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New Brighton Olympic

Athletic Club



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RUNNING COMMENTARY



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Please send any photos, videos, results or items of interest / relevance to Tony Prisk at tony.prisk@outlook.com.

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 June.

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

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From the Editor:

It is good to see the Track & Field season getting off to a good start ,with a strong coaching team.

Neville Reed's tribute to Ron Stevens, who passed away earlier this year, is in this edition. Ron was a long standing member of the club with a successful running career. One of his highlights was breaking the New Zealand 15 mile Track Record.



Margaret's winter season update, which she read at the recent prize giving is in this edition. The prize giving was held at the hub of the Eastern Sports Recreation Association in Rawhiti Domain. It is a great venue for these types of functions.

John Hellemans recently did us the honour of becoming our new patron. As well as being a member of our club, John has a distinguished career as a triathlete and coach. Both Erin Baker and Andrea Hewitt have benefitted from his guidance. A world class competitor himself, he is also locally known for his tenacity in attacking Lap 6 of the Takahe to Akaroa Relay.

Coming to NZ as a young Doctor, John established a deserved reputation as a Sports Doctor as well as a competitor and Coach.

We look forward to his input and advice. Seek out his memoir. It's a great read.

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.

Track & Field update:

The Summer Children's Track & Field Committee has decided to return to the format of Club Nights every Tuesday and training for Interclub Athletes only on Thursdays, dropping Social Nights every fortnight altogether. It was felt that having Club Only athletes participating on Thursdays was not allowing us to provide the quality training which our coaches like to give to our competitive athletes, so it was decided to return to the old training format. After two weeks of training, we can already see that this is working a lot better than last season.

Our coaching team continues to grow and improve each year. This year we have the return of Paul Wadsworth and Kevin Exton as our Throws coaches with Henry Lemalu continuing to support them. Pat Boland is returning to take the reins of High Jump, while for Long Jump Dean Taurima and Paul Gray have returned with Cameron Marino (a former athlete) has been added to support them when he can. Bronwyn Alexander and Tony McManus are returning as our Track coaches with the addition of Kayleen Devon who has joined to assist and no doubt they will continue to build on the outstanding results from the previous year. We also have Melissa Exton taking on the mantle as the Littles Club Coach, she is an incredible addition to the team with her experience as an early education teacher an invaluable resource. All our coaches are passionate about seeing our young athletes achieve their best in all their events.

We have had our first two Have A Go/Information Nights (6th and 13th October) and we had over 80 young athletes attend, which is a phenomenal turnout. Lots of new families in attendance asking loads of questions and enjoying the fun atmosphere. It was organised chaos but worth seeing all the smiling faces. In comparison, the Thursday nights were smaller with about 40 kids but much more focused and relaxed with the competition athletes wanting to make the most of their time with the coaches. The first Interclub was Saturday 17th October, we had 41 athletes participating with several new faces taking the opportunity to try it before registering. It was mayhem the first half-hour with temporary numbers and registered numbers being handed out at the same time as relay teams were being selected. We had 22 girls and 19 boys who achieved 38PB's (Personal Bests) performed by athletes who competed last season. We also had 6 first placings, 11 second placings and 9 third placings. A great start for Interclub. I have a feeling this is going to be an amazing season and I can't wait to see these young athletes thrive.

Josie



A Tribute to Ron:

We gather here today to farewell Ron, or Ronnie as he was known to many in the athletic fraternity. He will be mourned and missed by all of us and I know we will all have had a Ronnie experience. I have too many to be related here from many hours training together in all sorts of weather and conditions over a great many years. I estimate that up to 50% of the quarter million kilometers I have covered would have been done, with Ron along side. (HANGING ON FROM THE FRONT) Ron would say.

I call on my son Mark to finish this address on my behalf.

Ron as an athlete was at his best before I met him. He started to run in 1954 and came to prominence very quickly. His best running in these golden years was cross country, road racing and the track. He was part of the golden era of NZ athletics and crossed swords with the likes of Sir Murray Hallberg, Sir Peter Snell, Barry Magee Ray Puckett and a host of other Lydiard coached athletes. Ron developed his own ideas on training based on Alfred Shrubbs ideas from earlier in the century. The core part of his training were regular 2mile and 10 mile efforts run flat out. Not for everybody but it suited RJS and he improved rapidly.

At High School Ron was advised by a doctor never to play sport even cricket. This due to the fact that he twice suffered from rheumatic fever as a child, two spells in bed one of 10 months and again of 1 year. That Doctor would not have reckoned on the career Ron had over some nearly 60 years as a top athlete. The highlight in this career was surely setting a NZ track record for 15 miles, 60 laps of Rugby Park on a grass track, in 1hr 17.42. That is over 24k. Ron also won the Canterbury Marathon twice and was runner up on two occasions.

It was 1959. In that year to celebrate the fact that Timaru had been founded 100 years a relay race was held from Oamaru. As a 16 yr old supporting Caversham from Dunedin I watched in amazement as ChCh Olympic took the lead on the first lap. Ron ran the over 4 miles out of Oamaru to Waitaki Freezing works in under 20 mins. It was lead never to be caught. This day helped firm in my mind what I wanted to do in sport. In 1963 I shifted north and my long association with Ron, and the Olympic Club began.

It was 1966 when a local runner Peter Betts caught up with the fact that I had shifted into the area he thought it would be a good idea to form a morning running group to keep each other honest, Ron lived close by so he was approached as well. And so it began. At the time Ron was concentrating on his Teaching career and thought his best days as a runner were over. Soon his competitive streak reemerged, and some morning runs were more like races. This training didn't harm Murray Clarkson either whose benefitted from the training and won the Canterbury 800 and 1500 and was second in the 1968 National 800m.

We met every morning at 6am which was a big ask winter and summer, never did we not go out. One memorable occasion was the morning after the Wahine sunk when winds were blowing around Christchurch the next morning still at 100 kmph.

The run to Brighton with the wind at our backs was easy but it was a bit tough on the return journey!

The Saturday morning run after that we went to the Burwood plantation to find every tree had been toppled.

In all the years I knew Ron we never had a harsh word to say to one another, except. It was 1969 for some reason I had decided that as the NZ event was to be held in ChCh I would like to run the NZ Marathon. I was a novice at this event and to qualify was required to run the Canterbury event 4 wks. prior. I set out to do so, Ron with my wife Carolyn and new baby Aaron followed in Ron's car. Early stages I shared the lead with Club mate Clive Frethey a Sub 2.30 man. After 5 miles in around 27mins, I let Clive go as I thought it too fast for me to last. I got a decent spray from Ron who had a higher opinion of my ability than I had myself. I took off caught Clive and we fought tooth and nail for the lead. I was proving to Ron that such action was foolhardy, and I would run out of steam! But I did not, at 20 miles I cleared out to win and run 2.25. This was the start for me of a succession of Marathons all of which Ron helped me get fit for.

I could relate many instances where Rons attitude differed from other athletes (INCLUDING MYSELF). Athletes are by nature competitive and do not give an inch, here are two such instances:

In 1973 Ron and I trained hard for the club 10 mile championship. We had a course starting at Doug Reece's house in Halswell Road. When our race started I was still the garage getting my gear off. Ron noticed I had not started and came looking for me. To say I was not amused is an understatement. Somehow Ron managed to convince me to still start, Ron had sacrificed his own chances, 1.5mins behind we caught most and eventually I ran into 2nd place with Ron well up.

The second occasion happened in 1986. We were running in the Motueka to Nelson road relay. I ran lap 2 that day in the master's grade. I started a minute ahead of Greymouth whose runner was Coleman Creagh. I asked Ron to give me the time gaps along the way so I could have a crack at fastest lap time. This Ron did at regular intervals, until with a k until the finish he told me I was 1 second ahead. that was also how it finished. When I got my breath back, I thanked Ron for giving me an advantage, so I knew what was what. That's alright Nev says he I was giving Coleman the gap as well!

One Saturday Ron and I set out on a training run of some 30k. By the time we reached the foot of Rapaki Hill Ron was not feeling good and turned back. He

happened to see a Land sale in progress and attended as an interested observer. As a consequence he ended up buying two sections one of which was no 6 Tekapo Place. With very little help he designed and built his house there. My sons will remember heading around to Ron's and holding up Gib Board so he could fix to the tricky parts of his design. Ron Thought he could do anything he set his mind too an he was right.

Today I say farewell today to a man who has been both a friend and mentor to me. He has been like one of our family and was well thought of by all my family. Ron was there from the start and took an active interest in all my children's Lives. Ron, I am all the better for having had you in my life, and all though you have now departed you will never be forgotten. We celebrate your life, and are vastly richer for you being in our lives. RIP RON.

Neville Reid



R. J. Stevens Breaks N.Z. 15-mile Track Record

R. J. Stevens, of University, who took part in a special attempt on the New Zealand 15-mile track record at Rugby Park last evening, led from the start and won in 1hr 17min 42.5sec, beating the four-year-old record of K. R. Williams, set at Dunedin, by 2min 38.5sec.

The race was held to enable C. F. Reece, of Technical, to attack the record, but Stevens, who has done comparatively little training in recent weeks, set a fast pace and drew away from the rest of the field after the first mile.

Reece retired with 17 laps remaining. At that stage Stevens was two laps ahead of him, and D. Reece, in second place, was a lap behind Stevens.

Stevens ran an amazingly consistent race, and until the 10-mile mark his lap times never varied by more than three seconds. In the second lap of his eleventh mile he recorded his slowest time, 79sec. He maintained a steady pace, varying from 80sec in the fifty-second lap to 84sec in his fifty-ninth lap, but he recovered well in his sixtieth, and last, lap with a good 77sec.

Stevens ran the first 10 miles in 51min 8sec, and this time will be claimed as a Canterbury track record. His distance of 11 miles 1280 yards in one hour will also be sent to the Canterbury centre of the New Zealand Amateur Athletic Association for ratification as a new record.



STEVENS



—R. J. Stevens, of University, set a new national 15-mile last evening. He is shown running in the early stage

IN MEMORIAM

There is a Maori saying that has resonated with me in 2020.

“A mighty totara tree has fallen in the forest of Tane.”

My running journey with the Olympic Club began back in 1975 and two of the people who were important to me since that time have died this year.

Ronnie Stevens coached me to some of best performances as a Masters athlete. It is no coincidence that my earlier coach, his friend Neville Reid, also coached me to my PBs as a Senior runner. Neville's tribute to Ronnie appears elsewhere in this edition of Running Commentary, so I will leave you with one of Ronnie's pieces of wisdom.

“Better underdone than overdone”.

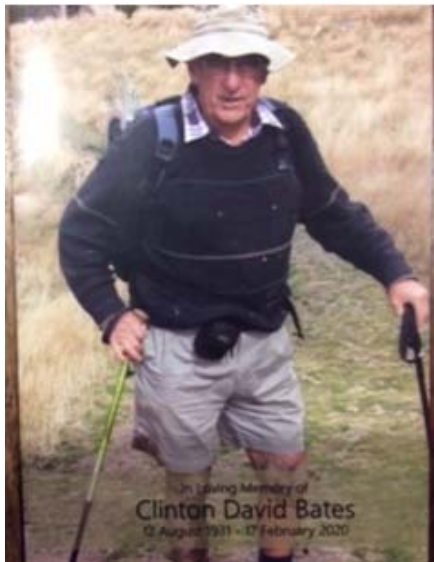
He believed in training hard and in recovery. And ballroom dancing.

When our two original clubs combined, the Olympic Club patron, Dave Bates, was installed as the patron of NBO.

He had been a longstanding athlete, administrator and official for his Club and Athletics Canterbury. He and his extended family were part of my running journey since 1975. It was an honour to speak at his funeral in February. Dave lived a full and energetic life personally and professionally. Amongst the many things done for running, he and Noeleen put out Marathon Post for a long time and she was the woman beneath his administrative wings. The lemon tree at their house close to the hills was legendary as were their afternoon teas after Club runs.

They live on in our memories and in what we learned from them.

Margaret



Winter Season:

The following report contains the main text of my coverage of the 2020 winter season which I read at our recent prizegiving. This event was held for the first time in the Hub, which is the new centre for all the individual member clubs of the Eastern Sports and Recreation Association and is in the former Rugby Club building in Rawhiti Domain.

I began by acknowledging and thanking all of the people who made the season possible- the wind beneath our individual athletic wings.

John Kerrison is our Winter Club Captain. He is the one who collates the race entries, delivers the gazebo to venues and takes it down, hands out the timing chips and counts them back in. Then at the end of the season, he regathers the trophies, gets them all engraved and sets up the prizegiving.

The gazebo doesn't put itself up or fold up on its own. We rely on the early birds and the stayers on to help with that. By the end of the season, it would be fair to say we had worked it out. Thanks to those- you know who you are.

Many of us get our 5 minutes of fame on facebook after each race thanks to the photos taken by Stephen Graham, Damien Cook and myself. (A montage of these photos was shown during the afternoon-thanks Tony Prisk.) All complaints about angles and expressions should be submitted in triplicate and stapled to a suitable beverage.

As Selectors, Paul Coughlan and I have not had much to do this year because of the shortened programme. We are looking forward to resumption of normal service next year, with a highlight being the National Road Relay back here.

Tony Prisk has continued to plead for copy and put out Running Commentary. I try to post some race reports on Facebook. It would be great to have some company next year.

Huge thanks from me go to Richard Young who once again helped me with the Junior Winter training on a Tuesday night. In this Covid-impacted year we had a smaller but no less enthusiastic group who made good use of the gym and kept us on our toes in the warm up run. Richard's other claim to fame is the individual groove he has worn in our grass track as he trains for the 24hr race on the weekend of the 14th November.

I would also like to acknowledge Ron Growcott, our oldest and most dependable supporter. There is no event terrain he cannot get his walker over to be able to support our athletes. He was an original member of the Olympic Club and now in his 90s, comes out to cheer us on.

We had 3 hosted runs this season. Stephen led us around a course in the Quarry and we enjoyed afternoon tea at Pauls' coffee cart. We ran round the forest from Ronalds's house and enjoyed a sumptuous afternoon tea. The run from my house took in the spring blossoms of the city, the highlight being

running through the grounds of the Staff club at the University with all the rhododendrons.

Back in March, at the end of the Summer season, many of us were thinking about the transition to Winter, the 15k Organising Committee was hard at work getting our annual event ready to roll and then we were stopped in our tracks. Our event and the income it provided were gone. We runners were forced to get to know our neighbourhoods in a more concentrated way and learn to dodge the multitude of dogs and their owners escaping the confines of home. Hagley Park was my backyard, thankfully. Whats App kept me in touch with my training buddies as they got creative in their locations. I gazed mournfully at the hills from my balcony. During one of the last group runs before lockdown we were talking about the theory that had popped up in the news about droplet transmission and the danger of running in someone's wake. There was some scoffing. And now we know a lot more about the behavior of this virus and masks are generally seen as a protective device from those very droplets.

It was a glorious Autumn. In a cruel irony, deeply felt by those of us who march every year, the day the Christchurch marathon events were scheduled to be run was fine. I had bought new gumboots specially.

But the urge to compete was not to be constrained and so Virtual events began to appear. Athletics Canterbury created a 5k series and there were worldwide events reported on via facebook. Athletes used stationary bikes and treadmills if they couldn't get outside.

Fortunately once NZ was down to Level 2, we were able to get together to race, albeit with hygiene requirements and some limitations on numbers. Our season programme was truncated so we missed some favourite events.

Before I go through and acknowledge the runners who featured on the podiums, I would also like to observe that while we are here to applaud the winners, it is also important to recognize every runner who steps up to the start line and pushes his or her body to its limit. We are competing first and foremost against ourselves. We want to run faster than last time or come in ahead of a certain person or run more intelligently on this course than last year and we all have our private victories and our moments that say "must train harder." It is an interesting personal test that is done in full view of the running community. And that's where the calls of encouragement come in. And why we photograph every runner and not just the winners.

So finally, on June 13th we started with what was called a Shakedown race at Ascot Green. No gazebos, no coffee cart and please leave after your race. It featured lots of community runners and the first of several duels between Andrea Hewitt and Angie Petty. Allan Staite, Damien Cook and Chris Mardon showed they would be age group contenders.

The Andrew Reese event at the same venue featured more women and juniors. Otto Church started his run of wins (excuse the pun) and we saw Allan McLaren out there again plus Connor Ritchie and Keith Wright.

The Kennett Cup was at the same venue and young Tayla Cox showed us she was a chip off the family block.

One of the few Relays of the season was held at lake Roto Ko Hatu. We won both MM and MW grades with Andrea taking fastest MW time. I was all smiles as our Junior mixed team was 4th and all ran the 2.5 lap in under 11 mins.

John Marshall ran for us for the first time and Thomas Spiess turned out as well.

The Canterbury Cross Country Champs were held at an uncharacteristically dry Quarry. Andrea ran a strong second to Katherine Camp. Hamish, Tyler and Henry joined Tayla and Otto in the junior ranks and we had a string of age group placings in the Masters grades. Allan, Chris, John, Clive, Ron, Ronald and I all had top 3 placings.

I distinguished myself in the chip collection department. John was on holiday and I was in charge. Racing, photographing and chip management proved to be one task too many. I was struggling to reconcile the number of returned chips with the number of actual runners and it was not until I had counted out the chips a second time into Janette Coughlan's patient hand that I realized the missing one was still firmly attached to my shoe.

The final Cross Country Event of the season was in Hagley Park. It was a flat fast course and was the most obviously Covidised in the regimenting of warm up, bag drop, chip collection and move along please after your race. Andrea once again cleared out to be the first woman home. Heather McLean joined us as a MW walker and I had another go at catching Ronald.

My Juniors gave it a good crack. Libby was 5th and Otto was second for the first time. Tayla, Hamish, Tyler, Henry and Connor all acquitted themselves well.

In the MM categories, Allan won, Mark and John were 1 and 2, Ron was 3rd and Matt was 6th.

The Cross Country National event in Dunedin was relegated to the National Cross Country Challenge because Auckland was in Level 3 and their competitors could not travel. We made the most of it anyway. It was held at the Chisholm Links beside the sea in Dunedin. The course was a good, old-fashioned gut buster to satisfy those who remember farms and haybales as part

of a real Cross country Course. Not that there were any of those, but there were lots of grunty ups and downs. Hayden Wilde blew everyone away in the Senior Men's race and finished over a minute ahead of what had been described as a strong field.

We had members in the Canterbury team. Damo, Mark, John and Allan ran well and Grant and I ran in our Club singlets.

We sent two Teams to the National Road Relay Champs in Feilding and alas our MM team were hobbled by an injury, literally and John Marshall ended up running the rest of Nick's lap as well as his own. There was a time penalty so our boys did well to still cross the line in 4th place, but 6th on time. Next year in Jerusalem!!

The Canterbury Road Champs the following weekend felt almost like an anti climax after all that, happening so late in the year and after the Road Relay. The consequence was very small fields. Still some excellent running. Camille Buscomb who was in this neck of the woods for a training camp, showed the Men's field a clean pair of heels and came in first in under 33 mins for 10k.

Mel Angland won the MW race and Carolyn Forsey was 3rd in the O50 grade. In the other grades Chris Mardon, Otto Church, Ron McTaggart and I came in first. There was also good running from Tayla Cox in 6th and Libby Overend once again in 5th. Henry Church and Connor Ritchie also had solid runs.

My favourite photo of the day came from the walking events and you saw it on facebook. Fern and her Mum Heather both stood on the podium.

At the Athletics Canterbury Awards evening, two other members were acknowledged for their service to our sport. Bronwyn Alexander was Best New Official of the Year and Rosie Robinson won several accolades for her service to walking as an Official and a Competitor.

So here we are already back at Nga Puna Wai with our Juniors already doing great things. Keep an eye on Facebook for all the photos and progress reports posted by Tony McManus. Hopefully we will see some Seniors and Masters out there too in the near future.

Thank you to all of you who shared this definitely different Winter season. Despite the challenges, there was still the camaraderie and fun that keeps me putting one foot in front of the other. And there's always next season!

Margaret



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