

A.A.A.

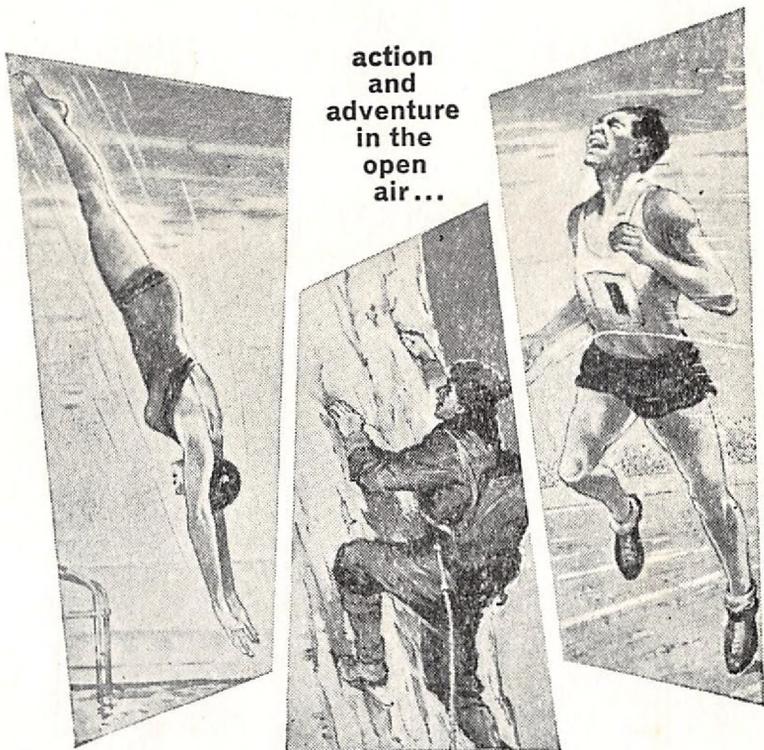


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NEWSLETTER



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British Middle Distance Running: The Way to Future Greatness

TONY ELDER (A.A.A. Senior Hon. Coach)

IT is common practice today to criticise British middle-distance runners for failing to produce world-class performances. "Gone are the days of Bannister, Chataway and Pirie," cry the critics. It is indeed undeniable that some countries have caught us up and that some have overtaken us, the most remarkable improvement having taken place in the United States, where the recent spate of sub 4 minute miles shows that an affluent society is no bar to success in middle-distance running.

The purpose of this article is to examine how British middle-distance runners can regain their place among the best in the world. To put up a world class performance an athlete must (a) be physically capable of such a performance, (b) be psychologically prepared to do it, and (c) have the opportunity to do it. If each of these factors is present the performance will come. Any athlete who has failed to achieve a world-class time when he expected to do so should consider which of these factors was missing. I should like to consider each in turn.

To be physically capable of a 1 : 45 half-mile, a 3 : 55 mile, a 13 : 10 three miles, an athlete must obviously be trained to a very high peak of efficiency. (For a fuller treatment of the subject of Middle Distance Running, see the author's chapter in "Athletics" ed. by G. F. D. Pearson, pub. Nelson's.) There is no one way of achieving this condition. It can be done by training on the track, over the country, on the roads or on whatever terrain the athlete has at his disposal. The great runners of the past have employed a great variety of methods to achieve this physical condition; there is no one way to the top. The great British half-milers, milers and three milers of the future will no doubt train in many different ways. Where the training is done and what it is will depend on where the athlete lives and what his job is and on what training he finds suits him best.

In the winter months there is little doubt that the athlete has to run many miles a week (Snell of course ran up to 100 miles per week, though I believe it can be done on less) to improve his physiological condition. There is no substitute for regular hard work in this period and I think our runners recognise this. It is in the spring that I believe some of the most important work must be done by the champion. He must do really fast work, but also he must practise running at racing speed for as much as $\frac{1}{4}$ of his racing distance. This means 660 yds. in 78 secs. for the half-miler, $\frac{3}{4}$ miles in 2:55 for the miler, and 2 miles in 8:40 for the 3 miler. If this work is neglected world-class performances will elude British athletes. And of course this quality in training is quite impossible without several years of solid conditioning. The summer or racing season is for many athletes the most difficult time of the year for training. To do too much will produce tiredness on race days, to do too little will lead to a loss of fitness as the summer goes by. Every athlete has to experiment and to plan his programme so as to avoid each of these pitfalls.

The psychological condition of the athlete has I believe been much neglected. In the future it is the psychological aspect of an athlete's preparation that must be given more prominence. Much work remains to be done in this field—but as champion athletes begin to attain the maximum physical development possible, it is the mind that must be conditioned better if records are to continue to be broken. The world-record holders of the future will not only be physically capable of great times—they will believe themselves capable.

It is not often that an athlete can convince himself of his greatness, especially on a big occasion, and the great British middle-distance runners of the next few years will need to be motivated by their coaches as never before. Many of our best runners have no coaches and they achieve by dint of much hard and sensible training a first-class physical condition. But the ability to do really well—to beat

others as good as themselves on the big occasion—often eludes them, for psychologically they are vulnerable. Elliott and Snell were not only great animals, superbly fit and fast, but each had behind him a man whose greatest contribution to his success lay in the power to inspire. The 3 Gold Medals in Rome (Snell—800 metres, Elliott—1,500 metres, Halberg—5,000 metres) were won by men who were not only physically supreme but who believed they could win. Cerutti and Lydiard had done their work well. Our runners today need this kind of inspiration more than anything. If British middle-distance runners are once again to beat the world then we must have coaches with great personality and character.

The third factor which is also very important is the need to have the opportunity to break records. By this I mean that races must be run fast by those who are capable of running them fast. It is no good a potential 1:45 half-miler running many of his races with a 54 or 55 secs. first lap. He must get used to going through in 52 secs. or under, and occasionally a "hare" can be introduced to hot up the early pace. The great runner should not suffer the indignity of having to dispute the race in the final straight by sprinting against his inferior rivals and doing a mediocre time. The race should be won long before the end by maintaining a fast pace throughout. On this point I think it would be very much to everyone's advantage if more of our best middle-distance runners trained together. Too many of them train alone and fail to bring out that little bit extra. Even occasional training sessions together would raise the standard, and this could be continued in the summer in the form of joint track sessions and actual races such as have been organised this year in some places.

As a middle-distance coach my conclusions are that we certainly have the talent to regain our position as a leading middle-distance nation. Our standards will rise provided our athletes continue to train hard and sensibly (and preferably together), provided they run their races determined to go through the intermediate sections fast, and provided they are completely mentally prepared to run faster than ever before—as fast in fact as their training will allow them to. Great things are possible for those with sufficient determination.

Sports Medicine

Translating a 'hobby' into a service

Physician: We have both of us read the article by Mr. Featherstone in the April issue of *Sport and Recreation* on 'Coping with Sports Injuries,' and I think we both found it interesting and stimulating. What are your main impressions?

Surgeon: My first impression is that the organisation and running of courses as described in the article is a good idea. It is obvious that the author is attempting to provide a valuable service and is doing good work. I do wonder however whether this is quite the best way to tackle the problems involved in teaching the prevention and management of sports injuries.

Physician: Yes, I agree. It seems to me that such courses could well be enhanced by the addition of lectures from suitably qualified members of the medical profession, who by virtue of their training and experience could add considerably to the technical approach of the first-class physiotherapist. A medical practitioner, in the course of his preclinical and clinical training, receives much more instruction in physiology and pathology than a physiotherapist or other medical auxiliary, and throughout his professional career he continues to acquire further knowledge in these fields. This places him at a material advantage in lecturing on these subjects.

Do you think that there are sufficient doctors with the appropriate knowledge of and experience in sports injuries to take the lead in providing guidance of this kind?

Surgeon: I can of course speak only from my own knowledge here, but certainly if membership of the British Association of Sport and Medicine is any guide there would seem to be plenty of doctors as well as physiotherapists and physical educationists up and down the country to provide the necessary teaching resources. Do you agree that in these courses the accent should be on prevention rather than on treatment ?

Physician: Oh yes, this is obvious. The amount of time lost and unnecessary suffering caused by neglect of elementary precautions is as great in the field of sport as in any other sphere of human activity. Where the coach and trainer, who are in constant touch with the athletes and sportsmen in their care, can lend invaluable support is in the supervision of simple measures which will often prevent unnecessary sports injuries.

Surgeon: Do you feel that the coach or trainer has any particular part to play in the actual treatment of injury ?

Physician: I think he has a most important part inasmuch as he is usually on the spot when the injury is sustained, and can therefore render immediate first aid. If this is carried out rapidly and skilfully it will often make all the difference to the eventual outcome of treatment.

Surgeon: If the coach or trainer is to render first aid in a case of injury, to what extent if any do you think he should attempt to reach a diagnosis ?

Physician: Well of course many of the common sports injuries are easily recognised by anyone with any experience, particularly if he himself has suffered from the same in the past. Obviously it would be unfair and wrong to expect the coach or trainer to be able to diagnose a surgical condition in detail. He should, however, like the first aid man, be able to spot the common types of injury and be able to differentiate between, for example, an obvious fracture and a simple sprain. Do you agree ?

Surgeon: Indeed yes. I think the type of courses which we are considering could well provide coaches and trainers with a series of basic rules of thumb whereby they could determine with a fair degree of accuracy the relative severity of an injury, in particular, what injuries require immediate or urgent qualified medical attention. What I think must be discouraged vigorously is any possibility that the non-medically qualified person may be tempted to bite off more than he can chew! This still happens too often, and the consequences are almost invariably regrettable.

Rehabilitation

Physician: Of course in addition to doing all he can to prevent injury, and to render first aid when it occurs, the coach or trainer has a real part to play in the rehabilitation of the patient after the acute phase of the injury is over.

Surgeon: This I see as perhaps his most important task. At present, and probably for many years to come, the National Health Service cannot begin to provide the sort of service necessary if every injured athlete or sportsman is to be properly and fully rehabilitated. There is therefore everything to be said for including the coach or trainer in the therapeutic team, with the specific task of supervising the later and more active stages of treatment in co-operation with the doctor in charge of the case. Experience has showed time and again how valuable can be the coach's contribution at this stage of treatment, how smooth and easy the progress from formal rehabilitation to the normal pattern of training, and how beneficial this is to the patient's morale.

Physician: Why is it that the treatment of sports injuries presents such problems ? Why should National Health Service facilities be limited as you say they are ?

Surgeon: I think we must be quite clear in just what respect the Health Service facilities are limited. Of course serious injuries are properly treated—there is no question of that. But the majority of sports injuries are not serious, and most of them only disable the sportsman as far as the practice of his sport is concerned. In the past, and still today, the treatment of these injuries has tended to be a very hit

and miss affair, with some doctors taking a special interest in them as a form of hobby. With the growth in demand for medical treatment of all kinds following the introduction of the Health Service, and with the chronic shortage of staff in all grades there has inevitably developed a system of clinical priorities, and sports injuries which are relatively minor have a low priority. The net result has tended to be that many athletes and sportsmen can only get treatment from people who are not medically qualified.

Physician: From what you have just said I get the impression that you feel that more attention should be paid in the Health Service to the treatment of sports injuries.

Surgeon: Yes, that is so, and I think there are very good reasons. We know how often past injuries can lead to such conditions as osteoarthritis, and how much disability and trouble these conditions can cause. If we do not treat these sports injuries properly now are we not storing up trouble for the future? It certainly seems that in this age of automation and sedentary work the practice of sport is one of the few ways in which people in this country can keep themselves physically fit. It is of course true that more and more people are being encouraged to take up sport of one kind or another, and yet no parallel provisions are being made to cope with the inevitable increase in sports injuries which must be expected. All this increased sport is going to waste if the sportsmen cannot get treatment for the injuries which they sustain, and it must be remembered that injury is one of the main reasons why people give up sport. I believe that sport has a very significant role in the preservation of health, but unless it is possible for injured sportsmen to obtain the right treatment for their injuries when they need it, then sport will lead to more disability, not less.

A new speciality ?

Physician: Does this mean that you feel that there should be a new speciality in medicine to cope with these problems ?

Surgeon: Yes and no! We already have in medicine a recognised field known as Occupation Medicine, which embraces Industrial Medicine, Service Medicine and Aviation Medicine. I would like to see it include also Sports Medicine. As you know, it is not generally appreciated to what extent the cult of athleticism adds a new dimension to human biology. The acquisition and maintenance of the levels of physical fitness needed to practise sport nowadays, particularly at international level, produce distinct alterations in the patterns of function of the human body and in its response to injury. These must be taken into account if sports injuries are to be properly treated.

Physician: It is true to say, is it not, that in other countries the medical problems of sport are receiving more attention. There are for example, Institutes of Sports Medicine in various Continental countries, and doctors are being trained specially for work in this field.

Surgeon: This situation is variable. Certainly some countries are far in advance of our own, but in many the practice of sports medicine still remains a sort of hobby.

Physician: A hobby, yes, but one that is attracting an increasing amount of interest. I believe this increasing interest is reflected in the growth of the British Association of Sport and Medicine, whose work is not as widely known as perhaps it might be. How do you feel it can help to cope with the problems of sports injuries ?

Surgeon: Primarily of course the British Association of Sport and Medicine is an organisation for people qualified in various disciplines (not only medicine but also physiotherapy, physical education and coaching of various sports) who are interested in studying the various relationships between medicine and sport and who come together from time to time to discuss problems of mutual interest.

Sports injuries

Physician: Does the Association hold courses dealing with sports injuries ?

Surgeon: As such, no. But it does assist appropriate organisations to obtain suitably qualified speakers—indeed many of the lecturers on the recognised courses such as those run by the Football Association are in fact members of BASM. In addition, the Association holds its own meetings, some of which include papers on methods of prevention and treatments of sports injuries. But the Association is not fundamentally a teaching organisation. The teaching of the prevention and treatment of sports injuries will be one of the main functions of the recently inaugurated Institute of Sports Medicine.

Physician: Tell me about the new Institute.

Surgeon: The Institute of Sports Medicine was founded last year under the joint sponsorship of the British Association of Sport and Medicine, the Physical Education Association and the British Olympic Association, and has four main objects. They are (1) the collection and dissemination of information, (2) the inauguration and support both direct and indirect of research into medical and allied problems of sport, (3) teaching, and (4) the practical management of sports injuries and other clinical problems. I must stress that the Institute is very much in its infancy. It is anticipated that many other organisations will in due course join the sponsors as the Institute develops. At present the Institute of Sports Medicine has not the capacity itself to arrange the presentation of teaching courses, but this it could do in conjunction with such existing organisations as the CCPR.

Physician: Of course the CCPR did in the past refer medical problems that came up at its courses to its Medical Advisory Panel which existed for some years, but it has never directly run such courses as we are discussing. How do you think they might be run ?

Surgeon: It should be possible to arrange suitable courses for coaches and trainers in appropriate sports at the CCPR's centres, either as week-end courses or as evening ones. Through the Institute of Sports Medicine and the BASM it should certainly be possible to bring forward members of the medical profession with special knowledge and interest in the appropriate sports to lecture on suitable subjects. At the same time physiotherapists, physical educationists and senior coaches should also be recruited to make their own particular contributions so that all the aspects of the various problems could be properly covered.

Physician: Do you think that this will effectively solve the problems of coping with sports injuries ?

Surgeon: Quite frankly, no, but I stress that this is purely a personal opinion. If really good courses were run it should certainly result in a decrease in the high incidence of sports injuries, and probably also some decrease in the morbidity of those that do occur. But the real solution lies far deeper than that. I do not think that we shall ever solve satisfactorily this enormous problem (and it is enormous when you remember that there are more people injured in sport per year than in road traffic accidents, and that even if many of those injuries are relatively minor they all give rise to some degree of disability) until it becomes generally accepted that sport is of vital importance in our national well-being. Until this is accepted, until the injured athlete gets as much attention as the injured workman, until we realise how short-sighted is the present attitude to sports injuries, and until we make possible the provision of the right sort of medical care on a full time basis, I think the problem, and its consequences, will remain. But this, of course, is a matter for the future.

The above discussion between a surgeon and a physician, both of whom are very interested in the problems of sports medicine, was specially commissioned for 'Sport and Recreation,' the quarterly journal of the Central Council of Physical Recreation, from which it is reproduced by kind permission of the Editor.

Missionary Work

TONY WARD

(Hon. Coaching Secretary, South Western Counties Committee)

THE adage for opportunity 'Go West, young man' hardly applies to track and field in Britain. On the other hand the almost universal image of the West-countryman as being slow-witted, wearing a straw hat and sipping cider, is also far from the mark.

To achieve anything worthwhile in this vast rural area its main officials must possess the belief of a Schweitzer; the loquaciousness of a Billy Graham; the know-how of a Dyson; the political sense of a Harold Wilson. They must also possess very understanding wives and the fortitude of a nomadic monk. Consecutive week-ends may see meetings in Chippenham and Weymouth, followed by a Committee meeting in Taunton and, seven days later, another meeting in St. Austell.

It is, perhaps, the rather misunderstood vastness of the West Country that really thwarts efforts to make it an athletically conscious part of the land. From Swindon (pop. 94,560; no cinder track) in the far east of the region to Penzance (pop. 18,960; no athletic club; no cinder track) in the far west is some 225 miles—further than Leeds—London or Preston, Lancs.—London. For a National Coach to run a course at Cornwall's only, rather desolate, cinder track at Par involves a round trip of 480 miles from London—or the equivalent of running a course at Darlington.

Immediately the problems to be surmounted become apparent and it is easy to understand why for so many years the West lay dormant, a vast source of untapped talent and why, still, many athletes, coaches and officials give up hope and the fight through utter frustration. One has only to look at Cornwall, intensely parochial and unprogressive, to see the vast amount of work that needs doing.

Over the past few years, however, some definite progress has been made. The relatively newly-constituted South-West Counties Committee has finally overcome many fears and prejudices from the counties to establish itself firmly in the fields of coaching, development and competition. Typically, one might almost say inevitably there was some opposition at first. Many remembered the first Western Counties Committee that was formed—an ill-fated organisation that perished on distrust and lack of support—and the early days of the new one were not without various crises. Today, however, under the excellent chairmanship of L. A. Doggett of Wiltshire and with a keen band of officials in the various spheres, the Committee is making great strides forwards.

In the field of Development many Local Authorities are becoming 'track conscious' and beginning to understand the need for the provision of facilities. There are, of course, many 'black spots' as there are in other parts of the country, but within the next ten years there may be some athletics facilities in every major town in the west. In Coaching one has only to look at last year's programme ending in July, 1964, with Christmas vacation courses in Cornwall, Devon and Somerset, two Braunton Training Camps and one hundred and fifty young athletes and thirty five staff on a Somerset Easter Course to realise that athletics in the area lacks nothing in this sphere. In competition the South-Western Counties Championships, after one or two pitfalls, are now firmly established dates on the athletic calendar. Next year, perhaps, we may see an Area team matched against another similar area in the country.

Inevitably, however, the \$60,000 question: 'Where do we go from here?' must be voiced. Perhaps many other similar areas in the country are facing the same problem. The answer lies, I think, in a look at Britain's track and field set up as a whole and a critical viewpoint of organisation.

Many times it has been said that one has not necessarily to be born in London, Birmingham and Manchester in order to be a world-class athlete and the examples of Lynn Davies (Nantymoel), Mary Rand (Street) and Arthur Rowe (Barnsley) are often cited. This may well be true, but it is a truism at the moment that one must live near one of the aforementioned cities in order to achieve international or near international standard—and the migration of athletes to London is surely proof enough of this. It was not until Bruce Tulloh and Mary Rand moved away from the West that they began to achieve their great performances. One athlete who stayed—and he makes an interesting comparison—was the bull-like Barnstaple farmer, Brian Kent-Smith, who trained alone around the lanes and fields of his North Devon home, sixty miles away from the nearest running track, and who must have travelled an unprecedented number of miles for competition. To me the achievements of this miler were nothing short of amazing, but before he reached anywhere near his full potential he retired—just after the Rome Olympics—the strain of training on his own in such remoteness, the travelling to competition often hundreds of miles away, proving soul destroying. Many advised him to move to London but I am not sure that if he had done so he would necessarily have improved. Certainly the training facilities and top class competition would have been there, but I do not believe that such a cosmopolitan life would have suited him. Surely it is an indictment of our present system that an athlete must move from his job and family and background in order to achieve greatness? What then is the alternative?

Those who campaign so vigorously for a British A.A.A. should also take a careful look at the base of their prospective pyramid. They should think about the athlete who, at sixteen years of age, leaves school and joins, let us say, Chipping Sodbury Harriers (a mythical club). At school he found a logical sequence—he competed at District level, and if he won he competed at County level and so on to, perhaps an Area meeting and finally to the English Schools Championships. For him there was incentive all along the line—a carrot was always being dangled. At Chipping Sodbury Harriers, however, things are very different. The zenith of the season is the County Championships at the end of May with perhaps the Area Championships as a possibility. Inter-County Championships? No, he cannot compete there because he has not reached the necessary standard. A.A.A. Championships? To Chipping Sodbury they are in Never-Never Land. The only carrot that can be dangled is that of Personal Best Performance—and this begins to pale after a while. I believe that it is this lack of worthwhile incentive at club level that is one of the major factors in the tremendous flow down the drain of huge numbers of promising school athletes. From the number of athletes in senior competition it is obvious that this 'drainage' is highest in the rural areas, such as the South-West. This could be vastly improved, to my mind, by working further on the Southern A.A.A. idea with its South-West and Eastern Counties Committees and dividing the country into eight or ten different areas; by abandoning the present C.A.U. Championships—at the moment an Essex, Surrey or Middlesex bonanza—and substituting an Inter-Area meeting later in the season with each Area fully represented in each event. If the opportunity for more athletes to compete in the A.A.A. Championships could be given by, for instance, extending the meeting to one lasting three or four days—as in swimming—then again there would be higher incentive and more motivation for the athletes. The great danger of stiffening the standards required to run in national meetings is that, in the end, athletics becomes a sport for the chosen gifted few.

Because of its rural and non-industrial nature, however, the five south-western counties are constantly being drained of their most promising material. A quick survey of the five English Schools Champions from the area this year showed that all intend to leave the South-West within the next few years—going either to College or University, or to improve their prospects in a particular career. Extending this to those who reached the final six at Hendon would show, I am sure, that 90% will move away from the area. This is inevitable, but on my travels I hear often club officials and coaches constantly bemoaning the fact—sometimes quite angrily. It is difficult to persuade them that they must take the long-term view of the athlete's career and look upon themselves rather as the High School Coach must do in the United States. To me, however, this is the next logical step in the development of West Country athletics—to view itself as a 'nursery,' producing

athletically conscious, tremendously fit, top class junior athletes. This is why our coaching scheme, at the moment, is geared towards the junior athlete—and that is where I believe our competition and development should be geared also. It may seem a harsh thing to say, but I do not believe that it is mere coincidence that West Country athletes do not achieve a relatively high standard in senior athletics. I believe that all those who have had any desire—in either sport or a career—have left the area anyway for, in talking to many of our seniors, they seem tragically to lack the one basic ingredient for success at anything—the desire to do well. They are singularly content with the mediocre performance. For those that leave it is vitally important that there is some tie-up with other areas, not only in coaching—which can be done via Doug Mannion, Special Coaching Organiser—but in competition also.

These, then, are some of the problems which face officials in the South-West and they are not peculiar to the sport of athletics alone. I don't suppose, for one moment, that they are peculiar to the South-West alone either. What is peculiar, perhaps, is the losing battle fought against the competition of water-skiing on azure bays; skin-diving off the Devon and Cornish coasts; sun bathing in a temperature of eighty-five, surrounded by a seeming multitude of bikini-clad lovelies—as opposed to sitting and fretting for two hours on the Exeter By-Pass on one's way to a competition.

To me the whole image of track and field in the West Country—and perhaps all rural areas of Britain—was summed up one warm summer's evening a few weeks ago. I drove via picturesque narrow Devon lanes to the little village of Kingskerswell where, on the village playing field, an Open Scratch Meeting was to be held two days later. As the sun began to fall and cast long shadows across the field so I could see Bill Davey, one of the doyens of the Devon A.A.A. and one of the shrewdest of officials who belies his seventy odd years, slowly and methodically marking out the track, almost solo. He was lucky this year, because in 1963 he had to do it in teeming rain. Here surely was enthusiasm, dedication or whatever you will at its very highest. And, I thought, it's supposed to be a young man's sport.

A Short History of Birchfield Harriers

(Motto—"FLEET AND FREE")

D. H. DAVIES (*Club Recorder*)

Formation of the Club

THE birth of the Club in 1877 was due to a dispute which arose over a cross-country race promoted by the Excelsior Football Club, one of the many clubs playing in Aston Park, Birmingham, in those days. This race ended in a fiasco because of a poorly marked course and many claimed that the prizes should be withheld and the race re-run. The outcome of it was that the dissatisfied competitors after a stormy protest called a meeting, at which it was decided to form a separate Cross-country Club to be known as Birchfield Harriers. This meeting was held in the Youths Classroom of Lozells Sunday School, a spot not far from where Aston Villa F.C. was formed. The first officers of the Club were Thomas Bragg (President), W. Davies (Captain) and T. K. Steanes (Hon. Sec.).

The Club's opening run was held from the Calthorpe Arms, Handsworth and its first inter-club fixture (with Moseley Harriers) actually started and finished on what is now the Alexander Sports Ground. Even as early as 1880 the Club achieved Championship success, winning both the Midland Senior and National titles in that year. The Club's first A.A.A. Championship winner was J. Ogden in the 2 mile Steeplechase in 1881.

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In these early years there was a close association between Birchfield Harriers and Aston Villa F.C. and in 1881 Aston Villa and Wolverhampton Wanderers played a friendly match on behalf of Club funds. It may surprise some members today to learn that a special athletic meeting arranged in 1883 had to be postponed as Aston Villa required certain members (who were also members of that club) to play for them against Cambridge University.

The Club's Headquarters were moved to the old Aston Lower Grounds in 1882. It is interesting to note that the Club had by 1890 secured 4 wins, 6 seconds and 1 third in the National Cross-Country Championship. W. Snook in 1885 achieved a unique record in winning the 1 mile, 4 miles, 10 miles and 2 miles Steeplechase A.A.A. Championships.

The Period 1890—1927

The Club continued to grow rapidly and, as a result of requests by members, branches of Birchfield Harriers were formed at Selly Oak, Erdington, Handsworth and Tipton in 1902-3; the latter, in fact, marks the actual beginning of Tipton Harriers. The Tipton branch carried on as such until 1910, when they broke away to form themselves into a separate club. Birchfield had its branches until 1922 when the Midland Cross-Country Association introduced legislation that a club must not have separate branches. The year 1905 marks the first of many trips to France when the Club was successful in winning the 18½ mile road race for the Dubonnet Trophy. In 1922 a Ladies' Section of the Club was formed and the first race was won by Miss P. M. Hall who later finished second in the British 880 yards Championship race in 1924.

In this period the Club won the National Cross-Country Championship on fourteen occasions including seven successive wins in the 1920's, a feat which was to be repeated in the 1930's. Because the strength of the Club teams in this era barred many members from competition, it was decided in 1925 to promote a members' cross-country league, which has proved a very popular feature of club life ever since. It is interesting to note that of the 30 club members who have gained international selection at cross-country in the International C.C.C. the following five have won the Individual Championship: 1907—A. Underwood; 1908—A. J. Robertson; 1921—W. Freeman; 1923—C. E. Blewitt; 1925—J. E. Webster.

The year 1926 was an important one for Birchfield Harriers for it was in September of that year that it was decided to purchase the present Alexander Grounds, the transaction being completed on 11th November. The stadium nowadays is regarded as a memorial to W. W. Alexander for his long and honourable services to the Club which dated back to 1880.

The Period 1927—37

The Club celebrated its Jubilee in 1927 and one of the original members of the Club (C. Wood) was present at the celebration. It was on 27th July, 1929, that the Alexander Ground was officially opened by the late Mr. H. A. Butler. April of 1932 saw the advent of the Club's magazine "Stagbearer." Started primarily to accommodate the programmes for the track league meetings, it is now a medium for recording Club performances in many fields. In 1935 the first of the annual W. W. Alexander Memorial Cross-Country fixtures was held for local clubs in the area. The Club's Diamond Jubilee was celebrated in 1937 and a special souvenir programme was prepared by C. G. Austin, the secretary for the meeting held on 24th July.

From 1937 up to the Present

In the 1920's and 1930's the Club was primarily known for its cross-country and road relay achievements. Since the war, however, it has been the track and field athletes who have dominated the national scene. Birchfield Harriers were the first club in Britain to promote a floodlit athletic meeting, which they did in 1948. This annual meeting at the beginning of October brings the athletic season in this country to a close every year.

The Club's Present Nature and Activities

Both sections of the Club cater for the full range of athletic activities, the ladies' section being particularly keen on walking. An extremely healthy sign is that the Club committees consist of many members who are still actively engaged in athletics as well as many others who in their time have rendered great service to the Club.

It will be as well to conclude this short survey of the Club's history with a summary of its major achievements.

Mens' Section

62 wins in the A.A.A. Championships in 15 events. 37 full British track Internationals. 28 times winners of the English Senior Cross-Country Championship, seven English individual champions and five International Cross-Country Champions. 30 Cross-Country internationals. 6 successes in the National London to Brighton Relay.

Ladies' Section

45 W.A.A.A. Championship winners in 11 events. 19 track internationals. 6 Cross-Country internationals. 11 times winners of National Cross-Country Championships (11 individual winners). 11 successes in National Road Walk Championship (nine individual champions).

Today's members have a difficult task to emulate the achievements of many of the old 'Stagbearers' but with no fewer than thirteen active coaches in the Club it should be possible to improve the current standard of certain events.

Social and Membership News

ROBERT STINSON

IN February of this year Norman Cobb resigned as Honorary Secretary of the Club. We are all grateful to him for the work he has done and it was very fitting when he was presented with a pipe bowl and pipes at the A.G.M. He continues to serve on the Committee.

Due to an unfortunate misunderstanding over a projector, no film could be shown at the A.G.M., but for forty minutes we were greatly entertained by Mike Fleet's highly amusing account of the 1963 Foreign Tour of the British team.

The main feature in the Club's year is of course the Annual Club and Championships Dinner. It was once again at the House of Commons under the sponsorship of Sir John Vaughan Morgan, M.P. 186 sat down to dinner including a considerable number of the champions from all parts of the world as well as some of the overseas team managers. John Cooper responded to the toast of the Champions, which had as usual been proposed by our Chairman, Sir Joseph Simpson. Our thanks are due to Mr. and Mrs. Anthony Turnbull for the hard work they put into the arranging of this most successful occasion. It is hoped that an A.A.A. Club Dinner in the Midland Area will be organised at some stage during the coming winter, when perhaps a film may be available.

The Committee continue to look for ways and means to increase our membership. We have many enquiries, very often as a result of advertisements in athletic periodicals, and this produces a steady flow, in the summer particularly, of new members. Unfortunately experience shows that this is matched by a failure of existing members to renew their subscriptions. To my own knowledge there are many famous clubs up and down the land who have no members of the A.A.A. Club upon their Committees; this is a very sad state of affairs, which should be remedied. Our present membership of a little over 1,300 is really rather paltry

considering the interest shown in the sport throughout the country—we ought to have over 2,000. Please do all you can to enrol your friends who are or may be interested. Think what a difference it would make if every one of us found a new member every year!

We are always trying to make membership more worthwhile. This year members have received membership cards giving entry to Blocks Q, R, S, T, U and V and the Olympic Bar at the White City in addition to their own seats (if worth 5/- or more) at the Championships. Negotiations are in hand for the extension of this facility to other meetings. It is hoped too to obtain by exchange of White City tickets with other sporting bodies, e.g. tickets for Twickenham, Wembley, Wimbledon, Lords, Henley, etc. so that members may ballot for the limited number that will be available.

(Although this article, written before the 1964 Olympic Games, will not appear in our Newsletter until the Games are over, I felt that some of the things it has to say on the subject will still be of interest to our readers—Ed.)

Some Thoughts on the Tokyo Olympics

ROBERT MCKINNON

‘NOT only is Tokyo working at a frenzied pitch for civic improvement’ (I quote from the special Olympics number of the *Visitor's Guide to Japan*) ‘but a mad, mad rush is now on by the city's 10,000,000 and more residents to obtain a working knowledge of not only English but several European languages to leave a goodwill impression on visiting guests from abroad.’

I very much doubt if even a diligent people like the Japanese are learning foreign languages at the rate mentioned above, but when an island people in any numbers at all applies itself to learning other tongues, one can be sure that there is a pretty good reason for it.

And of course the Japanese have the best of reasons, for in October are they not the hosts to more than 90 nations for the 18th Olympic Games, an honour which, in the international scheme of things, probably ranks next to sending up a space craft or becoming a member of the Nuclear Club.

Anyhow, it has been variously estimated that Japan is spending between £15 million and £30 million on playing the host, and the *Guide* details a number of breathtaking projects, including the construction of a network of expressways from Tokyo International Airport to the various stadia where the games will be held. Also under construction is a ten-mile mono railroad which will be completed in time for the Games. These, of course, cannot be strictly costed to the Olympics, but without them they might never have been built. Some day, somewhere, someone is going to get a Ph.D. for a paper entitled ‘The Olympic Games as an Accelerator to Social and Civic Progress.’ No doubt, too, the time will come when the privilege of being host will seem cheap at £100 million.

For all the excitement and fascination of the Games, for anyone whose youth has vanished like the dew in the morning, there is the slightly terrifying frequency with which they recur. Is it really four years since Rome, since my television screen showed me Davies and Kaufmann break 45 seconds for the 400 metres and Herb Elliott explode from the pack to set up a new world record for the 1,500 metres? Was it all that time ago when the ever sanguine Peter Dimmock, seeking to comfort after our poor medal tally, drew our attention to the imminent publication of the Wolfenden Report on Sport?

In my sports-obsessed boyhood, a century elapsed between each Olympics, yet a few feet of film in *Pathe Gazette* or *British Movietone News* was all we saw of them. Even to read about them in detail involved a visit to the local public library to consult *The Times* and other newspapers which, in the jargon of the ad men, have ‘an AB readership,’ for rarely in these days did Scottish sports editors allow much to encroach on the columns that were sacred to King Football.

So it continued until television. Today, as they work their way through the heats, the finalists become like old friends or enemies. We pry on their secret gestures, and study their faces for tension or confidence. For me, anyway, most of the competitors are no longer God-like and remote, as once they were. Can that man scratching his nose really clear 7 feet or that one with the skinny legs break 1:48 for the 800 metres? Who would have believed it! At the same time, much of the frustration has gone. Who wants an expense account trip to Tokyo when you can see the whites of their eyes on telly?

Of course, if we take the thing to logical extremes the whole idea of the Olympic Games sounds ridiculous. Why give up one's whole youth merely to be able to run 100 metres faster than the next man or throw a javelin a few inches farther? But it doesn't seem so ridiculous when the medals are given out!

Again, there is the chauvinism that takes all manner of forms, from the ominous chanting of the German contingent at Rome and the tear-stained ecstasy of the Italians over Berutti's victory in the 200 metres to the excited tones of our own commentators who often seem to see no other competitor until our own man has patently no chance. Much has been written in anger and exasperation about the nationalism provoked by this great international event, but anything short of a riot is better than a hushed crowd. Only in field events are records broken in silence.

As in Rome, these coming Olympics will be staged in a number of centres. The National Stadium with seating capacity for 80,000 will house the track and field events, the Grand Prix jumping competition and the football final. Gymnastic events will be staged in the 5,000-capacity Tokyo Metropolitan Gymnasium which was built for the 1956 Asian Games and is one of the latest of its kind. This building is being connected by a viaduct with the National Stadium. Water polo and pentathlon will be held in the Tokyo Metropolitan Indoor Swimming Stadium which can seat 3,000 people. The preliminary football matches—*pace* men of the oval ball!—will be staged in a Prince Chichibu Rugby Football Field, built in memory of the Prince who was president of the Japan Rugby Football Association. The ground can seat 20,000 spectators.

Wrestling, hockey and volleyball will be held in a new £4½ million sports centre (Komazawa Sports Centre) and swimming and diving in the National Indoor Stadium which is described as 'a gigantic, ultra-modern indoor stadium incorporating the latest construction techniques.' It can accommodate 13,000 spectators with seating for everyone.

The Olympic Village will be based on an old 'camp' used at one time by the American Forces, and about twenty minutes' walk from the National Stadium. It is enough to note that it will have all the amenities today's Olympic athletes need and expect, including full training facilities. The Japanese have said that it will be 'spruced and polished,' and that should satisfy anyone.

Japanese printed sources have also been refreshingly frank about features of Tokyo which will not be quite so wonderful. The *Guide*, for example, mentions with, one feels, inverted pride that the city boasts 800,000 vehicles and that the traffic jams have to be seen to be believed. It also warns that night clubs are expensive (but very good), but anyone who can afford to go to Tokyo will not be bothered by that. Nor will anyone who has ever settled up in a London night club. Again—a charming touch this!—the earthmoving equipment that is changing the face of Tokyo is described as 'ugly.' So it is, but few countries would bother to mention it in a tourist handbook.

The 18th Olympics, then, will not only provide the visitor with a feast of sport but also with the opportunity of seeing a remarkable nation expanding its economy and its standard of living at a rate which makes the rest of the world boggle. They will also have the unique experience of seeing the Games staged for the first time in a country whose roots do not lie in the civilisation of the West. For once, at least, this should make Baron de Coubertin's dream all the more colourful and exciting.

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KEEPING TRACK

There are now 303 cinder athletic tracks in England and Wales, reports Cecil Dale (Hon. Secretary, A.A.A. Development Committee). Of these 127 are classified as public and 89 as private, with a further 50 and 37 owned by the local education authority and the Services respectively. In addition there are 12 permanent first-class grass tracks. This is an increase of 92 over the figures reported in our issue of November, 1961. A further 28 tracks are now under construction, with another 133 planned or under consideration.

NEWS OF MEMBERS

Squire Yarrow has kindly agreed to edit a regular contribution to this Newsletter which will provide news of the activities of our members. He can only do this if members will co-operate by letting him know their own personal news or by reporting news of other members. Items from overseas will be particularly welcome—but so indeed will letters from U.K. members who have athletics news or views to offer. Please make a New Year resolution to drop a line to Squire at 21 Burton Manor Road, Stafford.

Graded Meetings – An Account of an Experiment

DEREK HAYWARD (Chief Coach, Woodford Green A.C.)

FOUR Essex clubs have been experimenting during the 1964 track season, having introduced a different-style competition for their athletes.

The four clubs involved were Essex Beagles, Eton Manor A.C., Ilford A.C. and Woodford Green A.C. During last winter, when fixtures were being considered, it was generally felt that mid-week evening competitions staged by these clubs were leaving much to be desired in both standard of performance and efficiency of organisation. Often one club was unable to field a full team, whilst another had many 'reserves' unable to score for their club team. The field event specialist received very little competition from his opponents who had often been "press-ganged" into competing, in an attempt to score a few points for their club. This method did nothing to help the good field event man bring out best performances since the runner-up was often well below standard.

For this reason the four clubs introduced a scheme which others may wish to consider in the future. Each undertook to arrange two mid-week evening meetings during the season. At first these meets were confined to any members of the clubs who wanted competition. Races were graded according to ability and age (for Boys, Youths and Juniors), whilst officials from each of the competing clubs helped at every meeting. The scheme proved most popular on the track. Athletes were able to choose which event they wanted (as compared with the usual method of "doubling-up" to score points), and were often able to achieve personal best performances since the races were arranged so that athletes of the same standard were together in the same race. In the first meetings the field events were not well supported, since the "scrubbers" were now eliminated (or not forced to compete in events for which they had little inclination or physical ability). For this reason other Essex clubs were invited to send their field event representatives to later meetings. Under this plan "graded evening meetings" proved most popular and two attracted well over 150 athletes. Critics of this system will say that such a

scheme destroys "club spirit" etc., since athletes are not competing for their clubs but for themselves. The answer to this, of course, is that present-day athletics is an individual sport, anyway, and the greater majority of athletes want little else other than to improve their own personal performances. At the same time, it should be pointed out that these clubs were fielding teams at weekends for inter-club matches and trophy competitions, so that the "team spirit" was still in being. The main result was that the athletes were getting close competition in well-organised meetings, since there were always sufficient officials present to ensure no delays on field events etc.

As one of the investigators of this scheme I would suggest that each County Association could well persuade a few of the larger clubs in their county to stage at least two graded meetings in 1965, and invite the smaller local clubs in their area to send their athletes and officials for competition. At the same time a few 'open' field events could be included on the programme. At present, there are usually one or two large clubs in a county which are too strong for the smaller clubs in a team competition. These smaller clubs, however, often have a few really good athletes who deserve top-class competition. Under the scheme described above, such athletes, and others, have access to top-class contests. As for the field events, I suggest that liaison with the Specialist Clubs of the events being arranged, or with a local coach in those events, would be the best way of ensuring that the most prominent exponents are brought together for a particular event.

This experiment has proved popular with the athletes, and all officials should give careful consideration to the possibility of undertaking a similar plan in their area next season. Now is the time to plan for 1965. It is imperative to avoid a clash of fixtures in arranging such meetings and liaison with County, or even Area, Committees should be considered. How about arranging a "Graded Meeting" in YOUR area?

OLYMPIC WELCOME HOME, 1964

ROBERT STINSON (*Honorary Secretary, A.A.A. Club*)

THE successes this year of our athletes in the Olympic Games have fired the imagination of many people in this country; not only those who have a close interest in the sport but also the wider public, whether or not they have a passing interest in athletics.

At the Club Committee Meeting on the 25th September our Chairman suggested that some sort of presentation should be made on the return of the athletes, preferably at the airport, as an indication of the pleasure and pride in their performances felt throughout the whole country, and because in the past, Olympic teams have returned without official, or indeed semi-official, reception of any sort, save a few photographs and some questions from newspaper men. Little was known at this stage as to the details of the return of the Olympic parties and indeed what form the presentation might take.

A week before the first plane with competitors on board was due back from Tokyo I telephoned the offices of the British Olympic Association to obtain details of the flights and the passengers on each flight. I mentioned to Sandy Duncan's secretary what the Club had in mind, and it was not long before the "Daily Mail" telephoned me to say that they themselves were interested in doing something to mark the occasion of the return. The only thing that seemed feasible, with arrival times of before seven o'clock in the morning, was to offer the team some sort of ceremonial breakfast. I then spoke with Ross McWhirter and told him what had



Sir Joseph Simpson (Chairman, A.A.A. Club) greets Olympic rowers John Russell, Bill Barry and Hugh Wardel-Yerburgh who won silver medals in Tokyo in the coxless fours.

transpired; he said immediately that an evening newspaper would be most interested, and undertook to speak with the Editor of the "Evening News" (in the same group as the "Daily Mail") and suggest a champagne breakfast. I heard later from the General Manager of the "Evening News" and it seemed clear that his newspaper was very interested.

That evening the good news came from Ross that the "Evening News" would provide 200 breakfasts on both the 27th and 29th October and that the newspaper would be happy for the Club to make its presentations at the same time.

Next evening our Committee met as pre-arranged and we discussed at some length what could best be given as a present. Silver propelling pencils seemed most suitable as well as bouquets of flowers for the distinguished lady competitors. Shortly before the meeting it was known to a few that the Queen wished to mark the occasion with a reception at Buckingham Palace, and fortunately the final decision of the Queen, for a buffet lunch, dovetailed very well with our tentative arrangements. The Chairman telephoned Sir Norman Joseph of the Ariel Hotel (close to London Airport), who very kindly offered the use of twenty rooms at that hotel to enable the team to change before their trip to the Palace. This offer was subsequently considerably enlarged upon by the addition of valets, hairdressers and other facilities, as well as further rooms.

At about this time a kind of unofficial ad hoc committee seemed to have formed itself, consisting of Arthur Gold, Assistant Secretary to the British Board, myself, Ross McWhirter, the "Evening News" office and at times our Chairman and Barry Willis. Each of us kept in touch continuously by telephone as the arrangements



Mr. Reg Willis, Editor of the "Evening News," presents an album of Olympic photographs to Robbie Brightwell, Captain of the Men's Athletics Team and silver medallist in the 4 x 400 metres relay. Seated, from left to right, are Mr. Atsushi Uyama, Minister Plenipotentiary, Japanese Embassy, London; Mr. Michael Stewart, Minister of Education and Science; Sir John Lang, Chief Adviser to the Government on Sport.

began to take shape, and Sir John Lang of the Privy Council Office, being the civil servant responsible to the Government for sport, also kept in touch daily. On Friday the intention was to have a meeting at the airport of a small number of those concerned. A dozen or more people from all branches of the airport's various organisations appeared, and to my horror I was projected into the chair. The "Evening News" had moved very fast to book the Queen's Building Restaurant a short head in front of certain other newspapers, and the co-operation of the staff in the Queen's Building throughout the whole performance was wonderful. At the meeting we went through the arrangements chronologically from the moment the aircraft was to touch down, and each of the airport's experts gave us the benefit of his advice in turn, until a satisfactory plan was hammered out. We then went over all the timing again so that it was absolutely clear what would happen and so that all possible snags would be unearthed.

My recollection of the next few days is one of consistent and continuous telephoning, snags eliminated and arrangements double-checked. Arthur Gold throughout this period worked like a Trojan, as he had to deal with the Palace authorities and make certain that the returning competitors received proper information on what was to happen when the plane landed and subsequently throughout the day. This was done with the aid of the "Evening News." Sir Joseph Simpson kindly



A distinguished sextet of athletes at the champagne breakfast. From left to right: Ernie Pomfret (10th, steeplechase); Roy Hollingsworth (10th, discus); Basil Heatley (silver medal, marathon); Maurice Herriott (silver medal, steeplechase); Ken Matthews (gold medal, 20 km. road walk); Alan Simpson (4th, 1500 metres).

Photographs by courtesy of the Evening News

laid on a motorcade so that the buses could get to the Palace unhindered, and also did all he could to smooth the immigration and customs arrangements in No. 3 Building, where the passengers from the planes would be taken. Elaborate precautions had been taken so far as possible to discourage the Press, public and relatives from going to No. 3 Building, as we had provided facilities for them in our planned layout for the reception hall at the Queen's Building.

Tony Turnbull and Peter Lenton of our Committee had been busy getting together the presents that would be given to our athletes. This had to be, and was, done quickly, as Tony had a friend in the jewellery trade. Peter Lenton arranged with Selfridges for the bouquets, and saw to their safe arrival at the airport. Ross McWhirter arranged for flags to be brought from Wembley Stadium and from the British Olympic Association so that the reception hall at the airport could be properly decorated and so that the Ariel Hotel (contrary to all protocol) could fly the Olympic flag. The "Evening News" worked hard to produce the necessary placards advertising the presence of the A.A.A. Club, also producing blown-up photographs on hardboard backing of the medal winners and other athletes, which were to be put around the reception hall on easels. Originally it had been hoped to prepare the reception hall the night before, but it was decided that the hall should be scrubbed out thoroughly on each occasion during the night, which meant that it could only be prepared in the morning.

Tony Turnbull had procured from his firm, Nestlé, many boxes of chocolates free of charge for the team members. Sir John Lang had told me which members of the Government would be coming and everything had been fixed for the V.I.P.'s to arrive at approximately 6.45 a.m. to be ready to receive the competitors at 7 a.m. At 9 p.m. on the Monday I went home somewhat weary, and knowing that I would have to get up at 4 o'clock the next morning.

Setting out on the road at 4.20 a.m. there was dense fog along the Staines By-pass. Arriving at the reception hall at 4.45 a.m. nothing had as yet been started, but it was not long before workmen and helpers arrived and the lay-out began to take shape. Not, however, before a member of the airport police had told me that the plane, despite fog, was going to be one hour early! It seems that the pilot put on maximum speed in order to get into London Airport before the fog came down, and in fact the Olympic plane proved to be the last into the airport for about three hours. If the plane had been more than an hour and a half late, the whole breakfast reception would have had to be cancelled. The early arrival meant that the athletes would arrive in the reception hall at about 6 a.m. instead of 7 a.m. fully three-quarters of an hour before the Ministers and the Japanese Ambassador, H. E. Shigenobu Shima. I telephoned Sir John Lang in his bedroom at the Carlton Tower Hotel and told him what had happened. He must have acted promptly because he managed to get Mr. Michael Stewart M.P. and Mr. Dennis Howell M.P. collected and to the airport before it was too late; he must also have got a message to the Japanese Ambassador through the Foreign Office because he too arrived in time. We were very grateful at this juncture to Mr. Frederick Passmore, the General Manager of the airport, who was able to get over to No. 3 Building to slow up the process of transport by bus to the Queen's Building until the V.I.P.'s arrived. The timing, though improvised, seemed to work well, and the B.B.C. and others were permitted to have short interviews downstairs with some of the leading athletes before the reception proper took place. There was quite a sizeable crowd of relatives and Club members, as well as a Club Stand under Norman Cobb advertising membership. The lights flashed and the competitors moved their way along the reception line and were duly presented with their pencils and boxes of chocolates. From the end of the reception line the relatives and Press mingled with the competitors before the Master of Ceremonies announced that breakfast was served, and we all proceeded through into the Forte's Restaurant for the champagne breakfast.

Thursday morning was much the same; the plane was not quite so early, and a drill had been worked out with the official car service to get the Ministers there if necessary. This time the customs took a hand and it took longer for the teams to get to the reception. The speeches at breakfast were short, and clearly all the arrangements were appreciated by the team. And so, for the athletes from the breakfast to the waiting buses and the Ariel Hotel, there to change and get ready for the Palace; for those of us who had been up since 4 a.m., another day's work on top of what seemed like a day's work just finished!

Modern Athletics

ACHILLES CLUB, whose membership stems from the University Athletic Clubs of Oxford and Cambridge, draws "on certain inevitable advantages of material and competitive stimulus and opportunity"—to quote from the editor's note which precedes the Second Edition of "Modern Athletics" (Oxford University Press, 25/-). One would hope that the strongest arms and the fastest legs to be found in a community selected for their intelligence would, in the fullness of time, be associated with great achievements in athletics administration and management, coaching and reporting, documentation, sports medicine and so on. Achilles Club members have indeed made a tremendous contribution to our sport, on an international as well as a national level, as is shown clearly by these absorbing essays on many aspects of athletics.

One cannot hope to summarise adequately the contributions to this volume (which is edited by H. A. Meyer and which contains much new material) from Harold Abrahams, Roger Bannister, Godfrey Brown, Chris Chataway, Sandy Duncan, Herb Elliott, Tommy Hampson, Roly Harper, Peter Hildreth, Douglas Lowe, Norris and Ross McWhirter, Adrian Metcalfe, Philip Noel-Baker, Sir Arthur Porritt and others. Here, to whet the appetite for more (and with the kind permission of the publishers), are three excerpts from contributions by men who achieved Olympic gold medals and/or world records.

From "The Future of Athletics" by Harold M. Abrahams, C.B.E.

There is no doubt that there is room for much improvement in the presentation of athletics. Many of our top class meetings are conducted in such a hurry—so many things are happening at once that the spectator, even the experienced spectator, very often misses the start of a race or some important happening in a field event. Athletics, like many other sports, has been feeling the draught of diminishing gates in the last few years. This diminution is not due to a lack of interest on the part of the public, because there is much evidence that athletics, largely due to television, is far more popular than it was a decade ago. But the fact that people will watch with keen interest an hour's athletics on television does not, alas, mean that even a tiny fraction will be bothered to make the journey to the White City. Television presentations of athletics have come to stay, and until the time arrives when the B.B.C. or Independent Television sponsor athletic meetings (and I predict that this will happen one day), unless through lack of finance amateur athletics is to suffer acutely, we have got to attract the public to our National Championships and international meetings in greater numbers. I believe that with a real concentration on presentation we could improve our sports programmes beyond all knowledge. The presentation of an afternoon's sports meeting should be a professional job, worked out with the precision of a revue or circus. The public must be made to feel that they are taking part in every event—by good commentaries (but not too much talking); and much more intelligent attention must be given to the field events, which after all constitute almost half of any international match, and from the time point of view occupy at least double if not treble that of the track events.

From "The Stresses of International Competition" by C. J. Chataway, M.P.

The shortness of the American international's athletic life is evidently due in part to the fierceness of the competition for places in the national team. It is due also to a large population, which ensures a continual upthrust of new talent. The man at the top has only to drop a fraction of 1 per cent, and he disappears from the international scene.

The quick turn-over of top-class athletes in the States is not, however, due solely to the depth of talent and the forces of competition. It results also from an outlook which is different from that in Britain. Many young Americans decide to give the sport three or four years, and after that, whether or not they have achieved all their ambitions, they are prepared to make a clean break, give it all up, and start work.

This, I believe, is the only way to approach top-class athletics today.

From "The Road to Rome" by H. J. Elliott

Most of us have met what for want of a better word we call a fanatic, whether he was a zealot in religion, in a political cause, or at marbles; but after the initial enjoyment of their intensity they become bores because they cannot discuss; they preach. They can only talk about this thing that consumes them; talk on other subjects bores them to tears. I think it was a fortunate experience that I passed through a stage such as this in the earlier part of my athletic career. I had an overwhelming feeling of contempt for people who were not physically fit, and felt superior to them. Athletics was my life and I was extremely conscious of it. Conversation about anything else just didn't interest me and I couldn't help showing it. I gave up smoking without even trying; I didn't feel like drinking alcohol. This is what ambition did to me.

I didn't want the company of other people and I couldn't wait till work was finished to get my togs on and go for a run in a near-by park. Because the running was part of me and not just a pleasant way of keeping fit and passing the time, I couldn't be bothered running around such artificial structures as cinder-tracks. The track was the boxing ring, where I had to fight for my superiority. I would never train on a track that I was going to race on, because the track was the venue.

where I gave everything in four laps and I couldn't compromise this by running around it many times at less than full tilt. The only training venue that was appealing was one which was in natural surroundings. It could be the quiet grass oval at Portsea secluded from houses and the road by trees; or it could be through the woods; or along the seashore, helped by the strength of the ocean and the might of the pounding waves; or over the sandhills, battling against the loose sand and the gale off the sea. These surroundings built strength into me. A training session which consisted of running round and round a track left me both physically and mentally exhausted, while a training run in the natural surroundings, although leaving me physically exhausted, always allowed me to finish mentally and emotionally elated.

It was this period of lonely running which developed the alleged 'killer' (a journalistic phrase, I might add). Can there be a killer without actual physical contact? I don't think so. If anyone is consumed by an ambition and does everything in his power to make his goal attainable, it must be achieved; he won't allow it not to be. Once the arena is reached, so much has been given up that there is a fear of being beaten—not an urge to 'kill.' In that last lap of the mile, when the battle really begins, the overwhelming emotion, and often the only emotion that can be recalled after the race, is that of fear—fear of being beaten. The ears are straining to catch every step and breath behind you; the speed you are pouring out is not the speed of the ferocious carnivore attacking, but the speed of the frightened gazelle in flight. There are few athletes who could be called 'killers.'

Curious Cuttings

The First Olympic Games—From "*Mind and Body*," January 1896

The Olympian Games at Athens in April of this year seem to be a failure at present writing. The German Union, the largest organisation in the world, owing to the French members of the International Committee, was neither invited to arrange for the programme, or to take part in the festival. At a late hour, the Grecian local committee took notice of this blunder, and extended a kind invitation which was justly and promptly declined. Now it is learned that 1, the Belgian Federation cannot accept the invitation, because the programme does not conform to its principles; 2, the French Gymnastic Union has its own festival in Algeria at the same time, and cannot take part; 3, the Swiss Union objects to the sportive character of the games, and declines; 4, the Italian Federation has exhausted its finances at the last festival, therefore cannot take an active part; 5, the Union of Netherland does not agree with the programme, too much sport; 6, Sweden declines on the same grounds; 7, Norway claims to be too far away to send delegation. May be, Monsieur Coubertin will succeed in arousing greater sympathy among the Tartars and Bashkirs who may not object to his chauvinistic notions.

American Rhodes Scholars at Oxford University—From the London "*Saturday American*" of 1904 as quoted in "*American Gymnasia*."

Supposing that these American freshmen should eventually come nearly up to the reputation they bring with them and finally exercise a preponderant weight in the athletic club, a rather delicate and complicated position is set up. The matches against Harvard and Yale are now more or less regularly established. Will Oxford be judged to have beaten Harvard if a deciding event is won for her by an American? The case is anything but improbable. But at any rate it will not occur frequently. Cambridge on the other hand will have American competitors continually against them. They will have good reason to feel aggrieved if, as members of an English university, they are beaten by those who are in no sense British.

An American athletic meeting, as also the training preliminaries, is conducted on a very different system from ours. The ring is packed with useless officials. The professional trainer of the team is almost the most important person before or at the meeting.

Metric Distances—From "*Country Life in America*," 1904

It is the belief of experts of to-day that the metric measurement will become universal for athletic contests. The Olympic games hasten the day. When the distances for races are the same in all countries we shall, in a sense, have international sport all the time, because we can constantly be comparing the latest achievements at home with those abroad.

These press cuttings are quoted from the collection made by Peter Powell, Honorary Treasurer of the Northern Counties A.A.

S.C.A.L.P. and After

ARTHUR KENDALL (*Hon. Secretary, Southern Counties A.A.A.*)

THE S.C.A.L.P. (Southern Counties Admin. Liaison and Planning) Conference was held at Bisham Abbey 7th-9th December, 1962, as the result of an idea developed by John Le Masurier and Arthur Gold. The aim was to focus attention on those athletes in the South with best potential, to survey the facilities and plan the best use of the available coaches. A wide variety of interests were represented at the meeting including Coaching, Development, most of the Specialist Clubs, the I.A.C., N.U.T.S. and administration.

Questionnaires had already been sent out to leading young athletes and the N.U.T.S. had prepared lists of starred Southern athletes. The Questionnaires returned by these "star" athletes were carefully considered and action was taken to see that their most urgent requirements were met.

Speakers included Fred Housden on "Schools of Athletes"; athletes, he maintained, trained better in good company, and a specialised coach was better employed in concentrating on a whole group at a single event than in trying to cope with a number of athletes interested in different events.

In addition, Emlyn Jones spoke on the progress of the Crystal Palace Scheme, and Don Anthony reviewed the development and progress of training camps throughout the world. John Salisbury dealt with Timsbury, and Norman Cobb with tracks and facilities available. Members of Specialist Clubs spoke of their particular activities and problems, and County Hon. Coaching Secretaries gave surveys of the position in their respective Counties.

I have dealt only briefly with the proceedings as this information has been published previously and I would like now to concentrate on the results. The following are the recommendations of the Conference with a brief account of action taken.

1. That Clubs should be encouraged to run hurdle races as Invitation events. Clubs are still rather reluctant to promote hurdle races, presumably because of the work involved. A number of such invitation events have been held, mainly for Juniors and Youths, and it is to be regretted that the response has on occasions been rather poor. The Association has set an example by putting on invitation hurdles events for Juniors and Youths at the Senior Championships and at the Junior International at Southend.
2. That consideration should be given to the sending of a G.B. entry for the Decathlon in Tokyo.

This suggestion was put forward, although it had to be admitted that with the expense of such a long trip it was not the best of occasions to make this suggestion. Had a young athlete won this year's Decathlon Championship there would have been a better argument for sending him so that he could have gained experience for 1968.

We are tackling the Decathlon problem in a different way by trying to encourage Juniors to take an interest in the event. We have already held two Junior Decathlon competitions with very good results. Last winter we held special training weekend courses for young athletes interested in the Decathlon and more are planned for the coming Winter. These steps should undoubtedly increase interest and ultimately improve the standard.

3. That anyone with any knowledge of indoor facilities for competition or training should be asked to inform Sq. Ldr. Cobb (Southern Development Secretary). One result of this request was that an Indoor Meeting was held at R.A.F. Thorney Island last Winter which provided competition particularly for athletes in Sussex and Hampshire. As Thorney Island is an operational station it meant

clearing the hanger for the Meeting and the R.A.F. felt that they were not able to do this again. We are still in need of permanent indoor centres for training and competition in the South. Although one or two suggestions have been made, schemes are slow to develop and we have nothing really definite at present. The need for such centres is proved by the popular meetings at Feltwell and we always get a full coach load of competitors from London.

4. That local authorities owning floodlit tracks be asked to stagger their nights for training.

This suggestion arose because most tracks with floodlighting are open on Tuesdays and Thursdays and it has not proved possible to get any alterations made. Tuesdays and Thursdays are the most popular training nights and no one wanted to give up these nights. It was thought that Crystal Palace might help to provide a solution with floodlit training on Wednesday, but Wednesdays are the most popular night for "spectator" events at the Centre so that it was found impossible to be able to offer regular Wednesdays for training.

5. That a list of existing training groups of specialist athletes with their location, coaches, etc., should be circulated to Clubs.

This is one suggestion which has not been carried out because of the difficulty of obtaining precise information. It is known that specialist groups do exist but they seem to lack permanency and certainly not enough information has been available to circulate.

6. That the shortage of jumps coaches was probably due to the wide range covered by the Jumps examination, and that the suggestion of one exam for the Long and Triple Jumps and another for High Jump should be considered.

The suggestion was put forward and the examinations have been split up as suggested.

7. That the Association should pursue the idea of finding weekend accommodation for specialist and other courses.

Crystal Palace and Timsbury are now available for such courses. We are experimenting with monthly training camps and specialist training weekends at Crystal Palace this Winter.

8. That more invitation event "rigged races" should be run and that the specialist clubs should be encouraged to stage competitions of their particular events. The idea of "rigged races" was that athletes could compete against others of a similar standard without having the stress of a "big event" and could possibly achieve a good time and so gain confidence. This was attempted with 880 yards and 1 mile races, and although athletes welcomed the idea the actual races did not get support from the athletes for whom they were intended. Whatever date was arranged there were always some who had just had or were just about to have an important race and did not want another fast one at the time. Of the athletes who did compete in the events we held quite a number achieved their best times to date. We have for the past two years held, with the help of some of our clubs, a number of invitation events for Juniors and Youths to meet a demand for more good class competition. Track events have generally speaking been very well supported but the response for field events, where one would have thought the need was greatest, has often been rather poor. The exception has been what has now become an annual pre-season field events meeting promoted by Thurrock Harriers for Juniors and Youths. All the specialist clubs were written to regarding competitions and some are quite active in this direction.

Obituary

THE sudden death of GILBERT HUSBAND on 26th September last at the age of 52 came as a great shock to those of us who knew him well.

A member of the A.A.A. Club Committee since its formation in 1958, Gilbert had a great love of athletics and his contribution to our sport was far greater than he himself would ever have acknowledged.

As Honorary Secretary of the Club for four years I worked with him very closely and have perhaps more reason than most to be grateful to him for his sound advice and wise counsel over those years.

It was not only in committee that his influence was felt, for he was to be seen at a great many athletic tracks and at a variety of meetings over the country, enjoying his athletics. Indeed, I personally shall never again visit the White City, Motspur Park or the Old Rutlishians ground at Merton without seeing him standing there quietly taking in the athletic scene.

He was an Old Haberdasher and I know he gave great support to that club, not only in Athletics but in his other great love—Rugby Football.

I am sure that all who knew him will long remember Gilbert as a grand sportsman.

NORMAN COBB.

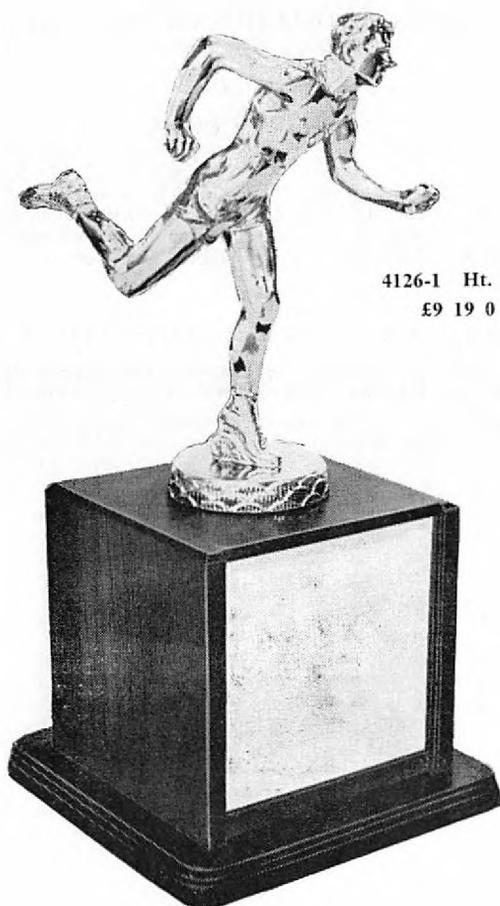
As Chairman I would like to add my personal tribute. I have more often than not left a Committee meeting with Gilbert and sat with him for an hour going over all the ground again. His views were sound and constructive and his support gave me confidence in my responsibility. On these occasions, and as his guest in the Pavilion at Lords, I discovered a real friend whose modesty and desire to help young sportsmen were a shining example to anyone who had the fortune to penetrate his reserve. I, and many others, have lost a dear friend.

JOE SIMPSON.

Your Contribution

EVERYONE, they say, has within him the material for a novel—and I think one might claim with even greater justification that every A.A.A. Honorary Member has within him the material for an article for this Newsletter. It might take the form of anecdotes and reminiscences from the good old days—or a comparison between then and now, and an assessment of whether the athletics scene of yesterday was more or less enjoyable than that of today. It might, in the case of one of our many overseas members, be a report on local athletic conditions and/or the part he is playing in helping the development of the sport locally. Or perhaps prophesy is your forte and you would prefer to look at the future of track and field. All will be grist to the mill. But should you really be convinced that authorship is not for you, there must surely be some subject on which you would like to read an article in your next Newsletter. So whether it be to write an article or to suggest one, please put pen to paper and please

Your Editor.



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THE NEXT EUROPEAN ATHLETICS CHAMPIONSHIPS

will be held in Budapest in September, 1966. Squire Yarrow is already planning to take a party there, and members who would be interested in receiving details should write to him at 21 Burton Manor Road, Stafford.

HAVE YOU SIGNED A BANKER'S ORDER ?

If not, please adopt at once this method of paying your subscription by obtaining the appropriate form from our Hon. Secretary (address on last page of this Newsletter). You will then be able to leave to your bank the job of remembering to renew your sub. each year. Furthermore your honorary officers will be spared the task of chasing unpaid subs. and will be able to concentrate on improving the services provided by the A.A.A. Club for its members and for the sport of athletics.

Cerutti - The Man and His Creed

A review of "Mr. Controversial" by Graeme Kelly (Stanley Paul, 18/-) and "Middle Distance Running" by Percy Wells Cerutti (Pelham Books, 25/-)

THESE two books are reviewed together because the first is the story, written by one of his pupils, of the life and rise to fame of Percy Cerutti, whilst the second is written by Percy himself on the subject in which he has become world famous.

"Mr. Controversial" tells us that the Cerutti family hailed from Northern Italy and emigrated first to London and then to Devonshire before trying their luck at the Australian goldmines. Percy was the eighth of nine children born there, three of whom quickly sickened and died, mainly because of an improvident father. Percy had indifferent schooling and at the age of twelve had to start work. He almost at once set about sports and hobbies with a fanatical determination but whenever frustrated, usually due to underprivilege, appears to have displayed what would now be termed violent and anti-social tendencies. A typical example is that he formed a Scout Group but had to resign from it because he could not afford to buy a uniform shirt. He therefore dedicated himself to the destruction, preferably by violent means, of the whole troop. Thereafter he was continuously searching for his niche in life, confident that he would eventually succeed. In these efforts he turned rapidly from one sport and occupation to another, with results varying from mediocrity to utter failure. In 1937, after suffering two nervous collapses, he went to New Zealand to enter business under a system which he had evolved and felt sure was bound to succeed. Once again, however, his judgment had been faulty and he returned to Australia in February 1939 and suffered a most severe breakdown, both mental and physical, from which he was told quite frankly that he was unlikely to recover.

It was then that the turning point in Cerutti's life appears to have been reached, for it was then that his friend Dr. Kilmier impressed upon him that his recovery, indeed his very survival, could depend upon his own effort and will-power and upon these alone. It is not quite clear whether he suggested any precise courses of action or whether Cerutti evolved these for himself, but he seems to have set out first to battle back to fitness and then to live an entirely different life, mentally and physically. He studied a wide range of books including such subjects as art, poetry, philosophy and agriculture, went on to a self-invented natural diet and took up running together with weight-training and other subsidiary conditioners. He also appears to have settled down to a steady job in the Australian Postal Services. Gradually he fought back to health and by 1946 had built up his mileage to a fantastic 2,600 miles in one year. He made a close study of animals in movement, chiefly horses, a result of which he concluded that human running style required modification. In 1949 he ran his first marathon distance at top speed and the next year moved to Portsea and set up a notice reading "Percy Wells Cerutti—Conditioner of Men." He invented the Stotan Cult which is a combination of Stoic and Spartan. This required the earning of just sufficient money to enable the athlete to live whilst indulging in the almost full-time pursuit of athletics, with most severe stamina-strength training involving long-distance and sand-hill running, weight-training and swimming under spartan conditions whilst partaking of a diet of mainly raw food, devoid of animal fats and with very little meat.

The book recounts in various chapters how out of such a camp emerged such athletes as Bob Prentice, Les Perry, John Landy, Don Macmillan, Dave Stephens, Murray Halberg and Herb Elliott. It goes on to tell of Cerutti's travels with them and his experiences at the great athletic festivals in which they competed, although it does not attempt to give their full histories. Throughout the whole of their travels, however, Cerutti was time after time the centre of controversy involving athletes, promoters, officials and newspapermen. Some of the incidents related are in fact magnifications of merely trivial annoyances and frustrations which all coaches suffer at times. Many however, although probably avoidable, were more serious and conducted with a vehemence bordering on violence and in the spotlight of publicity. Many of these Cerutti actually appears to have enjoyed. He always seems to have parted on good terms with his adversaries and one is thus forced to wonder whether it was often a case of controversy for controversy's sake. Possibly it sometimes did him good financially for a controversial figure will hit the headlines more frequently than a retiring and quiet one.

As you read the book, however, you cannot help feeling sorry for a man who has perhaps been a fool to himself in that his temperament has probably deprived him of the achievement of what could have been his greatest successes. For instance, he tried to turn his Portsea home and the surrounding acres into a kind of athletic Crystal Palace and others, notably Mike Agostini, joined him in an organisation aiming to raise some £A100,000 for this purpose. On the most crucial day, Cerutti once again exploded and blew the whole project to smithereens. Now he is struggling virtually alone to achieve this on a smaller scale. It is difficult to decide whether this fanatical figure is really a brave man or a foolhardy one, for as though athletic controversy was not enough he has also written books, articles and newspaper columns on such dangerous subjects as women, marriage and the follies of religion!

This is a fascinating story which had to be told, because Cerutti is certain to become a legend in the world of athletics and it is desirable that the telling should be permanently recorded by one of his close associates. Otherwise there would always be doubt in years to come as to whether the character was fictional, or alternatively whether the story is the result of exaggeration and garnishing caused by repetitive telling.

Percy Cerutti commences his own book by saying that it is addressed to the serious and gifted athlete who would attain championship performance, and later he says that it will aim at goals of 1.40 and 3.40 for the 800 metres and mile respectively. As the plan unfolds you realise that he is in deadly earnest. He is not interested in the mediocre but only in the superlative champion and believes that everything should be sacrificed to achieve the highest honours. The athlete should obtain a job with the shortest possible hours which will enable him to earn just sufficient cash to allow of his otherwise full-time devotion to athletics. Thereafter, he must rigorously follow the Stotan Cult with the severe vegetarian diet and the stamina-strength training sessions, sometimes three in one day, with long runs, very heavy weight-training, swimming and the inevitable sand-hill running. To be great, the champion must largely cut himself off from general club activities or mediocrity will swamp him.

It is on this basis that Cerutti proceeds to outline the technique which he advocates and, as ever, this is extremely controversial in an enormous number of details. He states that his ideas differ from those of other coaches because they have never bothered to study the movements of animals. The influence of this study is clear throughout the book where he states that all movement is initiated by the fore-leg (arm), and that Halberg actually profited by his uneven arm movement because it enabled him to run with the uneven beat and movement which is true movement. In various parts of the book he describes galloping and trotting which however he admits are very difficult to teach and also other items of technique. He says for example that one arm, called "the lead arm," reaches out, pulls down and drives as the air is inhaled, the hind legs have an uneven gait, there being a difference of three inches or so in the stride length while the arms are pumped downwards to raise the body. The pelvis is tipped up, the shoulders are rounded and the chest flattened. There must be body-lean. The hips should not sway but the elbows move at each stride. The head is moved freely as Zatopec knew it and it

may be turned to see who is behind. You require neither a high knee-lift nor a back-kick. The legs move in the segment of a caterpillar on a tractor. The eyes should be looking downward and may observe the knees. The technique gives a lift to the step. With strength and technique 12 inches could be added to the stride-length whilst maintaining the same cadence and there is then no reason why a sprinter should not run the 100 yards in 8 seconds. Relaxation cannot be taught—it comes naturally and starts with the larynx. He adds virtually that all great champions are front-runners and "floaters" rather than "drivers." This book is not the place to attempt to justify these views so he must be dogmatic.

As if this were not enough for one book, Cerutti also refers to his disapproval of warm-up, track-suits except on a very cold day, the friendly recognition of rivals, women's athletics and religion! He also has an intense dislike of schedules and believes that the intelligent athlete will listen to the coach, form his own opinions and then build up on experience. This is probably the greatest weakness in the book for how can you thoroughly understand revolutionary principles when no comprehensive examples are given? You are left with the mere idea upon which you will doubtless place constructions never intended by the author and thus the object of the book is largely defeated.

There are a few "howlers" such as comments on Fartlek's system as though Fartlek were a coach and not a Swedish word! In addition, Cerutti makes the mistake of writing of active athletes who have possibly not yet reached their zenith as though they were finished. This not only dates the book but, in the case of Snell, makes nonsense of several portions. In "Mr. Controversial" it is stated that Cerutti now proposes to write two books per year and, if he does so, it is to be hoped that he will allow one of the great athletes whom he has coached to read the manuscript beforehand and to direct his attention to any obvious inconsistencies, omissions or repetitions.

On the other hand, the book contains many fine photographs and excellent sections on subjects such as advice for the young novice, philosophy for the athlete, passing through the pain barrier and common athletic injuries. You can sense throughout, the fanatical inspiration of one who speaks only from experience and who has suffered deeply both mentally and physically due to both illness and athleticism and has emerged triumphant. Cerutti may be written off as coach. But suppose he is 50 years ahead of his rivals? Suffice it to say that any athlete able to survive the Stotan Cult and to complete the full plan must emerge as a great champion. It is fascinating to try to decide which.

RONALD A. JEWKES.

Book Reviews

"MODERN TRACK AND FIELD" by J. Kenneth Doherty

(Second Edition from Bailey Bros. & Swinfen Ltd., 35/-)

The first edition of 'Modern Track and Field' appeared in 1953; the most comprehensive and authoritative American athletic manual since Bresnahan and Tuttle, it rapidly established itself as a standard work and was included on the select list of recommended books for A.A.A. Senior Coaches. The second edition is likely to maintain, and probably to enhance, this reputation.

Coaches and athletes who have learnt to value the first edition as an old friend will be pleased to learn that the second edition is not just a reprint patched with a little new material, but a genuine revision. The tables of outstanding performances have been brought up to 1962; the 'Histories of Improvement in Form and Performance' with their fascinating anecdotes, which were a notable feature of each chapter in the original, have been revised and extended; a number of chapters have been largely rewritten. New chapters, or sections, have been added on the 440 Hurdles, the Hammer Throw, and Long Distance Running (though this last is too brief to be of much more than inspirational value), as well as on 'Basic Training for Track and Field.' The format and illustrations have been improved, and the full and valuable references and bibliographies brought up to date.

A comparison of the two editions provides, in fact, a most interesting commentary on the progress of athletics and athletic coaching during the last decade. Not surprisingly, new methods of training account for more changes than do new techniques. But the chapters on the Shot Put and the Pole Vault have been largely rewritten—the former now dealing mainly with the “O'Brien technique,” and the latter now incorporating a special section on the use of the fibre-glass pole. There are also some extensive modifications to the sections on ‘Essentials of Correct Form’ in the chapters on the Sprints, the High Jump and the Javelin, whilst that on the Triple Jump has been amplified. The illustrations of form have been generally improved; the sequence drawings (based on photographs) have been better arranged, and new sequences added.

Some specialist coaches may feel a trifle disappointed in the treatment of technique in certain chapters. The chapter on Relay Racing, with its comparatively poor standard of illustration, remains almost unchanged from the first edition. And whilst the author is correct enough in seeing no basic changes worth mentioning in Discus technique since Gordien, it is a pity that he did not take the opportunity to re-examine his description of Fitch and Gordien permitting “the upper body to ‘fail’ around the circle with the feet trying desperately to catch up and only succeeding after the reverse.” Here, as in various other places, Mr. Doherty—in an attempt perhaps to express what he terms the ‘muscle-feel’ of a technique—seems to confuse subjective impressions (his own or the individual athlete’s) with objective analysis of movement. And, surely, subjective impression fades into wishful thinking when he claims that Piatkowski *perfected* (my italics) “a technique of spinning in which good balance and control are equated with momentum,” and thus “pointed a way to the future.” But shortcomings there must be when one man sets out to cover the whole range of athletic skills in such depth and, at the same time, “to carefully avoid stating the ‘one best way’.” The fact remains that he has provided, in a single volume, a great fund of valuable material on technique and some very shrewd observations on skill coaching from which the discerning coach or athlete must select according to his own experience and knowledge—which is precisely what Mr. Doherty wishes him to do. This is not a book for beginners, or those who dislike observing and thinking for themselves.

A revolution in training methods had of course begun before Mr. Doherty published his first edition—he admits to “some embarrassment” for example that it contained no reference whatever to the subject of weight training. But the present edition makes full amends by the ample space which it devotes to modern training methods for endurance as well as for strength. Although some of his sources may be familiar to British distance enthusiasts, they will I feel sure have cause to be grateful to Mr. Doherty for his full and lucid examination and evaluation, supported by numerous quotations and examples, of the principles and practice of the various systems of ‘fartlek’ and interval training in Chapter 6, together with his explanation of Selye’s ‘stress concept.’ And the new Chapter 9, ‘Basic Training for Track and Field,’ deals not only with weight-training, but with isometric training, and with ‘Dual Resistance Exercises’ (which are curiously reminiscent of the ‘Event Form Exercises’ advocated by F. A. M. Webster in the 1930’s but generally neglected since—are they in for a revival, I wonder?).

Many chapters are now illustrated by a page of strength and suppling exercises suitable to the event, most of which are anything but mere ‘keep-fit’ or ‘warm-up’ activities. But it is the examples of detailed training schedules of champions of the last decade appended to each chapter which do most to underline the trend which has taken place towards more intensive training, winter preparation even for sprinters and field-event men, and the use of progressive “overloading” in many forms. Besides the more familiar training feats of Kuts and Snell, we read of Morrow running over the country in autumn with 2½ lb. weights strapped to his ankles, of Budd executing 25 x 220 in 28—31secs. during winter preparation, and Hary performing 10 press-ups with each hand—“enough to put Frank Wyckoff, George Simpson and Barney Howell onto stretchers headed for the training tables.” We learn too how Valery Brumel totalled 19,800lbs. in his weight training besides taking 1000 jumps with weights attached to his body in the course of a single month’s preparation for the 1961 season, and of the equally amazing schedules of Soviet triple-jumpers. Many of these schedules derive from such valuable sources as Fred Wilts’ “How They Train,” or “Track Technique,” which he edits. Mr. Doherty urges every coach to “constantly

read and study the periodicals and guide-books that are now available," and he certainly does not neglect his own homework. At the same time, he does not fail to stress that the real triumph of the amateur lies in achieving the highest degree of self-development within the limitations of time and energy imposed by the necessity of pursuing his normal vocation.

An allied theme to which Ken Doherty often returns indicates yet another, if less obvious, trend in modern coaching towards mental training; "our emphasis is that this quality of toughness, of self-confidence, of relaxation and control is present within each athlete within a range of capacity and should be trained towards the higher levels just as deliberately and carefully as the physical factors are trained." This emphasis is as fundamental to his chapters on Endurance Running and on Basic Training as it is to the six pages which he devotes to 'Mind Control in Shot Putting' or to his description of the methodical competitive planning of Soviet high-jumpers. But although he provides many interesting suggestions and illustrations of the value of deliberate mental preparation, the fact remains, as he admits, that no general system, desirable though it might be, has yet been evolved. In this sphere we are even more dependent upon individual inspiration, common-sense and experience, and upon isolated fragments of scientific research, than we are in the spheres of technique and physical conditioning.

For the immediate future anyway, the answers must still come, when they come at all, from the experience, wisdom and basic philosophy of the coach and athlete rather than from the adolescent science of psychology. And the discerning reader of this book can scarcely fail to realise that the qualities of wisdom and human understanding which it reveals in the author are every whit as important as the knowledge of skills and training systems which he displays. In comparison with the first edition, this is a work of maturity which reflects not only a long experience as a decathlon athlete and a dedicated teacher and coach, but a wide range of reading and much reflection. Few coaches of track or field could fail to profit from reading, in particular, his eighth chapter on the 'Principles of Sound Field Events Coaching' or to experience some moments of soul-searching in the process. The 28th, and last, principle is as typical of the author's philosophy as it is of his style, "Sound field event coaching should have three bones; a wishbone on which to fix goals and ideas; a backbone with which to maintain persistence; and a funny bone with which all the work can be made to seem worthwhile. The coach who lacks a sense of humour is carrying a heavy ball and chain."

H. H. LOCKWOOD.

**"A CLEAN PAIR OF HEELS" by Murray Halberg and Garth Gilmour
(Herbert Jenkins, 25/-)**

I thoroughly enjoyed this well written book and feel that Halberg comes over in his many aspects. So often this type of book becomes a chronicle of results but in this case, at the finish, we know a great deal more about him both as a person and an athlete. Nobody who saw his victories in Cardiff and Rome could doubt he is a man of almost superhuman courage and tenacity; a man who when he loses stores away the knowledge gained and uses it to good effect later; one who likes to plan his races but can still win if these plans should go astray.

His description of Lydiard as coach, mentor and friend portrays the ideal relationship. Lydiard's methods have enabled him to run his fastest 440 at the finish of 3 miles, not the start. Though this has taken a great deal of effort he obviously believes this training has been rewarding.

This man of iron willed determination seems to have been always searching for an ultimate goal from the age of 17. It took him until Rome to find it, but after the Olympic Games in 1956 he seems to have been confident of achieving his aim. In fact even after winning his gold medal he still seems in some way not satisfied and some inner force continues to drive him on.

He found in the Melbourne Olympic Games that he was not mentally attuned for his ultimate achievement, but the man who stepped onto the track in Rome was perfectly prepared both in body and mind—a lesson some fine athletes never learn.

I have a strong feeling that there will be another successful chapter needed after Tokyo. I found his chapter "Sweet Engravable You" particularly thought-provoking.

The only jarring note in this book is where Halberg states that but for his employers he would not be in the sport any longer. In fact we all owe these men a vote of thanks for enabling us to watch this great athlete.

We must envy the crowds which watch the sport in New Zealand; with such encouragement the future champions from this small country have every incentive to reach the ultimate goal.

"LAP OF HONOUR" by Norman Harris (Herbert Jenkins, 21/-)

"Lap of Honour" describes the greatest achievements of New Zealand's most notable athletes and the personal histories which led up to them. I found this book interesting, stimulating and the chapters well contrasted, though strangely the author seems at his best in describing performances which he did not himself see take place.

It is apparent that New Zealand's track heritage has been built initially upon a foundation of handicap races. Also it again raises the fascinating, though hypothetical question of how the great champions of the past would compare with their successors. Particularly interesting is the case of Randolph Rose who could possibly, with to-day's specialized training, have been the first four minute miler. Also Stanley Lay whose javelin throw of 222ft. 9ins. in the 1928 British Championships stood as a record for 29 years.

I personally found the chapter on Jack Lovelock's Olympic win the most fascinating. The success of this poised and intelligent athlete who won with a brilliantly executed plan could only be fully appreciated by the connoisseur.

Once names have been fully erased from the record book, we tend to forget them and this book fulfils a service in reminding us about the many great athletes who should never be forgotten.

The best of the chapters on the latterday competitors is about Snell's 880 race at Christchurch which must surely rank as perhaps the greatest of the recent World Records, slashing 1.7 seconds off the old figures.

Though I feel the most important contribution is the last chapter on the Maori marathon runner, Patu Riwai, who proved that the greatest achievement is to reach one's own personal peak of attainment.

PETER LENTON.

"SPORT IN SOCIETY" by P. C. McIntosh (Watts, 15/-)

Erudite, deliberately inconclusive, and thought provoking—this book is exactly what Peter McIntosh claims it to be when he concludes his introduction by saying "The chapters that follow are not written as a sociological study nor as history. They have been written rather as an extended essay upon some points where there has been, and still is, interaction between sport and the life and thought of man."

And yet by careful selection the author presents a philosophical thinking aloud that offers no answers but forces the reader to search his own mind in an attempt to isolate a standpoint.

Running through "Yesterday" and "Today" McIntosh follows the historical and philosophical evolution of sport from Ancient Greece to International pressures of this day. Yet is evolution the right word? If one agrees with his quotation from Huizinga, that play is "a valuable ingredient in sport . . . so valuable that when sport lost this particular element it became divorced from culture and had little dignity or worth for mankind," one sees with some trepidation a possible parallel between Roman and current times and wonders whether sport, which originated at ancient religious festivals, is not now dangerously close to becoming a religion in itself.

Reading "Sport in Society" has given this reviewer so furiously to think that he will even forgive Peter McIntosh's reference to him—in an easily identifiable high jump anecdote—as an "inferior English opponent."

Not light or easy reading, but stimulating and essential reading before next striking an attitude on sport.

A. A. GOLD.

"MODERN DISTANCE RUNNING" by Tony Ward (Stanley Paul, 21/-)

In every Olympic Games new champions of the track emerge, records are broken, new frontiers of speed and endurance are crossed. The student of athletics as well as the aspiring champion of tomorrow will study this year's record breakers to see wherein lies their secret. Their training methods will be examined, the philosophy of their coaches scrutinised. Tony Ward has made a study of the great runners and coaches of the past in his book "Modern Distance Running." Many memories will surely be stirred by reading again the many feats of such immortals as Nurmi, Wooderson, Harbig, Lovelock, Zatopek, to name only a few. Their races and training are analysed and discussed in a most interesting and informative way, and the author brings us right up to date by treating Elliott and Snell in similar fashion.

The tactics employed in many of the great duels of the track (Chataway v. Kuts. Pirie v. Kuts for example) are also discussed. In addition there are twelve pages of splendid photographs, and several very useful tables of figures showing, for instance the quarter-mile and kilometre splits in all the fastest 800 metres and 5000 metres races respectively. Two short chapters on weight training and tests and measurements are also included.

With so many books on athletics appearing these days one has to be selective in one's buying, but the middle-distance enthusiast and the keen student of athletics will not want to miss this book. I found it most enjoyable to read, and as a book of reference on the evolution of distance running it should prove most useful.

TONY ELDER

"A WORLD HISTORY OF TRACK AND FIELD ATHLETICS 1864-1964"

by R. L. Quercetani (Oxford University Press, 50/-)

1964 brings us to the centenary of the first clash on the athletics track between the Universities of Oxford and Cambridge, virtually the start of competitive amateur athletics on an organised basis. The improvement in all-round standards since then is graphically shown by the fact that the young schoolboy of to-day has little respect for the time of 4mins. 56secs. in which that first inter-varsity mile was won; a woman has run more than 10secs. faster, and the world record is of course more than a minute less.

Dr. Quercetani, President of the Association of Track and Field Statisticians, and the world's leading "track nut," has given us an exhaustive and exhausting history of athletics with every fact and figure in place. It is fascinating but not exactly easy reading. Athletes are for the most part mere names for which the author's massive files provide date and place of birth, weight and height (metric and linear) and the where and when of his best performances. All too seldom does an anecdote bring these figures to life—and the author's style sometimes makes the going heavy.

The admirable "Get To Your Marks" produced by the McWhirter twins in 1951 was written with a much lighter touch. Now it will be superseded (as all statistical works must be) on library shelves by this massive work, selling at a necessarily massive price. Though one cannot in all honesty be wholly uncritical, it must be made clear that this authoritative work must not be missed. Close on one hundred photographs will delight the enthusiast who will now know where to turn to check that fact or settle that argument.

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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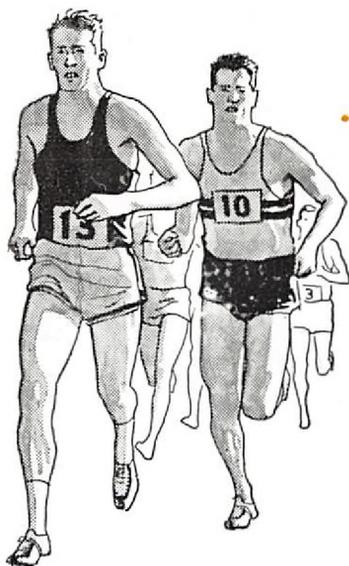
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