

THE TORCHBEARER

NEWSLETTER 71

"56ers Torchbearers Club Inc"

PO Box 2148, CAIRNS Q 4870

Committee:

Patron	Margaret Cochrane	
President	Jim Vallely	Tel 07 40532150
Vice President	Dennis Stevenson	Tel 07 40653223
Secretary/Treasurer	Bill Cummings	Tel 07 40312888
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President's Comments

Greetings fellow Torch-bearers and partners!

It has been quite some time since our last newsletter, but I can assure you that our editor and Vice-President is doing his best to gather information on a "very lean" news market.

Our AGM was pleasingly well attended with executive positions remaining unchanged and a number of interesting suggestions floated.

One in particular that created a deal of discussion, was to approach the line of command to reinstate the 1956 torch relay system, where runners would have to earn their spot by trialling over a designated distance in a suitable time.

As our newsletter goes to press, the next Nth Qld Games are progressing as scheduled. Our \$2000 incentive to the men's and women's 1500 metres events will be up for grabs.

I sign off hoping all our members are keeping the dreaded virus at bay.

Kind regards

Jim Vallely
President



NORTH QUEENSLAND GAMES

29th April - 2nd May 2022, Townsville

Members of the 56ers Olympic Torchbearers Club are invited to be present at the official opening of the 2022 North Queensland Games at Jezzine Barracks Park, Townsville, 6PM Friday 29th April 2022 (see following invitation).

The NQ Games Opening Ceremony is expected to go off with a bang! Athletes will march down the Strand from Strand Park to Jezzine Barracks being led by the exciting sounds of the Townsville Drumming Circle. Your invitation gets you access to a special VIP area at the event with drinks on arrival. The official opening ceremony will culminate in the lighting of the cauldron and exciting fireworks. Stay on and be entertained by the Trent Bell Duo and enjoy nibbles by Magnums Catering.

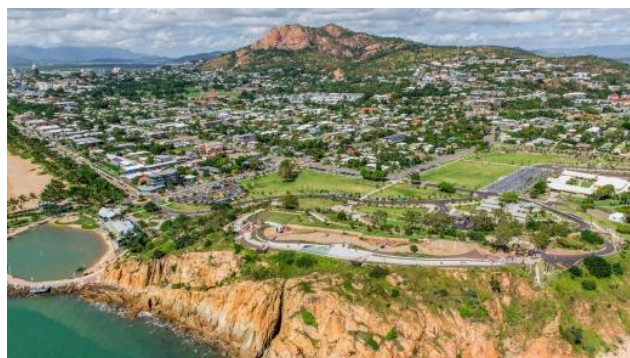


Photo of Jezzine Barracks Park location, Townsville.

If you are proposing to attend, please advise Club Hon Secretary on 07 40312888 or 0418 871 011 before the 22nd April, so we can advise the organisers of likely attendance.

1500 Metre Race Prizes

As per previous games, the 56ers Torchbearers Club is providing \$2,000 in prizes for the Men's and Women's 1500 metre event at the NQ Games. 56ers are invited to be especially present for the event and the prizes presentation.



TSV Sports Precinct, 14 Warburton St, North Ward.

The 1500m will be run at the Townsville Sports Precinct, Ward on Saturday 30th April at approx. 3PM. Official presentation of the prize money will take place centre stage at the NQ Games Community Concert, Saturday 30th April at approx. 6PM at Jezzine Barracks Park, 11-13 Isley Street, North Ward.

56ers NQ GAMES INVITATION

NQ GAMES VIP CEREMONY INVITATION

Dear VIP Guest,

The North Queensland Sports Foundation is pleased to officially invite you to the 2022 NQ Games Opening Ceremony and NQ Games Closing Ceremony.

NQ GAMES OPENING CEREMONY: Friday 29th Apr 2022, 6:00 pm to 10:00 pm, Jezzine Barracks Park, 11-13 Isley St, North Ward.

The NQ Games Ceremony is expected to go off with a bang! Athletes will march down the Strand from Strand Park to Jezzine Barracks being led by the exciting sounds of the Townsville Drumming Circle.

Your invitation gets you access to a special VIP area at the event with drinks on arrival.

The official opening ceremony will culminate in the lighting of the cauldron and exciting fireworks. Stay on and be entertained by the Trent Bell Duo and enjoy nibbles by Magnums Catering.

NQ GAMES CLOSING CEREMONY: Monday 2nd May 2022, 4:00 pm to 6:00 pm, Picnic Bay Surf Lifesaving Club, the Stand.

After all the fun of the NQ Games the closing ceremony will be great time to reflect on a brilliant event for our city.

The ceremony will be held at the Picnic Bay Surf Lifesaving Club on The Strand and include drinks on arrival and grazing table.

We will celebrate the closing of yet another successful biennial NQ Games and handing of the flag to Cairns Regional Council for the 2024 NQ Games.

We look forward to seeing you there.

MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE

The annual meeting held on 6th November 2021 resulted in the following being elected to the management committee.

President - Jim Vallely

Vice President - Dennis Stevenson

Hon Secretary/Treasurer - Bill Cummings

Descendent member, Andrew Cummings, agreed to assist Dennis Stevenson as editor of the Torchbearer.



Photo of 2021 Annual Meeting. L to R - Ted Huckett, Jim Vallely, Bill Cummings, Andrew Cummings, Nev Crossley, Don Lowe, Dennis Stevenson, photo courtesy of Margaret Cochrane (Patron).

DESCENDENT MEMBERS

Following an application received from Torchbearer Ron Entsch for descendent membership, the Club welcomes descendent member Jenny Entsch.

TORCH RELAY FOR 2032 OLYMPICS

At its annual meeting in November, it was resolved to write to the Premier of Queensland suggesting that the Torch Relay for the 2032 Olympics be staged as a real athletic event like that of the 1956 Games.

Please find accompanying the 71st 1956 Torchbearer Newsletter, the text of the letter from President, Jim Vallely, to the Premier. ([Link online](#))

56er's Corner

LETTER FROM TORCHBEARER

DOUGLAS EALES

It was a wonderful surprise to meet some of the torchbearers at the Melbourne MCG in 2006 for the Olympics' 50th Anniversary. As the last relay runner in Melbourne, arriving at the MCG, I have also been fortunate enough to visit the start of the relay at Olympia, thus seeing both the beginning and end of the torch's journey.

Since 2006, I have enjoyed receiving the Torchbearers newsletter, and have found the

news and updates interesting and the jokes have brought me humour and lightened up the day. I'd like to take this opportunity to acknowledge the Club's ongoing support of junior and up and coming athletes in Australia. Again, I wish to mention my appreciation of the time and effort of all the committee members who have managed the Club over the years.

I am now in my 90s, and although I enjoy general good health, over the last few years, I have rapidly diminishing sight due to macular degeneration. With all of this in mind, I have made the decision to cancel my subscription. However, I hope you will accept this donation (\$200) to assist the Club in continuing the commendable job you do.

Kind regards

Douglas Eales, Cheltenham Victoria

MONTANNA MCAVOY

PROGRESS REPORT

Montanna McAvoy continues to progress in her academic and athletics career and is now studying at James Cook University Townsville and participating in a 50km run at Noosa which is called trail running and a 9km run which included Castle Hill.

Montanna, now 21, granddaughter of 56 Torchbearer, Joe McAvoy, has excelled in distance events over a number of years with early support being given by the Club in her early athletics development.

WE SHOULD NEVER FORGET THEM

The Honourable John Landy

AC, CVO, MBE, FTSE, OLY

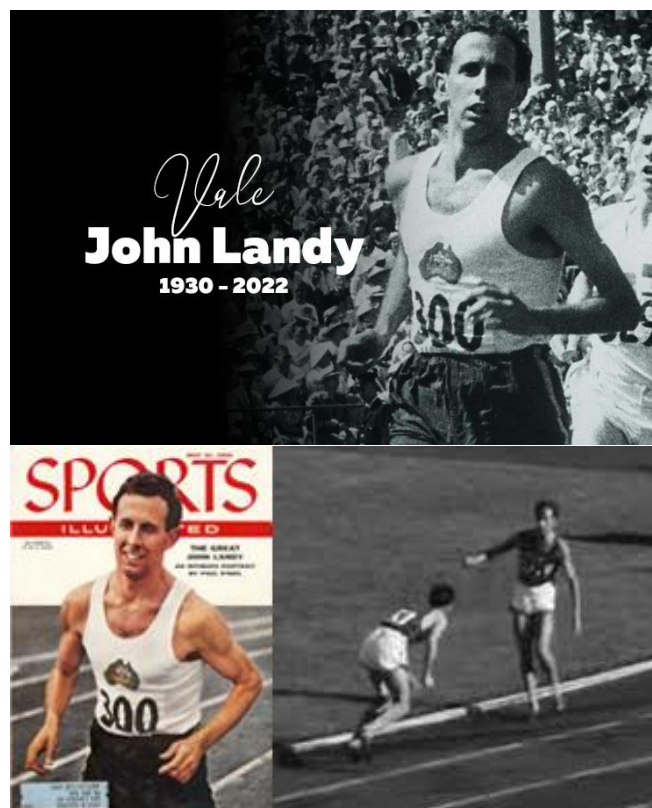
Our fallen runner John Landy, may we look back and remember him fondly.

John Landy, previous Governor of the state of Victoria and an Australian runner who duelled with Roger Bannister in the "Miracle Mile" to be the first person to run a four-minute mile, died Feb. 24 at his home in Castlemaine, Australia. He was 91 years old.

Please look back once again to our tribute to John Landy from the 67th edition (Feb, 2019) of The

Torchbearer. A wonderful story to recapture his life achievements.

https://56ers.org.au/pdf/67_The_Torchbearer_Feb_2019.pdf



Modern Olympics

The 1896 Olympics in Athens, Greece were the first games of the 'modern era'. French educator and historian Baron Pierre de Coubertin promoted the idea of restaging the ancient Greek Olympics in a contemporary setting.

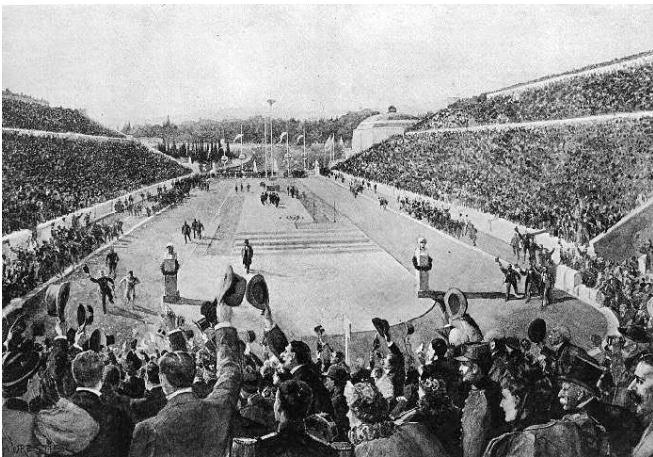


Baron Pierre de Coubertin, 1915

He had been impressed, when visiting England, by the British public schools' integration of physical education into their curriculum. He came to believe that playing sport could help build moral and social strength.

The committee decided the Olympics would only be open to amateur athletes. Sports at the first games included: athletics, cycling, fencing, gymnastics, shooting, swimming, tennis, weightlifting and wrestling.

De Coubertin was fascinated with the ancient Greek Olympic Games, and thought their ideals were worth cultivating in the modern world. He translated those principles into the IOC's official creed, 'The important thing is not the triumph, but the fight; the essential thing is not to have won, but to have fought well.'



Marathon winner Spyridon Louis entering the stadium at the 1896 Olympics.

Edwin Flack

Edwin Flack was born on 5 November 1873 in London. Five years later, his family moved to Melbourne where Flack attended Melbourne Church of England Grammar School.

He was a talented runner and competed in 'inter club' events around Victoria. After leaving school in 1892, Flack joined his father's accountancy firm Davey, Flack and Co.

As an athlete, Flack won the Australasian Championship over a mile in 1893. That same year he founded the Melbourne Hare and Hounds running club and, in December 1894, he won the Victorian mile and half-mile titles.

In 1895, encouraged by his father, Flack went to England to gain experience with chartered

accountants Price, Waterhouse and Co. While there he joined a number of running clubs and decided to compete in the Athens Olympics.



Edwin Flack Portrait.

First Australian Olympian

The London Athletic Club nominated Flack to compete in those first Olympics. He applied for time off from his accountancy job and received permission not long before the games were to commence. Later the same day he booked his passage from England to Greece.

It took six days by train and ship to reach Athens. Flack suffered from sea-sickness and was quite weak when he reached Greece on 1 April, five days before the official start of the games.

Flack chose to run in the 800- and 1500-metre races but also submitted his name for the marathon event although previously the longest race he had competed in was the Victoria 10-mile cross-country championship (the marathon is 26 miles).



Athletes prepare for the 100 metre sprint, 1896 Olympics.

On 6 April he won his 800-metre heat in 2 minutes 10 seconds and so advanced to the final. The next day was the 1500-metre event with eight runners competing. The favourites were Flack, the Frenchman Albin Lermusiaux, and American Arthur Blake.

The race came down the homestretch with Flack and Blake battling for the lead. Flack took the American at the line winning by less than a second in 4 minutes 33.2 seconds. It was the first athletics race at the games not won by an American and Flack was feted as a hero.

"I made the pace all the way with the Yankee Blake waiting on me. As soon as I got into the final straight I went for all I was worth. He almost caught me in the first 30 yards, and we raced together for about the same distance, when to my relief, I felt that he was falling back and that I had him beaten. I finished up strong and fresh but he was quite done up."

The finals of the 800-metre race were held two days later. Lermusiaux had withdrawn to concentrate on the prestigious marathon to be run the following day and Flack, now favourite, won easily in 2 minutes 11.9 seconds.

On 10 April Flack competed in the marathon. The race started at 2.00 pm, the hottest time of the day. There were 25 competitors; all but four of them Greek. The foreigners were Flack, Lermusiaux, Blake and the Hungarian Kellner.

Lermusiaux led early with Flack coming second after six miles. Flack passed the Frenchman after 20 miles and soon after Lermusiaux dropped out. But then Flack hit the runner's 'wall' and lost his energy. The eventual winner, Spyridon Louis passed him at 22 miles.

Flack continued on, swaying from side to side across the road, but eventually collapsed after 24 miles. He was taken by carriage to the finish line at the Panathenaic Stadium.

Lion of Athens

Flack was an incredibly popular champion. In a letter to his family he said, 'They tell me I have become the "Lion of Athens". I could not go down

the street without having a small crowd of people following me on all sides.'

During the games, Flack also competed in tennis and, pairing with his English friend and roommate George Robertson, won the bronze medal in the doubles.

After the Athens games, Flack returned to London and continued his accountancy training.

In 1899 he returned to Australia and joined the family accounting firm. He became a successful businessman and a member of the Australian Olympic Committee.

A sculpture of Edwin Flack was erected in 1996 by the citizens of Berwick to mark the centenary of Flack's achievements in the 1896 Athens Olympic Games.



The 'Lion of Athens' Edwin Flack

He has previously been honoured with the release of a \$10 coin and a postage stamp and a street running alongside Olympic Stadium in Sydney is named after him.

Edwin Flack's success

Flack is considered not only Australia's first Olympian but our first Olympic champion, even though Australia did not come into existence officially until 1901. At the games, Flack competed for Great Britain, but he ran in his old Melbourne Grammar School shorts and singlet.

Jokes Corner

I just saw a grandpa help a youngster who was staring into his phone, to cross the street.

I finally decided to sell my vacuum cleaner, it was just gathering dust.

A woman told her friend, "I feel like my body has gotten totally out of shape, so I got my doctor's permission to join a fitness club and start exercising." "So, I decided to take an aerobics class for seniors." "I bent, twisted, gyrated, jumped up and down, pirouetted, swerved, and buckled to almost collapse." "But by the time I got my leotards on, the class was already over."

Five surgeons were talking about the best patients

First surgeon says, "Accountants are the best to operate on because when you open them up, everything on the inside is numbered."

Second surgeon says, "Nah - librarians are the best. Everything inside them is in alphabetical order."

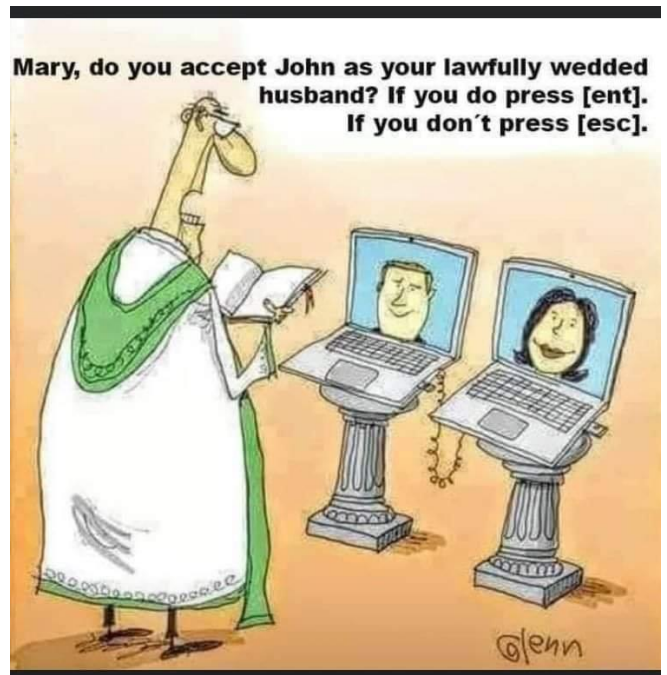
Third surgeon responds, "Try electricians, man! Everything inside them is colour coded!"

Fourth surgeon intercedes, "I prefer lawyers. They're heartless, spineless, gutless, and their heads and butts are interchangeable."

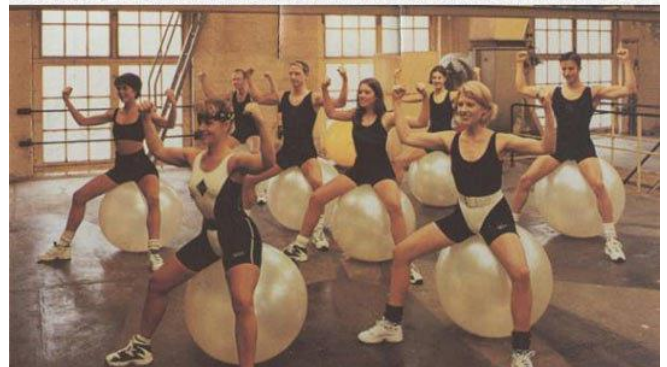
To which the fifth surgeon, who has been quietly listening to the conversation, says, "I like engineers. They always understand when you have a few parts left over at the end."

Three retirees, each with a hearing loss, were playing golf one fine March day.

One remarked to the other, 'Windy, isn't it? 'No,' the second man replied, 'it's Thursday.' The third man chimed in, 'So am I. Let's have a beer.'



This is what happens when you swallow gum...



Kind Regards

Dennis M Stevenson
menafalls1@bigpond.com

"The Running Scotsman"

Coauthor: Andrew Cummings