

THE TORCHBEARER

NEWSLETTER 55

"56ers Torchbearers Club Inc"

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President's Comments

Greetings once again Torchbearers and Partners

It is with a great deal of pleasure that I have to report our 60th Anniversary celebrations were a resounding success commencing with members participating in the Opening Ceremony of the RACQ North Queensland Games. All 56ers were invited onto the stage where a grand-daughter of a Torchbearer namely Montanna McAvoy and yours truly produced a 1956 Olympic Torch to ignite a second torch held by 1984 Gold Medallist John Sieben who in turn lit the Games cauldron.

The following day an excellent rollup of members turned out to witness the running of the 56ers sponsored 1500m event with Josiah McCarthy winning the men's race and Montanna McAvoy making it a back to back success in the ladies.



President Jim presenting Montanna McAvoy (4:37.74) with the Torchbearers prize for the women's 1500m event in the RACQ North Queensland Games. Second was Chantelle Yelland (4:42.57), third Hannah Hardy (5:06.67).

Our anniversary lunch at the RSL was well received with over 50 members and guests in attendance. Our patron Margaret Cochrane set

the scene for an enjoyable afternoon with table settings and arranging two large pin boards featuring a wonderful display of Olympic memorabilia. It was most pleasing to have members from as far away as Melbourne, Brisbane, Bowen and Townsville attending.

Best of health to all.

Regards
Jim Vallely



PASSING ON THE FLAME



Club president Jim Vallely, Montanna McAvoy (granddaughter of 56 torchbearer Joe McAvoy and winner 1500m women's track event) and former Olympian John Seiben (Games ambassador), in lighting of the flame ceremony, official opening NQ Games, Cairns June 2016.

FORMER OLYMPIC GAMES

As the London Olympic Games were the most recent of the modern Olympics were held in 2012 there are no more modern games to produce in the newsletter. Until Rio has been completed in

August 2016 there will have to be an alternative story for this section.

Torch runner Leo Solinas provided a preview of the welcoming monuments that were foreshadowed in newsletter no 40. It will be interesting to see if foreshadowed spectacular items become real for Rio 2016.

The Ancient Olympic Games

Keith Barrett wrote a little on this subject in newsletter No.6

The Ancient Olympic Games have a long history. It all began in Greece, in the Peloponnese about 3,000 years ago. According to existing historic manuscripts the first ancient Olympic Games were celebrated in 776 BC in Olympia. They were dedicated to the Greek god Zeus and took place in the same place every four years. This four year period became known as an 'Olympiad'.

Olympia is located in the west of the Peloponnese.



A map of the location of Olympia in Greece.

Imposing temples, votive monuments and treasures stood alongside the palaestra (wrestling-school gymnasium) and gymnasium in a site of unique beauty and mystique. From the beginning of the 10th century BC, Olympia was a meeting place for religious and political activities.



The ruins of the Temple of Hera.

The stadium which was entered through the Portico of Echo and could hold thousands of spectators.



The Portico of Echo. Entrance to the stadium.

It is difficult to know the exact reasons behind the birth of the Games. Mythology gets mixed up with history. There are many stories that attempt to explain their origin. One possible explanation is that they were the invention of Heracles of Ida. Another is that they were a celebration of the victory of Zeus over Augeas of Elis. The games were secular in nature and aimed to demonstrate the evolution of physical qualities of young men and make good relations between the Greek cities.

According to specialists, the Ancient Olympic Games owed their purity and importance to religion.

Before each games it was traditional to declare a truce signed by three kings, Iphitos of Elis, Cleosthenes of Pisa and Lycurgus of Spata. This allowed participants such as athletes, artists and their families to travel in safety. Messengers travelled from city to city to announce the date of the competitions.

There was originally three main criteria for participating in the games.

- The athletes had to be male of Greek origin and freeborn.
- Women were generally excluded but those who owned horses were accepted.
- Slaves and foreigners were excluded.

When Rome invaded Greece in 146 BC, Romans were allowed to join the Greek athletes. Apparently young virgin girls could be spectators. When the athletes were selected they had to train hard for several months.

Because of outstanding performance some of their names are known to us:-

- Athlos won a total of 6 victory olive wreaths.
- Milon won six wrestling titles.
- Kyniska was the first woman to win a chariot title.
- Melankomas for boxing. His movements were light simple and fascinating.
- Leonidas won 12 Olympic victory wreaths for running.



The ancient Olympic Stadium.

The programme of the games included only individual sports, with the exception of equestrian events all the competitions were held in the stadium.

The events held were:-

- Running, split into three events, the stade running the length of the stadium, the diaulos running two lengths of the stadium and the dolichos by running about 20 lengths of the stadium.



Starting blocks-all competitors from scratch!?

- Wrestling, the contest ended when one contestant admitted defeat.
- Boxing, the hands of the competitors were bound in leather and pieces of metal were added to the hand joints.
- Pankration, a primitive form of martial arts combining boxing and wrestling.
- The equestrian competitions, comprising spectacular chariot or horse races.
- The pentathlon that comprised five events-running, wrestling and boxing.
- The boy's events included among other things running, wrestling and boxing.

Initially the events were held over one day but extended to 5 days as the events increased.

In the Ancient Olympic Games there was only one winner. The Olympionic was immediately rewarded and a herald announced the name of the winner, then a Hellanodikas (judge) placed a palm leaf in his hands while the spectators

applauded and threw flowers. They then tied a ribbon of red wool around his head and hands in sign of victory.

The official prize ceremony took place on the last day of the games in the raised hall of the Temple of Zeus. In a loud voice the herald announced the victors name his father and the name of his city. A crown of olive branches (the kotinas) was placed on the winners head. On his return to his home town the athlete was welcomed as a hero and received advantage for the rest of his life. He was able to have his own statue erected.



A running event in progress. (Running nude).

Following the conquest of Greece by Rome in 146 BC a period of decline began which ended with the games being abolished in 393 AD. Emperor Theodosius 1, who became a Christian decided to abolish all pagan cults and centres. After almost 1000 years of existence the Ancient Olympic Games ceased. The site disappeared little by little through earthquakes and floods. It was rediscovered by Englishman Richard Chandler in 1766. It wasn't until 1875 that German excavators' rediscovered the ruins of Olympia.

These discoveries contributed to Pierre de Coubertin creating the Games of the Modern era.

Taken from a fact sheet of the International Olympic Committee.

The RACQ NORTH QUEENSLAND GAMES

I will let President Jim address the newsletter on the RACQ Games and the 60th anniversary celebrations both of which were most enlightening. A number of stories will emerge in future newsletters but two must be told in this full edition. One is the wonderful manner in which the room and tables were decorated for the lunch. Our Patron Margaret Cochrane did a wonderful job one of which was in choosing the colours of the Olympic Rings as the colour choice in serviettes and balloons. The choice of the luncheon meal was superb especially the apple pie and ice cream. Additionally those presenting the speeches had very informative topics. Well done Margaret.

The other item of special interest was the girls and boys hurdles events. The small hurdles were set up as we entered the grand stand (the layout of the competition field looked so beautiful) and the ages of competitor varied from 7 to 11 years old. Not sure of the height of the hurdles but just about all of the participant were 'jumping' over the hurdles clearing almost twice the height of the hurdle thus increasing the time of race. They were all magnificent little athletes who would have learnt very much and could develop into Olympic champions given expert coaching. Truly beautiful to watch.

We had 20 members attending and a photo of the hansom torchbearers attending follows. John Lowe was absent from the photograph.



Members attending the 60th anniversary lunch with Olympian Jon Seiben (in pink shirt).

WE MUST NEVER FORGET THEM

JANE CHRISTINA FLEMMING OAM

With this section of the newsletter previously I carelessly excluded Jane Christina Flemming a wonderful female Australian athlete from earlier athlete's series.

Jane commenced her athletics career competing for the Fairpark Little Athletics Club at The Knox Little Athletics Centre. She was born on the 14th April 1965. She completed her HSC in 1982 at the Mater Christie College Belgrave.

A two time Olympian, Flemming competed at the 1986, 1990 and 1994 Commonwealth Games. She was a fine heptathlete and reached 6695 points as her highest score. This achievement stands as the Australian and Commonwealth Games record as at February 2016.

Fleming's performances in the Auckland heptathlon were:-

- 100m hurdles-13.21 secs
- High jump-1.82m
- Shot put-13.76m
- 200m-23.62 secs
- Long jump-6.57m
- Javelin-49.28m
- 800m-2:12.53

In Australian Championships she won thirteen open titles-5 in heptathlon, 5 in 100m hurdles, 2 in 100m and 1 in 100 yards. In 1993 she was named Australian female athlete of the year.

In the Auckland Commonwealth Games, Flemming as well as winning the heptathlon won the long jump with a leap of 6.78 m.

Jane Flemming's best performance at the Olympic Games was 7th in Seoul and she was placed 7th at the 1993 World Athletics Championships.

Flemming was involved in a urine swapping incident at the Ulster Games in Belfast in 1986. She received an official warning as a result of the Black report into drugs in sport.



Jane Flemming competing in the 100m hurdles at the Edinburgh Commonwealth Games.

Jane Flemming's post-athletic career included an athletics commentator for the 7 network and SBS. She also represented Sebastian Coe, Daily Thompson and Michael Johnson as a business manager.



Jane with husband Ian Purchas.

Flemming was awarded an Order of Australia in 2014 for services to athletics and the community. She married Ian Purchas and they have twin sons James and Samuel.

CLIVE BERNARD CHURCHILL AM

Clive Bernard Churchill was born on the 21st January 1927 in Newcastle. He was a star school boy five-eighth at Marist Brothers Hamilton where he won five premierships while still at school. The brothers at his school banned him from playing with Central Newcastle. In 1946 he was graded with Central in the Newcastle competition as a full back.

Churchill represented Country Seconds in 1946 and came to the notice of Sydney talent scouts. He signed with South Sydney and moved to Sydney for the start of the 1947 season. He stayed with Souths for 12 seasons playing 164 games and won five premierships. He played Souths last regular game against Manly with a broken arm but Souths won the match thanks to a sideline conversion by Churchill after full time with broken arm wrapped in cardboard.



Clive Churchill in Australian Colours.

Churchill was selected to captain Sydney's representative team when they hosted France in 1951. The match was drawn at 19 all.



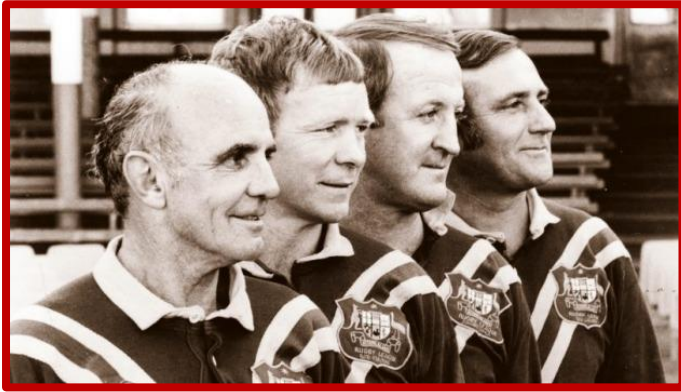
Churchill in South Sydney jersey.

He played 34 tests for Australia and the World Cup Series in 1954. He captained Australia in 24 tests over a period of 6 years that included three series against Great Britain and played his final test for Australia on the 1956-57 Kangaroo tour.

Churchill was widely renowned for his coaching career and toured Europe with the Kangaroos in 1959 as non-playing coach. He was also appointed coach for South Sydney in 1967. He had immediate success with the Rabbitohs winning the premiership in his inaugural year. He resigned as coach during the 1975 season.

He was commemorated as one of Australia's most successful coaches.

In 1985 he was made a Member of the Order of Australia and in that year he was named as one of the initial four post-war 'immortals' along with Fulton, Raper and Gasnier



Clive Churchill, Bob Fulton, Johnny Raper and Reg Gasnier as 'immortals'.



Mrs Clive Churchill sitting amongst her husband's memorabilia.

Clive Churchill earned the following awards:

- The Clive Churchill Medal is presented annually to the player judged the best in the Grand Final each year. The medal is presented by Mrs Joyce Churchill his widow.
- He was inducted into the Australian Rugby League Hall of Fame in 2002.
- He was named in the South Sydney team of the century.
- In 2007 he was selected by a team of experts at full-back in an Australian 'Team of the 50's'.
- In 2008 he was named in the list of Australia's 100 greatest players.
- He went on to be named full back in the Australian Rugby Leagues Team of the Century.

Clive Churchill passed away in August 1985.

QUOTES FROM FAMOUS PEOPLE

CICERO

The budget should be balanced, the treasury should be refilled and the public debt should be reduced, the arrogance of officialdom should be tempered and controlled, and the assistance to foreign lands should be curtailed lest Rome will become bankrupt. People must again learn to work instead of living on public assistance.

Cicero 55 BC.

Evidently we have learned bugger all in 2061 years. (Thank you Leo Solinas for this pearl of ancient history).

THOMAS JEFFERSON (about 1800 AD)

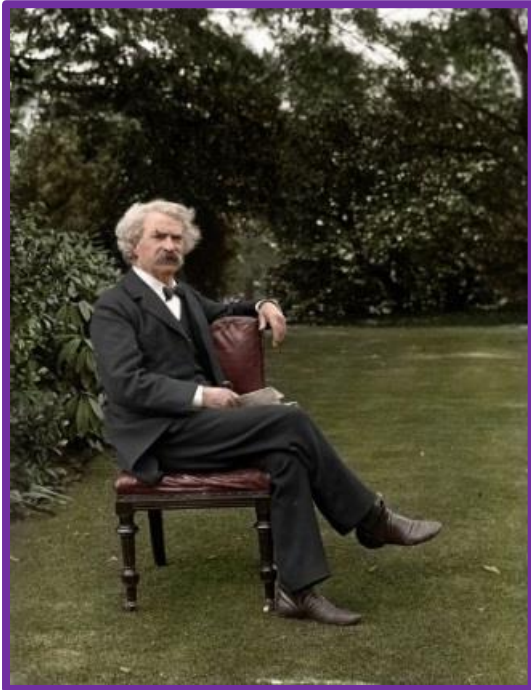
- *'When we get piled upon each other in large cities as in Europe, we shall become as corrupt as Europe'.*
- *'It is incumbent on every generation to pay its own debts as it goes, a principle which if acted on would save one-half the wars of the world'.*
- *'No free man shall ever be debarred the use of arms.'*

MARK TWAIN

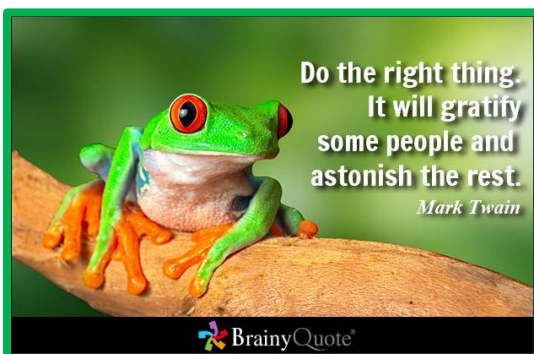
Mark Twain was born Samuel Langhorne Clements in Florida in 1835. He became a great American author writing among other things, 'The Adventures of Tom Sawyer' in 1876 and the 'Adventures of Huckleberry Finn' in 1885. In total he wrote 28 books. He died in 1910.

He was a great philosopher and wrote many philosophical notations such as:-

- *Patriotism is supporting your country all the time and your government when it deserves it.*
- *The secret of getting ahead is getting started.*



Mark Twain relaxing in his garden.



The waitress asked them what they would like to drink. The GM of Tooheys without hesitation replied 'I will have a Tooheys New'. The head of Carlton smiled and said 'make mine VB'. Then followed the Coopers manager who asked for 'a Coopers the King of beers'. The bloke from Cascade asked for 'a Cascade the cleanest beer in the world'. The Swan man ordered a Swan Lager.

The manager of XXXX thought for a moment and ordered a diet coke. The others looked at him as if he had a new head.

'Well he said if you blokes aren't going to have beer then neither will I'.



JOKERS CORNER

Medical opinion

I have kleptomania, but when it gets bad I take something for it.

Bloody Queenslanders

At a national conference of Australian brewers the manager of Cascade Breweries (Tasmania), Tooheys Brewery (New South Wales), XXXX (Queensland), CUB (Victoria), Coopers (South Australia) and Swan (Western Australia) found themselves sitting at the same table for lunch.



Kind Regards

*Dennis M Stevenson
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"The Running Scotsman"