

**A.A.A.**

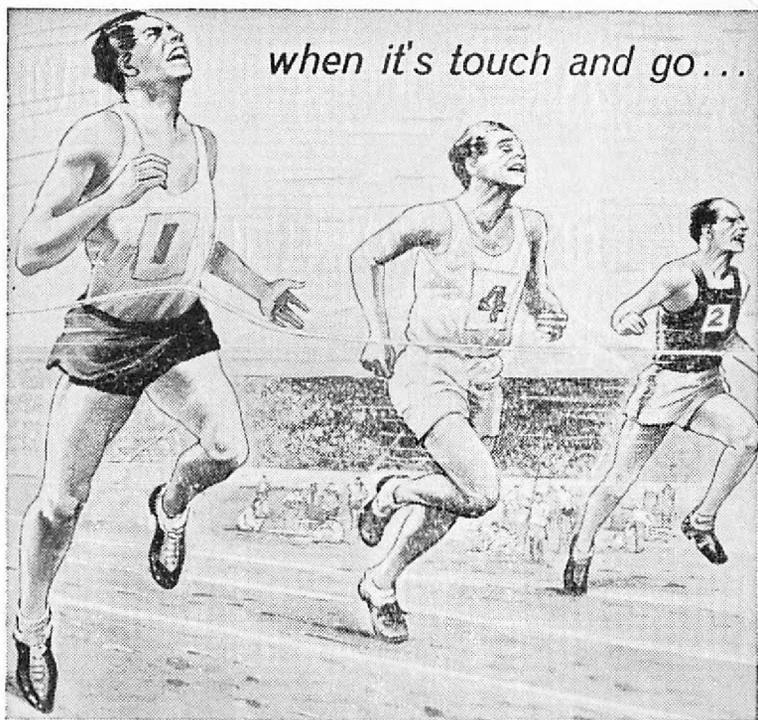


**CLUB**

# **NEWSLETTER**



**ARTHUR ROWE**  
(Doncaster Plant Works A.C.)



**...do you have that extra ounce  
of energy in reserve?**



**OVALTINE**

# Indoor Athletics

MIKE RAWSON

IN March, 1962, at Wembley, Indoor Athletics makes a welcome return to Britain. I have not forgotten that athletes have been competing for several years at Cosford and Stanmore, but somehow competition there is not quite the real thing and seems to be considered by the athlete rather as a useful extra training session. Cosford, although a reasonable size, has a flat concrete floor and Stanmore, while possessing a wooden track, unfortunately only has short sprint straights which leave the sprinters doing everything but falling over in their efforts to stop indoors rather than face the icy winds outside. Field event facilities are a little better, but lack the warm friendly atmosphere of a capacity crowd urging performers on to greater efforts.

At last at Wembley we have what we've been waiting for since Britain's only Indoor Track was damaged during the war, a home for a new sport which could well lead to a revival of interest in athletics. Running indoors is as different from outdoors as bowls is from ten pin bowling, and even an experienced athlete can feel like a novice when he first runs on a board track. A new technique of running round the bend has to be mastered and also many new tactics. The changing pace of the front runner can have a whip-crack effect, so that the back man is slowing down just as the leader accelerates, and this can be most difficult to overcome. It appears that athletes with a short stride, such as Ron Delaney 'the uncrowned King of the Boards,' have quite an advantage.

When I ran in America they warned us that there are very seldom any disqualifications which surprised us when six runners were starting shoulder to shoulder on a track which was only ten feet wide. As you can imagine this makes the start vital. It now seems possible when the technique of cornering has been learned, to run just as fast indoors, as has been shown recently by the two four minute miles and Peter Snell. There is the advantage of not having to run into the wind, although the central heating and smoke can play havoc with the breathing, and often leaves a sore throat behind as an added trophy. Many stadiums in America do not allow smoking now and ask spectators to go outside during the intervals to smoke.

It is best to warm up in the cool outside and only do striders round the bends between events. These bends are banked up to a height of 3ft. 6ins. and the tracks are made in sections of wood varying in thickness from  $\frac{3}{4}$ ins. up to  $1\frac{1}{4}$ ins. The one at Wembley is constructed from specially selected parana pine and is  $1\frac{1}{4}$ ins. thick which although allowing some bounce does not interfere with a smooth running action. It compares very favourably with the American tracks which we saw and is about 145 yards round. Spikes can be worn and these are usually about  $\frac{3}{8}$ ins. long, rather like old fashioned gramophone needles.

Indoor meetings should be extremely beneficial for the field events competitors, giving all the year round competition to the jumpers, pole-vaulters, shot-putters and hurdlers. The spectator gets an on the spot view of these events which consequently look much more impressive. The closeness and added limelight seem to help the athlete feel the crowd is with him, and indeed this is true when one considers that 15,000 people watch the Championships in New York. They do not go entirely to witness first class athletics performances. Many go expecting to see a spectacular show, and they are not disappointed. Good presentation is one of the highlights of the Indoor Meet, and many gimmicks are used. All the officials wear dinner jackets and the starter can be distinguished by his fluorescent red sleeve. His gun is backed by a coloured board which looks like a table tennis bat and helps the time-keepers to see the flash.

Often the unused centre of the arena is filled with green sawdust and this sometimes is further decorated with live flowers. The competitors all seem to wear bright track suits and the whole picture is like a kaleidoscope of colour worthy of a stage show. To heighten this effect an orchestra plays chase type music in the background, often keeping in time with the leading runner and fervently praying that not too many world records will be broken. The sprints are accompanied by a roll on the drums and terminated with a clash on the cymbals. The whole scene is very gay and this brightness tends to make the runners appear to be travelling faster than they are. Relay racing is great fun and the lead often changes on the small circuit. In the States even the youngsters get their chance to learn the technique in special Midget Relays.

We in Britain are unfortunately a long way behind. However this has allowed plenty of opportunity to learn from the mistakes and ideas of other countries, and I feel sure that the organisers at Wembley are doing everything in their power to see that indoor athletics is well presented here. If they succeed, and I am sure that they will, we shall soon have a new and very popular winter sport which may well go a long way towards getting the crowds back to the White City, both by creating fresh interest and by giving the specialist athletes glamour and the opportunity to improve by all the year round competition.

## A New Athletics Experience

**T**HE first of this season's three indoor athletics meetings at the Empire Pool, Wembley, took place on 16th and 17th March. "Promoted with all the splendour of a theatrical occasion" ran the official hand-out and it would be hard to fault this first presentation on that score. Officials in dinner jackets with coloured sashes according to their job, ground staff in blue track suits and white caps, the Band of the Royal Marines School of Music to march and play in the interval and the Trumpeters of the Life Guards to herald the presentation of awards—clearly no effort or expense had been spared and the result, not forgetting the athletics with a spotlight picking out the moments of greatest drama, was a truly exciting spectacle.

The professional announcers did well enough and gave us a reasonable amount of information about the leading competitors. But it was clear that they were not being fed with full information regarding make up of heats, etc.—and I thought that some of what they had could well have been passed on to us in advance of the first race; after waiting for the start we all of a sudden had a great deal to watch and to write down.

This, if anything, was the major fault; too much happened at once. In the expanse of the White City three events can happily proceed simultaneously, but in this confined space (used with great ingenuity) they proved one too many. The run-up of the women high jumpers crossed the tracks of the men long jumpers and the sprinters and perhaps this accounted for one or two below-par performances on their part. I hope this aspect of the programme will be improved in future; and the printed programme too, where there was no space provided to record individual jumps and throws for instance. I also felt that the relay change-over zone should be moved to the middle of the straight to reduce the advantage of drawing the inside lane; admittedly it would mean that the leader at the last bend would virtually be certain of victory, but this would be better earned than the present lead at the first bend conferred by drawing the inside lane, a lead which proved very difficult for others to win. The women's 4 x  $\frac{1}{2}$  lap relay was a case in point—but in any case I thought a  $\frac{1}{2}$  lap relay murderous and would suggest nothing less than a full lap in future.

I thought the whole meeting, which was promoted by the Daily Herald, an excellent start for this new athletics entertainment and hope it will meet with the success it deserves. B.E.W.

## Book Reviews

**"Sprinting" by Mike Agostini (Stanley Paul, 15/-)**

**M**IKE AGOSTINI covers many points from basic preparation to training at International level. In doing this he gives a lot of sound common sense advice. Much of the training can easily be amended to be used in this country and is not only applicable to a "sun drenched Californian Track," are so many books on this subject.

Without giving specific schedules he gives target achievements to be attained before passing to a higher intensity of training. A wide range of additional subjects from weight training and diet, to habits of smoking and sex are also discussed. In his analysis of sprinting and conclusions, the Author tends to analyse effects rather than causes, but then this is natural for an athlete who is writing of his own experiences to pass on to other athletes.

The ideas and schedules in the book contain nothing by way of a startling revelation. It is, however, a down to earth approach and is easily read and understood. There is one point however, which Mr. Agostini makes, which I think we in this country, athlete and coach alike, would do well to remember. He so rightly points out that far too much work is done on the start and that the greater dividends are to be earned in the

' middle ' flat out section of the sprint. If we remember this, I am sure that many sprinters will be able to remove as much as half a second from their time rather than niggling away over the odd tenth of a second.

This book I recommend to all interested in sprinting.

#### **Athletics Charts (Educational Productions: 6/- per set)**

These charts, which I presume are intended to be placed in school changing rooms, should give at a reasonably quick glance a firm and definite impression of the basic principles of each event. In this type of work, I imagine the artist either copies from a film or is given ideas of movement by an expert and has to translate them into his own ideas, but there seems to be no cohesion here.

To take the events in order, the Sprint start is accurately and vigorously drawn, but I think a further strip on mid-race running, e.g., 40 to 80 yards in a 100 yards Sprint, would have helped the series. As with many of the drawings, the Hurdle strip, suffers, in my opinion, from not having a definite take off line drawn showing contact with the ground in the vital stages.

The best of the charts for clarity and impression of movement is the Long Jump and Hop, Step and Jump (now Triple Jump) chart. In the Long Jump the figure appears to be driving and lifting from the board, running in the air is made to look possible, and leaves a clear impression. The Triple Jump also gives this quality of movement.

The Pole Vault at take off and swing is well defined, yet the later stages of the Vault succeed in mystifying between swing and press away position. Once again, the High Jump could well do with the base line drawn to show the athlete swinging his free leg to its greatest possible height, whilst emphasising the driving leg still in contact with the ground.

The Shot technique is current form for 14 years ago and whilst this may not be important, the faults of that technique are shown whilst its virtues are neglected. To attempt to present Hammer Throwing, and not to show the transition from preliminary swings to first turn, is just a sheer waste of time. The Discus and Javelin both suffer from similar faults, namely, the figures give no impression of movement, acceleration or power.

All the events are accompanied by captions which are a good and correct text on technique, but there does not seem to have been an alliance between these texts and the drawings.

RON BOWDEN.

#### **" Running Wild " by Gordon Pirie (W. H. Allen, 21/-)**

If ever there was a character in British athletics who remained a permanent centre of controversy it was Gordon Pirie. Throughout his career the man-in-the-stands was continually having to make up his mind whether he was pro-Pirie or not as one clash with the authorities followed another, as unexpected victory followed unexpected defeat in confusing sequence. One could never ignore Gordon—and nor should one ignore this book.

Pirie the aggressive rebel is here, with chapters entitled "The hypocrisy of British amateurism" and "The elderly dictators of British athletics: These men must go." But the arguments advanced under these headings are all familiar ones and are unlikely to make new converts. Much more absorbing are the behind-the-scenes stories of some of Pirie's greatest races including an account of his experiences at the Rome Olympics which I found of very great interest.

Pirie does nothing to strengthen his case by overstating it. When he writes that running shoes cost him £100 per year and answering fanmail another £100 annually we feel obliged to take these figures with a pinch of salt—and regard all his other statements with suspicion. Other errors of fact do nothing to counteract this. In the space of five lines we are told that Piatkowski did not reach the discus final in Rome, although he had beaten the world record earlier in the season, and that in that final Babka placed third; all this is untrue.

"At 30" writes Gordon, "I retire from athletics as a married man with no job and no prospects." After following him round the world through this book, to world records and to the greatest gatherings our sport provides, I cannot bring myself to feel sorry for him. But it is not easy to pass a simple and clear-cut verdict on this man, one of our greatest ever athletes; read this book and try it for yourself.

**"Athletics" by Peter Bird (W. and G. Foyle, 4/-)**

This book is one of over 200 in a series of so-called Handbooks dealing with all sorts of sports and pastimes. To my mind, it must differ from most of the others in that the newcomer to the activity concerned is likely to be a boy or girl in the early teens. Active youngsters of this age are not usually also great book-readers and I would think it vital that this book should seize and hold their interest right from the start. For this reason I would have preferred the chapters on the history and the structure of our sport to have been placed at the end rather than the beginning of the book.

But once past the Emperor Theodosius, Baron de Coubertin and the definition of an amateur, Peter Bird introduces the young reader clearly and concisely to track facilities and athletics kit, to the principal events and the techniques and training they call for. Inevitably these latter aspects are somewhat sketchily dealt with and I think the author would have done young athletes a service if he had suggested the A.A.A. Instructional Booklets for later reading when they wish to go more deeply into the event(s) of their choice. He might also have mentioned the specialist field event clubs.

A few errors catch the eye—David Jones' club, Susan instead of Suzanne Allday, even the address of the A.A.A.—but overall this is a careful introduction to our sport which is a miracle of compression. Its one hundred pages within stiff covers represent good value for money.

**" Handbook of the English Schools Athletic Association, 1962 " (9d. including postage from Mr. A. Foyston, 16 Cavendish Road, Hull, Yorks.)**

The first item, the Annual Report for 1961, shows how the work and achievements of the S.A.A. are growing steadily. Also included are " tables of standard attainments," the Association's Constitution and Competition Rules and the addresses of county secretaries. I found a good deal of interest in this handbook and cannot imagine how the S.A.A. manages to sell it so cheaply.

**" British Best Performances 1961 " (4/- including postage from Mr. A. Huxtable, 78 Toynbee Road, London S.W.20)**

This is the fourth annual compilation by the National Union of Track Statisticians of the greatest feats by British athletes during the past season. The 40-50 best performances in each event, men's and women's, are listed (only the athlete's best jump or throw in any given competition). In all about 2,000 performances are listed representing a tremendous amount of careful work on the part of the N.U.T.S. To me the main interest of these tables is the way in which they show (as the ordinary ranking lists do not) how completely certain events were dominated by one athlete, e.g. Herriott who achieved 11 of the 14 best winning times in the steeplechase, Surety 10 of the best 12 in the 440 yards hurdles, Fairbrother 18 of the best 22 high jump wins, and Rowe all of the 17 top shot marks. This booklet is indispensable if you want to possess a complete record of British athletics in 1961.

BARRY WILLIS.

## In the Right Direction

People's Palace of Sport

By G. A. McPARTLIN

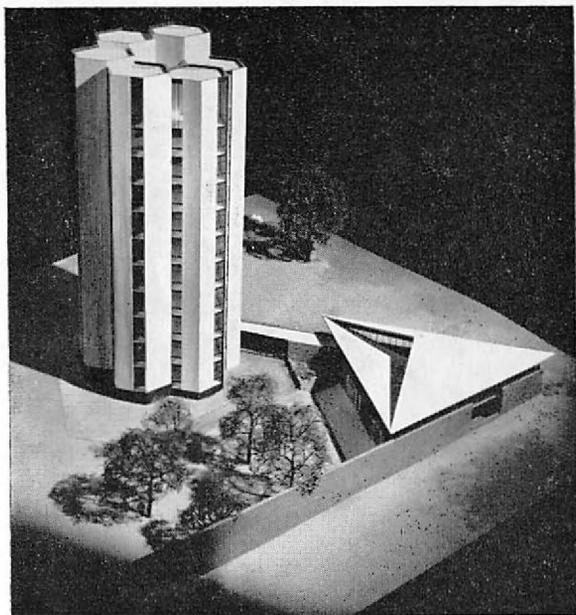
*Senior Technical Adviser, The Central Council of Physical Recreation*

IT is paradoxical that Britain, recognized as the mother country of sport, has hitherto been unable to boast of even one national sports training centre built for the job, whereas all over Europe on both sides of the iron curtain magnificent centres laid out and equipped on a scale that is a revelation to British visitors are almost commonplace.

With limited means the Central Council of Physical Recreation has done its best to fill the gap by taking over and adapting three existing buildings, the most recent built more than 100 years ago, the oldest dating back in part to the 10th century.

Little wonder then that those who had long deplored Britain's deficiencies felt excited when in 1954 the London County Council announced that they had accepted Sir Gerald Barry's bold and imaginative plan for developing part of the site of the old Crystal Palace as a National Youth and Sports Centre; that they had earmarked more than £2m. for its construction and that they had invited the C.C.P.R. to accept responsibility for administering it.

Unfortunately the initial enthusiasm was dampened by a government embargo on capital expenditure of this magnitude and although the L.C.C. architects in consultation with the C.C.P.R. went ahead with the plans, for seven years, the project remained a palace in the air.



**The hostel, which is of a unique hexagonal design, provides the maximum of accommodation but utilizes the minimum of ground area**

However, by 1960 all obstacles were overcome and today the new Crystal Palace is rising from the ashes of the old. By the end of 1963 it should be in operation. It may be opportune to see how the planners envisage the new centre working.

After consultation with the governing bodies of sport the C.C.P.R. decided that although the centre was primarily for training and therefore not in any sense intended to vie with existing large-scale stadiums it should, as far as possible, supplement existing places for competitive events and in particular give opportunities to the smaller governing bodies of sport to hold important fixtures under good conditions—a luxury which hitherto they had seldom known.

One of the greatest difficulties facing the planners was the small area—just over 36 acres—which made it impossible to have specialized facilities for all the games and sports with a claim to inclusion. It was decided to adopt the principle of the greatest good for the greatest number and to include as many multi-purpose arrangements as possible.

Athletics was given priority and for swimming and diving it was decided to take this opportunity of giving London its first Olympic swimming and diving pools.

The three cardinal features of the schemes are —

The residential hexagonal hostel which will house 135 people in single and double rooms.

An athletics and games stadium to full Olympic specification and with room for 15,000 spectators. As well as being used for training, it will be used for competitions in athletics and for such games as soccer, hockey and Rugby football.

The most remarkable feature of all is the multi-purpose sports building. This structure, the only one of its kind in Britain, will contain international swimming and diving pools and a teaching pool for beginners, with room for 1,600 spectators.

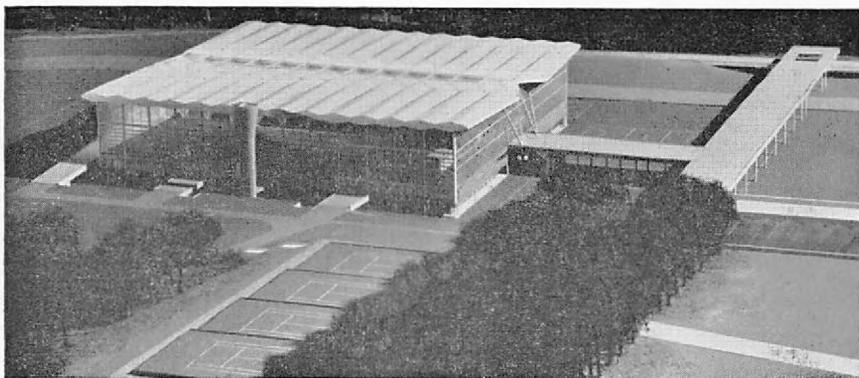
Parallel with the swimming pools there will be an indoor sports arena large enough for a full size lawn tennis court, with retractable seating which when pulled into position for spectators will seat 1,300. This arena can be used for such games as basketball, netball, badminton, and table tennis.

Also under the same roof will be three gymnasia equipped for gymnastics, weight-lifting, wrestling, fencing, and boxing; six squash courts; a cricket school, and a lawn tennis practice area. There will also be a lecture room, a first aid room, cafeteria and offices for the administrative staff and special places for the press, radio, and television commentators. Between the sports hall and the swimming pools there will be changing rooms, showers, locker rooms, and lavatories. As well as the stadium and the sports building there will be two practice pitches, four lawn tennis courts, and a number of all-purpose areas for netball, basketball, and similar games.

There has been regular consultation with the governing bodies of sport to ensure that what is being done meets their needs and also to plan the programme for the centre. The director and the management committee are already assured that the Amateur Athletic Association intend to regard the Crystal Palace as its National Coaching Headquarters; the Football Association propose to use the stadium with its magnificent flood-lighting for minor representative games and for match practice for its international teams; the Amateur Swimming Association intend to stage full-scale international swimming and diving matches as well as to train top-grade performers and coaches; the Lawn Tennis Association want to use the centre for the training of specially selected young players; many of the smaller governing bodies plan to hold international and championship events in the indoor arena; and many of the large governing bodies hope that British teams and teams from the Commonwealth and other countries will be able to use the centre for training.

Apart from this high-level use of the centre it is hoped that the general public will be able to swim there and use the squash and tennis courts and the track for recreation and personal training.

It has been estimated that working to full capacity the centre may have 135 trainees in residence and may, in a day's programme, have three major competitive events, with some 15,000 spectators as well as more than 400 non-resident athletes and sportsmen attending for training. In these conditions the centre might be seen as presenting an ever changing kaleidoscope of sport. Fortunately the director and his staff will not work in isolation. One of the advantages of having the centre administered by the C.C.P.R. is that it will be integrated with the work of the council as a whole and be related to the programmes of the other three C.C.P.R. centres—Bisham Abbey, Lilleshall Hall and Plas y Brenin.



**The Sports Hall with covered running track shown on the right**

To help the director the C.C.P.R. executive committee have set up a strong management committee under the chairmanship of Mr. A. H. Gem, deputy chairman of the C.C.P.R. Its members include three representatives of the London County Council, Sir Isaac Hayward, Mrs. Freda Corbet and Sir William Hart, and the following representatives of the C.C.P.R.:—Miss Elaine Burton, ex-M.P. for Coventry South and former international athlete; Mr. Cyril Gadney, president-elect of the Rugby Football Union; Mr. J. Emrys Lloyd, hon. legal adviser to the British Olympics Association and Olympic fencer; Mr. P. B. Lucas, managing director of the Greyhound Racing Association and a leading figure in golf; Mr. Walter Winterbottom, director of coaching, the Football Association; Colonel Townend, headmaster of Millhouse Pre-Preparatory School and a former international athlete; Miss P. C. Colson, general secretary of the C.C.P.R. Mr. Philip Goodhart, M.P. for Beckenham, in whose constituency the centre is to be built, represents local interests.

The C.C.P.R. in taking on the administration of the centre realized that they might have to face a deficit of some £45,000 annually but for the first five years of the centre's existence this worry has been removed by annual grants from the Ministry of Education of £10,000, from the City Parochial Foundation of £10,000, and from the L.C.C. of £25,000. The future must largely depend on the support the centre receives from those for whom it is intended. Given the full support of the governing bodies of sport, there is no reason why this gap should not be appreciably narrowed.

The first director of the centre appointed at the end of last year will take up his duties this autumn. He is Mr. Emlyn Jones, a technical adviser on the C.C.P.R. headquarters staff and he brings to his formidable task valuable experience of working with the governing bodies of sport in the planning and carrying out of training schemes and training courses for coaches as well as a life-long interest and love of sport, assets which it is hoped will enable him to get the centre away to a good start.

One can only hope that the imaginative planning that has gone into this project will meet with the success it deserves and that in the years to come the new Crystal Palace will be as much a magnet to the younger generation of Britain as the old Crystal Palace was to their Victorian ancestors.

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## Road Running

JOHN JEWELL

**L**ONG distance road running in the pre-war period consisted of few marathons with very few supporting events, and these events were generally tacked on to the track programme. The competitors came from the ranks of the cross country runners and thus was provided their sole programme for the summer months.

However, today, as the result of a remarkable expansion during the last ten years, Road Running is now a fully fledged branch of athletics with events at all distances throughout the length and breadth of the land. The intense enthusiasm of the participants in this exacting branch of athletics, has resulted in the development of long distance runners who are essentially road runners. Although the number of road races of 10 miles and upwards has trebled in the past ten years, it has been possible to avoid clashing with the cross country season which is an important consideration for the small club. A host of shorter races and the famous relay races must not be forgotten to obtain the complete picture.

Road races are similar to cross country races in that they cater for runners of all standards; in fact the turn out for some road races resembles in magnitude a cross country field. The Standard Certificate scheme of the Road Runners Club, which has been in operation since 1954, has provided a big incentive to the athlete of average ability. The awards are based on three performances at different distances in any road race in the country of 10 miles and over.

The First class certificate is still an award of distinction in spite of the rising standard of performance in road races. It is based on a 2 hour 40 minutes marathon and two other performances of equivalent merit, at different distances. One of the three distances need not be a marathon but must be 20 miles at least. The distances may be of the athlete's own choice; and 1st and 2nd class standards have been set for every long distance road race in the country, whether it is a precise number of miles or an odd distance as in a place-to-place race. On account of discrepancies which have occurred in the distances of a number of road races, an investigation has been made into the interesting and important problem of measuring road distances accurately. Many road courses have been found to be appreciably short of the full distance.

As with athletics generally a tremendous rise in the standard of performances has occurred during the past decade, and this is apparent not only in the times of the leading exponents but right down the field as well. Performances which would have brought a man into the front rank a few years ago, now give him only an insignificant position. The champions of today could give those of the post-war Jack Holden era two miles start in a marathon.

This has been achieved as in other branches of athletics by intensive training and nowhere are the results so apparent as with those dedicated to long distance running. The age of speed in the marathon was inaugurated by Jim Peters with sub 2-20 marathons which were at first not believed outside this country but which were subsequently recorded by Popov and others. These performers were all capable of fast 3 and 6 mile times on the track but the imponderable influences of the weather and the nature of the course itself still added unknown factors to the race.

Races of a new type have been established during the past 10 years which attract a man who is not well adapted to the modern fast marathon. These are the ultra long distance events of which Arthur Newton was the pioneer. The best known of these is the London to Brighton race of 52½ miles, a classic in the long distance runner's calendar. Many extremely fine feats of running have been performed on the Brighton road during the past 11 years. The record has been reduced by half an hour and over 150 men have run from Big Ben to the Aquarium within the time limit. Geoffrey Dyson once referred to 'those fantastic men who run from London to Brighton,' but the achievement is well within the capacity of the average marathon runner.

The only other similar race is the 54-mile Comrades from Durban to Pietermaritzberg (vice versa in alternate years) which first took place in 1921. A band of 50-mile runners has therefore existed in South Africa for a considerable time. The Brighton race immediately attracted their attention and indeed since Wally Hayward won in 1953, the record has been held by only one home athlete, Tom Richards. Gerald Walsh of the Durban AC and Jackie Mekler (Germiston Callies) have also broken Hayward's time. These men have run from London to Brighton as fast as the winner of the first cycle race on the Brighton road covered the distance.

This year the Road Runners Club are for the first time sending a team to South Africa to compete in the Comrades Marathon on 31st May. John Smith (Epsom and Ewell), Tom Buckingham (Leamington AC) and Don Turner (Epsom and Ewell) have been selected. The financing of this venture has been a considerable undertaking to an organisation with a very modest subscription in a sport where there is no gate. However, thanks to many road runners and a number of good friends this has been accomplished. Participation of our runners in the Comrades Marathon will arouse great interest in South Africa and stimulate road runners in this country to greater efforts.

The Isle of Man 37½-mile race round the famous TT course is an event of unique character. Last year Ron Linstead of Belgrave Harriers knocked 7 minutes off Tom Richards' record for the circuit which includes the ascent of the 2000 feet Snaefell.

Two new ultra long distance events appeared last year, a 44-mile race from Edinburgh to Glasgow and a 48½-mile race from Liverpool to Blackpool. John Smith won the latter, averaging 6 minute 9 second miles the whole way, and he also won the London to Brighton race a month later.

This brief account of road running can only reveal a few facets of this flourishing branch of athletics.

## Cross Country Running—Past, Present and Future

*SQUIRE YARROW*

ONE likes to think of cross country running as a typically British sport, but in fact the crossing of country on foot must be one of man's basic exercises. We can perhaps rightly, however, take pride in the thought that we were the first to turn the art of cross country running into a competitive sport.

Those who, like myself, look back at many years of enjoyment of the English countryside in Winter, at happy carefree hours of vigorous exercise in the company of likeminded 'mudlarks,' can never be sufficiently grateful to the unknown genius who first conceived the idea of cross country running.

I have always firmly believed that the spirit which binds the members of a Club together in unshakeable loyalty is born 'on the country.' There is an indefinable quality about the friendship created in cross country running, not only amongst the members of a Club but also between the members of Clubs which are in friendly rivalry, which other athletes will never enjoy.

We carried this lasting friendship with us into our road races and on to the track, and today, many years after retirement, we can see by the look in the eye and feel by the grip of the hand, when one meets an old cross country companion or rival, that this friendship will never die. This, I think, is what makes athletics so much worthwhile.

In the days between the Wars we in the South had to battle hard to graduate to our Club's first team and one's first County colour brought a thrill of pride in achievement never equalled by subsequent honours. But I best remember, not the competition, keen and satisfying though this was, but the inter-club social runs and matches at Woodford, Halton, Henlow, Wimbledon, Putney, Wycombe, Aldershot, Blackheath etc. When we had all washed the mud from our bodies and the tiredness from our limbs, we would have a meal together and then enjoy a social evening laid on by our hosts. And what evenings these were. I doubt if the magic could be recaptured, though a 'get together' of old-timers of the 1928-39 era would produce an interesting assembly, and the anecdotes . . . !

Unfortunately I am not closely in touch with cross country running today, but my interest in it is just as great as ever. The quality of performance is astoundingly good and the size of the fields in the major events proves that as a sport its popularity is as great, if not greater, than ever.

The great names of the past, Clubs as well as men, have departed and new ones have taken their place. Belgrave and Mitcham in the South, Birchfield and Tipton in the Midlands and Hallamshire and Salford in the North will no doubt be back at the top one day when their present youngsters reach the senior ranks. Meanwhile we are witnessing the success of Clubs who in most cases are being inspired by devoted runners of the previous era. And this is as it should be.

I see no signs of interest in cross country running waning in the future, but as a sport it could undergo a change. The post-war years have seen the growth

of a tendency to 'soften' cross country to suit the foreign conception and to aid the distance track man. I am not decrying this idea, but I do hope that we will continue to provide also for the vast majority of cross country men who love the game for its own sake rather than for the prize and who, even if they couldn't quite cross their heart and say that they 'enjoy' the major races, at least can and do really enjoy their companionable club and inter-club runs.

I dislike intensely a modern attitude which tends to turn our sport into big business. Athletics is, or should be, a healthy and enjoyable game and we ought to remember that it is the thousands of everyday ordinary clubmen, as well as our top performers, who keep athletics alive. Long may we see the straggling line of brightly coloured vests crossing the British countryside on a Winter's day. This typifies the 'stuff' we are made of.

## Modern Champions

NEIL ALLEN

"**H**IGHEST athlete of all time" could well be the title bestowed upon **John Uelses**, a United States Marine, who has become the first man to pole vault himself over 16ft. This he did on two successive evening indoor meetings, first clearing 16ft.  $\frac{1}{4}$ in. and then 16ft.  $\frac{1}{2}$ in. He was aided by the springy, and therefore controversial, glass fibre pole which is to be discussed by the I.A.A.F. next summer. Uelses (pronounced Yule-cess) was born Feigenbaum in Berlin on 14th July, 1937. His father, a German soldier, was killed in the war and Uelses moved to the United States to live with an aunt in 1949 and took her name. He is 6ft. 1in. tall, weighs 172lb., uses a 14ft. 11ins. cut-down pole and a truncated run-up of 104ft. Chiefly self-coached, his target is 17ft.

**U.K. note.** The United Kingdom record is still 14ft.  $\frac{1}{4}$ in., first set by Geoff Elliott in 1954. Most likely man to break this in 1962 is possibly James Robson McManus, ex-Cambridge blue, now coached by A.A.A. north-east coach Ian Ward. McManus's best is 13ft.  $\frac{7}{8}$ in. but Ward believes that 14ft. 3in. is within the reach of his charge.

"Strongest athlete of all time" is a big label but **Gary Jay Gubner**, the latest sensation in shot-putting, is big enough to wear it. Gubner, a 19 year old student at New York University, is 6ft.  $\frac{2}{4}$ in. tall, weighs 260lb. and has already heaved the 16lb. shot 64ft.  $\frac{11}{16}$ in. The world record of Bill Nieder at 65ft. 10in. seems well within his reach if we consider that in the three Olympic lifts he has a competition best of 1,075lbs. (press 360, snatch 315, clean and jerk 400)—good enough for fourth place in Rome. In training he has squatted with 600lbs. and has a best of 450lbs. in the bench press. According to his coach Joe Healy, Gubner ("he has muscles in places where most people don't have places" said one journalist) will beat 67ft. this year and eventually perhaps 70ft.

**U.K. note**—The United Kingdom record is 64ft. 2in. by Arthur Rowe. This has (at time of publication) only been beaten by Nieder, Gubner and Dallas Long (64ft.  $\frac{7}{8}$ in.)

## Milocarian Trophy Competition

Commander F. W. COLLINS, R.N. (Ret'd)

**E**ARLY in 1946 the Milocarian A.C., whose members are all officers in the Services and which had therefore shut down for the War, set about finding out whether or not it would be possible to field a track team that summer. Service movements were still too disorganised for this to be done, but the lengthy work of checking the whereabouts of everyone on the Club list in 1939 produced the sad fact that 100 members had lost their lives in action. When considering a memorial to them it was realised that, as most subscriptions had been continued during the intervening years, there was a very useful balance at the bank.

When the end of the war was in sight the A.A.A. had already asked the late Lord Aberdare to take the chair at the meeting held to consider the future development of athletics. The broad recommendation from that meeting was that emphasis should be placed on the enjoyment of their sport by the rising generation and to do this boys at school and Club juniors should be taught how to run and jump and throw; more tracks should be provided; and more competitions should be organised.

From the last of these objectives grew the idea that the Milocarian memorial should be an inter-school competition, to be held within each school so that no travelling was involved and, of even greater importance, so that every school would have an equal opportunity of matching itself with all the other schools. It was decided that a trophy should be presented to the A.A.A. to be held by the winning school each year and that, once the organisation of the competition had been established, it should also be turned over to the Association. This was done in 1946 and ever since the Club had made an annual donation to the A.A.A. to help meet the cost of running the competition.



**Milocarian Trophy**

The principle on which the competition is based is that a certain proportion of the boys in a two year age group must enter from each school. Every boy must enter for two track and one field event, or vice-versa. Points are scored according to a simple score sheet and the school with the highest average per boy per event wins the Trophy. A boy can compete in as many events as he likes, but only three results may be used for the competition. All performances in matches, school competitions or properly supervised Milocarian tests may count, provided they are made before the end of July of the year in question.

For 1962 the boys must be in the A.A.A. 'Youth' group, i.e. 15 or 16 years old on 1st April, 1962. 20% of the boys in this group in the school must be entered, with a minimum entry of 10. The maximum entry is 25, even if this is less than 20% of the eligible number. Rules and scoring table are all contained on one sheet which will be sent to anyone interested by Mr. J. E. Peckham, Hon. Secretary, Milocarian Trophy Committee, 68 Erskine Road, Sutton, Surrey.

Since 1947, 74 different schools have entered for the competition, best year being 1959 with 26. A total of 5,564 boys have had their results entered and, though some of these are consecutive entries by the same boy, there have been many thousands more who have taken part in the competition. The reasons why these latter efforts have not appeared in the results are either because the boy was not good enough for his score to give him a place in the school team, or because enough results could not be obtained for the school in question to send in an entry.

The main reason why so large a proportion of the schools which could enter do not do so, and there are well over 1,000 of them, is that they have not the staff available to conduct the tests and collect the results. Here is a great opportunity for the A.A.A. Club members to do something for the rising generation. If your local school, comprehensive, secondary modern, grammar, public, or private does not take part, it might well do so if your services were offered as an occasional judge or time-keeper for Milocarian trials. Performances recorded up to 31st July will count so the date of the School Sports does not rule out scores made up to the end of the summer term.

Winning schools have been—King Alfred, B.A.O.R. (6 times); Lancing (3 times); Hurstpierpoint and Prince Rupert, B.A.O.R. (twice); Wanstead; Penzance; Southfield; Oxford.

## Britain's Weakest Event—The Decathlon

ANDREW HUXTABLE

THOSE readers who subscribe to "Athletics Weekly" may have noticed a letter by this writer drawing attention to the tremendous superiority of West German over British standards in the decathlon. This is best illustrated by the following table which shows the number of performers who achieved the minima indicated in 1961:

	West Germany	Great Britain
over 7,000	2	—
7,000—6,500	4	—
6,499—6,000	12	—
5,999—5,500	22	3
5,499—4,900	73	7
	113	10

Britain's top performer, George McLachlan, would have ranked 24th on the W. German (DLV) list. In no other event is Britain so far behind—next worst is the pole vault where Rex Porter (13ft. 9ins.) would rank as high as 8th. As a simple comparison here are the 1961 best performances by Willi Holdorf and George McLachlan respectively:—

7238	(10.7	7.11	13.46	1.70	48.8	15.0	45.47	3.80	55.06	4 : 53.4)
5777	(11.1	6.69	10.33	1.77	51.1	15.6	34.18	2.85	43.90	4 : 38.8)

Two sensations in W. Germany last year were Hermann Alms (6877) and Hans-Joachim Walde (6700), both born in 1942! It is clear that the emphasis placed on mastery of the various field events techniques in W. Germany is reflected

in the decathlon. The paucity of British decathlon talent can be seen by comparison with countries which we have recently met in 'B' matches, e.g. Belgium, which had 3 performers better than McLachlan (all over 6,000) and Switzerland with 7 better.

One major reason for this continued lag behind other countries is the apparent reluctance of men who rank at or near the top of an event to compete in decathlon competitions. One such performer is Robert Birrell, who with bests of 14.2 (110mH), 44ft. 6ins. (SP) and 144ft. 2ins. (DT) could, I believe, raise the U.K. record (6176 by Colin Andrews), to round 6,500.

Let us hope that 1962 will see a marked improvement in this most unjustifiably neglected event and perhaps even representation at Belgrade.

## Social News

**S**INCE the last issue of the Newsletter there has been one Social Evening, which was held on Friday, 8th December, at the Shaftesbury Hotel, Monmouth Street, off Charing Cross Road. The programme for this evening was given in full in the Social News, and consisted of an excellent demonstration of weight training technique by Lionel Pugh with Barry Jackson as his pupil, followed by instructional films on Discus Throwing, Javelin Throwing and Shot Putting.

Despite the advance notification given through the medium of the Newsletter and in "Athletics Weekly," the attendance was once again disappointing, only about thirty members being present. Those who were there were all agreed that it was a most worth-while effort, but frankly with such little support the Club will not be able to continue with such events. It was, indeed, for this reason that no attempt was made to organise a similar event on the occasion of the Annual General Meeting.

Members will, I hope, be pleased to know that arrangements are in hand once again to hold the Annual A.A.A. Championships Dinner in the Members' Dining Room at the House of Commons on Saturday, 14th July, 1962. This year we have been fortunate to have as our Sponsor the Right Hon. P. J. Noel-Baker, M.P., who will be well-known for his interest in athletics. The arrangements for the Dinner will be similar to previous years, and full details of the cost and availability of tickets will be made known towards the end of May in a separate distribution to all members. This Dinner, which has been highly successful for the past two years, will probably be held in conjunction with the International Athletes' Club in some form or other yet to be decided. It provides, of course, a first-class opportunity for Club Members to get together, and to meet the Champions of the year.

C.N.C.

## A Proud Tradition

MELVYN WATMAN

**T**HE British team for the 7th European Championships, to be held in Belgrade in September, has a proud tradition of success to uphold. British men athletes have accumulated no fewer than 19 gold medals from the five meetings entered since 1938—more than any other nation—while the girls have won five from the four meetings held since 1946, a record bettered only by the U.S.S.R. and Netherlands.

We first entered the Championships on the second occasion on which they were held (Paris, 1938) and were rewarded with victory by four of Britain's all-time greats: Godfrey Brown (400m.), Sydney Wooderson (1500m.), Harold Whitlock (50km. road walk) and Don Finlay 110m. H.). Silver medals were won by the 4 x 400m. team, and marathoner Squire Yarrow.

The next European title meet was, of course, postponed until 1946 (Oslo). The remarkable Sydney Wooderson won the 5,000m. and Jack Archer took the 100m. The young high jumper Alan Paterson took second place, as did the 1600m. relay team (Ronald Ede, Derek Pugh, B. W. Elliott and Bill Roberts) and

50km. walker Harry Forbes. Incidentally, 6th in the long jump was A.A.A. national coach, Dennis Watts. Most successful of the girls was Winifred Jordan, who was 2nd in both sprints.

We really mopped up in Brussels in 1950. Victories were recorded by Brian Shenton (200m.), Derek Pugh (400m.), John Parlett (800m.), Jack Holden (marathon), the 4 x 400 team of Martin Pike, Les Lewis, Angus Scott and Derek Pugh, high jumpers Alan Paterson and Sheila Alexander (later Mrs. Lerwill) and the women's relay squad of Elspeth Hay, Jean Desforges, Dorothy Hall and June Foulds. Three silver medals were gained, too: by Maureen Dyson (80m. H.), Dorothy Tyler (high jump) and Bertha Crowther (pentathlon).

Berne, in 1954, proved somewhat of a let-down—only three "goldies" and four silver medals. Roger Bannister took the 1500m., Thelma Hopkins the high jump and Jean Desforges the long jump. The vice-champions were Chris Chataway (5,000m.), Jack Parker (110m. H.), the 4 x 110m. team of Ken Box, George Ellis, Ken Jones and Brian Shenton, and Diane Leather (800m.). The 1600m. quartet (Peter Higgins, Alan Dick, Peter Fryer and Derek Johnson) finished first, but were controversially disqualified.

In the face of stiffer than ever competition, the performance of the British team in Stockholm in 1958 was greater even than eight years before. John Wrighton (400m.), Mike Rawson (800m.), Brian Hewson (1500m.), Arthur Rowe (shot), Ted Sampson, John MacIsaac, John Wrighton and John Salisbury (+ x 400m.), Stan Vickers (20km. road walk), and Heather Young (100m.) all chalked up outstanding victories. Second places were gained by Dave Segal (200m.), John Salisbury (400m.), Peter Radford, Roy Sandstrom, Dave Segal and Adrian Breacker (4 x 100m.), Diane Leather (800m.), and Madeleine Weston, Dorothy Hyman, Marianne Dew and Carole Quinton (4 x 100m.).

And Belgrade? Well, on last season's form men like David Jones, Adrian Metcalfe, Robbie Brightwell, Bruce Tulloh, Martin Hyman, Arthur Rowe, Ken Matthews, Don Thompson and both relay teams and such girls as Jenny Smart, Jen Dunbar, Joy Jordan and Betty Moore could be in line for gold or silver medals. Here's hoping anyway!

## Are Starting Blocks Really Necessary?

PETER HILDRETH

AS an awed and youthful spectator at White City back in 1946, the heyday of McDonald Bailey and Wint, nothing captured my imagination quite as much as the familiar ritual of the starting blocks. I watched in fascination as sprinters lined up their machinery near the sprint start and then stood back while an attendant hammered in the nails. In those days only athletes who were really with it had blocks; ordinary runners carried a garden trowel with which to dig holes and as this was eventually barred at White City, there were some pretty bad starts.

In time I became the proud possessor of my own starting blocks. I grew attached to them and would use no other. I spaced the blocks as far apart as they could go on the central shaft of my implement and there they remained for the rest of my career. Subconsciously I attributed both success and failure to my blocks. At the European Games in 1954, for instance, I travelled without them because team instruction stated that athletes were not allowed to use their own equipment. How was I to know that this applied to field events men? After I was eliminated in the semi-final, I had a ready excuse.

But quite apart from their usefulness on the track, I found that my blocks were also a great source of prestige. Wherever I went they attracted admiring and curious glances. A bottleneck once occurred at Waterloo station when several citizens craning to see them tripped down the escalator. Occasionally I would leave them on a train and have to claim them at the lost property office. I became acquainted with the staff there and used to be ushered into the manager's office while he telephoned other stations for the latest news of my blocks. Sometimes I even had paragraphs in the newspapers asking for my blocks to be returned.

On my travels I heard some surprising comments from passers-by as to the nature of the gadget I was carrying. Few seemed to guess its real purpose. Trench mortar, back scratcher, outboard motor and shoe polisher were a few of the wilder attempts at identification that I overheard. One lady asked what they were and was clearly satisfied when I told her it was an adjustable prayer mat.

In 1958, following the European Championships at Stockholm, I joined a small team flying to Oslo. My luggage, including blocks, had already been loaded on a London bound plane, so it was without my precious blocks that I faced the starter at Bislet the next day. The local blocks did not appeal to me so I ran without them. Stanko Lorger of Yugoslavia won the 110 metres hurdles in 14.1 secs. My time in second place was 14.3 secs., a personal best. From that day I never took my blocks seriously again, and on retirement gave them away to an up-and-coming sprinter. I hope he does not find out how useless they really are.

## The British European and Commonwealth Games – Perth, 1962

SANDY DUNCAN

**T**HE next British Empire and Commonwealth Games are to be held in Perth, Western Australia, from 22nd November till 1st December, 1962.

Already plans are being made to take from England a team numbering in all about 157 from the nine sports in the programme of the Games. Of this 157 no doubt thirty to thirty five men athletes will be taken.

The main problem is to find the cash to send England's team, for about £75,000 is required.

A joint U.K. Appeals Committee has been set up to deal solely with Commerce and Industry. But England has its own Appeals Committee which has already circularised Athletic Clubs. We do hope each and every Club and well-wisher will send **something**—no matter how small. The address is:—The Appeals Secretary, B.E. and C.A. Appeals Fund (England), 95 Mount Street, London, W.1.

Apart from raising the cash there are many other problems, which confront The Council for England, not the least being the airlift. Two Boeing 707 jets, each holding 120 passengers, have been provisionally booked to take the teams from England, Scotland, Wales, N. Ireland and the Isle of Man and Jersey—each of which contests up to nine sports. Our Medical Advisory Committee has strongly recommended a minimum period of 10 clear days in Perth before competition and preferably 14 days. It is to be hoped that the A.A.A. will fall into line happily with the former suggestion in concord with the other Countries, and thus avoid further press criticism on the lines of that directed against the B.A.A.B. athletic team in Rome. No quick acclimatization can be obtained after such a journey, with the temperatures probably around 80° F. and an 8 hour time change.

Arrangements are going ahead steadily in Perth. A fine new stadium is being built, with a cinder warming-up track outside. These will be the first two cinder tracks in Western Australia. The village will consist of 150 houses in a new housing estate, with temporary offices, dining halls, etc. From all accounts it seems that it will be ideal.

Probably never before at any Games, Olympic 'Empire' or others, have all the sports facilities and the village been grouped so closely together—located as they are in an area of about 4 miles radius. Even the rowing course is in the heart of Perth.

These 'Empire Games' are by now assuming considerable importance. More than thirty countries take part, and the standard of competition is very high. At Cardiff the performances of five of the winners bettered those of the European Championships.

But important as this may be, there is far more behind the concept of 'The Empire Games.' Here is International Sport at its best; there is the minimum of discord; this is a 'family gathering' of friends all speaking the same language, thinking somewhat on the same lines, eating and playing together and even coaching one another before the competitions. This is how sport should be, and every fourth year it springs up miraculously somewhere in the Commonwealth.

England must be there in Perth with her best athletes—for her own sake and for that of the Commonwealth as a whole. Let us do all we can to this end.

## The Future of Our Club

**A**T the request of the Amateur Athletic Association the A.A.A. Club has agreed to take over the entire administration of the Honorary Membership Scheme, for a trial period of two years. This will involve, amongst other things, the operation of the Scheme without recourse to any facilities available at the A.A.A. Offices. Details have been agreed between the A.A.A. Club Committee and the Hon. Secretary and Hon. Treasurer of the A.A.A. and it is the intention that the scheme shall operate as from the 1st April, 1962.

It is hoped by the introduction of this scheme to be able to exercise certain economies in the detailed administration at the A.A.A. Offices, and the basis of the idea is that after deducting the administrative expenses the Club will donate 90% of the total remaining income to the A.A.A., the remaining 10% being kept by the Club for its own internal expenses.

This means that the Club will have greater freedom in running its own affairs and in maintaining contact with its members. It must, however, be remembered that this additional freedom carries with it also additional responsibilities which the Club Committee must face up to. One of these responsibilities involves the important question of increasing Club membership. So far the general trend of membership has been the enrolment of slightly less than 200 per year, with a general wastage of about 100 a year, thus increasing membership by about 100. This is not good enough, and the Committee have it in mind at least to double the membership, which now stands at about 1200, and to do this as quickly as possible, certainly much more quickly than has been the case in the past. To do this the Committee expect the support of all existing members. Detailed plans to put the increase into effect will be made by the Committee as soon as possible, and members will be hearing of these in the very near future. In the meantime, however, there is nothing whatever to prevent members encouraging their friends and acquaintances who are interested in Athletics to become members of the Club. An added fillip to this aim lies in the fact that it has now been agreed between the Club and the Women's A.A.A. that women members may be accepted.

If the two year trial period is successful, and every effort must be made to make it so, this new arrangement could be the beginning of a new era for the Club and a considerable boost to athletics in this country.

*NORMAN COBB.*

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We are grateful to all those who have contributed articles to this issue of our Newsletter. Their views are, of course, not necessarily those of the A.A.A.

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Honorary Secretary: Sq. Ldr. C. N. Cobb, M.B.E., R.A.F. (Ret'd), Ser Amadia, Chanctonbury Chase, Redhill, Surrey. Hon. Editor of Newsletter: B. E. Willis, 14 Bluebridge Avenue, Brookmans Park, Herts.