

THE TORCHBEARER

NEWSLETTER 58

"56ers Torchbearers Club Inc"

PO Box 2148, CAIRNS Q 4870

Committee:

Patron
President
Vice President
Secretary/Treasurer
Email

Margaret Cochrane
Jim Vallely
Dennis Stevenson
Bill Cummings

Tel 07 40532150
Tel 07 40653223
Tel 07 40312888
admin@56ers.org.au

President's Comments

Greetings once again Club Members and Partners. Happy New Year.

After quite a busy year in 2016 our radar tells us we could be looking at a quieter 12 months.

As the Athletic Club has kicked off its new season our club will be keeping a keen eye out for young athletes showing exceptional potential as our previous assisted athletes have continued to impress on the State and National level.

Cairns Athletic Club has been notified they have been successful with their bid to host the Australian All Schools Titles in 2018, quite a coup for the city as over 1,000 athletes will compete over a full week.

Sydney resident and 56 Torch Bearer, Ralph Schubert, has thrown his hat into the ring to once more compete in the North Queensland Masters Games in late May. Ralph is a regular competitor and never goes home without a swag of medals.

It never seems to amaze me how editor, Dennis, keeps backing up with his wide range of interesting comments of our past sporting celebrities. I take my hat off to him.

Good health to all.

Regards
Jim Vallely

President.



GREAT ATHLETES OF (early) 20TH CENTURY

JOHNNY WEISSMULLER

Weissmuller was born in 1904 at Freidorf in the Kingdom of Hungary now Romania and died in 1984 in Acapulco. His active years were from 1921 to 1930. The highlights of his swimming time were:-

Amateur Athletics Union 50m freestyle champion 1921, he was unbeaten in 10 years. An Olympic gold medals in the 100m and 400m freestyle in 1924 Olympics and also in the 4x200m relay. He also won gold in the 100m freestyle event in the 1928 Olympics at Amsterdam.



Weissmuller in July 1922 a month after breaking four world records in one swim meet.

After a turbulent and abused childhood, he joined the prestigious Illinois Athletics Club where his revolutionary high-bodied way of swimming quickly took him to prominence in the AAU Competition. By the age of 18 the muscular 6ft 3 inch freestyler was a national champion.

In 1930 with more than 50 national titles and 67 world championships to his credit he retired from competition becoming a celebrity representative for BVD Swimsuits. This arrangement led Weissmuller to Hollywood where an MGM screen test earned him the role as the Edgar Rice Burroughs's hero-Tarzan the ape-man. It was a part that he was born for; he as well as being handsome, could out swim crocodiles looked good in a loin cloth and could even swing on a vine. When he added his ear-piercing yodel, a new folk hero was born.



*Weissmuller with Jane-Maureen O' Sullivan
(me Tarzan you Jane)*

In all Weissmuller made 19 Tarzan movies his last in 1947. In the following decade the somewhat over aged and overweight ex-athlete played another wilderness hero Jungle Jim. The yodel was gone but he remained a cheerful and likable screen presence.

Money flowed through Weissmuller's hands, like water; there was five marriages, family squabbles and bad investments. But there was also grand-

children and a comfortable final marriage to Maria Brock Mandel Bauman in 1963.

He died in 1984 age 79.

No doubt us 56'ers recall attending Saturday matinees featuring Tarzan.

WILMA RUDOLPH

Wilma Rudolph born in Tennessee in 1940 was a most unlikely athlete. She was one of a family of 19. By age four she had contacted both pneumonia and scarlet fever. At age eight she could barely walk and used crutches until after her 11th birthday. Less than 10 years later she was an Olympic Champion the fastest woman in the world. She succeeded because of her dogged determination and family support-her mother drove her to clinic 50 miles from home to undergo therapy for her weak legs. In response to greater expectations she increased her work outs and her muscles responded. At 16 she stood 5 ft. 11ins and weighed 130 pounds. Her high school athletic talents alerted athletic officials and she enrolled at Tennessee University after high school graduation.

In 1960 she was selected in the American team as a track athlete for the Rome Games. She won three gold medals in the 100m, 200m and 4x400m relay.

French reporters described her as 'La Gazelle' because of her long elegant strides.



Rudolph displaying her three medals at the 1960 Rome Olympics.

After the Olympics Rudolph returned to the States and competed at the Milrose games and New York Athletic Club Games, the top track and field events in the country. She retired in 1963 and spent the next 20 years raising four children and worked in physical education and recreational pursuits around the country. In 1981 Wilma founded the Wilma Rudolph Foundation, an Indianapolis based organization that promotes amateur Athletics.



Wilma Rudolph winning a relay event and later in life.



Wilma Rudolph with John F Kennedy.

56'ERS CORNER.

THE PROSERPINE SECTION OF THE CAIRNS TO MELBOURNE RELAY. Ernie Rowe.

At last we have a story about the Cairns to Melbourne Torch Relay. And it is a beauty. Thank you Ernie.

Ernie Rowe contributed this wonderful story. Ernie ran his mile 8 miles south of Proserpine.

'In early December I received a phone call inviting my wife and me to attend a 60th anniversary function at the Whitsunday Shire Council chambers in Proserpine on the 19th December for the Proserpine runners in the 1956 Torch Relay. It was short notice but this was the result of Mrs Gloria Demartini of Proserpine noticing that the Rockhampton Torch Runners had held their 60TH Anniversary celebrations and deciding that Proserpine should do something similar. As there had been 37 runners involved and nobody knew where to find all of them. Gloria set about making phone calls and eventually was able to track down all but one of the surviving runners. Fourteen of those chaps were able to attend the function as was the last runner from the Bowen Shire who handed the torch to the Proserpine contingent.

It was a memorable occasion as friendships were rekindled, many stories were told and all still have clear memories of their run.



A photo of the torch bearers who ran the 1956 torch relay through the Proserpine section of the relay together with 'Greek' Olympia Torch lighters. Must have been a wonderful reception for the Torch.



The Proserpine contingent at their 60th anniversary celebrations in December 2016. Two torch bearers did not attend the photo session as they had other appointments. Not sure where Ernie is positioned.

Our heartfelt thanks go to Gloria for the mammoth effort involved in bringing this celebration to fruition. The Whitsunday Shire Council also played a big part in the process by supplying the venue, staff, certificates and celebratory cake for the occasion. The mayor was fulsome in his praise for the group and his kind words were sincerely appreciated.'

The mayor's comments are set down for Newsletter 59.

Ernie Row.

NORMAN ALFRED MAY

Composed and submitted by Ron Royes
(20 miles north of Ingham).

Norman May was born on St. Valentine's Day, 14th February 1928. In his youth he was a champion swimmer and lifesaver representing his home state of New South Wales in several national surf championships. It was his knowledge of surf lifesaving that led to his joining the Australian Broadcasting Commission (now Corporation) as a commentator.

What was remarkable about May was the fact that he had only one eye yet he was able to broadcast over many years with such disability? A boyhood accident with a bow and arrow resulted in the loss of his right eye. May often reflected- the public can't call me **a one eyed commentator, because I am one.**

May joined the ABC in April 1958 as a Specialist Trainee. He was 30 years old and was paid the salary of a 19 year old. On his admission he was out of work at the time, hence he accepted the position.

His entry into broadcasting came at a time when television was in its infancy in Australia. It was introduced in 1956 at the Olympic Games in Melbourne. It was a learning curve for May. He did not receive any formal training. He recalled he was a trainee for three years when a vacancy occurred for a Sporting Assistant. Because the Sporting Assistant was required to perform both radio and television work they were referred to as Integrated Staff.



Norman May as a young commentator.

When he started at the ABC it was mainly a radio organization. He became a television presenter. According to him many radio people at the time did not have the confidence of **on camera appearances**. An ABC management direction ensured that **O.B'S (Outside Broadcasts)** were done every weekend. He claimed that he would have broadcast nearly forty different sports on television as a result.

In the late 1950's May joined renowned cricket broadcaster **Alan Mc Gilvray** at Mossman Oval, North Sydney for an OB. It was an overcast day, suggesting rain was imminent.

Mc Gilvray said to May. **You used to be a beach inspector. Do you think it will rain?** May replied **'It's a north easterly breeze, the clouds are high, and so I don't think it will rain.** Half an hour later the rain came so heavily, the game was called off. May told Mc Gilvray that he would never forecast the rain again, or the result of a cricket match.

In subsequent years he was the voice of many cricket television matches and rugby union test

matches. He was credited with the telecast of the first live rugby union match in Australia between two Sydney teams Gordon and Manly (a reserve grade fixture). He was in the chair for the first colour broadcast of a rugby league grand final between St. George and Balmain.

A Norman May broadcast was infectious. He had no peer in the enthusiasm stakes. He was the first to bring swimming into lounge rooms and introduce some of Australia's greatest swimmers from **Dawn Fraser** and **Murray Rose** in the 1960's to **Shane Gould** in Munich; **Tracy Wickham** in Edmonton, Canada and the latter day stars such as **Susie O'Neill**, **Ian Thorpe** and **Grant Hackett**.

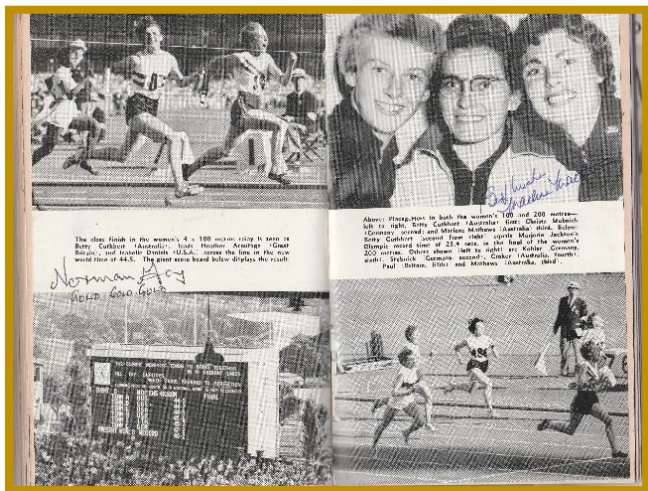
May was responsible for the most memorable stretch of sports commentary in Australian Olympic Games and Commonwealth Games history. His broadcast of the 4x100 m men's medley swim team's win in the finals at Moscow Olympic Games in 1980 earned May the **non du plume of Gold, Gold, Gold**. In subsequent times he stated he did not say **Gold, Gold, Gold**. In an interview with renowned broadcaster George Negus the archival audio was played which stated, **'ten metres out, Brooks in front. It could be Australia's gold.**

Five metres, four, three, two, one. Gold, Gold to Australia! Gold.



Norman May broadcasting his famous 'Gold, Gold, Gold call at the Moscow Olympic Games.

The editor proudly can display Norman Mays autograph in book Olympic Saga written by Keith Donald and Don Selth. May visited Cairns to assist in an Olympic Games fund raising function in circa 1999. Herb Elliott and Marleen Mathews were also present and Marleen also displays her autograph.



Norman Mays ' gold, gold, gold! Autograph

Marlene Matthews Autograph

TO BE CONTINUED IN NEWS LETTER 59

HISTORICAL IMAGES



British nurses alighting from a landing craft on the Normandy Beaches 1944.



President Lincoln posing with Union spy Alan Pinkerton (left) and General John Mc Clelland a democrat and personal friend of Lincoln. Pinkerton saved Lincoln from an assassination attempt.



The crash of the Hindenburg craft 1937.



Testing bullet proof vests 1923. A mite risky.



Girls delivering ice in 1918. Remember ice slabs?

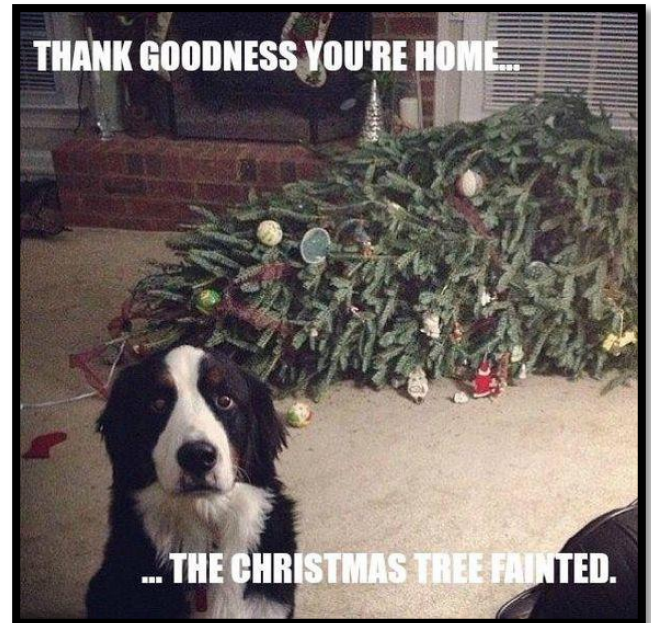
JOKERS CORNER

The Scottish Wedding

At the Scottish wedding reception the DJ called, "Would all married men please stand next to the one person who has made your life worth living!" The bar tender was almost crushed to death.

Message from a wife to a mother-in-law

Don't teach me how to handle my children. I am living with one of yours and he needs a lot of improvement.



PHILOSOPHICAL WORDS

From a German Professor of weather analysis- H Flassbeck.

'You can wish for a lot and always hope for a good outcome. But as important as wishing and hopes are, they are not the solution.'

Weather sceptic.

The New Year lies before you like a spotless tract of snow. Be careful how you tread on it for every tread will show.



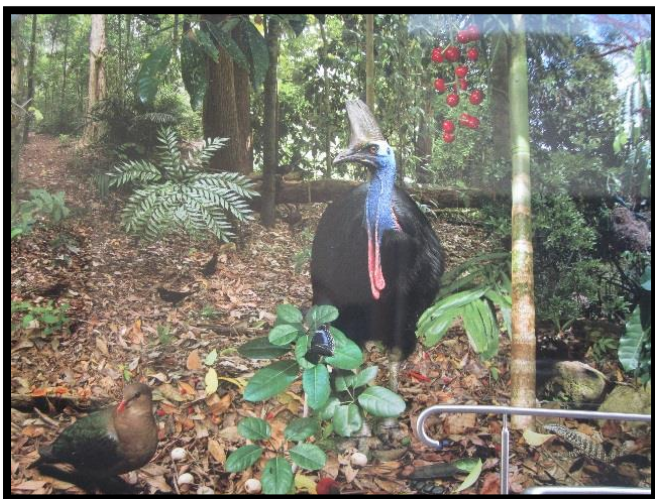
Kind Regards

Dennis M Stevenson
menafalls1@bigpond.com

"The Running Scotsman"

SCENERY AROUND INNISFAIL

If any readers are travelling through Innisfail you will be rewarded if you visit the Cassowary Coast Regional Council Library where you will see a beautiful mural of tropical flora and fauna on the right hand wall leading to the reception area. A small part of the mural is pictured below.



A small part of the mural at the library in Innisfail, featuring a cassowary and a green pidgeon plus local flora. The whole mural is magnificent.

Wishing all members and readers a most successful 2017.
