

GREY HARES

Special edition celebrating 30 years of the South Australian Veterans Athletic Club
Saturday 13 October 2001 at Santos Stadium, Mile End

This publication appeared bi-monthly from 1981 to 1988 and here are some random selected extracts from Grey Hares and its predecessor.

Thoughts of a Long Distance Vet

(This was signed Plumbeus Pes although the handwriting looked suspiciously like that of Eddie Cross.)

On Saturday .. as I firstly ran, then jogged and finally plodded my weary way around Victoria Park Racecourse in the 15 kms Cross Country Championship, I mused on the differences in treatment and conditions between the usual runners on this course, i.e. horses, and the motley collection of humans using it today.

Not for us the crowded grandstand, the baleful eye of the TV cameras and all the hysteria and adulation of the many punters and race callers that are part and parcel of the sport of kings. Four times I passed their winning-post and four times I saw empty and deserted stands with the only "encouragement" coming from Roy Sutcliffe as he leaned over the rails shouting "only 5 miles to go". All the pampering, special foods and personalised transport that horses get just to run some 4 or 5 kms, and here was I running 15 km after working (public servant actually) 5 days and having a diet of canteen lunches at work and frozen food at home.

Included in the treatment of horses is something called curry combing, and whilst I don't know what it is, as it sounds like some exotic Indian practice, I read the Karma Sutra to find out about it, but to no avail as it didn't get a mention, so to be on the safe side I say all runners at Victoria Park are entitled to be curry combed. I then thought that at least they don't whip us to make us run faster, but against that advantage was the ultimate difference between old racing horses and old racing humans, i.e. they get put out to stud on retirement with all the best fillies being actually brought to them. The Distance Runners Club could stick their yellow T-shirts if I thought a similar fate was in store for us.

On the last lap on Saturday I was so tired that I felt like just sinking down on to that lush turf and resting, and then later walking back to the finish making some excuse about my knee being gone or something equally fatuous, and the worst thing to happen to me would be that as I lay there all the fast lads would leap over me muttering "silly old sod", but for a horse to do that whey would shoot it, so possibly it isn't so bad being a Vet after all.

From the December 1987 edition

The trials of the ageing athlete! In an 800 metres event at Adelaide Harriers track recently **Norm Charles** had to stop and pick up his teeth which had fallen out.

We've got it

(April 1988)

For years the SA Veterans Athletic Club has toiled away in winter relays and summer interclub generally winning respect but nothing more tangible. Forget that now as a new age has dawned! In the 1987/88 Track Season we started as usual in D Grade Interclub and finished - FIRST in C Grade! Premiers!

Not being bush lawyers we can't explain the convoluted rules that caused this to happen but the men who contributed throughout the season are happy to accept the result without complaint. It should be fascinating for future historians to contemplate as to what colossal talent we must have had at the time in order to win the Pennant which we will now display whenever possible. We may however modestly decline any offer to promote us to B Grade next season.

A Real Race

With all the hoo-hah about marathoning, one could be easily fooled into thinking that that race is the greatest event of all. Humbly speaking as one who has completed all races from 100 yards to marathon, as well as the odd triple jump, I say phooey.

The real race is the 1500 metres, or the mile if you can catch one. To me this race has it all. Two obvious factors are firstly endurance - to sustain a fast rate of knots for over four minutes and secondly, speed - better than 80 seconds per lap just to break the five minute barrier. Now lots of distances combine those two factors, with different emphasis, but the 1500 meters - the classic race - has two more factors which put it "up there".

Tactics. It's a thinkers race and the thinking starts during the warm-up as you scan the other competitors and decide a general plan of what's best considering the talent of the others. Look too to the wind direction to note the worst area of the track to move past other runners. As you race there are continual judgments and decisions to be made. Is the pace too quick, too slow? Are the leaders too far ahead? Is the runner just ahead of me slowing down making it time to pass? Perhaps it's time to lead to pep the pace up. Watch out to avoid being boxed in - watch for the opening to get out if that has happened. As you race continually scan and monitor.

If your favourite event also combines endurance, speed and tactics then the 1500 metres has yet another factor which is the big trump. Excitement with a capital E. Events up to the 1500, except perhaps the 800, are just a madcap gallop. Over 1500 - well, how many exciting 5 000's and 10 000's have you run apart from one or two? The 1500 metres continual tactical decision making, speed and anaerobic finish keep the adrenalin flowing. It really seems to all start from your first motion on race morning until you drape over the fence beyond the finishing line.

Now that's my kind of race!

(Bob Auld)

In 1981 John Gilmour of WA ran 4m57.1 for a world veteran record in the **M60** mile

The Victor Harbor Relay (1987)

John Rhodes was our winter season captain and here are excerpts from his typically whimsical report.

A day with a few minor problems like trying to fit 15 runners into two teams of 10...Our 'A' team was helped by three runners, namely Dennis Beck, Marcus Breuer and Des The Pres who also ran legs for their first claim clubs. Iron man kiwi, Doug Smart, finding no-one to hand over the baton to was faced with the classic dilemma at Aldinga pub "Do I stop and search for the bastards in the front bar or do I grit my teeth and slog on over Leg 9?"

... One of the most enjoyable things about the event is the opportunity to drive other member's cars. Not just the familiar Holden or Toyota, but the personalised car, aged and cherished, an ancient family retainer, lovingly packed with a special and individual kind of bric-a-brac. For what dreadful occurrence, you may ask, is Dave Kimber preparing, when he brings his lawnmower to run Leg 8? My apologies to Dave, by the way, for confusing his car with Ron Woodcock's, which of course was built by the Stradivarius Motor Corporation in about 1723. ... Gerry Hicks nearly-new, one-owner, state-of-the-art masterpiece sports semi-automatic steering which goes some way to explaining those spectacles - but at least I had keys. Last year I had to start Ron's with a tuning fork as he didn't leave alternative transport in the form of a lawnmower in the back.

Running - On And On

What could be better than running on a beach at daybreak, when the air is clean and with the wind in your face, or on a forest path or bush track on your own with not a worry in the world. Those who haven't run in the wet with heavy rain beating the face, or on a spring morning with the sun on your back don't really know what it's all about.

(Wally Beames)

Play

(From Dr. Sheehan On Running" by George Sheehan, World Publications, Calif.)

(Of Play) ... "We are dealing with one of the primary categories of life, one which resists all logical interpretation. Play has a deeper basis than utility. It exists of and for itself. When we expose play to the function of promoting fitness and preventing heart attacks, we change its gold to dross ... What we need then is to conserve those mysterious and elusive elements of play which make it its own reward. We must remove anything that suggests practicality and usefulness. What we do must be fun and impractical and useless, or else we won't do it ...

We should be in sports not because they are practical but because they are not, not because we feel better but because we don't care how we feel, not because our fitness is increased but because we are so interested we don't even notice. Play is the key. We all love to play. We like only the jobs that have a play element for us. Anything as practical as physical education or physical fitness is not going to get to first base with most of us."

"Not the quarry but the chase, not the trophy but the race" **(Rudyard Kipling)**

The Linear Park

(Excerpts from an Editorial in 1986)

This year brought a start to a praiseworthy venture by the State Government in co-operation with 12 suburban Councils. The River Torrens Linear Park project will link the coast to the foothills "with a valuable recreation area for the people of South Australia" according to the Minister of Water Resources, Mr. Lyn Arnold.

In length the Park will extend 10.5 kms from coast to City and a further 18.5 kms to the east of the City, with these sections linked by some 4 kms of existing parkland within the City limits. "... connecting a series of conservation and natural areas, open spaces, picnic and barbecue areas and some sporting fields ..." and "... will be the centrepiece of the SA Government's contribution to the State's 150th anniversary celebration in 1986."

Opportunity Knocks

Here is an opportunity for the running/walking fraternity - DRC, RRC, AASA, Veterans or whoever - to ensure that their growing ranks are at last catered for by a suitable trail as is frequently the case in other major cities around the world. ... It is important to establish the trail as a desirable venue for training, fun running and racing as soon as possible. This would begin traditions and earn the quick acceptance by the public of the Park being a popular spot for runners ...

The First 10 Years

(Excerpts from a short history of the SAVAC compiled in 1981)

Membership rapidly increased from 22 in our founding year of 1971 to 223 in 1980/81. In 1971 a group of 11 veteran athletes met to bring the South Australian Veterans Amateur Athletic Club into being and Alistair "Scotchy" Gordon was elected our first President later that year and Al Digance our Secretary/Treasurer with Lloyd Snelling, Ron O'Neil and Ron Davis as committee members. Al designed a uniform of a badged blue singlet with red and yellow stripes together with plain white shorts. In 1972 our Club was represented at the first international veterans competition in Cologne when Jim Liascos and Alex Lampard took part. In 1975, we hosted our first National Veteran Track & Field titles at Olympic Sports Field, Kensington. In 1976 Bob Clarke became our first medal winner in World Veteran Championships when he ran third in both the 400 and 800 metres events in Toronto. Veteran women formed a separate club in 1977 but decided to amalgamate as one club in the following year. In 1980 "Amateur" was omitted from the Club title after open competition was permitted between athletes over 40 years. Of the 223 members in 1981, 180 were male, 43 female whilst pre-vets numbered 24. 158 were first claim members not having membership of another club. (N.B.: Perhaps this was the Club's peak membership year as in 1981/82 numbers were down to 193). In 1981 in Christchurch at the World Veteran Championships Lloyd Snelling won the M50 100m, 200m and 400m in times of 11.91, 24.46 and 52.91.

Prominent in the organisational area over these years was the drive and ability of Secretary Rowley Ferris and some top class Club members earned open State selection over this period - namely Phil Afford, Gerry Van Eckelenburg, Gerry Hicks, Helen Alderson and Peter Liebelt.

From "Heroes and Sparrows" by Roger Robinson circa 1987

(Roger was a former English and New Zealand representative)

(Of the modern running movement) ... "People in large numbers are gaining self-fulfilment through an activity which is wholly peaceful and has not the slightest connection with the pursuit of wealth, possessions or power."

(Why Roger runs) ... "I run for the variety it puts into my life. I run for the physical well-being it gives. I run for the feel of the textures of the earth under my feet. I run for the friendship, and for the companionship of shared effort. I run also for the intense privacy it bestows, whether in the solitary exhilaration of training or the equally solitary stresses of the race. I run for the strength it puts into my heart, my legs, my willpower and my concentration. I run for the sheer adventure of racing ... I run because it is a form of genuine play ... I run for the pleasure of crunching leaves under my feet ... I run for the intense drama of the race, the challenge and the uncertainty and I run because I like it, the simple rhythmic, effortful movement over the earth."

In 1978

In the National Veterans Championships held in Melbourne **Alex Lampard** dominated the M60 area despite arthritis. Alex won the 100 Metres in 13.7 s, 200 Metres in 28.5 s, 110 Metres Hurdles in 20.6 s, 400 Metres Hurdles in 1m 16.0 s, Long Jump with 4.60 m, Pole Vault with 2.30 m, High Jump with 1.25 m and Triple Jump with 9.32 m. Perhaps tiredness kicked in eventually as in the 400 Metres Alex could only manage second in 64.2 s!

Sylvia White won the W45 Discus with 33.39 metres, Shot Put with 10.08 m and the Javelin with 30.88 m. **Lloyd Snelling** meanwhile won the M45 200 Metres in 24.0 s and the 400 Metres in 53.0 s.

Club Walking Records in 1981

<u>1500m</u>		<u>3000m</u>		<u>5000m</u>
M35 Peter Fullagher	6m 05s	P Fullagher	12m 37s	
M40 Eddie Folland	7m 00s	E Folland	14m 03.6s	E Folland 24m 21.4s
M45 Geoff Peters	8m 00s	Terry Nailer	15m 04s	T Nailer 26m 22s
M50 Ron O'Neil	7m39s	G Peters	16m 28s	G Peters 28m 07.56s
M55		Al Digance	17m 24s	
M60 Jack Weber	7m39s	J Weber	15m51s	J Weber 27m 15s
M65 J Weber	8m 08s	J Weber	16m 32s	J Weber 28m12.12s

Fees

For the year 1982/83 the Club membership cost \$6, it was \$14 to register with Athletics SA (\$1 for second claim members) and \$4 for accident insurance (not compulsory).

* In 1981 John Gilmour of WA ran 2h 41m 07s for the marathon, a **M60** world best.

Stars

Club members who gained **open State** selection in **1982** were:- Roy McFadden in the 50km Walk and in the marathon Bill James, Helen Alderson and Avis Pearce.

The Tiki Trophy

A visiting group of New Zealand veterans presented us with the Tiki trophy in 1972 in appreciation of our hospitality to them. It was always a ferociously prestigious event staged over a hilly road course in Blackwood and to win it was regarded as a top achievement amongst the elite of the Club's runners. Winners read like a Who's Who of Club greats:- Ron O'Neil in 1972, Gerry Hicks in 1973 and 1974, Terry Nailer in 1975 and 1976, Roy Sutcliffe in 1977, Gerry Hicks again in 1978 and Dave Cooke in 1979. Traffic problems forced us off the road to a cross-country course from 1980 which saw Gerry Hicks win yet again then in 1981 the event was staged in the flat South Parklands and Al Digance constructed an Owl Trophy for the first female and Helen Alderson was the winner whilst Dave Cooke was top male. In 1982 the winners were Peter Sandery and Judy Daly.

Founding Members

Percy Barnes (Dec.)
Bob Clarke
Peter Dalwood (Dec.)
Ron Davis
Alwyn Digance (Dec.)
Alistair Gordon
Alan Gottschalk
Dave Kimber
Rex Leedham
Ron O'Neil
Lloyd Snelling

Life Members

Alwyn Digance (d)
Des Paul
Don Parker
Kurt Postler
Paul Boyce
Glynn Boyce

Honorary Members

Betty Edwards
Ruth Weber
Don Dohnt
Ron O'Neil
Betty O'Neil
Pat Peters (AM)
Gwen King

Presidents

Alistair Gordon
Ron O'Neil
Lloyd Snelling
Alwyn Digance (d)
Nora Sutcliffe
Brendan Wilson
Dave Mallett
Des Paul
Dave Janssen
Glynn Boyce
Colin Hainsworth

Secretaries

Alwyn Digance (d)
Rowley Ferris
Nora Sutcliffe
Elaine McFarlane
Margaret Cahill (d)
Leonie Byrnes
Avril Hill
Glynn Boyce
Bev Byrne
Marcia Sheer
Paul Boyce
Helen Suridge