



# GEELONG REGION CROSS-COUNTRY TEAM NEWSLETTER



Issue # 42

August 2004

## GEELONG TEAMS CONSOLIDATE AT SUNNY COLIBAN ROAD RELAYS AND SOGGY COBURG

### COLIBAN WATER ROAD RELAY. HARCOURT - BENDIGO.

(Saturday 31st July)

With the sun shining and a new battery placed in the bone-shaking World War Two issue Hino bus, Geelong senior athletes optimistically arrived at Norlane Waterworld in readiness for the trip to the Harcourt Swimming Pool, and the start of the Coliban Long Road Relays.

However, at the back of everyone's mind was what lay ahead - the gut busting up-hills, the quad killing down-hills and the unforgiving terrain that stretched out ahead for as far as the eye could see. Many of us were also worried that our transport was about to pull a hamstring as John Perrott struggled to control a vehicle that resembled a bucking bronco. But after a detour to Ballarat to collect 'young gun', Brenton Rowe, we were flying along at the speed of a thousand startled gazelles. In fact, at one stage, John (Schumacher) Perrott was heard to mutter, "if I don't have to use first, second and third gears, this bus is not too bad!" Anyway, after a few anxious moments, we arrived, ready to race.

Fortunately, after a week of wintery weather, race day conditions were perfect as Jamie Godwin toed the starting line for the Division One Men. Also, on the starting line was Athens' Olympic marathon representative, Nick Harrison, in his last hit-out before heading to Europe. However, Jamie, still on a high from becoming a father for the first time, ran a strong opening leg over the rolling 5.2 kilometre course.

Athletes don't usually beg to run the second leg up and down Mount Alexander as it's a killer. In fact, most runners only ever run it once, vowing never again to put their body through the mental and physical pain involved in conquering this monster. However, despite not being in his best form after only recently returning to full training, Rowan Walker put his hand up to help the team. Sensibly, Rowan decided to race in his training shoes and to throttle back a fraction on the quad - killing down hills. Even so, he ran very well to peg back a few places.

The second toughest leg on the Coliban Course is "The Gap". Unfortunately, the race description in the A.V. Handbook says only, "has difficult sections" and does not do this 9.3 kilometres of country road justice. However, Rohan Perrott, despite having to back-off his training due to chronic calf tightness, ran a gutsy race to record second fastest individual split for the day and take Geelong up to third place.

Sixteen year old Brenton Rowe was easily the youngest Division One athlete competing in the Coliban Road Relays. However, as the old saying goes, "if you're good enough, you're old enough!" And Brenton was certainly good enough as he powered over the challenging 5 kilometres of the Coliban Water Race Leg in the second fastest split of the day.

Those of us who witnessed Simon Taylor burst from the blocks to begin his leg thought he was racing over his favoured 800 metres

on the track, rather than the gradual downhill 7.5 kilometres along Sedgwick Valley Road. However, Simon kept the momentum going and ran an excellent time of 24.20.

On the bus trip to the race start, Geoff Purnell went banana with fellow Vet, Geoff Clark in an eating competition that belied his super-lean physique. And once out onto Hogan's Road, this potassium powered athlete ran an excellent leg to serve it up to his much younger competitors.

As his six team-mates negotiated more than a marathon around the Bendigo countryside, 18 year old Nick Wightman was patiently waiting at the final change-over. And with a snappy tag with Geoffrey 'Osama' Purnell, Nick was off, speeding along the One Tree Hill Leg towards the Bendigo Athletic Track and a very creditable fourth placing. Great effort Jamie, Rowan, Rohan, Brenton, Simon, Geoff and Nick.

### "THE ATHLETE'S FOOT" GEELONG CROSS - COUNTRY CHAMPIONSHIPS

Don't forget that "The Athlete's Foot" Geelong Cross - Country Championships will be held on **Saturday 4th September** at the Eastern Gardens.

Junior Men / Women - 3 kilometres (2:00 pm.)  
Under 16

Senior Men / Women - 6 kilometres (2:30 pm.)

In the lead-up to the Coliban Road Relays, 18 year old Rebecca Forlong requested one of the shorter legs to assist her preparation for the Australian Cross - Country Championships. However, shorter does not always equate with easier as Rebecca was to discover as she negotiated the final gut-busting climb up Mount Alexander. Even so, Rebecca ran very well to have Geelong within striking distance of the lead at the first change - over.

Second runner, Celia Cosgriff then set off strongly along the Coliban Water Race determined to keep Geelong in with a strong medal chance. Twenty-one minutes and fifty-three seconds of sustained running later, Celia had accomplished her goal. Strong, rhythm runners are usually selected for the long, relatively flat Sedgwick Valley Leg. This job description suited marathon specialist Loretta McGrath perfectly as she powered down the road, stopping the clock within a few seconds of her 2003 time.

Initially, Cathryn Hoare was to run one of the shorter legs, but due to 'team balance', she enthusiastically slotted into the more challenging Hogan's Road Leg, where she ran an excellent race that will boost her endurance and confidence for the up-coming Burnley Half-Marathon.

And so, once again it all came down to the final 4.9 kilometres. Could final leg specialist, Joanne Lambert race Geelong to a well deserved team medal? Well, in one of the closest finishes in Coliban history and despite smashing her own Leg Record, Jo

finished an agonising 3 seconds from the bronze medal position. In fact, our gallant Geelong gals were only a miniscule 94 seconds from taking first place. Great running Rebecca, Celia, Loretta, Cathryn, and Jo!

The Coliban can be a strange, soul destroying event where athletes battle not only the terrain but sometimes their own team mate's ineptitude. More than once in Coliban history has an athlete run themselves to a stand-still, battling litres of lactic acid in sprinting frantically for the change-over only to find that his team mate has not arrived. Such was the case for the Division Four Men's Race where our old friend, Mr Thongs absolutely flew down the final hill only to find ..... no one from his team! Undeterred, Mr Thongs continued on, running the next leg, no doubt a trifle annoyed with somebody.

In previous races, Chris Colley has been a picture of composure and focus as the Geelong Team bus has wended its way to the start line. However, Chris quickly vacated his seat near the front of the bus, as the speed picked up with the start time quickly approaching. However, despite the 'white-knuckle' arrival, Chris ran a strong leg along the Coliban Water Race Leg.

Over the last few weeks, Paul Wilson has battled a virus that has slowed his running. Now fully fit and healthy, Paul ran a great leg along Sedgwick Road, slashing exactly a minute from his 2003 time and rocketing the Division Four Men's Team into third place. More impressively, Paul completed the longest cool-down in Coliban history as he searched in vain for the pick-up bus.

As stated previously, Geoff Clark consumed enough bananas on the trip to Bendigo to feed the Melbourne Zoo's primates but once up and running, he was able to consolidate third position with a strongly run leg that caught team mate, Andrew Chalmers by surprise.

One of the secrets to successfully negotiating the later legs of the Coliban is to calculate when you are likely to be running. Your team-mate's kilometre rate, terrain, wind direction are all taken into account so that a warm-up can be planned to the second. And so, it was a startled Andrew Chalmers who completed his final, frantic sprint to the change-over point as Geoff Clark suddenly appeared out of nowhere. Once over his shock, Andrew was able to smash his 2003 time for the final leg as he claimed third place for his Geelong Team.

Well done Chris, Paul, Geoff and Andrew!

Thorough planning and split second timing are required for the smooth running of the Coliban Road Relay. Actually, the Coliban is more like a military operation than a road race. To make sure everything worked like a well oiled machine, Geelong athletes were well versed on which bus to catch, what to do with clothing bags and when the team bus would pick them up. Last year we had a few hiccups (holding the course map upside down was not a great start!) but this year John Perrott and Kevin Varker were superb in collecting athletes and their gear. Great work, John and Kev!

Every bus trip home from the Coliban Road Relay has something different to offer. However, they are all great fun and highly entertaining. On previous trips we have had Lee "Hits and Memories" Troop leading a two hour karaoke session for tired, off key athletes or cake and candles to celebrate Rebecca Wiasak's 18th birthday or Weetbix eating competitions that still cause contestants to gag at the memory. This year was a little different with the "Left Side of the Bus" (61 points) just pipping the "Right Side of the Bus" (58 points) in the Cathryn Hoare hosted "Coliban Quiz". Then, there was the bizarre: "didn't we pass through Daylesford 20 minutes ago?" feeling of deja vu that engulfed our exhausted athletes as the bus chugged for home, eventually touching down well past our bedtimes.

Finally, we need to thank John Perrott for his great work in piloting the Team Bus once again and Kevin Varker and Lyn Taylor for

marshalling, managing teams and leading the Geelong Cheer Squad. Thanks guys, we all really appreciate your wonderful support!

## COLIBAN ROAD RELAY RESULTS

2003 Times in ( )

### DIVISION 1 MEN (48.8 km. 7 runners)

(The Orchards Leg - 5.2 km. "Hard Leg")

Jamie Godwin 22.06

Fastest Times - N Harrison (Glenhuntly) - 18.01  
- D Quin (Melbourne University) - 18.32

(Mt. Alexander Leg - 8.3 km. "#@&%\$#@ Hard Leg")

Rowan Walker 32.18 (29.48)

Fastest Times - M Michelsson (Collingwood) - 28.23  
- P Eason (Ballarat Harriers) - 29.06

(The Gap Leg - 9.3 km. "Very Hard Leg")

Rohan Perrott 32.12

Fastest Times - L Gloster (Glenhuntly) - 31.41  
- R Perrott (Geelong) - 32.12

(Coliban Water Race Leg - 5.0 km. "Relatively Flat")

Brenton Rowe 16.42

Fastest Times - P Hulbert (Glenhuntly) - 16.14  
- B Rowe (Geelong) - 16.42

(Sedgwick Valley Leg - 7.5 km. "Relatively Flat")

Simon Taylor 24.20

Fastest Times - M Chettle (Glenhuntly) - 22.38  
- Tim Wallace (Peninsula R.R.) - 24.04

(Hogan's Road Leg - 8.6 km. "Undulating")

Geoffrey Purnell 30.44

Fastest Times - D Ruschena (Glenhuntly) - 25.39  
- Trent Wallace (Peninsula R.R.) - 27.06

(Athletic Track Leg - 4.9 km. "Relatively Flat")

Nick Wightman 16.54

Fastest Times - G Morgan (Melbourne University) - 15.12  
- B Woodman (Glenhuntly) - 15.24

Geelong 4th place in 2:55.16

1st place Glenhuntly in 2:38.52

2nd place Peninsula Road Runners in 2:50.08

3rd place Melbourne University in 2:55.08

### DIVISION 4 MEN (32.3 km. 5 runners)

(The Orchards Leg - 6.3 km. "Hard Leg")

Neil MacDonald 28.21 (28.57)

Fastest Times - B Foley (Bendigo YMCA) - 22.43  
- R Coleman (Richmond Harriers) - 24.08

(Coliban Water Race Leg - 5.0 km. "Relatively Flat")

Chris Colley 22.02

(Sedgwick Valley Leg - 7.5 km. "Relatively Flat")

Paul Wilson 26.08 (27.08)

(Hogan's Road Leg - 8.6 km. "Undulating")  
Geoff Clark 30.52 (30.25)

(Athletic Track Leg - 4.9 km. "Relatively Flat")  
Andrew Chalmers 19.24 (20.09)

Geelong 3rd place in 2:06.50

1st place Knox Athletic in 2:01.08  
2nd place Oakleigh in 2:03.08

**DIVISION 1 WOMEN** (32.3 km. 5 runners)  
(The Orchards Leg - 6.3 km. "Hard Leg")  
Rebecca Forlong 26.34

Fastest Times - S Clark (Peninsula R.R.) - 26.18  
- R Forlong (Geelong) - 26.34

(Coliban Water Race Leg - 5.0 km. "Relatively Flat")  
Celia Cosgriff 21.53

Fastest Times - S Braakhuis (Melb Uni.) - 18.43  
- J Edwards (Glenhuntly) - 19.02

(Sedgwick Valley Leg - 7.5 km. "Relatively Flat")  
Loretta McGrath 27.01 (27.05)

Fastest Times - L McGrath (Geelong) - 27.01  
- M Jueff (Malvern) - 27.08

(Hogan's Road Leg - 8.6 km. "Undulating")  
Cathryn Hoare 35.12

Fastest Times - T Austin (Malvern) - 31.25  
- S Wallace (Peninsula R.R.) - 32.09

(Athletic Track Leg - 4.9 km. "Relatively Flat")  
Joanne Lambert 19.10 (19.42)

Fastest Times - J Lambert (Geelong) - 19.10  
- C Pivetta (Glenhuntly) - 19.57

Geelong 4th place in 2:09.50

1st place Malvern in 2:08.23  
2nd place Melbourne University in 2:09.05  
3rd place Peninsula Road Runners in 2:09.47

## COLIBAN ROAD RELAY INDIVIDUAL LEG RECORDS

**Leg 1. The Orchards - 5.2 km.**  
Sean Quilty 1998 Doncaster 17.05

**Leg 1. The Orchards - 6.3 km.**  
Lex Davey 1999 Keilor St. Bern. 21.52  
Serena Gibbs 2002 Peninsula R.R. 24.00

**Leg 2. Mt. Alexander - 8.3 km.**  
Sean Quilty 1997 Doncaster 27.11

**Leg 3. The Gap - 9.3 km.**  
Steve Moneghetti 1997 Ballarat YCW 27.57

**Leg 4. Coliban Water Race - 5.0 km.**  
Travis Longmuir 2002 Doncaster 15.52

Nicole Webster 1999 LSW 19.19

**Leg 5. Sedgwick Valley - 7.5 km.**  
Phil Sly 1999 Peninsula R.R. 21.10  
Haley McGregor 2002 Knox Athletic 22.41

**Leg 6. Hogan's Road - 8.6 km.**  
Michael Power 2003 Glenhuntly 24.47  
Susan Michelsson 2002 Collingwood 29.46

**Leg 7. Athletic Track - 4.9 km.**  
Mark Tucker 2003 Geelong 14.28  
Joanne Lambert 2004 Geelong 19.10

### THE BUSH INN AWARD

The winner of the Bush Inn Award for the  
Coliban Road Relays is  
**Cathryn Hoare**  
for her fantastic commitment to the Geelong Team  
and her great improvement over the last twelve  
months.

Well done, Cathryn.  
Enjoy your meal and the  
Bush Inn's famous hospitality.

### VOTES FOR "BEST PERFORMED GEELONG REGION ATHLETES" AT THE COLIBAN WATER ROAD RELAY

#### Senior Men.

3. Rohan Perrott
2. Brenton Rowe
1. Rowan Walker

#### Senior Women.

3. Joanne Lambert
2. Loretta McGrath
1. Rebecca Forlong

### RUNNER PROFILE

This profile features Matt McDonough, one of Geelong's most talented distance runners and a member of last season's history making Division One Team at the Sandown Road Relays. Matt has also recently been selected in the Victorian Team to contest the Australian Cross - Country Championships in Canberra later this month. However, all has not been plain sailing for Matt as he has shown great perseverance and patience in over-coming injuries including a nasty bout of osteitis pubis.

#### Matthew McDonough

Occupation Accountant

Age 31 Date of Birth 24 / 7 / 73

Height 176 cm. Weight 68 kg.

Married / Single Married to Kym Mary McDonough

Coach Jaime "Zed" Werner

**Personal Bests**

<b>400m.</b>	53 - 57 seconds
<b>800m.</b>	1:55 - 2:02
<b>1500m.</b>	3:50 - 4:01
<b>3000m.</b>	8:15 - 8:21
<b>5000m.</b>	14:10 - 14:50
<b>10 000m.</b>	30:17
<b>Half Marathon</b>	66:50

"The 400 metre - 5000 metre times are estimates as I have rarely raced these exact distances on a track. However, I have run 14.17 for a rare 5000 metres on the track. I also have to be very careful with some of the above times as the handicapper might see this profile, so I may have run quicker than the times above".

**Favourite Food** Anything my wife cooks!

**Food Eaten Before a Race** As little as possible but usually bananas.

**Favourite Drink** Caramel Latte from Gloria Jeans.

**Favourite Movie** "American Pie" and "Reg Reagan - All Of Me"

**Favourite Book** "Every Second Counts" by Lance Armstrong

**Favourite Music / Band** Don't Like Music! I listen to SEN - 1116 all day.

**Favourite TV Show** The N.R.L. Footy Show

**Favourite Night Spot** At home on my 'Big Boy' recliner.

**Favourite Holiday Spot** Hawaii and Austria.

**A Recent Winter Training Week**

<b>Mon.</b>	am.	50 minute easy run.
	pm.	35 minute easy run.
<b>Tues.</b>	pm.	60 minutes including 30 minutes at Threshold Pace.
<b>Wed.</b>	am.	55 minute easy run.
	pm.	40 minute easy run. Weights / Core Stability.
<b>Thur.</b>	pm.	4 x 2 kilometre reps with 2 minutes easy between. (Deakin University)
<b>Fri.</b>	pm.	40 minute easy run.
<b>Sat.</b>	am.	60 - 70 minutes including long and short hill reps over Breamlea sand dunes.
	pm.	40 minutes easy run.
<b>Sun.</b>	am.	80 minute easy run.
	pm.	Weights / Core Stability.

Note: easy runs at about 4:10 km. pace.

**Other Training / Recovery Sessions.**

Massage once a fortnight. cycling to work (10 kms. a day). gym twice a week concentrating on upper body weights and core stability exercises.

**Favourite Training Session** The Breamlea sand dunes session.

**Favourite Race** Stawell 3200 metre and Bendigo Mile.

**Best Ever Performance** Sorry, can't tell you that but winning Stawell Mile and Two Mile in 2000 is right up there. Have won 12 Professional races including 2000 Botany Bay Mile.

**Favourite Place To Train** Kapiolani Park, Hawaii.

**Toughest Ever Training Session** Running the Dandenong Ranges 1000 Steps three times. Each rep up the steps took 35

minutes.

**Most Admired Runner / Person** Lance Armstrong.

Please note: he is **not** on drugs!

**Advice To Other Runners** "Take up knitting - it's easier on the body!"

**Goals for the Future** "To limit my pro running and increase my amateur running - sounds good in theory."

**Anything Else** Last summer Mark Boxer and I completed an interesting Mona Fartlek session around the Barwon Valley Fun Park gravel track circuit. On our warm-up we noticed a young Danish back-packer sunbaking in the long grass near the lake. Then, as each lap was completed, we noticed that the young lass was taking off clothing to sunbake in the traditional Danish way - 'nude!' Of course 'Boxy' and I recorded P.B. laps that day and for the first time had more than enough energy for another full lap at the end of the session.

Please note: I was totally focused on my running and did not look once - not sure about Mark Boxer, though!

**COBURG CROSS - COUNTRY**

Saturday 14th August

Biting winds, driving rain, stinking ankle deep mud, the coldest Melbourne day for more than a quarter of a century! And that was inside the team bus! Yes, the 2004 Coburg Cross - Country race will be remembered for the challenging conditions over a difficult course that tested the heart, lungs, mental toughness, traction and the washing machines of all athletes.

However, in the opening 3 km. race, Rebecca Forlong did not let the terrain and elements deter her as she ran out a comfortable winner and thus clinching valuable New Balance sponsorship as the Under 20 Individual Winter Season Champion Athlete. Rebecca, congratulations on an excellent Cross-Country Season.

Also, competing over 3 kilometres were our Under 14 Male and Female athletes with Kate Sly, Georgie Buckley, Tyron Cover and Sam Withington all running excellent trials two weeks out from their races at the Australian Cross - Country Championships. All the best for Canberra, Kate, Georgie, Tyron and Sam! In the same race, Laura Stekelenburg finished an excellent fourth after running stride for stride with team mate Kate Sly for the majority of the race. Laura's form has gradually improved over the last few months and is a great reward for her perseverance and determination over the winter to regain full fitness. Well done also to Kate, Laura and Georgie for finishing the season on such a high note with third, fourth and seventh placings against the best quality field for the season. Along with Amy Stekelenburg, Eliza Curnow and Emma Hockey, our youngest female team finished an excellent second for the season and were a little unlucky to collect no team points at Albert Park due to a clash with the Zone Little Athletics Cross - Country Championships.

Under 16 athletes, Breanna Ryan and Holly Lipson looked like twins as they stood shivering on the starting line in their identical black and lime green Nike cross-country spikes. However, once the gun fired both girls flew from the blocks, determined to conquer not only the muddy six kilometre course but the rapidly dropping temperature and the driving rain. In a field stacked with Victorian Team Representatives, both Bree and Holly ran excellent races to finish ninth and eleventh respectively.

If possible, the rain had intensified for the Under 18 eight kilometre race, featuring Brenton Rowe and Michael Kenny. However, despite wearing racing flats that would have made parts of the course extremely treacherous, Brenton went to the front from the gun and gradually extended his lead to win by more than a minute. Great work, Brenton! Michael Kenny too, went out hard and was moving beautifully in fifth place as he began the second lap. And even though, he lost a couple of places as he tired, Michael was pleased with his effort on a truly testing day.

Despite our senior women having to negotiate just four kilometres at Coburg, only the ever reliable Cathryn Hoare and Joanne Lambert competed. However, both ran strong races over an extremely difficult course to finish in the top half of the field.

Also racing over four kilometres were Under 16 athletes, Tom Burns-Wallace, Tim Kilfoyle and Caleb Byrt. All three boys employed a fast, aggressive start to put themselves near the lead as the pack left the track and headed for the hills. Eventually, all three faded a trifle as the terrain and the weather took a toll with our gallant boys resembling 'drowned rats' as they crossed the line.

The Open Men's 16 kilometre course was a true endurance test with athletes required to negotiate four laps of hills, mud, gusting winds and tight, treacherous turns. Also, the decision to put the race back 15 minutes left athletes huddling under cover as they tried to stave-off hypothermia. However, Rowan Walker, resplendent in a near new pair of spikes, flew around a course by now part rice paddy- part quagmire, to finish less than 30 seconds from a top ten placing. Next to finish was the evergreen Geoffrey Purnell, who in his best result for the year was fourth Veteran. With six finishers required for Division One team points, it was essential that training partners, Paul Wilson, Jamie Godwin and Chris Colley not only finish but fight like crazy for every position. Fortunately, our boys were up to the task with gutsy running on a day where a nice cup of hot chocolate in front of a blazing fire would have been the preferred choice.

Well done to all our athletes (and cheer-squad) at Coburg for a fantastic effort. On a day where hulking footballers across the state were being helped from grounds with hypothermia, twenty-one lean, scantily clad Geelong athletes raced in atrocious conditions for twenty-one finishers!

## COBURG CROSS - COUNTRY

(Saturday 30th August.)

### MENS OPEN 16 km.

Rowan Walker	12th	59.05
Geoffrey Purnell	54th	66.37
Paul Wilson	75th	68.34
Jamie Godwin	109th	71.45
Neil MacDonald	178th	80.12
Chris Colley	191st	83.50

Fastest - N Adkin (APS)	-	55.08
- M Fedmowski (Mentone)	-	55.31
- C Perrett (Mentone)	-	56.38
- P Hulbert (Glenhuntly)	-	57.16
- D Ruschena (Glenhuntly)	-	57.47
- G Morgan (Melbourne University)	-	57.47
- J Meagher (Box Hill)	-	58.17
- A Failla (Doncaster)	-	58.23
- Tim Wallace (Peninsula R.R.)	-	58.36

- M Michelsson (Collingwood) - 58.37

### UNDER 20 MEN 6 km.

Fastest - L Adams (Essendon)	-	19.42
- B Woodman (Glenhuntly)	-	19.50
- D Locke (Peninsula R.R.)	-	20.16

### UNDER 18 MEN 8 km.

Brenton Rowe	1st	27.46
Michael Kenny	8th	30.44

Fastest - B Rowe (Geelong)	-	27.46
- K Symons (Yallourn)	-	28.48
- S Crowther (Knox Athletic)	-	29.29
- L Searle (Western Athletics.)	-	29.44
- R Lindsay-Johns (Ringwood)	-	30.05

### UNDER 16 MEN 4 km.

Tom Burns - Wallace	13th	15.29
Tim Kilfoyle	16th	15.56
Caleb Byrt	19th	18.00

Fastest - M Bayley (Knox Athletic)	-	13.36
- R Matthews (Essendon)	-	14.11
- J Huggett (Ballarat YCW)	-	14.13
- D Ireland (Keilor St. Bern.)	-	14.15
- K Wille (Knox Ath.)	-	14.29

### UNDER 14 MEN 3 km.

Sam Withington	6th	11.33
Tyron Cover	7th	11.51

Fastest - M Blicavs (Keilor St. Bern.)	-	10.30
- T Schumacher (Inv.)	-	11.02
- A Hall (Inv.)	-	11.16
- K Grimster (Frankston)	-	11.19
- J Warhurst (Inv.)	-	11.27

### WOMENS OPEN 4 km.

Cathryn Hoare	48th	18.10
Joanne Lambert	56th	18.35

Fastest - A Thompson (Glenhuntly)	-	14.38
- K Seibold-Crosbie (Malvern)	-	14.50
- L Weightman (Knox Athletic)	-	14.57
- S Gibbs (Peninsula R.R.)	-	15.08
- J Wilson (Malvern)	-	15.08
- J Edwards (Glenhuntly)	-	15.14
- S Braakhuis (Melbourne Uni.)	-	15.33
- S Wallace (Peninsula R.R.)	-	15.37
- F Nash (Doncaster)	-	15.48
- A Worland (Eureka)	-	15.49

### UNDER 20 WOMEN 4 km.

Rebecca Forlong	1st	11.04
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Fastest - R Forlong (Geelong)	-	11.04
- R Ferry (Peninsula R.R.)	-	11.36
- E Clayton (Frankston)	-	11.51
- S Renouf (Frankston)	-	12.06
- B Trueman (Frankston)	-	12.22

### UNDER 18 WOMEN 6 km.

Fastest - Z Warrington (Frankston)	-	24.08
- A Uys (Frankston)	-	24.27
- K Duncan (Knox Athletic)	-	25.03

**UNDER 16 WOMEN 6 km.**

Breanna Ryan	9th	26.23
Holly Lipson	11th	27.28

Fastest - R Green (Frankston)	-	23.30
- M Duncan (Knox Athletic)	-	24.17
- S Grahame (Frankston)	-	24.27
- R Owen (Frankston)	-	24.27
- R Gatt (Western Athletics)	-	25.32

**UNDER 14 WOMEN 3 km.**

Kate Sly	3rd	11.56
Laura Stekelenburg	4th	11.58
Georgie Buckley	7th	12.07

Fastest - B Nash (Essendon)	-	11.29
- G Thek (Box Hill)	-	11.34
- K Sly (Geelong)	-	11.56
- L Stekelenburg (Geelong)	-	11.58
- A Lavale (Doncaster)	-	12.01
- R Menadue (Essendon)	-	12.05
- G Buckley (Geelong)	-	12.07

**VOTES FOR  
"BEST PERFORMED GEELONG REGION  
ATHLETES" AT THE  
COBURG CROSS-COUNTRY**

**Senior Men.**

3.	Rowan Walker
2.	Geoffrey Purnell
1.	Paul Wilson

**Senior Women.**

3.	Rebecca Forlong
2.	Cathryn Hoare
1.	Joanne Lambert

**Junior Men.**

3.	Brenton Rowe
2.	Sam Withington
1.	Tyron Cover

**Junior Women.**

3.	Kate Sly
2.	Laura Stekelenburg
1.	Georgie Buckley

**THE BUSH INN AWARD**

The winner of the Bush Inn Award for the Coburg Cross-Country is **Kate and Chris Sly** for Kate's outstanding Winter Season running and Chris' team commitment in driving the Geelong bus. Well done, Kate and Chris. Enjoy your meals and the Bush Inn's famous hospitality.

**AROUND THE TRACKS AND TRAILS**

At the London Grand Prix Meeting at Crystal Palace on 30th

July, Craig Mottram stamped himself as a 'super-star' of world athletics and a medal chance for the Athens' Olympics when he finished a close second to the great Haile Gebrselassie over 5000 metres. Prior to the race, Gebrselassie was unaware of the tall 24 year old from Geelong but he had certainly developed a new respect as he was forced to pull out all stops to win in 12:55.51. "It was a hard race, especially the big guy - wow, he's fantastic", said the two - time Olympic 10 000 metre champion about Mottram. Craig's time of 12:55.76 smashed his own Australian record and makes him only the third non-African to run under 13 minutes for the distance. Dieter Baumann (12:54.70) and Bob Kennedy (12:58.21) are the other two and Baumann tested positive for drugs. Interestingly, Baumann claimed he was innocent and that he tested positive because his toothpaste had been spiked! Craig's time equates to 62 seconds per lap for twelve and a half laps.

One week later, Craig lined up for the 1500 metres at the Zurich Weltklasse Grand Prix Meeting, confident of improving on his P.B. of 3:35.40. Unfortunately, a tangle of legs with New Zealand's Nick Willis 310 metres into the race left Craig sprawling on the track. Left to run the remaining 1190 metres solo, Craig finished 14th in 3:46.80 behind Bernard Lagat (3:27.40) and Hicham El Guerrouj (3:27.64).

The heats of the Olympic 5000 metres can be seen on Thursday 26th August (2:55 - 3:33 am. AEST) while the final is Sunday 29th August (4:00 am.) **GO CRAIG!!!**

Georgie Clarke, another member of the strong Nic Bideau training group, finished 5th over 1500 metres (4:15.92) in Birmingham on the 25th July behind Greece's K. Efentaka (4:10.36).

Also competing in Europe is Mark Tucker who continues to lower his P.B.'s over the shorter distances with an 800 metre time of 1:51.87 (7th place) at a British Milers' Club Meet on 21 July and a 3:42.50 time (and win) for a low key 1500 metre race in London on August 4th.

Meanwhile, Lee Troop has completed his four week stint of altitude training at St. Moritz and will spend the final 21 day lead-up to his Athens' Olympic Marathon in Ostia, acclimatizing to the heat, before arriving in Athens only a few days prior to his race. The following e-mail details Lee's final race before the Olympic Marathon.

"Came off St Moritz super fit and did a 8.5km. race in a little Italian town called Amatrice. Race started at 960 metres and dropped the first 2 km. to 860 metres then the last 5.5 km. rose continually to 1010 metres. Was hot (35 degrees) but thought I ran solidly. A bit tired maybe from St. Moritz but am relatively happy.

1. Stefano Baldini ITA 23:44
2. Patrick Ivuti KEN 23:57
3. Daniele Caimmi ITA 24:34
4. Gashaw Melese ETH 24:41
5. Meba Tadesse ETH 24:52
6. Lee Troop AUS 24:55
7. Javier Caballero ESP 25:00
8. Simon Kiliu KEN 25:11
9. Michele Gamba ITA 25:14
10. Abraham Chelanga KEN 25:17

Freyja got fit in St. Moritz and ran the race too. She had been a bit sick but ran well in 43.30. In Ostia now getting used to the heat. Felt OK in the Amatrice heat but I know that for 42 km. it may be a whole different story."

Lee's Marathon can be seen on Monday August 30th (1:00 am. AEST) **GO LEE!!!**

The Athens Olympic Marathon will be very, very tough. After winning a rehearsal event on the course in 2002, Kenya's Mark Saina said it was "the toughest course I've ever run", and Saina finished seven minutes outside the course record that has remained unbeaten for 35 years, since Coventry's Bill Adcocks enjoyed his day of days in 1969.

Adcocks typified the no-nonsense approach of his era, regularly running 120 miles a week in training. Adcocks ran from Marathon to Athens in 2:11:07 wearing nothing more sophisticated than a pair of Woolies plimsolls and a handkerchief tied around his neck. "It didn't seem anything special at the time," says Adcocks, now 63 and one of the backroom staff at UK Athletics.

Adcock's tale of the ancient marathoner is one which all Athens' Olympic marathoners would do well to heed. "From 20 km. to 32 km. the course rises over 200 metres," he says. "There are a lot of hills and some are very hard. Given the tough course and the extreme heat that is expected, a time of 2 hours 10 minutes will be an exceptional run!"

Following the Athletics Victoria Bundoora Cross - Country Selection Trial, the following Geelong athletes have been selected in the Victorian Team for the Australian Cross Country Championships in Canberra on Sunday August 29th.

Well done to:

Brenton Rowe	Under 18 Men
Nick Wightman	Under 20 Men
Rebecca Forlong	Under 20 Women
Matt McDonough	Open Men

Brenton, Nick, Rebecca and Matt will join junior athletes: Georgie Buckley, Kate Sly, Tyron Cover, Sam Withington and Kelsey Rau in Canberra. We wish all our Victorian Representatives all the very best.

Well done to our junior athletes who competed at the Victorian Little Athletics Cross - Country Championships at a very slippery and muddy Lardner Park on Sunday 24th July. Congratulations also to Kate Sly, Laura Stekelenburg, Holly Lipson, Tyron Cover, Ryan Saunders, Sam Withington and Michael Kenny who collected team silver medals.

#### Individual Results:

Kate Sly	3rd	U 13 Girls 3000m.	10.11
Laura Stekelenburg	5th	U 13 Girls 3000m.	10.27
Holly Lipson	10th	U 13 Girls 3000m.	10.52
Georgie Buckley	5th	U 12 Girls 2000m.	8.11
Emma Hockey	32nd	U 12 Girls 2000m.	9.13
Amy Stekelenburg	25th	U 11 Girls 2000m.	9.13
Tyron Cover	2nd	U 11 Boys 2000m.	7.50
Ryan Saunders	10th	U 11 Boys 2000m.	8.26
Sam Withington	8th	U 12 Boys 2000m.	7.55
Caleb Byrt	16th	U 13 Boys 3000m.	10.29
Daniel Payne	7th	U 14 Boys 3000m.	9.58
Michael Kenny	8th	U 15 Boys 3000m.	9.26

Many of our junior athletes have also performed brilliantly over the Geelong Centre Little Athletics Cross-Country Season. Well done to Kate Sly and Georgie Buckley who were named joint Geelong Centre Girl's Champions for 2004. Both Kate and Georgie won all nine line honours for the Winter Season.

Finally, congratulations to Jodie and Jamie Godwin for the safe arrival of son, Jaylen John Godwin. Our Under 14 Boy's Team is already looking strong for the 2016 Winter Season.

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## MISSED IT BY THAT MUCH!

In the immortal words of Maxwell Smart, it appears that many recreational runners have "missed it by that much!" when bragging about their kilometre rates for a lap of Melbourne's famous 'Tan' running track. It appears that the distance of 3.847 kilometres, which has been used for years, is in fact incorrect and 20 metres long. Recent measuring by surveyors has 'The Tan's' actual measurement at 3.827 kilometres. However, this does not effect the fastest times, as Craig Mottram's recent time of 10.12 is certainly 'hooting' along, and of course, everyone runs the same distance.

## THE QUEST FOR THE SUB FOUR MINUTE MILE

On 6th May 1954, at Iffley Road Track, Oxford England, Roger Bannister created athletic history when he broke four minutes for the mile in a world record time of 3:59.4.

Six weeks later, on the 21st June in Turku Finland, Australia's John Landy clocked 3:57.9 to better Bannister's mark.

Fifty years on, 38 Australian athletes have broken the magical four minute barrier. To commemorate the 50 year anniversary of Landy's wonderful run, a dinner, brilliantly organised by Athletics International, was held at Crown Palladium on Monday 21st June 2004. The night was a fantastic event, with 25 out of the 38 Australian sub four minute milers in attendance. Listed below are the 38 Australian (how many Geelong athletes can you spot?) who have broken the four minute barrier, following which is the transcript of Bruce McAvaney's wonderful presentation on the history of the mile. To quote Bruce, "this was a special night!"

**Australian Sub Four Minute Mile Honour Roll**  
Simon Doyle 3:49.91

Mike Hillardt	3:51.82
Craig Mottram	3:52.90
Pat Scammell	3:53.58
Herb Elliott	3:54.5
Ken Hall	3:55.2
Graham Crouch	3:55.59
Scott Petersen	3:55.75
Merv Lincoln	3:55.9
Youcef Abdi	3:56.23
Andrew Lloyd	3:56.52
Steve Foley	3:56.59
Peter Fuller	3:56.8
Holt Hardy	3:57.12
Chris Fisher	3:57.3
Peter Bourke	3:57.53
Steve Austin	3:57.79
John Landy	3:57.9
Peter Watson	3:58.0
Michael Power	3:58.03
Paul Grinstead	3:58.3
Darren Abbott	3:58.38
Alastair Stevenson	3:58.38
Chris Bowden	3:58.39
Glen Ritchie	3:58.43
Daniel Hill	3:58.57
Jim Bailey	3:58.6
Peter O'Donoghue	3:58.6
Nigel Adkin	3:59.09
Colin Dalton	3:59.44
Shaun Creighton	3:59.46
Mark Fountain	3:59.63
Mark Arens	3:59.64
Harry Downes	3:59.7
Tony Benson	3:59.8
Keith Wheeler	3:59.81
Mark Tucker	3:59.9

## OUR PART IN FOUR MINUTE MILE HISTORY

*Bruce McAvaney addressed a dinner in Melbourne recently, to commemorate Australian John Landy's first sub-four-minute mile and world record, run 50 years ago, six weeks after Roger Bannister first went under four. This is the transcript of his speech.*

"Here is the result of event No.9, the one mile: No. 41, R G Bannister, of the Amateur Athletic Association and formerly of Exeter and Merton Colleges, with a time that is a new meeting and track record, and which, subject to ratification, will be a new English native, British National, British all-comers, European, British Empire and World Record. The time is 3:59.4."

That's arguably the most famous cue, let alone understated announcement in athletic's history...3 Minutes, 59.4 seconds! He was a formidable character, the announcer. Norris McWhirter died earlier this year, unfortunately just before the 50th anniversary of the first sub-four minute mile.

McWhirter apparently had rehearsed assiduously the night before, in his bath, and it was through him that the BBC, the newsreel camera and most of the print media were present that day. McWhirter, and his twin Ross, who was gunned down in 1975 by the IRA, were joint founders and editors of the Guinness Book of Records.

McWhirter had a sense of humour. Here in Melbourne at the 1956 Olympics, he told the story of a middle-aged Australian woman who, observing distressing scenes at the finish of the marathon exclaimed, "Cripes, how many qualify for the final?"...

Back to Bannister, and the race: is it the sport's finest achievement? How does the 3.59.4 stack up with other athletic landmarks? Classics such as our own Ron Clarke's 27:39.4 in Oslo in 1965, a 35 second improvement on the previous mark.

Or Bob Beamon's famous Olympic leap at the 1968 Games in Mexico City, one jump taking the world record from 27 to 29 feet.

And then there's his fellow American, Michael Johnson's equally outrageous performance over 200m in Atlanta in 1996.

Bannister's performance contains one flaw. Runners know it: obvious pace making, a practice contrary to the rules at the time. Just 11 months earlier, Bannister had broken the British mile record only for it to be disallowed for the same infringement, albeit in more blatant circumstances...

Why did the record escape scrutiny? Perhaps it had something to do with national pride; the much-needed boost for Britain after her hardships following World War II, the fact that Bannister had been a student at Oxford; it was a class-conscious era; or even the inclusion in the six-man field of Tom Hulatt, the odd man out.

Hulatt was the northern counties champion. On that day he ran for the AAA along with Bannister, Brasher and Chataway against George Dole and Alan Gordon from the Oxford University Athletic Club.

Critically, Hulett wasn't a part of the pacemaking team. He finished third in 4:16, behind Bannister's 3:59.4, Chataway's 4:07.2 but in front of Brasher who was not timed, and the non-finishers Gordon and Dole.

Tom Hulatt differed from the other competitors off the track as well. Bannister became a distinguished neurologist and master of Pembroke College, Chataway an ITV newsreader and cabinet minister; Brasher a journalist, businessman and founder of the London Marathon; George Dole a reverend and Alan Gordon an economist.

Tom Hulatt had left school at 14, worked variously in a woodyard, as a railway labourer and shovelling coal, eventually having his own business - rat-catching.

Back to Bannister. No, I don't think it was the greatest performance ever but it was outstanding. Definitely the most famous record in my mind and therefore a contender for the greatest achievement. Pacemaking aside, it was a mighty effort and Roger Bannister was a superb athlete.

Different and determined, no formal coach, Bannister set himself a highly criticised training and racing programme. He was an athlete who refused to conform. What's impressive is his courage to rise above the disappointment of the 1952 Olympics in Helsinki where he finished fourth and then was hammered by the press. One journalist penned the headline: "I feel like suing British Athletics for a breach of promise."

And then there's his character, to absorb the "Cathy Freeman" scale of pressure in the race to be the first to break the four minute barrier. Bannister almost irrelevantly had taken two seconds of the previous world record of 4:01.4 set by the Swede Gunder Hagg nine years earlier.

What a pair Hagg and his fellow Swede Arne Anderson proved to be. Aided by Sweden's neutrality in World War II, these fierce rivals set the stage for the assault on the four-minute mile. History shows Hagg to have been slightly superior, but between them they broke the world record no fewer than six times in the three years 1942 to 1945, taking the mark down from Sydney Wooderson's 4:06.4 to 4:01.4.

Now 85 years of age and confined to a wheelchair, Hagg still has attitude. In 1946, he and Andersson were declared professionals for receiving appearance money. And therefore they missed out on the London Olympics in 1948.

(Sweden still provided the gold and silver medallist in the 1500m.) Ten years ago, Hagg was offered reinstatement by the Swedish Athletics Union but declined, declaring, "Once a professional, always a professional."

Incidentally, Hagg was picked up for speeding (in his car) the day Bannister broke his world record, and that's how he heard the news: the police told him and let him off without a fine.

I'm not sure where the American star miler Wes Santee was that day, but our own champion John Landy was in Finland preparing for a series of races and heard the news while relaxing in a Finnish restaurant.

John must have had mixed feelings when he received the news: it was his friend and rival Denis Johansson who dashed into the restaurant, cable in hand. Landy's reaction: "Santee will be the next."

Hagg's record had proved elusive. That 4:01.4 had survived despite Landy's great efforts from December 1952.

It should be recognised that in the 18 months prior to Bannister's 3:59.4, there had been nine races won in 4:02. Belgian Gaston Rieff (first in the Olympic 5000m in 1948) was the first in 4:02.8, Santee and Bannister (not ratified) once each and John Landy the other six - his first at 4:02.1 in Melbourne in December 1952.

Turku was 50 years ago. 46 days after Iffley road in Oxford. Chataway was there, a pacemaker was offered, but Landy declined. John had run 4:01.6 off a too-quick first half at the end of May, and was sharp following a series of time-trials. The field of six featured two Finns: John's mate Denis Johansson and the up and coming Aulis Kallio. It was Kallio who took on the role as pacemaker.

The sports ground was packed - 8000 fans. Kallio led the first lap 58.0, Landy followed in 58.5. The Australian took the lead after 600m and reached half way in 1:57.9. At the bell it was 2:57 but Chataway was close. Unlike Oxford, Chataway was here to win, and Landy knew it. So with 300m to go, he took off.

The Finnish fans, sensing something special was on, roared their appreciation: "Landy, Landy, Landy..." echoed around the ground. The timekeepers were in the right spot and when John when through 1500m, he had registered a new world record: 3:41.8.

The sprint continued all the way up the straight and when he hit the line, there was no immediate celebration. But when John looked back and saw Chataway was 40 yards behind, he must have known it was fast.

(Chataway finished with a personal best 4:04.4.) The announcement was in Finnish but I doubt in the same fashion as Norris McWhirter. Not immediately understanding, John got the message from Johansson: "It's a new world record - 3:58..."

Pandemonium broke out as the fans grabbed hold of the Aussie and threw him up into the air. Landy asked Chataway to join him in a lap of honour, but the Brit refused: it was John's day.

After two years of training and racing, the world record was his. He was to hold it for the next three years.

It may not have been as famous, but I reckon if you asked Chataway to compare Landy in Turku with Bannister at Oxford, you'd be able to pick his answer.

Vancouver and the Empire Games were now in waiting. The race of the century was touted, and that's what Bannister and Landy produced. The classic clash between the front runner and kicker, Bannister winning the gold in 3:58.8; Landy silver, 3:59.6.

Can you imagine that happening in Athens? That's the equivalent of Hicham El Guerrouj running 3:44 (using the mile standard) holding off Medhi Baala in 3:45. We can only hope.

Let's leave the definitive appraisal of that mile in Vancouver to Chataway. His role and second place finishes in both Oxford and Turku gave him a unique insight: "It was Roger's best race, superbly judged and also the best duel on the track that I have ever seen."

The legendary Czech distance runner Emil Zatopek once said: "It is not enough just to run in a race. You must make a contribution to the contest." And that's what John did so brilliantly that day in Vancouver.

So what has been Landy and Bannister's legacy? Let's see what followed:

In 1955, young Australian Herb Elliott clocked 4.22 for the mile. The equally famous Percy Cerutti was there that day and declared: "That boy can be coached to break the world record in 1958." He did. Herb was unbeaten in the 1500 and mile from 1954 when the serious training commenced, to 1961 when he retired.

The year 1958 was a watershed one. He ran 3:59.9, then went to the United States in May and improved that time to 3:57.8. Herb cleaned up at the Cardiff Empire Games but his greatness really came to light 11 days later at the Santry Stadium in Dublin. He smashed a world-class field and the world record for the mile, reducing it from 3:57.2 to 3:54.5.

Later that season he did something similar in Gothenburg to the 1500m mark, taking it from 3:38.1 to 3:36.0. Herb was quiet in 1959, studying in England, though Cerutti declared him lazy. Prior to the 1960 Rome Olympics his fastest time for the year was a modest 3:59.2. But Rome would prove to be his masterpiece.

The Frenchman Michael Bernard set the race up with a very fast first half. And then Herb took over at 600m. In customary Elliott style, it was brutal. The third lap 56 seconds, the last 800 1:52.8. The final time 3:35.6. The winning margin, 2.8 seconds and a new world record. Another Frenchman finished second; Michel Jazy was 20m away and he would eventually go on to break Peter Snell's mile record.

Snell, I guess, was to New Zealand what Elliott was to Australia at that time: a winner. In Rome, when Herb was winning the 1500, Peter was taking gold in the 800. Two years later, on a grass track in Wanganui, the Kiwi set a new world mile mark of 3:54.4.

On to Tokyo, and the '64 Olympics, and there he became the first man in 44 years to win the classic middle distance double: the 800/1500m. Ironically, it was the first time he had actually run over 1500m and in that final, he ran the fastest ever last lap for the time: 52.6.

The next Olympic champion at 1500m, the metric mile, was the father of Kenyan athletics, Kip Keino. He was extraordinary. Early in that 1968 year, Keino clocked the third fastest 10,000m. He was one of the favourites for the 10km in Mexico, but with two and a half laps remaining he dropped out of the final with stomach cramps. His recovery was impressive because two days later he won a heat of the 5,000m and then two days after that took the silver.

Far from finished, on successive days Keino then won a heat of the 1500, was placed in the semi-final, and then ran one of the most famous races ever, taking gold in the final.

The overwhelming favourite was the American Jim Ryun. Unbeaten for three years and the world record holder in the 880 yard, 1500m and mile, Ryun held back, fearful of the altitude factor. Keino, aided by his compatriot, Ben Jipcho, set off at a ridiculous pace: the first lap 56 seconds. By the time they had a lap to run, Keino was more than 30m clear of the American.

Ryun made up some ground and was actually happy with his time: 3:37.89. But that was only good enough for silver. Keino's gold was almost overshadowed by his winning time of 3:34.91.

Ryun, a long-time senator in the United States, remains a complex character. But there's no doubt he's the greatest high school miler that country's ever produced, and one of the greatest talents the sport has ever seen.

To give you an idea of the fame he enjoyed or perhaps endured, I'll use the Sports Illustrated cover - a cultural icon in America - as an example: In the world of American sports you make it when you're on the front cover of that magazine...they even keep count.

Michael Jordan holds the record with 49, followed by Muhammad Ali on 37, with three other legends - Magic Johnson, Jack Nicklaus, and Kareem Abdul-Jabbar - on 22. Ryun finished with seven - more than any other track and field athlete, including Carl Lewis - and the same number as John McEnroe.

During the last months of the 50th anniversary celebrations, one British journalist urged all mile devotees to pay homage not to what happened at Oxford in 1954, but what transpired in Christchurch 20 years later.

John Walker was Chataway that day; a very competitive Chataway, second behind Filbert Bayi. Was this the race of the century? John and the three Aussies in that Commonwealth Games final - Graham Crouch, Dave Fitzsimons and Randell Markey - might say yes.

There was no pacemaker for the Tanzanian. From the front his lap times tell the tale: 54.9, 57.3, 58.6; the last 400 - 55.4 (Walker 54.4). His 1.52.2 was almost four seconds up on Ryan's 800 split when he had set the world record 3.33.1 in Los Angeles seven years earlier.

The finishing times were as follows: Bayi 3:32.2, Walker 3:32.5, Jipcho 3:33.1, Dixon 3:33.9, Crouch 3:34.2...

Remember it was 1974. 30 years ago... I would think that's about as good as it gets. Although second to Bayi that day, Walker had made his mark and the next year his fame spread from New Zealand to the rest of the world.

Fittingly, it was Bayi's three-month-old world record John shattered, but like Hagg's mark, that was the cameo; it was the mountain he climbed: that was even more significant. He was the first to run a mile in under 3:50.

He did it on August 12, 1975, in the Swedish city of Gothenberg. And it did it the typically tough Walker way. Four fast strong laps: the first 55.8, the last 56.4.

There were two Australians in the field that night: Ken Hall, who finished second in his personal best of 3:55.2, and the remarkably consistent Graeme Crouch. Crouchy would be in that final when John went on to win the gold medal in Montreal the next year, becoming the third Kiwi to win the Olympic 1500m title. (Lovelock 1936, Snell 1964.)

His longevity is legendary. John was the first to run under the four-minute mark on 100 occasions. That was in Auckland on February 17th, 1985.

Speaking to him recently, it was that mile in Gothenberg and not the Olympic gold medal, he cherishes most, explaining that evening he broke the 3:50 was the one and only night he actually set out to break a world record.

That night must have been special. The bath was full of champagne when he returned to his hotel room. His phone rang non-stop for a week.

His first interview was with Time magazine and the reporter's first question was: "Well done Mr Walker, but I have to ask you, how many laps are there to a mile?" Luckily for her, it wasn't Daley Thompson she was talking to...he would have bitten her head off.

History proves all things must pass and John's number one ranking probably went to the next wave at the World Cup in 1977. John wasn't at his best in Dusseldorf that night, but Steve Ovett's surge at 200m out must have been a definitive

statement.

In my working time, the most hyped race has been the Ben Johnson / Carl Lewis final in Seoul. But Steve Ovett versus Seb Coe in Moscow in 1980 is a close second. The media publicity and speculation was understandable.

Their only previous clash had been in 1978 at the European Championships over 800m. On that occasion Coe went out too fast, getting to 400 in 49.32.

He was a sitting duck for Ovett, who actually broke the UK record with 1:44.09. But he too was overrun by a German outsider, Olaf Beyer.

In 1979, Coe was a sensation. He set three world records (800m, mile, 1500m) in 41 days. But Ovett timed his record-breaking efforts for the Olympics year.

July 1st, 1980, must have been one of those unforgettable nights in Oslo - and they've had a few. Coe added the 1000m world record to his long list but by the end of the night that list had been reduced. Ovett shaved two tenths of a second off his British rival's mile world record with 3:48.8.

In Moscow, first up was the 800m: Coe the hot favourite, but he ran a badly-judged race and Ovett, lucky not to be disqualified after pushing through a gap, took the gold medal. The British press didn't let Coe off. The next day he went jogging. They took a photo and captioned it: "Coe's trail of shame". But Seb had the last laugh and displayed his first sign of true greatness at those games in Moscow, with his famous comeback victory in the 1500m.

The early to mid-eighties were remarkable times for middle distance fans, dominated by Coe, Ovett, Cram and Aouita.

As a broadcaster, the 1984 Olympic final is my favourite 1500m. What a field, and what a race it turned out to be: the American star Steve Scott going out hard, making it fast...Ovett stepping off the track in the last lap, the victim of a viral heart condition and then Coe daring to go first, holding Cram and finally running away to earn his unique place in Olympic history.

On the same day Coe was winning an unprecedented second 1500m gold medal, we were given a long look at what in many ways has become the force in the mile. I'm speaking of North Africa, in this case, Said Aouita of Morocco. Aouita seemingly strolled around the Coliseum in LA on his way to an Olympic record in the 5000m. At that moment in 1984 I'd never heard of [Noureddine] Morceli from Algeria, or El Guerrouj of Morocco. But it wouldn't be long.

Cram's big years were '82 to '86. His defeat in Rome at the World Championships in 1987 were the first sign he had come back to the field.

In July 1985, Cram was close to perfection: three world records in 20 days, from 1500 metres to 2000 metres. They were each impressive. The 2000 had been Walker's, and it was a benchmark. The 1500 was in Nice, against Aouita and it was thrilling. The mile was in Oslo against Coe.

Today's world record holder, Hicham El Guerrouj says that's the greatest mile race of his lifetime.

Herb Elliott at one stage thought Morceli was the best he'd ever seen. I'm not sure if El Guerrouj has supplanted the Algerian in Herb's mind but if you had been in Tokyo in 1991 the night Morceli won the first of his three 1500m titles, you would be loath to argue with his assessment.

Morceli demoralised a first class final field containing Kirochi, Herold, Aouita and Simon Doyle, winning by an ever-increasing 15m; running irresistible splits 1.50.1 last 800, 51.5 last 400, 38.7 - 300, and 25.9 final 200.

I often think Morceli's reputation has suffered because of El Guerrouj's brilliance. The Algerian was on occasions

awesome, great for many seasons, very good for nearly a decade. A big race winner and a big record breaker, his mile mark 3:44.39 took nearly two seconds off Cram's Oslo extravaganza.

After under-performing in Barcelona behind Cacho, he won 53 consecutive 1500/mile races prior to the final in Atlanta. Morcelli won that final. It was a just reward, but the victory felt incomplete.

El Guerrouj fell at the bell, Cacho had to high jump him and Morcelli suffered some spiking. I'm still uncertain how strong he would have been had El Guerrouj stayed on his feet.

We've arrived at today's man, Hicham El Guerrouj: at the start of 2004, 81 wins in his last 84 races. Those wins include four world titles, but the defeats include two Olympic finals. At times he's breathtaking.

When he won in Seville in 1999 at the World Championships, his finishing time was five seconds quicker than anybody had ever run at a major title. I called that night with Coe, who at the completion of the procession, gasped, "This guy is incredible."

The all-time list backs him up. At the start of 2004, El Guerrouj has eight of the fastest 10, and 15 of the fastest 23 times on the combined 1500/mile list.

His mile record stands at 3:43.13. His 3:26.00 for the 1500 equates to an even faster 3:42.48.

But he looked mortal in Sydney, a victim he believes, of overtraining in the Olympic year, and probably an over-reliance on a pacemaking team mate, let alone nerves and pressure. They won't go away in Athens.

Mehdi Baala of France was fourth in Sydney and pushed El Guerrouj in Paris last year at the worlds. He's a danger. It's a race I'm looking forward to calling in Athens as much as any other. The stakes are high...

A great champion has to overcome his demons in a contest which will go a long way towards determining his place in the history of the mile.

### **What a history.**

That four-minute barrier was a holy grail, as described by McWhirter: "The phrase, the four minute mile, had a beauty in it, a symmetry, there was magic in it".

He also went on to say: "It was something that we felt ought to be accomplished by a Briton, because it was our measurement, our distance, our imperial mile."

So perhaps it was fate that it was Bannister, and not Landy. John Landy, when asked would his life have changed had he been the first to break the four minutes replied, "I don't know. I've had an extraordinarily interesting life and I just leave it at that."

So who can claim to have run the greatest race over the mile? Who's the best ever? Tough question. This is my answer: In 1924, Parvo Nurmi won a gold medal at the Olympics over 1500m and then 5000m in the space of 45 minutes.

Bannister in 1954 followed by Landy and then Elliott in 1960; Walker in 1975; Ovet, Coe, Cram and Aouita in the eighties; Morcelli in the nineties, with El Guerrouj, have on one day and in some cases more than one, been the very best the world has ever seen.

But let's finish with the anniversary. Great athletes inspire lasting memories. Think of Sydney, think of Cathy. Think of Melbourne, think of Betty. Iffley Road has Bannister, Gothenberg Walker, and Turku in Finland - well Turku's lucky, because they have Nurmi. That's where he grew up.

But they also have Landy, forever Landy, 50 years to the day.

## **FINALLY, THANK YOU TO THE FOLLOWING FOR THEIR FANTASTIC SUPPORT OF THE GEELONG REGION CROSS-COUNTRY TEAM**



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