



# RUNNING COMMENTARY



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## Club Website:

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The club website is [www.nbo.org.nz](http://www.nbo.org.nz) . Please send any photos, videos, results or items of interest / relevance to Tony Prisk at [tony.prisk@outlook.com](mailto:tony.prisk@outlook.com).

## Articles

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Do you have something interesting which could be included in our magazine?

If you feel that it is interesting we would love to share it with other members. Articles for the next issue should be sent in by the middle of February.

A big thank you to those members who have contributed to this issue.

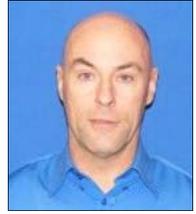
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## From the Editor:

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This year has been a tough year for me with my Father passing away and over the last nine months I have been through a Business Transformation process at my workplace. Fortunately I have come out the other end with a very pleasing outcome. During this period my morning runs have kept me energized and sane.



In this edition I have included a couple of Mel Angland's blogs which I can really relate to. I have always suspected that my Achilles problems were related to the alignment of my spine. Too many hours sitting at a computer over the years has not helped. Although I do a yoga routine on a regular basis, maybe I should take Mel's advise and visit a chiropractor. I am a morning person and 5.00am runs suit my biorhythm, work schedule and family commitments. Usually I can manage 4 runs a week.

I agree with Tony's sentiments on the Children's section. My association with the club started many years ago, with my participation in the club nights as an 8 year old. Way back then it was the same with the parents and other helpers running around supporting us. In those days the track had a cinder surface and there was a forest where the embankment is now, which gave us great shelter in the home straight.

A few years ago Allan McLaren published a 268 page book on the history of the New Brighton Athletic and Harrier Club (1928 to 2003). It was a real labor of love with Allan spending many months interviewing members and then compiling this very comprehensive history of the club. Recently in his weaker moments he has commented that he is thinking about going back into print to update it and include our merged clubs history. That would be fantastic! Over the next few editions of this magazine I will be including extracts from his book and in this months magazine I have part one of the 'Peter & Wendy Renner' story.

Tony Prisk

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## From Margaret:

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The Track and Field season is well under way and those of you competing and supporting will have noted how dry the track had become. The rain last week was welcome, but by no means enough. Another meeting was held at the track last Friday with the Council Rep and two of the Contracting team from Recreational Services. The watering regime has been increased, the sprinkler heads adjusted and there is a plan to add another k line and put a wind break along the top of the bank. Recreation Services will also provide fertilizer. Their Company supports young people involved in sport and Ed the Operations Manager delivered two boxes of water bottles to give out. There are enough for all of our Children's section to have one. I took a photo on Saturday morning after distributing some to our competitors who were in between events.

They are standing in front of the gazebo where yet another delicious bake sale and sausage sizzle was taking place. The amount of money raised by these great efforts is significant and I want to thank all of the parents who contribute their baking skills and their time to support the club in this way.

Staying hydrated has been even more important in the last few weeks as we experience a record dry spell and almost unbroken high temperatures. The latter has obviously affected my brain as I was the one who suggested we start our Sunday run an hour earlier than normal at 7:30 the weekend before last.

Those of you with gardens will have also had earlier than usual crops. My blackcurrants need picking already.

I hope that this holiday time provides you with rest, fun, family and food, liberally sprinkled with friends and training.

See you in the New Year.

Margaret



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## Junior Track & Field:

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Well it's hard to believe we are halfway through our season already but what a great start it has been so far!!!

We have had a lot of our wonderful families who have returned this year and some wonderful new families join.

It's never an easy task organising children's' athletics and it is all voluntary from everyone involved. I am lucky enough to be working with such a wonderful group of parents that have volunteered their precious time to be part of my committee which makes the workload easier to juggle.

Our Tuesday nights have been awesome as always and its great to see so many children enjoying the sport and getting excited when they achieve a PB. We are also very lucky to have so many volunteer coaches and parents helping on these nights as if we didn't have their help we couldn't run our Tuesdays.

We have an amazing Littlies team this year being run by Don & Jack. I take my hat off to both as I have not heard anything but positive comments from parents and children on what they have learnt on the Tuesdays. They are a true asset to our club and have great little people skills!! The encouragement towards all the children is awesome so thank you guys for such an awesome job!!

We also had our yearly Runathon Fundraiser on the 5<sup>th</sup> December and what a scorcher it was!! But it was great seeing so many kids and adults turning up to support the club. They were all amazing completing 10 x 400 laps and they all utilised the sprinkler system Kevin set up and then all enjoyed a refreshing ice block at the end.

Then we have our Interclub Children, well where do I start!!! They are all amazing!!! We have a great bunch of kids representing our club every Saturday and the encouragement they have for each other is outstanding. We have one of the most caring and respectful clubs which is absolute awesome.

All our children have been competing at Interclub with heart and soul which is so cool to watch and makes me extremely proud as a Club Captain. We have had some amazing results so far with PB's, medals and ribbons, our children an all superstars in my books.

I would also like to mention our amazing interclub parents, they all step up to duties when required and their support for all the children is to be commended. Our parents also have amazing baking skills which showed at our first interclub bake sale fundraiser. With their amazing baking and Kylie's amazing organisational skills we managed to raise over \$800 for the club which was truly

amazing. We have got another bake sale on the 16<sup>th</sup> December which is our Christmas special, so I am looking forward to seeing what goodies will be made for it.

Lastly a huge thank you to Gayle & Les Marino for all their amazing work cooking our sausage sizzle every week and our amazing coaches for all the hard work on Monday's, Tuesdays, Wednesday's & Thursday's with our children you are all amazing!!

We hope everyone has an amazing Christmas and New Year and look forward to sharing with you results from the Colgate Games in January where we have 26 children competing.

Kara  
Junior Track & Field Club Captain





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## Discovering the Children's section:

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One of the highlights of my 40 year association with Athletics in Dunedin and Christchurch, is discovering the Children's section of the New Brighton Olympic Athletic Club.

This summer season I have offered to help initially at the finish line on Club Night.

I have been "Blown away" by the whole Children's operation. Firstly the children are well behaved and have a great time. The comradeship is strong and their manners are a credit to the parents.

The organisation of the Children's section committee is unbelievable. Kara has an amazing team and Bronwyn, Kevin, Kylie, Keela and others are totally committed to the club.

They fundraise to an extent that I, a NBO Club Committee member, was not aware.

On Saturday \$1,230 was raised at the Cake Stall following \$800 at the previous stall.

The annual Children's Club Runathon raises about \$1,000 and the Club Night Sausage Sizzle raises around \$80 per week. An outstanding effort I am sure you will agree.

This section of the New Brighton Olympic Club is most important and I recommend that we support it to the extent that we are able. It is the lifeline of the Senior Club.

Tony McManus

## Keeping up with the Badasians:

Our Badashians Balchin and Baynes have been keeping themselves busy on the Half Marathon front. First up was the Auckland Half on the 22<sup>nd</sup> October which goes over the Harbour Bridge. Daniel Balchin was second in 1:09:08, in a race convincingly won by Aaron Pulford of the Waikato in 1:07:18.

A few weeks later on the 18<sup>th</sup> November at the scenic Queenstown Half, Daniel simply ran away from the opposition winning by three and a half minutes in a race record of 1:07:28 for the tough course. I like his comments to a Journalist, "It is absolutely beautiful, a cracker of a day. The plan was to sit in and see how I was feeling and then I just went off on my own and ran at my own pace. It was about 3km into the race I made a burst and I just didn't see them after that."

On the same day in Kerikeri Oska Baynes ran one of his best races to finish second in the New Zealand Half Marathon Championship. Contending with strong head winds at times, Oska and Craig Lautenslager of Nelson were well clear. Oska did everything he could to run Craig of his feet, but was caught in the last few metres after doing all the work. Craig sneaked in by three seconds, but Oska's time of 1:05:01 was a personal best.

Allan McLaren

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<p>To see some of my work, check out the PDF versions of Cant-A-Long, the Canterbury Master's magazine, on the Canterbury Masters website.</p>	

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## Mel's Blog - Flip Your Switch:

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Did you know there are approximately 100 billion nerve cells (neurons) in the human brain and approximately 13.5 million neurons in the human spinal cord!? ..... Or, that the nervous system can transmit signals at speeds of 100 meters per second!

The Nervous System includes both the Central Nervous System (CNS) and the Peripheral Nervous System (PNS).

The CNS comprises the brain and spinal cord (it is the command center of the nervous system). The PNS comprises the cranial and spinal nerves (it serves as the communication lines that link all parts of the body to the CNS).

Essentially, the Nervous System is a complex network of neurons and cells that transmit signals around the body to coordinate our actions.

It is, in effect, our body's electrical wiring and it is not until more recently that I really appreciated the importance of ensuring the spine is correctly aligned to maximise the delivery of these signals and therefore athletic performance.

Often when we get injured, we look at the muscle or tendon in isolation of the bigger picture. However; "there is vast difference in treating effects and adjusting the cause" (Dr D.D.Palmer).

The ancient Greek physician, Hippocrates (who is traditionally regarded as the father of medicine) also believed that we should "look well into the spine for cause of all disease."

Following the birth of my second son, who was a month premature and eventually delivered via emergency c-section, it was recommended that I see a Chiropractor. I took this advice on board and made an appointment.

During the visit, I learnt that my pelvis had shifted and my leg length was different by several centimeters. Also, my weight distribution over both legs was uneven and the difference was approximately one kilogram.

By adjusting my spine and realigning my pelvis, my leg length equalized. My visit to the chiropractor had got me thinking. I could strength train all I liked to prevent injury, but if I was unbalanced in the first instance, how much was I actually achieving?...How much harder was I making it for myself?

I learnt that if the spine is not aligned, or the body is out of balance, it can impact

the function of the Nervous System, causing chronic pain, difficulty in mobility, and potentially other health conditions.

I now understand that chiropractic adjustments open the pathways of the Nervous System allowing the signals to flow unobstructed!

In addition, my visit to the chiropractor reinforced the idea of looking at solutions to health and sports ailments holistically.

The Nervous System, Immune System, and Endocrine System are inextricably linked so when one is impacted, the others are impacted as well. This occurs because all three systems share certain molecules that carry message between them, allowing them to communicate or work together.

While the Immune System protects the body from disease, the Endocrine System is responsible for producing certain hormones. These hormones are responsible for regulating tissue function, sleep, metabolism, sexual function, mood, growth and development, as well as other vital functions.

I now see my chiropractor regularly every 4-6 weeks and consider it an essential part of my training plan!

Ultimately, the power is within us to function at our best. Keep in mind, your chiropractor knows how to flip the switch, so now might just be the right time to get adjusted!

*Reference: Human Anatomy & Physiology, 5th edition. Elaine N. Marieb.*

*Acknowledgement: Inalign Health Rolleston, Chiropractor: Jude Moriarty.*

Mel Angland

<https://purposefrompassion.net/>

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## Mel's Blog - Uniquely You:

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Have you ever been told to “Listen to your body”?

Many of us will often hear this but what does it actually mean and are we really listening!?

All of us are unique and what works well for someone else may not work out well for you.

Over the years, I've come to realise that acquiring knowledge is easy, but to acquire wisdom requires observation and the engagement of our senses.

If we truly listen to our body, we have the ability to unlock and maximise our potential.

Taking note of what works for you is really important. Don't compare yourself to others; merely observe what others do. Decide on the bits that you believe are right for you and try them out for yourself!

In essence; Observe, Experiment, Learn and Grow.

For many years, even though I was told to listen to my body, I don't really think I did. Repeated injury and eventual surgery resulted in much frustration. It got to the point where every time I ran, I was in pain. I no longer enjoyed it.

I realised that it was time to change my focus and for my husband and I, it was the right time to start a family.

I stopped running completely during each of my pregnancies. An early miscarriage with a first pregnancy meant I didn't want to put any additional stress on my body.

Once we had children, I had a slightly different perspective on things. A perspective where if I didn't look after myself, I couldn't look after anyone else. So, I started listening to my body. Actually listening.

I noted how I was feeling, prioritized what was important, planned what I could, but most of all, I realised and acknowledged my limits.

I also began to run again, simply because I enjoyed it!

On my journey back to running, these are some of the things I observed and noted:

- \* Too much running didn't improve my performance, but a combination of cross-training and running worked best!
- \* Everyday 5am starts (to exercise) were too much for me, but I could manage 2-4 mornings of 5am starts each week.
- \* Orthotics didn't help my feet, but a slightly modified inner sole in my running shoe worked just perfectly!
- \* I eat well, but I actually need more nutrients than I was able to get from my food to stay healthy. Supplementation is a must for me.
- \* Recovery is when "the magic" happens. If in doubt, I give myself more recovery, not less.
- \* My desire to train hard and my ability to cope with training hard are two different things!
- \* Strength training at least twice a week is essential for me to remain injury free.
- \* I'm yet to find a racing shoe that really suits my feet, so i'm still working on that one!

My challenge to you on your journey is to find what works for you!

My blog is aimed at giving you an insight of what works for me. From my posts; Observe, Experiment, Learn and Grow. Because you are Uniquely You!

Mel England  
<https://purposefrompassion.net/>

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## Sydney Marathon:

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My second marathon outside of New Zealand was September 2017's Blackmores' Sydney Marathon.

A work friend mentioned to me before I travelled that he had heard the marathon will be live on one of Sky's pop-up sports channels. He suggested if I didn't want to be on TV, I should distance myself from the front-runners!!! "Oh you bas ... d!"

The races start at Milson's Point, under the Sydney Harbour Bridge on the other side from downtown Sydney. It's easy to get to the other side: as long as you're wearing an entry number you can take the train for free. Even if you're not wearing an entry number, it appears to me you can still take the train for free!

My advice is to stay in a hotel in downtown Sydney, get on the train early (especially if you're running the half-marathon, which starts earlier than the full marathon), follow everyone else off at the first stop after the bridge (Milson's Point station), and get in one of the hundred-odd toilet lines early, and maybe take your own toilet paper.

The 8°-ish start time temperature was just fine for me, although some of the locals were cold. The early start was also great for me, as the body-clock was still in the New Zealand time zone: a definite advantage for kiwis running such events in Australia.

The marathon route show-cases Sydney big-time. Within one kilometre of the start you're running over the closed and relatively flat vehicle deck of the Sydney Harbour Bridge, with magnificent views of the harbour, the Sydney Opera House (where the finish is), Circular Quay and the tall buildings of the CBD.

Then you run up the historic MacQuarrie Street and into Hyde Park, past fine statues of Queen Victoria and Prince Albert, and Sydney Cathedral. These first seven kilometres I was running 10 kmh. There's a surprisingly gentle uphill up Flinders Street and past the Sydney Football Stadium and the Sydney Cricket Ground (which is about as close to Heaven as Australia gets) and then there are multiple switch-backs in Centennial Park, where runners on my time see the front-runners leaving Centennial Park just as we're entering it. By now I'm running 11 kmh, telling myself I get better value for money than they do!

You run back the way you came, gently downhill from the SCG to Hyde Park, with magnificent views of Sydney. Then it's really downhill, through the CBD (and past my hotel: I nearly popped in to freshen up!) and down into Circular Quay.

I tried to run that five kilometres of downhill gently, but by the time I headed

around to Darling Harbour and at around the 30 kilometre mark, that downhill pounding, the dry, dry air heading toward 18° in that last hour of running, and frankly the feeling of running 'away' from the finish line, started to drain my energy. I had to slow down a little, to 10kmh, even though I had been heading for a Sub-4 hour time. I had to walk and water-up at every drinks station, and spread my energy and thoughts over the last ten kilometres.

After being within two kilometres of the finish line at about the 26 kilometre mark, you wind up almost touching the ANZAC Bridge before winding your way back around the Darling Harbour waterfront, counting down every kilometre toward the finish. It's certainly uplifting when you run under the Harbour Bridge and you can see the finish line by the Opera House, almost two kilometres away around Circular Quay.

It's wonderful finishing that last kilometre, with spectators lining the route deep on both sides, cheering you on.

I ran 4:06:07, my sixth fastest and fifteenth marathon. I was really happy with it. To think that fifteen months earlier that time would have been my second fastest! I have four marathons between 4:05:49 and 4:06:13!

The finisher's running tee-shirt is nice, but ask for one size bigger than normal. I have an XL, but I can only wear it under something, as it's clingy, and highlights my gut a bit. The finisher's medal is fantastic, and the organisers post you an insert with your name and transponder time engraved.

The next day I walked to and over the ANZAC Bridge. For those who like large iconic bridges, it's well worth the walk, but at the other end I grabbed the next bus back into the CBD, on the same NSW card as for the trains and ferries. Then I rediscovered beer, with an old high-school friend, at the waterfront bar at the Opera House.

My sixteenth marathon will be Buller, in February. Yes, I'm aware it's in the middle of the cricket season!

Stephen Graham

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## The Boss and Lady Boss / The Peter & Wendy Renner Story P1:

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Peter Renner has the honour of being the clubs only Olympian. His achievements are many, competing at three Commonwealth Games, one World Athletics Champs, two World Cups, two Pacific Conference Games and two World cross-country champs. His list of achievements at national level is so vast, and over so many types of distance events, I will get them out of the way now. At colts level he has two golds in the steeplechase. In the juniors he has three golds in the steeplechase plus a 5000m, cross-country and road title. At senior level six steeplechase titles, two 5000m, two 10,000m, one half marathon, and one marathon. You can add to that two road champs and one cross-country title. To the list of titles add nine silver medals and three bronzes.

So how did all this come about? Peter was born in Mosgiel on the 27<sup>th</sup> October 1959, the second child of Eugene and Maysie Renner. Peter has an elder sister Shirley and three younger sisters Rosemary, Sharon and Toni. His mother enjoyed netball as a youngster, and was a real softy to Peter and would do anything for him, which I believe included cleaning his muddy spikes. His father would have to be placed in the opposite category, a real hard man who would drive him at every opportunity. This probably stems from his upbringing, where his father, Fred Renner was a middleweight boxer who used to spar with the Olympic Champion Ted Morgan. Eugene was also a boxer and very good in wood chopping contests, which was also his profession. Sadly Fred used to beat him if he did not perform up to expectations. An example of Eugene's toughness is that he used to compete in races at Gymkhanas wearing hobnail boots.

Whilst Peter's father never beat him, he was very hard on him, and on the very few occasions he was defeated in a race he would have to explain himself, even if he had done his best time. You would have to describe Eugene as one of the more vocal supporters, and it felt like the whole grandstand shook when he was in full flight. At first it was hard to comprehend, but as time went on he was seen as one of the characters. In 1987 Eugene was diagnosed with cancer and given only six months to live, but the doctors did not count on his fighting ability. I am pleased to advise that the cancer went into remission and that he is still going strong.

When Peter was four the family moved from Mosgiel to Burnham, and on turning five he attended Burnham Primary School. Even at five he showed these determined qualities that he became famous for, by dragging a tree home. Apparently copying his father he cut all the branches off. He would work to a standstill until he was crying and then after recovering slightly would repeat the process. When Eugene got home he enquired who had been here, and could not believe a five year old had done it.

After primary school it was on to Lincoln High School. At school he used to win all the races, which obviously lit the flame to be an athlete. He also showed promise at rugby and was an Ellesmere representative.

In 1973 at only 14 his father had a heart attack. To keep his father's logging business going he took time out of school to basically do a man's job. When his father recovered, he was given the choice to stay. I can't imagine many 14 year olds being capable of this type of work, rising at 5.30am for 10 hours very physical work in the bush. After cleaning up he would then do his running training. The writer's theory is that this tough physical work would have initially strengthened him very quickly as an athlete, but then after that you would think it would be a hindrance to running training and competing. Peter advised that he got so used to it, that when he went to Europe he always used to find the first two weeks very hard, as he was not used to resting and preferred routine.

Around this time Peter was told he had to choose between rugby and athletics. Luckily he chose the latter. As a result he went along to the Cashmere Club where he met his mate Neil Lowsley. They hit it off immediately, 'hit' probably being the operative word, and loved the outdoors together, fishing etc. In somewhat of a parody, Neil also developed into a top steeplechaser and left school to join Peter in the bush. Initially Bill Richards, the country's first Olympic marathoner, helped them. On one particular occasion Peter and Neil were doing their usual mucking around and fighting, wasting their ability trick, when Peter's dog took off with Eric Rowe's sneakers.

At the time Eric was coaching a number of throwers, all of who took after the nuisance dog. One of the shot-putters managed to give the dog a swift kick that enraged the young boy from the bush. Peter came flying round the corner fists raised and was going to take the lot of them on, including Eric and caused quite a stir. Eric's judgment obviously got the better of him, and he was actually impressed that such a young person would show so much spunk, and thought he must have potential. Eric, then asked if he could coach him. So from somewhat humble beginnings the pair forged a partnership. Eric, an ice skater in his day, was a believer in the Lydiard system of building a base and then moving onto faster work. Eric was a firm believer in training to how the body felt, and was very goal oriented, which suited Peter.

Due to work commitments training was limited to one run a day, but even at 17 he was running a healthy 75 miles a week. Peter realized at an early age that if he was going to get the best out of himself he needed to train with older athletes. This meant most runs were at an intense pace, with three runs a week on the hills. As a lot of these runs were with New Brighton athletes, Tony Good and Don Greig, he developed an affinity with our club. He also felt New Brighton had more depth and as a result joined the club in 1977.

Whilst it may have been an advantage for him to run with the men, the men had to put up with his boyish pranks. On one occasion flatmates Tony Good and Allan McLaren had just done their weekly grocery shop, and stopped at the plantation for a run. On their return, Allan found his car had been broken into, and two rolls of toilet

paper wrapped around it. They did not have to look far to ascertain the culprit. In a retaliatory move, the next time Peter arrived at the plantation the flatmates were able to save themselves dumping fees by transferring their rubbish to Peter's boot. Stones were placed in all the hubcaps and probably going too far, wire was tied around the bumper connecting it to a wire fence. Unfortunately, the ranger thought the flatmates were sophisticated vandels trying to have a fence pulled down and gave chase. After hiding in the golf course for sometime, the flatmates made their escape. Although he gave an accurate description of the car when the boys returned from their run, thankfully they denied all knowledge. It should have stopped there, but boys will be boys.

On another occasion Peter jumped in Don Greig's car and drove it up someone's driveway and then ran off. You can imagine Don was quite embarrassed recovering his car. Peter seemed to find Don an easy target and on another occasion lifted out a log fence at the plantation, drove the car in behind the fence and then put the fence back. In another incident outside a shop, I can't remember whose car it was, but it had not been locked, the boys tried to move it by pushing it. Unfortunately, a good Samaritan would not take no for an answer, and with the steering wheel still in the locked position the car moved backwards in an arc into the ditch on the other side of the road. It didn't seem to matter what Peter did to Don, he would come back for more, which probably explains why he is a marathon runner. I remember one run in the plantation where Don cheeked him, and took off in full flight with Peter in hot pursuit. Peter was gaining and just as he reached out with one hand to grab him, he tripped on a piece of wood, sprawling headfirst into a sawdust heap. Don's "Na na na" afterwards was either very brave or very stupid. Thankfully, a truce was called but only after Peter had his tooth snapped. The boys were all staying together in Auckland, fooling around as usual, when the person we were staying with threw an icepack at him. Unfortunately, he found Peter's weak spot hitting his tooth. Peter says he still has trouble with that tooth today, with it usually falling out around Christmas. In one incident it shot out over Christmas dinner getting entangled in someone else's meal.

Peter started off by running the 1500m but did not have the speed of people such as Mike Molloy, and as such moved into the longer distances. Peter had always enjoyed jumping logs in the forest, and with his endurance was a natural for the steeplechase. As previously pointed out, he dominated his junior years especially in the steeplechase.

His junior year of 1978 was somewhat mixed. It started off with a win in the steeplechase at the nationals in Wellington. In the 5000m in the most exciting finish you will ever see, he was pipped on the line by John Park of Wellington. It took a photo finish to establish the result. A week later he ran a brilliant 8-46.5 for the 3000m steeplechase which at only 18 ranked 10<sup>th</sup> on the all-time NZ list. Then disaster, injury and glandular fever curtailed his winter season, with results such as

7<sup>th</sup> in the Canterbury cross-country champs. As a result Peter had the ignominy of being relegated to the B team for the Takahē-Akaroa relay. In an embarrassing moment for the selectors, Peter upstaged A team runner Tom Birnie to announce his return to form.

In his final junior season in 1979 he won the steeplechase and 5000m so convincingly, that he was chosen as a senior for the NZ versus Australia meet in Melbourne. Very excited in his first overseas trip, the race did not go as expected. Showing confidence beyond his years, he led the steeplechase until a lap to go, when he was brought down from behind by the Australian runner Peter Larkins, who went onto cross the line first in 8-38.0. Peter picked himself up, and struggled home in third place. The Australian was of the arrogant opinion, that although he was behind at the time, Peter should have got out of his way. Peter then showed his aggressive temperament with the “Eye for an eye” theory, by grabbing the Australian, and inviting him to a punchup on the banks of the Yarra River. While I consider Peter had been hard done by, he was taking a risk with Larkins, who as a doctor could probably have had him committed if need be. To this date Peter is embarrassed to admit it, that it was Tony Good who calmed him down and stopped the fight. Peter then learnt the correct way of doing things, with the New Zealand team lodging a protest. As a result Larkins was disqualified. I would not employ Peter as a Peace Ambassador. Almost lost in all this mayhem, is that Peter still a junior would have run an amazing 8-40.00.

It was obvious that the boy from the bush had potential, and as a result the club arranged for Peter and Tom Birnie to get experience in Europe. A number of functions were held to raise money for the trip. The club was fortunate that the brother of club member John Hermans, was a famous athlete in Europe and held the world one-hour record. It was arranged that the pair would base themselves in Holland with Joss Hermans, who would hopefully be able to get them into meets. They generally ran in B grade meets, but on one occasion Peter paced Emil Puttermans of Belgium who held the world 5000m record before Dick Quax broke it. Apparently they trained everywhere and enjoyed the experience. On one particular training run they got lost in the Black Forest, that resulted in a four hour run.

By the end of the 1980 athletics season, his steeplechase time had been lowered to 8-36.6 which was 5<sup>th</sup> on the NZ all-time list. Further improvement followed in the cross-country season, when he finished second in the nationals at Upper Hutt, to his role model Euan Robertson. Euan a fellow steeplechaser won on pure guts that day, and confided that one day Peter would break all his records. The function that night was an interesting affair, with Wendy admitting to the writer that she had always had a soft spot for Peter. As you can see from this article Peter was scared of no man alive, but these women were a completely different kettle of fish. Wendy had been

making eye contact to him across the room, and one would have thought the eyes have it, but it took to the last dance before Peter worked up another courage to ask her for a dance.

As Peter already had a girlfriend, the liaison went into hibernation, until Wendy was invited to Peter's twenty first party. She was originally attending with Erin Baker, but in another amazing act of courage, Peter's mum phoned to say that Peter would pick her up. Maysie was sure Erin would understand in the circumstances. So there you have it, a bond was formed, with the added advantage that Wendy came over to our club, along with her talented brother. Previously she had competed for the Avon Club and then moved on to University.

Also that year Peter helped New Brighton win the National Road relay for the first time. He found it a real buzz to combine as a team, and always made himself available when not on overseas duty.

1981 started off very well, with a second in the steeplechase at the Pacific Conference Games held in his own town. In the national champs in Hastings he managed to hit the last hurdle, allowing his friend Neil Lowsley to sneak through for victory. It was then off to the World Cross-country champs in Madrid, still having problems with the injury from hitting the hurdle. The World Champs are so large, that a good start is essential. Coupled with Peter's natural aggression, this was a recipe for disaster and he took off like a bat out of hell. More experience gained but unfortunately a DNF. Hopefully travel broadens the mind, with Peter also that year having trips to Taiwan and Italy. He attended the Taipei Friendship Games with Dianne Rodgers and finished second in the 5000m. He found food such as chook trotters not really his cup of tea. The World Cup in Rome is a competition involving basically one entrant in each event, from each continent. Peter was there as a reserve for Oceania, but thanks to John Walker was given a run in the 5000m. Unfortunately, Peter did not have a good run.

Only 48 hours after returning to Christchurch, New Brighton was keen for him to run in the Takahe-Akaroa relay as they were keen to retain their National Road relay title. For obvious reasons Peter was assigned Lap 4 the easiest lap. After receiving the baton, he set out after Auckland University and Lynndale, and feeling absolutely brilliant he flew past Clive Cullen of Lynndale and seemed set to challenge the lap record. He remembers seeing the finish in the distance, but in what appears to be a combination of jet lag and dehydration things started to go horribly wrong when suddenly he was unable to pass C grade runners. He does not remember hitting the road, or Neil Lowsley coming back to collect the baton. When he woke up he threw a punch at poor Doctor Lyftoght who was attending to him. It is not very often that your strongest runner, is your weakest link.

Being goal oriented, the Commonwealth Games in Brisbane were the aim, and with a

win in the nationals in a time of 8-28.8, the second fastest time run by a New Zealander, selection was assured. His mate Neil Lowsley was also selected which added to the satisfaction. Before the Games Peter injured his patella, and was unable to train. When other athletes were easing off for the pre-games meets in Adelaide and Melbourne, Peter was training his butt off. Improvement was rapid and in a very good run he was fifth in the steeplechase, and followed it up with an 8<sup>th</sup> in the 5000m. It must be remembered that the steeplechase is one of the hardest Commonwealth Games events due to the all-conquering Kenyans. He found the whole Games village experience a real buzz.

1983 was to be a very exciting year with the first world championship in athletics to be held in Helsinki. This was the obvious goal, and in February 1983 in a time trial paced by the 400m hurdler Wayne Paul, he smashed the qualifying time in a fast 8-23.28 At Helsinki Peter managed to get through the first round, before bowing out in the semi-final in 9<sup>th</sup> place. However, his time of 8-25.72 was fast, and probably good experience for the Olympics the following year.

After being engaged for 18 months Peter and Wendy decided to fit in their marriage between running seasons. Addicted as they are, they even squeezed a training run in on the day. A few weeks before, Peter had done his best to have the wedding called off, by obviously getting over excited when choosing bedroom furniture, and standing on and breaking his fiancée's toe.

While Peter, nick named The Boss because of his no nonsense attitude to racing, had bombasted his way through life, with a mixture of aggression and pranks, Wendy had calmly worked her way through Burnside High School gaining her qualifications, before being gainfully employed as a radiographer. In 1976 she was selected for the NZ Secondary School's team against Australia at Cuthbert's Green. In a very impressive race Wendy-Lee cleaned up both sides of the Tasman. She was also selected in the Secondary Schools 1500m against Australia, but was not happy with her performance. Also that year she was 3<sup>rd</sup> in the Junior 1500m at the Nationals also held in her own town. To be picked for three teams and not get a trip away is a bit rough. Finally establishing herself in senior competition, in the bog of Dunedin, Wendy finished third in the National Cross-Country.

1985 started off with the customary National Steeplechase title, and complementing it by winning the 10,000m. On the grass at Wanganui while only finishing 7<sup>th</sup>, he achieved a goal of any distance runner by just squeaking inside the 4 minute mile in a time of 3-59.7. The highlight of 1985 would have to be his first international victory in the steeplechase at the 5<sup>th</sup> Pacific Conference Games held in Berkley, USA. On the down side he had another bad run in the World Cup this time in Canberra, and failed to qualify in the 3000m at the World Indoor Champs in Paris.

I would hate you to think Wendy had been idle during this period. In 1984 she was

third in the National 10,000m in Auckland, and had run a 5000m in 16-23.54 to rank 10<sup>th</sup> on the NZ all-time list. In 1985 at Dunedin she moved up a notch to finish second in the 10,000m in a time of 34-21.42 that was good enough for 7<sup>th</sup> on the old time list. On the 15<sup>th</sup> June 1985, Wendy chose a low-key marathon in Duluth, Minnesota to make her debut. Aply named the Grandmas Marathon, it has been said that if you want to know what you will look like in twenty years time, look at yourself in the mirror at the completion of a marathon. This marathon had no prize money and that irritated Peter, the ultimate professional, who felt she should have tried something like New York. However, Asics did come to the party and paid for the airfares. Although Wendy ran a very impressive debut the final result was heart breaking. Leading with 200m to go the roar from the crowd was deafening, and she assumed it was for her. What she did not realize partly due to the noise, was that she was being caught, and was unaware until she was passed in sight of the finish. All the same, second in 2hrs 39-54, 8<sup>th</sup> on the all-time NZ list was something to be proud of.

With Peter a certainty for the Edinburgh Commonwealth Games in 1986, Wendy entered the Houston Marathon in January 1986 in the hope of joining him by breaking the qualifying time for the marathon, that was only 3 minutes faster than her debut. Unfortunately, the race did not go to plan, and after 10miles she was walking from leg cramps caused by a problem in her back. She decided to pull out at halfway, as there was no chance of qualifying, and to not hurt her other chance of qualifying for the world cross- country champs in Switzerland. In the qualifying race over 5000m at the national champs in Wellington she finished second to clinch a spot.

So the husband and wife combination headed off to the World Cross-Country Champs in Neufchatel, Switzerland. The team spent some time in an Italian training camp really focusing for a good effort. The women team members who apparently eat like sparrows were not affected, but the men struggled on their diet of pasta for lunch, breakfast and dinner. Ultimately it affected their performance with Peter in 106<sup>th</sup> place. Wendy in a world class performance was 23<sup>rd</sup> with the team in second place only two points from the winner England. Initially the NZ team was announced the winners, but it was discovered one of the English runners had been missed. When you consider Zola Budd the winner of the race is really South African, you can see Wendy was robbed of a world title. She followed this up with another impressive performance in finishing 9<sup>th</sup> in the Cinque Mulini in Milan.

While Peter was readying himself for the Commonwealth Games, Wendy attacked the American Road circuit, with her best performance 8<sup>th</sup> in the Boulder to Boulder Classic. She also ran the Grandmas marathon again in a time of 2-43 in 8<sup>th</sup> place. She then met up with Peter in England and spent the Commonwealth Games with him in Edinburgh. With The Games boycotted by the Kenyans Peter was a top medal prospect. With 250m to go in the steeplechase Peter had 10m on 3<sup>rd</sup> with a gap of 20m to the 4<sup>th</sup> runner. At this point a medal looked certain, and even Peter can't explain what happened in the last few meters to drop to 4<sup>th</sup>. There was some controversy, as it

appeared Roger Hackney who had finished second, had not cleared the water jump correctly, but the positions were retained.

Wendy had time to reflect at the Games, and was wrestling with her emotions. She was sort of looking for some sort of closure on her running career, happy her goals had been met, and wanting something else in life. The timing was perfect to have a family, with Amy born in 1987 and Scott 1988. Both have shown their parents athletic attributes, but are more into other sports. This has not stopped them from winning school and North Canterbury zone titles in cross-country, and finishing in the top 10 in the Canterbury Schools. Amy's pursuits are horse-riding, ballet and dancing, with music and drama for good measure. Scott really enjoys basketball and plays cricket in the summer.

Peter who had been racing on the European circuit for years decided to give it away, as he did not like spending so much time away from his family. As a result he decided to give marathons a go, the reasoning being you only needed to be away a couple of weeks, as you were not going onto the next race. He made his debut in the Rotorua marathon in April 1987 finishing second to John Campbell in a time of 2hrs-19-13, which he described as a fast training run. Six weeks later he entered his first international marathon in Sydney. In terrible conditions he came away with the winners cheque of A\$10,000 in a fast 2hrs 14-09. Experts at the race felt it was worth 2hrs 11-00 in normal conditions. By the end of 1987 he had won the NZ title in Auckland in a time of 2 hrs 15-32. In 1987 he was voted NZ athlete of the year with track, cross-country, road and marathon titles.

Allan McLaren

*(Part 1 of 2 - to be continue in next edition)*

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