

NUTS NOTES  
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EDITORIAL

The AGM on 14 August was sparsely attended and it is clear that holding it immediately after the AAA Championships (particularly when these are in August) does present a number of problems. It may be that the best solution would be to hold the meeting early in the year with some other NUTS function (e.g. film show); any suggestions for 1977 will be very much welcomed.

The Chairman's address delivered at the AGM is reproduced here in full.

"I want to start this review of the last year by commenting on the work done by Andrew Huxtable as secretary, because I am sure that without his efforts the NUTS would by now have ceased to function as a corporate unit. This is not to suggest that individual members are not working as hard as ever on statistical projects, but many of us have such heavy commitments in other spheres of athletics that concentration on the affairs of the NUTS becomes extremely difficult. This manifests itself in a noticeable drop in the standard of completeness of the Top-20 lists, and frequent problems in getting a quorum for Executive Committee meetings. Bearing in mind Andrew's considerable range of interests in all walks of life, it remains for me a matter of some amazement that he continues to handle the secretarial duties so efficiently - duplicating and distributing Top-20s with faultless regularity in addition to producing agendas, minutes, NUTS Notes and multitudinous other items.

1975-76 has been a particularly critical year for the NUTS, but we survive to continue the battle. Reorganisation of the membership into Active and Associate categories happily went smoothly, and I hope that all those affected by the change of status will continue to give generous support to the group. The Annual was a notable success in terms of content, layout and accuracy, and remains the outstanding independently-produced national booklet in the sphere of athletics statistics. All those involved in the compilation deserve our hearty thanks for their efforts, and we can only regret that intolerable delays at the printing stage resulted in the book being published so late.

The Kraft Handbook was a great achievement, thanks to Peter Matthews, Tim Lynch-Staunton, Dave Terry and Harold Abrahams; although for the purist the number of misprints was disappointing, we succeeded against great odds in meeting our deadlines. Certainly it was most important for future prospects that we keep faith with our sponsors. I would echo Andrew's words of thanks to Kraft Foods and to West & Nally (particularly Jacob de Vries), and I must also pay tribute to Pat Brian for his enthusiastic sales promotion; if this results in Pat taking a more active part in future ventures, the exercise will have been even more rewarding.

The comments above concerning the Top-20 lists are not intended to be read as criticising Stan Greenberg or Liz Sissons, who continue to bear the brunt of the work in their compilation. Ultimately they depend on members throughout the country for up-to-date news of significant results (particularly now that Stan's new job with Guinness Superlatives prevents him from making his frequent expeditions down Fleet Street), and it is in this sense that the NUTS as a whole have been supplying a less than adequate service. I hope that next year we can get back in control of this situation, because otherwise I do not think we are treating our customers fairly. The NUTS enjoy a tremendous reputation, both at home and abroad, but we must be careful to preserve the quality of our work - at the expense of quantity if necessary.

In conclusion, I would like to acknowledge the understanding and assistance given to us by the various governing bodies in British athletics, with the hope that we can continue co-operating for the ultimate benefit of the sport. Finally, these notes would not be complete without thanking our President, Harold Abrahams, for his unflagging interest and support."

Bob Sparks

MISCELLANY

§ Congratulations to:

- 1) Janette and Peter Moss on the birth of Daniel William on 11 July; his weight was 8lbs/3.63kg. Mother just arrived home in time to catch the Olympic Games Opening Ceremony!
- 2) Colin Shields and Cliff Temple, who are getting married (not to each other, silly!) on the 10th and 25th of next month.
- 3) David Turner on joining Yorkshire & Humberside RSC and being selected by the FIBA as one of ten neutral international basketball referees at Montreal.
- 4) Bob Sparks on being elected President of the ATFS at the Convention held in Montreal on 27 July.

§ If you would like to act as wind gauge operator at the Hillingdon AC Gala International meet on 19th September at West London Stadium, please contact Carol Jackson, 2 Juniper Close, RICKMANSWORTH, Herts. WD3 1NW (877 6881).

§ Only six entries were received for the NUTS Olympic Forecasting Contest, with the following result:

- 1. David Dallman 20 (including 8611 decathlon)
- 2. Jeff Carter 19 ( " 27:40.5 10,000m, 8:08.8 3,000mSt)
- 3. Tim Lynch-Staunton 17
- 4.= Martin James )
- Ian Steedman )16 (including 10.07 100m, 17.33 TJ, 1:24:49 20kmW;
- Chris Thorne ) 11.06 100m, 22.37 200m, 49.26 400m)

§ Dave Terry still has photocopies of back issues of NUTS Notes (first number was produced in July 1959): you'll only have to pay postage. Write to him at 5 Grange Close, Heston, HOUNSLOW TW5 0HW.

§ We were invited by Moise Dreyfuss Ltd (Rotary Quartz Division) recently to assist in the evaluation of Rotary/Cronus digital stopwatches (you may have seen them advertised in "Track & Field News"). There is every possibility that bulk orders from the NUTS will attract a useful discount. Please let the Editor know if you require literature on any models.

RUNNING NOWHERE by Bob Phillips

A funny thing happened as I was jogging along the Dee Estuary the other day - the sun blazing down, the sands stretching away like some benevolent Kalahari, the hills of North Wales providing a gently rolling backcloth, and me feeling like El Aurans about to lead a sloop on a Turkish troop train.

No, I didn't meet Omar Sharif, but as I made my laborious way through the dunes I spied a figure loping along 300 yards ahead at the sort of speed which indicated straight away that he was no footballer, oarsman or pot-bellied businessman frightened into belated activity by the "Sunday Times" Fitness for Over-Forties campaign.

He was obviously running repetitions and when I eventually passed him walking back we exchanged a cheerful greeting. On my homeward trek 10 minutes later from the turnaround point (carefully calculated to fall 100 yards short of the point of no return) he came towards me in full flight and the action looked familiar even if the face wasn't.

"It couldn't be," thought I and jogged on. But curiosity eventually got the better of me, and anyway it was one of those days when some sort of diversion from footslogging would be welcome. I strolled back, struck up a conversation, did a bit of discreet cross-examining, and enquired of his event and best times.

He finally admitted he'd set an English Native record for the quarter, and as it obviously wasn't Arthur Wint, I announced triumphantly, "You're Peter Higgins, aren't you?" He was suitably astonished at being recognised 20

years after his salad days and made my day by surmising that I'd be too young to remember him. I didn't like to mention I can even remember Wooderson and Slijkhuis, too, and McLeod Wright and Squire Yarrow sprinting down the White City straight to the finish of the 1946 AAA Marathon.

There's absolutely no point to this story at all, except to remark that it's nice to know that so many of the one-time stars are still active. How about getting Pirie, Brasher, Chataway, Ibbotson, Farrell, Rawson, Hewson, Johnson, Uncle John Disley and all, together for a sort of Senior Super-stars contest at Crystal Palace?

Some of the old-timers - like Messrs Mathias, Rhoden and Oerter and Mesdames Blankers-Koen, Cuthbert and de la Hunty - glimpsed on that strange Canadian TV series we've been seeing on Tuesday nights look scarcely any older or more careworn than they did in their heyday. In fact, on the basis that any athlete in peak condition inevitably looks ashen, haggard and generally worn-out, some of them look considerably sprightlier than when they were winning their golds.

\* Mr Bud Greenspan (not one of your pseudonyms, is it, Stan?) managed to put together a series which contained both some of the most fascinating athletics footage ever shot and some of the most frustrating, too. The low spots for me were the classic Landy mile in 1956 when he stopped to pick up Ron Clarke and still won by a street, only we were shown so many crowd scenes we didn't see the fall or the finish; and a glimpse of yours truly in the 1968 Mexico City press-box avidly watching the action, only the accompanying race into which this clip was inserted happened to be taking place in Melbourne 12 years earlier.

Far and away the best extract showed Al the Platter King strolling along some beach like he was expecting Streisand to rise out of the briny and the band to strike up "The Way We Were". For my money, if the powers-that-be had allowed Al to compete as a guest in Montreal he'd have thrown 210 for sure and all the rest would have frozen up in awe in the presence of the master, unless they were too young to remember, that is.

But now for something completely different ... Enough has been said about the Thompson saga, but allowing for the usual mismanagement by the British selectors there was never any question that once their decision to take the first three had been made they had to stick to it. If you've ever tried to run a Marathon, how would you have felt if you were Keith Angus at the finish-line in Rotherham with the British Bored chief breathing quietly in your ear, "Sorry, old chap, but we've changed our minds and we're not sending the first three, after all."?

In the furore over Thompson, not enough credit was given, I feel, to the astonishing achievement of Paul Nihill in making his fourth Olympics. Colin Young's been saying for years that the oldest Rock 'n Roller of them all is one of Britain's greatest ever athletes, and now it's been proved. Which is as tortuous a cue as any for prompting another bout of soul-searching among fellow NUTS. How about the top 12 British athletes of all time (my lists, I hasten to add, are compiled off the top of my head with no reference to any records or written material, and well before the Montreal Olympics, too):

- Men
1. David Hemery
  2. Gordon Pirie
  3. Douglas Lowe
  4. Roger Bannister
  5. Ken Matthews
  6. Derek Johnson
  7. Don Thompson
  8. Harold Abrahams
  9. Lynn Davies
  10. Don Finlay
  11. Paul Nihill
  12. Brian Kilby

- Women
1. Mary Rand
  2. Mary Peters
  3. Ann Packer
  4. Lillian Board
  5. Dorothy Hyman
  6. Dorothy Tyler
  7. Sheila Sherwood
  8. Maureen Gardner
  9. Sheila Lerwill
  10. Sheila Carey
  11. Diane Leather
  12. Jean Desforges