



RUNNING COMMENTARY



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Articles

Do you have something interesting which could be included in our magazine?

If you feel that it is interesting we would love to share it with other members.
Articles for the next issue should be sent in by the middle of December.

A big thank you to those members who have contributed to this issue.

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From the Editor:

This months edition includes a review of a book recently published on John Hellemans life.

John has been a member of our club for a very long time and was a key member of our road relay team during the heyday of the New Brighton Club, when we won the Senior Men's title several times.



There is a chapter in the book on this era in the clubs history. John was an awesome uphill specialist and was also a champion triathlete and very successful triathlon coach.

It is sad to hear that Bill Hobbs has passed away. I have many memories of his very distinctive running style. There is a tribute to him in this edition.

Tony Prisk



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To see some of my work, check out the PDF versions of
Cant-A-Long, the Canterbury Master's magazine,
on the Canterbury Masters website.

From Margaret:

“Running is nothing more than a series of arguments between the part of your brain that wants to stop and the part that wants to keep going.”

That seems an appropriate quotation for this time of year. We stop our winter running and many of us switch over to summer running on road, trail and track and say ‘hello there again’ to our fellow club members who jump and throw things.

This year we have cause for celebration. Labour weekend saw the opening of the new facility at Nga Puna Wai. NBOL members were out in force, particularly in the morning at the Children’s meeting. I look forward to new PBs and a renewed enthusiasm for Athletics. I am sure many of us will appreciate not having to make the journey to Timaru as often, given the current cost of petrol.

This is also the time to look back at the Winter season and celebrate it as we did at our prizegiving on October 14th.

I have some terrific memories of the Winter season. Tony McManus and I ran the winter programme for Juniors and we had 20 youngsters signing up- an advance from the 6 of the previous season. Those of you who follow the facebook page will know how well they all did. This would not have been possible without the support of the parents.

As I said at prizegiving, the joy of the juniors included:

- * My failure to convince them to warm up at a “talking pace”.
- * Their enthusiasm for anything involving sprinting
- * Their polite amusement at my inability to balance for very long on one leg
- * Their insane and scary enthusiasm for Tony’s game of Tennis/Hockey

A look back at the season for the grown up runners shows success at both local and national level and this has been reported on in earlier editions of Running Commentary. We have many members who are in the top 3 of their age groups and we have many members who are still competing against themselves and the runners around them they try to stay ahead of, hopefully winning the argument referenced in the opening quote.

Two of my favourite memories in the last 6 weeks have been the Greta Valley Relay and the Takahe to Akaroa Relay. The Greta Valley Relay deserves a bigger entry list. It is a mere hour away from Christchurch and provides the opportunity to run over a scenic North Canterbury course on country roads in Spring. This year it was once again a glorious day. We had 3 teams entered and we all had fun. It was Paul Coughlan’s birthday and we sang to him as he crossed the finish line. It is a relay all about the joy of running and the support of a team. No one really knows who won what until the prizegiving because it is a

handicap relay, apart from the race within a race against the teams you started with.

Of course we also like it when we are on the podium. This year's Takahe to Akaroa Relay on Oct 6th was also the National Road Relay. We had 5 teams entered. It was one of our most successful competitions for some time. (I await confirmation/correction about this assertion from some of our statistically minded fellow members.)

In this year's Takahe to Akaroa Relay we were the top performing local club and 5th overall nationally.

Our MW and MM teams were both 2nd overall. Our SM team was 3rd in the Open C grade competition. Our O60 team was 5th out of 13 overall and first local team. Our social team was 18th in a huge field. The entry list this year was the largest for over 10 years and I am still wearing my medal to bed.

Many people have contributed to the success of this 2018 season. Without the individual effort of members to do one of the many essential tasks, we would not be able to run on a Saturday. I acknowledged them at our prize giving.

Many of us who have been doing these things are ready to pass on the baton, as it were. As a club we need younger people to step in and take over. I'll get back to you about that.

Margaret

A tribute to Bill Hobbs:

A great collection of more mature runners gathered at the All Saints Anglican Church on Monday 15th October to farewell a longtime fellow runner. Here is part of our club tribute.

Bill arrived from England in 1957 after a successful running career with Thames Valley Harriers. He chose the Olympic Club to join because of mentions in the English Road Runners Magazine, Olympic being one of the dominant Canterbury Clubs.

Bill soon made his presence felt and his determination made him both a formidable opponent and a valuable relay ally. In that first year he was a member of the winning T/A Relay B grade team and the year following when he was awarded the Baton given to the member of the team who had had the most meritorious run on the day.

Over the next 20 plus years he distinguished himself in road, relay and XC running. In going through the Club history I counted at least 26 occasions on which Bill was in the top 3 from National and Canterbury level completion. We'd

be here all day if I recounted all the mentions of Bill and his achievements in our Club history.

Bill's best Marathon time was 2:42. As a Masters athlete he won NZ Track titles at 5,000 and 10,000 metres, placed 2nd and 3rd in the NZ XC Championships.

To mark the 50th Anniversary of his arrival in NZ, Bill planned a special Club run in 2007. We ran a 3 lap course around part of the Show Grounds near where Nga Puna Wai is now and had a lavish afternoon tea afterwards. And in 2008, Bill was the anchor man in the Over 60s team in the Hagley Relay becoming the first 80 year old member of a Relay team to run for us.

Bill also served as an administrator for the Olympic Club and as you have heard was instrumental in the creation of other Running organizations in Christchurch. In recognition of his all round participation and service to the club, he was made a Life member of the OHC in 1991.

In the last 20 years Bill has been as enthusiastic and regular a supporter of our club as he was a runner. He has turned frequently up on his motorbike and more latterly his car to Club and interclub events right up to and including this year. He kept up with current performances and could be relied on to comment on recent results or enquire about the progress of a running injury.

To quote Ron Stevens:

"Always encouraging others, Bill has had considerable influence on many members by his thoughtful comments and training guidance."

Neville Reid remembers one of Bill's sayings, "It's alright to walk" when getting back into training.

We will miss Bill, his enthusiasm, his support and his running knowledge. We salute his memory.



Bill Hobbs

Merit Award:

Receiving a merit award is a way for us to acknowledge and honour members of the athletic community for their service to the sport. There are dozens of people out there who for years have been involved and worthy of this.

How do you decide who to honour without feeling like you have left someone out?

It is not easy.

Our recipient of this award started his running passion in Dunedin, where he ran for the Caversham Club. It was romance that brought him to Canterbury.

He has been involved in athletics since the mid 1960's, first as an athlete, then later as a coach, official, administrator and now a volunteer.

He:

- Was the 1969 Marathon Champion in 2:25
- Ran in excess of 10 sub 2:30 marathons
- Was the 1990 Masters Champion at the Christchurch International Marathon
- Is the current Lap 4 record holder of the Takahe to Akaroa Relay and beat the legendary Rod Dixon on that same lap in 1971.

As an administrator he was:

Canterbury Cross Country and Road selector for 20 years with Brent Rollo and Anne Kennedy. Canterbury Team Manager at numerous National Championships. He was a selector, Club Secretary and Club Captain at various times for the Olympic Club.

While this person was a well-respected athlete, he is probably better known as a coach. In terms of coaching he obtained great satisfaction from helping ordinary people achieve great things through hard structured work and commitment.

At times he would coach more than 20 athletes at a time, from top flight athletes to regular club runners. This was a time when there was no internet or email, athletes would get face to face time, and personalised individual phone calls, sometimes calling over ten athletes a night.

The list of athletes he has coached is extensive:

- Arthur Gempton - National 5000m Champion in 70s
- Phillip Watson – 28:37 10k and ChCh Commonwealth Games finalist
- John Sheddan -Team member of the NZ Cross Country Team at the 1975 World Cross Country Championships – subsequently earned induction into the NZ Sports Hall of Fame.
- Warren Sheddan – former NZ 1500m junior record holder
- Tony McManus – he has coached for the last 25 years. Tony is a World record holder for Masters mile, with multi National and World titles
- Anne Sisson – a Christchurch Marathon winner as a Master, also running 2hr47.55 as a 42 year old.

He is a life member of the Olympic Club and received the BNZ Services to the Community Award. He recently competed in his 53rd Hagley Relay and his photo on our Facebook page received a lot of comments. He is in his 61st year of competition and still coaching and inspiring.

Some of you younger budding athletes may be interested in his favourite sayings:

Never ever give up, hard work is not easy, it's better to get to the start underdone, than over cooked and finally Recovery is important – sometimes you're better off for what you don't do.

Your peers thank you for what you have done for our sport – your time, effort, expertise, humbleness and selflessness has been incredible.

This year's recipient of a Merit Award is **Neville Reid**.



A Measure of Success—1950s New Brighton The Struggle for Survival

This was a mixed decade with the club struggling for survival with low membership, but overcoming it by innovative measures put in place by the committee, especially with schools. The committee realised the importance of looking after the younger members, which paid huge dividends in future years. On the positive side the Rawhiti Memorial Pavilion was completed and Peter Price won the club's first National title in the Senior ranks.

A very quiet year in the 1950 Canterbury Championships with Miss N. Thomas the only place getter with a 3rd equal in the 220 yds.

1949 – 1950 Canterbury Championships	
Women	N. Thomas 220yds 3=

Another quiet year in 1951 with Jack King and G. Secker being the only place getters at the Championships.

1950 – 1951 Canterbury Championships	
Men – Senior	J. King Discus 3 rd
- Junior	G. Secker Javelin 2 nd

The 1952 Championship was a slight improvement with G. Secker placing in two events.

1951 – 1952 Canterbury Championships	
Men – Senior	J. King Discus 3 rd
Junior	G. Secker Pole Vault 2 nd Javelin 2 nd
	M. Richardson Pole Vault 3 rd

1953 was the year Peter Price began to shine with a win in the Senior long jump.

1952 – 1953 Canterbury Championships	
Men – Senior	P. Price Long Jump 1 st 6.40m/Triple Jump 2 nd
	M. Richardson Pole Vault 2 nd
	R. Ferguson 440yds 3 rd
Women –	N. Martlew Javelin 2 nd

In 1954 Peter Price was again the outstanding athlete, not only for the club but also in Canterbury. In November 1953 he long jumped 6-96m to become 8th equal on the New Zealand all-time list. That was only a prerequisite for what happened on the 30th January 1954 where he triple jumped 14-68m to move to third on the NZ all-time list. At the West Coast Championships, he was first in the long and triple jump and second in the 100 yds. In the Canterbury Championships Peter was the star easily winning the long and triple jump. He then moved to the 100yds final, and the question was asked could he make it a unique treble? The newspaper said Peter started very smartly and appeared to be winning easily when P. Fleming of University came through with a very fast burst, and had the winner Price fully extended at the finish. Peter travelled to the New Zealand Championships with great expectations, but was unfortunately injured in the long jump and had to withdraw from any other competition.

1953 – 1954 Canterbury Championships

Men – Senior	P. Price	100yds 1 st 10.7/Long Jump 1 st 6.58m
		Triple Jump 1 st 13.76m
Women	M. Richardson	Pole Vault 2 nd
	J. King	Discus 3 rd
	E. Maxwell	High Jump 2 nd / Long Jump 3 rd
	N. Martlew	Javelin 3 rd

In 1955 the Canterbury selectors rated Peter Price the most prominent field events athlete in the province, and he did not disappoint in the championships by retaining the long and triple jump crowns. Both M. Richardson and J. King moved up a place in their respective events. All three were picked for the NZ Championships in Auckland, with Peter Price taking the silver medal in the triple jump. This was only the second.

1954 – 1955 Canterbury Championships

Men – Senior	P. Price	Long Jump 1 st 6.62m /Triple Jump
		1 st 13.93m
	M. Richardson	Pole vault 1 st 2.74m
	J. King	Discus 2 nd 32.46m

1954 – 1955 NZ Championships

Men – Senior Peter Price Triple Jump 2nd

In 1956 Peter Price finally did it by claiming the club's first Senior national championship. In his home town he won the long jump with a magnificent leap of 6.71m and followed this up with second in the triple jump to R. Webb of Southland.

As was customary he completed the double at the Canterbury Championships. It was also the emergence of Doug Dixey who finished 3rd in the Boys U17 440yds, and went on to excel in the longer distances.

1955 – 1956 NZ Championships		
Men – Senior P. Price Long Jump 1st / Triple Jump 2nd.		
1955 – 1956 Canterbury Championships		
Men –	Senior	P. Price Long Jump 1 st 6.62m / Triple Jump 1 st 13.68m J. King Discus 2 nd 33.18m
	Junior	P. Doig Javelin 2 nd 42.50m
	U17	G. McKay Discus 1 st 29.24m D Dixey 440yds 3 rd
	Women - Senior	K. Stevens Javelin 3 rd
	U17	S. Wayman Long Jump 2 nd



New Zealand Champion Peter Price

In 1957 Peter Price appears to have disappeared after reaching the pinnacle of last year. The good news was Jack King for the second year moving up another notch to finally capture the discus title.

1956 – 1957 Canterbury Championships

Men – Senior	J. P. King	Discus 34.98m 1 st / Shotput 2 nd 11.09m
Junior	D. Dixey	2mls 2 nd
	T. Salt	Javelin 2 nd 36.88m
- U17 G	G McKay	Shotput 1 st 11.48m / Discus 3 rd 30.71m

In 1958 the star of the season was Doug Dixey in the Junior section with Canterbury records in the 880yds, 1 mile and 2 miles in amazing times of 1-57.5, 4-16.4, and 9-27.2. Sadly, after setting these records he changed clubs and in the champs won the one and two miles for ToCH, lowering his 2 mile record to 9-19.2. Doug went on to win national Junior track titles over one and two miles within the space of one hour. Doug is a school teacher and now lives near Invercargill.

1957 – 1958 Canterbury Championships

Men – Senior J P King Discus 3rd 33.60m

In 1959 the athlete of the season was Miss J. Whiting with a first in long jump and high jump at the Canterbury Championships. Along with I. Penrose who, I believe, was a Canterbury Rugby Captain, they were our Canterbury reps at the Nationals.

1958 – 1959 Canterbury Championships

Women – U16 J. Whiting Long Jump 1st 4.64m
High Jump 1st 1.45m

A Gold at any Price - The Peter Price Story:

Peter Price was our first Senior national champion in 1956, the other highlight of the year being the birth of the writer. Tracking down the elusive Mr Price has been quite an exercise as he moves regularly, the last time one day after I managed to get hold of him. With the move completed, I spent an enjoyable afternoon at the Price's residence in Ashburton, catching up on the good old days and demolishing the lovely afternoon tea.

Peter Price was born in Christchurch on the 22nd January 1928, the same year that the club was incepted. His parents were William and Elizabeth Price. William Price worked as a solo butcher for CFM in Belfast and was later the head shepherd for Borthwicks. William was a keen cyclist and completed the Timaru to Christchurch cycle race three times before 1910, with a best time of 5hrs 58mm. This was in the days of shingle roads and a lack of bridges.

Peter was the baby of the family by five years with three brothers and a sister, Bill, Jack, Beth and Murray. Until aged seven, home was a freezing works cottage in Blakes Road. They then moved to another works house in Belfast Road where he remained until he was 22.

Schooling was at Belfast Primary and Papanui Technical. At primary school, promise was shown at the sprints and jumps, with wins on most occasions. He has no feasible explanation why he did not continue athletics at high school, but did comment that he did not really pursue scholastical achievements either. Sport was confined to cricket and captaining the Bantams rugby team.

At the outbreak of the Second World War Peter was age eleven, and thankfully the war ended a year before he was due to be conscripted. In Christchurch he did serve in the EPS which was a type of home guard.

After leaving school he was employed by Dale's Pharmacy as a message boy. Due to insufficient qualifications he left after 12 months, and in 1946 spent a year at the railways. Then like any good born and bred Belfast lad, he became a maintenance storeman at the freezing works, where he remained until his retirement at 55. In 1950 he moved with his parents to Bowhill Rd, hence the New Brighton connection.

In 1951 at age 23, he decided to go on a working holiday to Australia. He spent 7.5hrs on a flying boat to get to Australia. He travelled extensively through New South Wales, Victoria, Tasmania and South Australia before heading up to Brisbane. He then jumped on the ship, 'Monawai', for the long haul back to Christchurch.

Obviously employers were more understanding in those days, and only a few months after his return he was chosen to travel to Sydney as the freezing works

representative in the Australian carnival for peace and friendship. This was a gathering of the youth of the world to compete in friendly sport. So once again he boarded the flying boat for the 7.5hr flight to Sydney to compete in cricket and athletics. Spurred on by the carnival to second place in the 100yds and triple jump he returned to Christchurch with a large trophy and a fancy silver ashtray prize.



Peter and the spoils of the Friendship Games in Sydney 1952

Not long after his return he attended the Addington Workshops Dance and met his future wife, Dawn. About the same time, he was lazing around reading the athletic results from Rugby Park in the newspaper and turned to his mother and said, "I can beat them." His mother's reply was "Only one way to prove it son; actions speak louder than words, you had better get straight down to the New Brighton Athletic Club." He went down to the track where Jack King was running around. Jack wondered what the intentions were of this suspicious looking character and said, "Can I help you." "Yes" came the reply "I've come down to do a few laps." Jack who was noted as a sucker for poor souls invited him to join them and asked, "What do you exactly do." "I do everything" was the reply. To this day Peter still remembers the look on Jack's face as if to say we've got another one here!

You have to remember that Peter was a late starter at 24, and after only two meetings at the club, Jack felt he was ready to compete at Rugby Park, where he duly won at his first outing. Coaches such as Valdi Briedis and Sam Lewis took an interest, but it was Daphne Jamieson who became his mentor.

His first trip away was to compete against Wellington at the Basin Reserve. No accommodation was needed as in those days, you slept on the Rangitira the overnight ferry between Lyttelton and Wellington, and returned the same way the following night after the meeting. Each athlete had a day billet, and for breakfast the kind old lady presented him with a large bowl of porridge. Not wanting to upset the woman but absolutely hating porridge he bolted it down as quickly as possible to get it over with. The lady most impressed said "You athletes really do love your porridge" and presented him with another bowl. Again he valiantly forced it down. Not feeling particularly well from his time doing porridge, he was unplaced in the jumps. He later recovered to finish second in the 100yds in what he describes as a howling gale.

Against Australian Universities at Lancaster Park he won the long and triple jump, and then in his first taste of the hospitality of the West Coast Champs won the 100yds, long jump and triple jump in 14-24 a West Coast record. Travel was an experience with the cars packed to the max with luggage and club members, Peter in his trusty Model A and Roger Russell in his Essex. In those days they usually took the Lewis Pass route as it was easier, but it still involved shingle roads and many fords. On one trip returning on the Arthur's Pass route the vehicles could not handle the gradient, so the athletes had to push them to the top. The coasters welcomed them with open arms, with the meeting always finishing with a few beers in the pub.

In the Canterbury Champs victory was secured in the long jump but in the triple jump he was surprisingly beaten into second place. His first National Championships followed in Dunedin where he qualified for the triple jump final but was unplaced. Travel to this meeting was by train, with two night's accommodation in a hotel.

The relationship with Dawn had blossomed and on the 19th December 1953 they married. They went on to have three children Malcolm, Vivien and Karen-Anne. Married life agreed with him with the first year being spent at Spencerville which gave him valuable training time on the sand dunes. After twelve months they moved to an old house in Belfast where they remained for the next 18 years.

Training does not appear to be one of Peter's strong points. Father Ryan of St Bedes, who often officiated on the long jump, would often ask him if he was off to his normal liquid lunch, a reference to beer being an integral part of his training. Hockey was played in the winter to keep fit and would be topped up with a run around the domain with the boys twice a week. Daphne Jamieson would run gym sessions at Crichton Cobbers where he would often wrestle Joe Howard a NZ Champion, odd training indeed. Joe was a gentle giant and would let Peter throw him about, not a bad person to know in a crisis.

The 1953/54 season started well with a 6-96 jump in November 1953 which was 8th on the NZ all-time list. This was a prerequisite for what happened on the 30th January 1954 when a magnificent triple jump of 14-68 shot him to 3rd on the all-time list.

Unfortunately, at the West Coast Champs he literally jumped out of the pit injuring his heel. He still managed to win the long and triple jump and was second in the 100yds. This caused a growth spur on his heel and meant he only got by with placing a sponge in his shoe.

Surprisingly, he scraped through the Canterbury Champs winning a magnificent triple in the long and triple jump and 100yds. Obviously he was picked for the Nationals in Hamilton but with his heel deteriorating felt it was not worth going. He was put onto a doctor in Papanui who injected him with a painkiller just before the team left, and told him to visit the duty doctor in Hamilton if it wore off. He managed to make the 100yd final and finished 4th but his first jump nearly crippled him with the painkiller wearing off. Relief was sought from the duty doctor but he refused to inject, saying he was not prepared to risk crippling him. Sadly, a season that started with much promise ended in disaster.

Before the start of the 1954/55 season the heel was operated on and the growth removed. After a few weeks on crutches, jumping resumed again off a shortened run up. Recovery was swift with wins at the West Coast Champs in the 120yds hurdles, long and triple jump. In the 100yds he was embarrassingly disqualified for breaking twice. In the Canterbury Champs he retained his long and triple jump crown, and had high hopes of finally making it at a NZ Champs.

This year's Championships was to be held in faraway Auckland with the Canterbury Centre proposing that the team take the ferry to Wellington, and then the overnight train to Auckland competing on the same day. The Athletics rebelled at this, as obviously the overnight train would be detrimental to performance. Thankfully sanity prevailed and the team flew to Auckland in a DC3. To make up for the disaster of last year, Peter collected his first medal by finishing second in the triple jump.

By now 28 and the NZ Champs of 1956 to be held in his own city, hopes were high for a final swansong. After retaining his Canterbury titles in the long and triple jumps, he moved on to the NZ Champs at Lancaster Park, and on the

Friday stepped up for the long jump. In the highlight of his career he prevailed to win the title. The following day he was the top qualifier in the triple jump, in a distance that would have won the final. He led for most of the competition but was just pipped in the final round by R. Webb of Southland.

Peter then duly announced his retirement, which led Dave Norris who had just won the first of three Junior titles to pay him a compliment by saying "I'm pleased to hear that." Dave then proceeded to win the next 15 triple jump titles. He got talking to one or two of the boys who asked him where he was going, to which he replied; "I'm off to my mother-in-laws." Les Mills, future Mayor of Auckland and Commonwealth discus champion said, "No you're not, you've just won a national title, you're going to the pub to celebrate, and you're driving us." So out the gate they went only to find Peters Austin 7 hemmed in by two inconsiderate drivers with no way of escape. "Well there goes your lift," said Peter. Next minute the heavyweights' shot-putter Doc Moody, Les Mills and Cliff Ormsby simply picked up the vehicle and carried it out of the parking space.

His only athletic feats since this time have been confined to the International Veterans meeting held at our track in 1974, and the prestigious Addington Railway Workshops picnic. The lure of a top veterans meeting just before the Commonwealth Games was too much for him, so he excelled himself by putting in a whole two weeks training. This was enough to secure victories in the long and triple jumps in the 45 to 50 age group, and runner up position in the 100m and high jump.

Peter attended the Addington Railway Workshop picnic courtesy of his father in law who worked there. Apparently for many years a noted All Black who shall remain nameless had always taken out the sprint, and assumed that no one would have the audacity to take him on. Peter asked his brother in law to nominate him for the sprint, but he kept putting it off saying, "What's the point the All Black always wins." After persistent nagging his brother in law finally entered him. Peter blitzed the All Black in the race, who apparently did not take it very well at all.

As previously pointed out Peter and Dawn have moved on many occasions in their later years. Driving through Tinwald many years ago they noticed cheap housing and decided to settle there. Their son bought a farm in Sefton, so they moved there to help him because of the decline in farming. There was talk of building another house on the farm, but they changed their mind and moved back to Ashburton to be near friends.

Peter retired at 55 because he had not been feeling well for a long time, and for years' doctors failed to diagnose his problem. At 59 he heard the bad news that he had bowel cancer, and was immediately rushed into hospital and in his words had a major overhaul. I am pleased to advise that at 75 along with his wife they are still going strong.

Allan McLaren

Never, Ever Give Up? - A Memoir:

New book highlights endurance athletes' tough life choices

The question mark hanging on the title of world-class triathlete and coach John Hellemans' memoir *Never, Ever Give Up?* represents his growing awareness of the tough life choices endurance sports athletes have to make.

Dr Hellemans emigrated from Holland to New Zealand in 1978, where he has combined his career in general practice and sports medicine with competing and coaching in triathlon for nearly 40 years. The memoir, published by Canterbury University Press, recounts his adventures as a young doctor in Blenheim and tells how he was captivated by the relatively new sport of triathlon while watching a TV broadcast of the 1979 Les Mills NZ Ironman Championship in Auckland. He went on to win six national titles and represented New Zealand at several world championship events and the 1990 Commonwealth Games. As an amateur he has won eight age-group world championship titles.

Dr Hellemans reveals the highs and lows of his triathlon experiences, initially as a successful competitor, and subsequently as a coach, sports medicine doctor and advisor for some of New Zealand's best performing triathletes, including Erin Baker, Kris Gemmell and Andrea Hewitt.

"Each year there was something new in triathlons relating to training techniques, race options, equipment or rule changes. I loved the dynamic development of this novel sport, it kept me interested," he says.

As his sporting career progressed and he juggled it with his family and medical practice commitments, he started to realise the significant personal cost that triathlon can have.

"It's a very addictive thing. From a sports medicine perspective it can be too much, and it can be harmful – socially, in regards to your relationships with friends and family, as well as physically."

In October 2013, at the age of 60, Dr Hellemans made the decision to compete in the Hawaiian Iron Man, long considered the ultimate test in triathlon where in excruciating heat, he found himself staggering and miserable – and still not giving up.

"Life used to be about surviving and meeting basic needs. For many of us the modern Western life is too cushioned, so we challenge ourselves to suffer in other ways. Endurance sport strips you bare and you are confronted with yourself. That is part of the attraction. But at a certain point it's about realising this suffering may not be good for me."

An exercise-induced cardiac event in 2015 brought the message home to him and made him question his motivation and the drive to never give up. However, he confesses wryly that he will find himself lining up for the 2018 ITU World Triathlon Grand Final on the Gold Coast in September. The question mark is still hanging.

Buy here: [Never, Ever Give Up? by John Hellemans](#)

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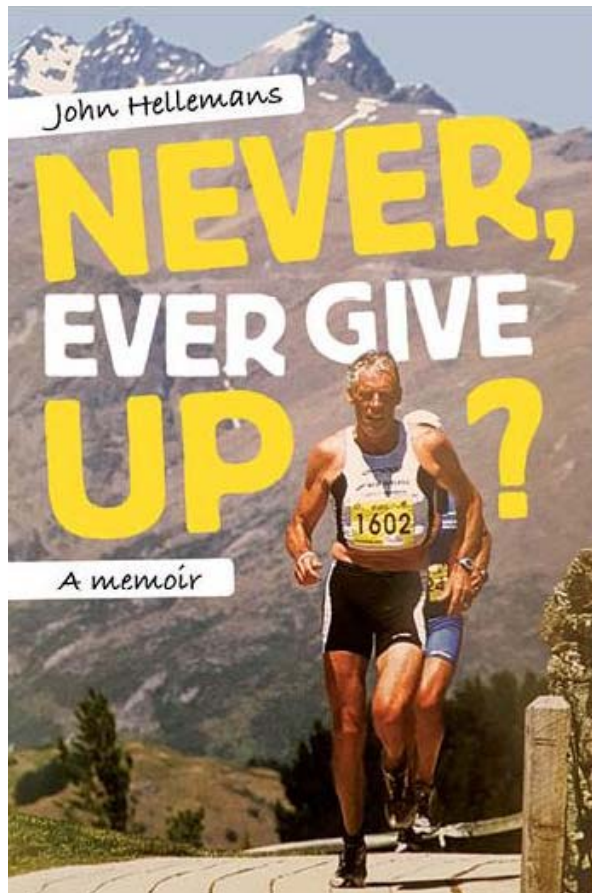
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Mel's Blog - Perpetuating Positivity:

"Our thoughts become our emotions, our actions and our habits". Deena Kaster, three-time Olympian.

I love this quote. It underpins the notion of our ability to cultivate a positive mindset. The ability to choose our thoughts and to see adverse events as an opportunity to learn and grow.

The thoughts we choose everyday in our lives can make or break our mental well-being. I like to think of it as a super power within us. We all have it, but we have to harness the benefit by consciously choosing to use positive thoughts.

I like to think I'm using my super power more these days.

Instead of feeling disappointed after a race if I haven't achieved a certain time, I choose to feel pleased that I completed it and that I can run at all. If I'm injured, rather than viewing it as a set-back, I see it as an opportunity to focus on strength training or other areas of my life.

When I talk to other athletes, I realise how hard we can be on ourselves.

One day, when we can no longer run, or exercise the way we did, we will look back on our performances (even the bad ones) and appreciate what we **were** able to do (and that it was actually rather good!).

The challenge we face in the moment is our ability to choose our thoughts wisely and recognise what we **did** achieve and what we **can** do. In doing this, we acknowledge our limits, celebrate our success, and relish in the opportunity to grow.



For me, the last few months have not been without any setbacks. Since being diagnosed with Coeliac Disease and focusing on healing my gut, I managed to acquire an infection which required antibiotics. Not ideal.

Re-balancing my gut microbiome has been a key part in my recovery. Rather than dwell on this minor set-back, I decided to accept it for what it was and move on. I recovered well and the opportunity to rest proved to have a positive effect when two weeks later I ran a personal best 10km time (post kids) at the Christchurch Marathon event.

Following the 10km event, I made the classic mistake of being slightly too eager to train and didn't allow myself enough recovery. I was also trying to fit training in around work commitments which included traveling. This led to the development of a minor injury. I was now three weeks out from the Gold Coast Half Marathon so I was going to have to adjust my training plan if I was to be able to line up on race day.

I decided to stop running for three weeks and cross train to let my injury settle down. I used the opportunity to strength train three times a week to maintain and balance my muscles so they would be ready to run on race day, however two days before the race I then caught a head cold from the kids. I seriously considered not racing the Gold Coast half marathon, but the day before the race I felt slightly better so I made the decision to line up on the start.

The race was never going to be a personal best with the events leading into it, however I was determined to give it a go. I finished in 1hr30min09sec and it was tough! A long way off the sub 1hr24mins I was aiming for, but none the less, I had finished. Now it was time for a decent break and time for the body to recover and heal.

Life is life and we will always be faced with challenges. So next time you are faced with a challenge, make a conscious choice to think about the opportunity you may have instead. If we continue to do this every time we face a challenge, I believe we start perpetuating positivity and being 'positive' is no longer just a once off isolated feeling anymore. We begin to actively cultivate a positive mindset and that's where the real opportunities lie..... and when we can truly reap the rewards! Enjoy.

Mel Angland

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