-boat which was sunk. He was promoted to flying officer on the 4th November 1944.

Miller flew missions over mainland Europe including V1 and V2 production and test launch sites on Peenemunde. He also attacked German

installations at Flensburg in Norway. During one flight a bomb did not disengage and he successfully landed the plane with the bomb attached. Germany surrendered soon after but Miller was ordered to fly air force personnel over Germany to view the results of Allied bombing. On one flight he broke away from the formation to fly over Bonn the birthplace of Beethoven.

On his return to Australia his wartime exploits gave him a greater sense of perspective. When asked by Michael Parkinson later about pressure in cricket he replied 'pressure is a Messerschmitt up your arse at 20,000 feet, playing cricket is not'.

Following cessation of hostilities Miller played in five Victory tests which were not credited as Test Matches. Miller scored 105 in 210 minutes in the first victory test at Lords and bowled fiercely hitting Len Hutton and Cyril Ashbrook on the arm and leg respectively and provoking an angry crowd reaction.

Japan surrendered and his squadron was disbanded. Miller had spent 550 hours in the air with the RAF. He was awarded the 1939-45 Star, France and Germany Star, Defence Medal, War Medal and Australia Service Medal.

Various matches were played in India where Indian independence protests were held. There was trouble in the Australian team when some members felt that Hassett should be removed from the captaincy but Miller refused to plot against Hassett.

The team returned to Australia where Hassett's men were assigned to play six first-class matches against state teams. The matches were designed to revive cricket and a lead up to the international tour of New Zealand.

MILLERS TEST CAREER

At the end of 1946 Miller was selected for the New Zealand tour under the captaincy of Queenslander Bill Brown. He started the tour well with a top score of 139 against Auckland.

The first test was played at Wellington and New Zealand was bowled out for 42 with Miller not bowling a ball. In the second innings Miller took 2 for 6 and the home side was out for 54. Australia made 8 for 199 in their 1st innings so won handsomely.

On his return to Australia he recommenced work with Vacuum Oil but became disillusioned when he sought leave to travel to America to marry Wagner that was refused so he resigned.



Miller with his first wife and children in mid-1950s

He had the comfort of a contract with an English club and left Australia at the end of the AFL season.



Miller (centre) playing AFL.

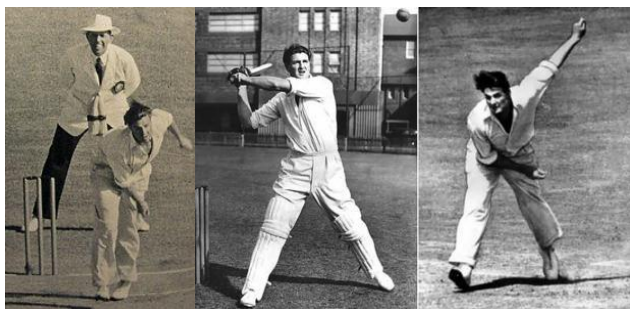
He was reunited with Wagner after more than three years and they were married in September

1946. The couple returned to Australia in November.



Miller playing an on drive.

Miller performed well in front of Bradman in a Shield match in Adelaide by scoring 188 and taking 2/32 with the ball. Bradman saw him as a top order batsman and as a new ball partner with Lindwall. He was crucial in attacking England's strong batting line-up.



'An utter match-winner.' Keith Miller in full flight, devastating with both bat and ball.

Miller made his Ashes debut in Brisbane and Bradman opted for six front line bowlers with Miller at number 5 in the batting order. Miller played a big part in the defeat of England by an innings and 334 runs.

During this test an incident, coloured by Millers war time experiences upset Bradman. This

incident can best be described by Michael Parkinson-

'Keith Miller was deeply affected by WW2. It changed him... In the first post-war test...England was caught on a sticky wicket... (and) Bill Enrich came in. He had a serious war and he survived and Miller thought "He is my old services mate. The last thing he wants after 5 years of service is to be flattened by a cricket ball so I eased up" Bradman came up to me and said 'Don't slow down Keith. Bowl quicker. That remark put me off test cricket. Never felt the same way about it after that.'

In the second test Miller had a quiet match scoring only 40 runs and taking only one wicket on a spin friendly pitch but Australia won another innings victory. The third test was drawn and Miller had a mediocre game in his home town (Melbourne) scoring 33 and 34 and taking two wickets.

The fourth test ended in a high scoring draw with Miller unbeaten on 141. During the fifth test Miller became disillusioned with Bradman's ruthless mentality preferring to play in a flamboyant manner in close contests. Australia won the ashes with a 3/nil victory over England.

Miller was selected for the Invincibles tour of England in 1948. The team remained undefeated in its 31 matches. Miller started strongly against county teams. With the outstanding success of the Invincibles Miller once again upset Bradman when playing against Essex. The Australians had massed 721 runs in one day. Miller came to the crease with the score at 2/364 and deliberately allowed himself to be bowled first ball. This was in protest against the one sided nature of the match.

The test series matches were won handsomely by the Australians but not before another 'Miller' incident.

After the Lords test Miller enjoyed a night out and returned to the hotel after day break the next morning. They were to play Surrey at the

oval that day. As a punishment he was sent to the fine leg boundary and was forced to walk the length of the field between overs. One spectator took sympathy on him and produced a bike that was used to cycle around the circumference of the ground.

Miller had many more differences with Bradman's leadership.

Miller was awarded an MBE together with Ian Johnson in 1956. In 2005 after his death he was made a Member of the Order of Australia.

The story of Keith Ross Miller could go on for a lot more space (in fact it could have taken up a whole newsletter) but I believe that members would have had enough of this brilliant sportsman so I will terminate this story. Miller died in 2004.



Richie Benaud and Ian Chappell at Miller's funeral.



Miller's statue and Keith Miller at the unveiling of his statue at the MCG in February.

56ERS CORNER

For the first time since editing this newsletter I do not have any contributions from Torchbearers. I wished to commence a member's profile but this did not achieve success. Accordingly if members have experiences relating to the relay or sporting or life experiences they wish to contribute my email address is listed below.

I am anxiously awaiting the *volume* of stories that I will receive!!??

VALE KEL ZIETH

It is with sincere regret that the newsletter advises of the passing of Kel Zieth. His funeral service will be held at the Atherton Anglican Church in Atherton on the 12th May 2016.

Kel ran his torch run 16 miles north of Gympie. One can see his medal receipt signature on page 98 of *Carrying the Torch*. Kel and his wife Wendy attended the 50th Anniversary celebrations of the Melbourne Olympics in 2006 and he has taken place in many Torchbearers' functions in the north.

Kel was part of the Beaurepaire torch rerun in Innisfail. Kel retired from the Tug Service to retire in Atherton.

Rest in Peace Kel. There is an Olympic Torch awaiting you in Heaven.

QUOTES FROM SIR WINSTON CHURCHILL



- Never in the field of human conflict was so much owed by so many to so few.
- I have nothing to offer but blood, toil, tears and sweat.
- It is no use saying, 'We are doing our best'. You have to succeed in doing what is necessary.
- You have enemies? Good. That means you have stood up for something, sometime in your life.
- A lie gets halfway around the world before truth has a chance to put its pants on.

Did you know that President Obama removed a bust of Sir Winston from the White House, placed there by President Reagan! He replaced it with the bust of Martin Luther King.

JOKERS CORNER

ROY BROWNS (32 MILES NORTH OF INNISFAIL) GREAT JOKE.

Two young chaps met on the street one day. One said to the other "Where did you get that black eye?" He said, "Well I attended Church last Sunday and this woman had her skirt tucked between her buttocks. So I leaned over and pulled the skirt out. Then she hit me."

Next week the friends met again and the first chap had a black eye on the other side. "What happened?" the friend said. "You would not believe it. I was at church again and the same woman sat in front of me with her skirt tucked away again. My cousin sitting next to me pulled the skirt out. I knew that she didn't like that so I tucked it in for her. She then gave me another black eye."

A good one Roy.

HANDYMAN HUSBAND

A wife texts her handyman husband on a cold winters morning:

'WINDOWS FROZEN~WON'T OPEN'

Husband texts back:

'GENTLY POUR LUKE WARM WATER OVER THE EDGES AND TAP THE EDGES SHARPLY WITH A HAMMER'

Five minutes later the wife texts back:

'LAPTOP REALLY RUINED NOW'.

Culinary delight

I love cooking with wine. Sometimes I even put it in the food.



IRISH LOGIC

Paddy says to Mick, 'I found this pen. Is it yours?'

Mick replies, 'Don't know give it here.' He then tries it and says, 'Yes it is'

Paddy asks, 'How do you know?'

Mick replies, 'That's my hand writing'.



Kind Regards

Dennis M Stevenson
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"The Running Scotsman"