

Chapter 3

The competitive spirit

“Every race is a teacher”

-- Hawaii Ironman Champion, Mark Allan

As you may already have gathered, the Joggers have always been a fairly relaxed group, with an emphasis on participation rather than cut throat competition. So it is perhaps not surprising that ten years passed before formal competitive races were organised. Of course, that did not mean that the runs before then were not competitive. Alan Farrell was the acknowledged “gun” runner right from the start, and would always be happy to pile on the pressure with anyone who challenged him.

The idea for races had actually been round almost since the start of the club. As early as December 1967, Jogger Jargon had reported that “ it is hoped that a handicap race, including one for the ladies, will be held when the cooler weather comes round again”. A few months later, he noted that the races would be held “in the not too distant future”.

Gus Risman, the club secretary, a large and affable man, organised the first races in 1978. They were relatively short affairs of 5-7 km, typically consisting of two laps of Balmoral promenade and two of Balmoral Oval. Rob Nolan recalls that they were conducted on a handicap basis, with the supposedly slowest runner starting first, and each other runner being counted down to their individual start time. In theory, but only in theory, this was supposed to result in everyone in a blanket finish at about the same time. Of course, fortunately for the timekeepers and race judges, this never happened.

Championships

Having races naturally led to the idea of having a Club Champion. Initially, this was decided on the basis of the results in one race, nominated by the Club Secretary. Running Bear recorded: “Our first ever Club championship was held on Sunday 8 October 1978, with 31 entries ranging in age from 16 to 76 years old. The gruelling 11 km course produced some excellent efforts”. After the race, adults were invited to the “Hot Dog and Brewers Breakfast”, where \$2 could buy you an entitlement to two hot dogs and either two cans of beer or three glasses of wine.

The inaugural Championship winners were Alan Farrell in the Mens Open (there was no Womens Open) and John Paxton in the Handicap. Alan vividly remembers the presentation of his award. “I was thinking I had been top dog for eleven years, and now I was 37 years old. I had finally won an award, but would I win any more?” Alan’s fears were unfounded – he would go onto win another five Opens in coming years.

The next year, more races were added, and a rather complicated system of awards was devised. The Mens Open and Handicap continued to be decided on the basis of one race. At the same time, there were separate awards based on results in all the races over the year. These were the Overall Points Championship, initially won by John Wright, and the Ladies Handicap, whose inaugural winner was Pat Cahill.

In those early days, prizes as well as points were awarded for winners and placegetters in each race. For the first race in 1979, for example, the lucky winner received dinner for two at the Leagues Club, and both second and third won two dozen cans of beer. Today, we have replaced these prizes with a manly or womanly handshake.

By 1981, things had been simplified pretty much to the system that we continue to use today -- a Mens Open, a Ladies Open (now called a Womens Open) and a Handicap, all based on results in a set series of races held throughout the year.

Scheduling races

The number of races was originally standardised at five. Two more race routes were added in 1984. This format continued unchanged until 2006, when the safety problems of increased traffic on the roads prompted several courses to be amended.

Races are scheduled at regular intervals over the year, with a gap during the peak of summer. Race scheduling can be a tricky exercise, requiring race dates to avoid clashes with other major runs such as City to Surf, the Mini-Mosmarathon, the Balmoral Burn or the Herald Half Marathon. In general, the length of the races gradually increases during the year till it reaches about 15 km just prior to the City To Surf. Two weeks before all our races, we schedule a run over the same course, to remind people of the route.

Currently, we have seven races – Thompson Street (6 km, usually in February); Cremorne/Spit Junction (10 km, usually in March); Long Chinaman's Beach (10.4 km, April); Beauty Point (13 km, June); Milson's Point (15 km, July); and Cremorne Out-and-Back (11 km, September); and Short Chinaman's Beach (9.1 km, October). You can find detailed instructions and maps on our website (www.runnorthsydney.com).

Races are held irrespective of the weather. If it's raining, our gathering spot and post-race barbeque is held in the shelter shed that is conveniently attached to the change rooms on Balmoral Oval. Just about the only exception in recent memory occurred for the opening race of 2005. A spectacular combination of teeming rain, local flooding and lightning made conditions not only unpleasant, but actually dangerous. Here's how Jogger Jargon reported it at the time.

Bears are a hardy lot, but not foolhardy. For the first time in decades, we were reluctantly forced to cancel the race. Soon after that, of course, the sun came out, but by then it was too late -- everyone had already started scoffing the food. A high level executive decision was made to award all race participants one point. So it's fair to say that after Race 1, the competition is extremely close, with no fewer than 25 people tied in equal first place!

Back in 1991, the then Club secretary Rob Nolan decided to fill the racing hiatus from November to February by experimenting with some novelty events. These were conducted just for fun, with no Championship points awarded. The first of these was a teams game competition held on Balmoral Oval. It included a balloon race, wheelbarrow race, and egg and spoon races. Perhaps predictably, reactions varied considerably, and it was dropped after two years. The other event, however, a Bears Team Race, has lived on. In this race, each team consists of two partners chosen at random, who run in opposite directions over a 7 km course. The winner is the team with the best result based on combined handicapped times. Each team gives itself a name, usually based on some awful pun – Fred Bears, Bear Essentials, Pooh Bears and Bear Nakeds often feature prominently. This event has proved to be very popular, and had the added bonus of bringing together members who previously may not have known each other so well. It has become a standard fixture on our race calendar to this day. The prize each year is now always the same – a box of vitamin-enriched, health-giving energy-boosters (also known as Roses chocolates).

Allocating race points

Points for each Open race were eventually standardised on the basis of 10 for coming first, 9 for coming second, and so on, down to one point for each runner who finished. Although various changes to this points system have been proposed over the years, it has survived – due mainly to the fact that it rewards regular participation and consistency as well as speed.

For the Handicap race, each runner's handicap is determined according to a secret formula, based largely on previous performances. The full details are known only to Rob Nolan, who inherited and adapted the system from Gus Risman, and to current race judge Rob Jones. This air of mystery ensures that Handicap results are not easily predictable, but also can never be challenged – avoiding the inevitable arguments that could otherwise arise.

The drawback to this – at least from Rob J's point of view – is that he is the one who has to do the lightning-fast calculations that are necessary to enable the Handicap results to be determined promptly after the race finishes. At these times, he cuts a heroic figure, poring over the results, sucking on a pencil, while everyone else is gnawing sausages or chocolate cake. It is just one of the burdens of office.

Post-race replenishment

In the early days, new members were invited to join the club by the seductive promise of having a run, and then enjoying a breakfast of hot soup and sausages. Sometimes too there would be family picnics held after the run.

Today, the post-run barbeque has become a major feature of our race days. Initially, this was always arranged by the club secretary, and catered for by wives and girlfriends, but in the mid 80s it was decided that it would be fairer if volunteers offered to cater for one barbeque each year. This had the bonus of introducing a tremendous variety of salads and cakes. Of course, as Rob points out, “the humble sausage lives on as the mainstay of the repast”. Reg Conway and Doug Ford remain, as they have for many years, as the barbeque kings and sausage supremos.

In the early days, when the atmosphere was possibly more blokey (and raucous), the barbeques were also sometimes accompanied by fair amounts of grog. It was not uncommon for five cartons of beer to be drunk, with some serious drinking going on. In December 1978, for example, Running Bear reported that after a race there would be a “Barbeque and Burgundy” breakfast. He added “The usual champagne will be replaced by lashings of rough red and white and, for those lacking sophistication, Dr Tooth will be dispensing the usual brown medicine.”

These days, consumption has dropped dramatically, no doubt due to health education, random breath testing and the civilising impact of more women in the club. This, plus the fact that 9.30 on a Sunday morning is not most people’s idea of an ideal drinking time!

Presentations and rewards

Our Presentation Night is held each year just before Christmas. As long as people can remember, it has been held in the Kamarail Room at the Leagues Club, no doubt because -- as Jogger Jargon is fond of pointing out -- “Las Vegas is invariably booked out at that time of year”.

Traditionally described as “glittering, celebrity-studded affair”, the Presentation Night is an opportunity for all Joggers to enjoy a fine meal and a glass or two, tell lies about how much or how little they train, discuss the latest treatments for dicky knees, and generally have a good time.

Of course, the main reason for the Night is to honour the achievements of our members. There are two distinct award ceremonies. The first is for the placegetters in the Mens Open, Womens Open and Handicap race series. In the beginning, Gus Risman purchased two handsome timber stands as perpetual trophies for the Mens Open and Handicap divisions. At that time there was no Womens Open, but in 1981, a magnificent perpetual trophy for the inaugural Womens Open was donated by Pat Cahill’s father, Fred Aldour. Fred, a Londoner, had been running regularly with the Joggers during an extended holiday in Australia, and made this generous gesture as a

thank you for the hospitality and friendship he had enjoyed. Each year, the names of three top placegetters in each division are engraved on a plaque on the relevant Trophy, with smaller individual trophies presented for the winners to keep.

The second category of awards are the “incentive” awards, which recognise Joggers who have achieved certain distances over the year – such as 1,000 km, 2,000 km or more -- as recorded each week in the Mileage Book (see Chapter 5). The thinking behind these awards is to provide motivation for all Joggers, irrespective of their speed or competitiveness. As Reg Conway has always said, “incentive is the name of the game”. Originally, these awards were small trophies, but later they became items of running gear, sets of glasses, beach towels and even, in one year, commemorative coin sets. Eventually, the mental strain of thinking up new prizes each year led to a decision to present gift vouchers, and even more recently, distinctive Certificates of Achievement.

Another feature of Presentation Night is the irreverent review of the year’s highlights, presented by the globetrotting Kelvyn Steggles. This culminates in the presentation of the dreaded Naked Bear Award. The unlucky recipients of this Award – and their exploits -- are noted in Chapter 6.

Mens highlights

Although we have had many great male runners, no-one could surpass the extraordinary Open Championship record of Alan Farrell. As we have already mentioned, Alan, a founder member of the club, was the winner of the inaugural Mens Open in 1978 and would go on to win another five championships over the next 20 years. In the whole of that period, he was only out of the top three placegetters on two occasions. He once went over 10 years without missing a race.

What makes this record even more impressive is that Alan had also been among the very top runners in the club for the previous eleven-year period since its formation in 1967. Alan was therefore able to maintain a running pre-eminence in the club for a phenomenal total period of 31 years! Alan is also one of the select City to Surf Legends – runners who have been officially recognised as completing every one of the first 25 City to Surfs. (You can read about Alan’s City to Surf exploits later in this Chapter.)

With his distinctively low-slung shorts and often shirtless, Alan just *loved* competing and running hard, and *hated* being passed – not that this happened very often. As Jogger Jargon reported, “Alan never ceases to amaze with his tenacity”. Alan would also travel great distances to participate, and hopefully win, fun runs all round the State. A full-length feature on Alan in *Run for Your Life* magazine notes that during the 1980s the family spent almost every weekend travelling to a run. Alan recalled that he used to say to his wife Carole, “Would you like to go away for a weekend?” And she’d say “Yeah, yeah, where’s the run on this time?”

Alan has completed more than a dozen marathons, almost all in less than three hours, with a best time around 2:45. Alan also played a pivotal role in the club by being its chief unofficial recruiting officer. As a gym instructor at Norths Leagues Club, Alan was instrumental in encouraging many people to join the Joggers, and to push their boundaries by participating in fun runs or longer distances. “Alan was full of praise and encouragement which gave me confidence to tackle future long runs” was typical of the comments of many Joggers interviewed for this book. Although he eventually left the Club to move to Queensland, he is still competing keenly, with a training schedule of four runs and three deepwater running sessions a week, and is Club Captain of the Southport Runners and Walkers Club, where Carole is president and secretary.

Another outstanding runner of this early era was Stan Bridger, who won five titles in the period from 1983 to 1990, including three in a row. In the process, Stan set four race records that still stand some 20 years later. There was a fine rivalry between Stan and Alan Farrell. Running Bear once reported on one particularly hard-fought race where Stan and Alan “went by like two semi-trailers on the Hume Highway”. Stan had a 2:39 first marathon to his credit, and was part of a category-winning team in the 1978 City to Surf. He was the winner of the Leagues Club’s coveted Sportsman of the Year award in 1984.

***Fast fact:** Ian Bowden, who won the Open in 1984, ran his first marathon in 2:42 and still holds three current club race records.*

Stan’s stellar run was interrupted during the mid 1980s by Dave McCormack, another of the runners who had been introduced to the Club by Alan Farrell. Dave won the Open twice in consecutive years. In fact, Dave won every race held during that two-year period, with the result that his 19 point winning margin in 1987 is the largest ever recorded since the seven race format was adopted. Dave’s wife Barbara also completed the second leg of a unique husband and wife double by winning the Women’s Open in the same year as Dave won the Men’s.

Other multiple Open winners include Gerry Arthur (twice) and Matthew Armstrong (three times). Matthew, who also had a promising early soccer career, had joined the Joggers while he was still at school and had an almost immediate success. A keen fun-runner and triathlete, he would later join with his father Keith Spackman to come second in the “Father and Son” Division of the City to Surf in 1998.

Our latest winner, Dave Vlotman, came to Australia from South Africa. “Big Dave” has featured prominently in the Open for a number of years, but a Championship win evaded him because his busy schedule often prevented him from entering some races. Dave has run over 60 marathons and ultramarathons, including the notorious Comrades marathon – the world’s top ultradistance race --over a distance of 90k from Duran to Pietermaritzburg in South Africa. Dave has also completed the Forster Ironman *[more from Dave??]*

The name Keith Spackman has only occasionally appeared in our Open placegetters, for a reason similar to Big Dave's -- his training requirements as a triathlete often make it difficult for him to compete in all the races. Keith started doing short course triathlons back in 1995 as a means of cross training. Hanna Paxton, who was also involved in this relatively new sport, had mentioned that she was training to enter the Foster Half-Ironman, and suggested that Keith might like to enter, too. As it happened Hanna withdrew before the event, but Keith had already done so much training he decided to carry on. He finished, but in an utterly exhausted state, and could only be revived, he claims, by being fed copious amounts of ice cream. Later that year, he was offered a spot in the full Ironman – the 3.8 km swim, 180 km cycle and 42.2 km run. He entered and has been hooked ever since. Keith has gone on to complete the Ironman eleven times, qualifying for official “Legend” status after ten. This gives him automatic qualification (which may sound to many like a punishment, rather than a reward!). His best time is an outstanding 12 hrs:18 mins. His Ironman training starts three months before the event, each day doing one of the disciplines. In a typical training week he would run 70 km, cycle 300 km and swim 4km. He also regularly competes in Half Ironmans, just to see if he continues to have enough in the tank to front another full Ironman event.

Impressive as these statistics are, even greater distances were achieved by Wal McCrorie. An ex Scottish paratrooper, Wal became addicted to running after completing his first City to Surf. He rapidly moved onto greater things, culminating by his record-setting victory in the 1,048 km Sydney to Melbourne ultramarathon in 1979. This race was the predecessor of the Westfield Sydney/Melbourne Ultramarathons, which Wal also entered with great success. In 1983, in the inaugural Westfield event that was ultimately won by the legendary potato farmer Cliff Young, Wal was in the lead early, after running an almost suicidal sub-3 hour marathon pace for the first 20 km. He was eventually forced to pull out after completing a massive 500 km. In 1984 he tried again. Even though at 53 he was one of the oldest runners in the field, he led into the second day and finished an incredible 3rd in just over 6 days. In 1985, he pulled out at Goulburn after about 200 km, demoralised – like everyone else -- by the pace set by the eventual winner, the almost superhuman Yiannis Kouros.

Another notable marathoner has been Dave Hawkins, who has run ??? marathons overall, including one in each State of Australia, and the notorious Midnight Sun Marathon in Norway, which Dave famously finished with ice in his moustache and a dose of hypothermia. A rather different type of target was achieved by Max Powditch, who resolved to raise money for charity by running 60 km in one day to celebrate his 60th birthday in 1997. Max's “60 at 60” was featured in a full-page article in *Fun Runner* magazine. Over a winding course he devised from Paddington to Kurnell, Max was accompanied for varying distances by a total of 79 fellow runners, friends and colleagues.

Womens highlights

Since the inaugural Women's Open in 1981 (then called the Ladies' Open), there have been eleven winners. Of those, five have scored multiple victories.

Hannalore Paxton won the first Open (tying with Trish Lenehan), and then went on to win another three. She also achieved the rare double of winning the Handicap and the Open in the same year. In 1990, when she was nominated for the President's Shield award, Hanna could justly be described as the most successful female jogger in the Club's history to that time. She has gone on to successfully compete in multiple City to Surfs and other longer distance events including the marathon. Hanna is still running and has established a wonderful record in the duathlon (swim and run) and the triathlon (swim, bike and run). As we've seen, Keith Spackman credits her with encouraging him to take up his successful Ironman career.

Another early multiple winner was Anne Satz (now Walsh), who took out the Open on three occasions in the period 1987 to 1991. A few years before, Anne had been told that she had scoliosis and that she should never run again. Instead, she started gym work to correct the problem, and later started running with the Joggers, on the urging of Johnny Tisdale. She competed in dozens of triathlons, biathlons and fun-runs – and two marathons -- on a regime of swimming (two days a week), cycling (two days) and running (four days), with a bit of squash and volleyball thrown in. She was the first to win the Open and the Handicap in the same year (1987), and was also the winner of the Presidents' Shield in the first year in which it was open to women.

In 1986, Jogger Jargon commented that “because our membership is predominantly male, I imagined that the ladies were at a disadvantage. Evidently this is not so, according to Anne Satz. She says that running with the Bears is like a Sunday morning smorgasbord, surrounded by all those cute little male bottoms! Well, as Rex Mossop would say, I'm flabbergasted!”

After Anne moved on, her mantle was taken over by Belinda Fry, a teenage sensation who won twice in the early 90s and set an astonishing five race records that still stand today. Belinda was also the first woman in the club's history to be the overall winner of an Open event (in 1996). On two occasions, she also achieved the rare feat of winning all seven Womens Open races in a year. Belinda had to leave the club after moving house, but continued an active running career, setting a PB in the City to Surf in 2005, running a best marathon time of 3:15, and setting an age group record in the Herald Half Marathon. At last report, Belinda was keeping fit working as a personal trainer.

In the mid 90s, a young Merran Butler emerged to take over top spot. Merran had played hockey for 15 years at up to first grade level, and had decided to take up jogging so as not to let it all go to waste. She was encouraged to join the Joggers by workmate Laurie Coleman. Merran would go on to win the Open three times, and to be runner-up on a record five occasions. Merran has run many half-marathons, four marathons with a best time of 3:30, won a number of fun-runs, and featured prominently in the Corporate Cup races held in the Sydney Domain. Merran, who is married to Joggers President Richard, is currently making a major climb back up the rankings after a few years looking after their young son Matthew, our youngest

member, who is already beating his Dad (mainly because Richard has to push the race buggy).

During the first period of Merran's dominance, a newcomer called Cris Penn had been steadily improving. Cris, originally a basketballer, had been encouraged to take up running by Alan Farrell. Despite her initial impression that she was "no good" at running, Cris edged up the rankings until 1998, when she pipped Merran by just two points. Since 1999, when she shared victory in the Open with Merran, Cris has seemed to be totally unbeatable, winning every year until 2006 to score a total of eight Opens. With a repertoire ranging from 100 metres to the marathon, Cris' phenomenal running career has also developed onto the State, national and international stage. At the 2003 Australian Masters Games, for example, Cris won her age group in the 400m, 800m and the 1,500m, and came second in the 5,000m! In the same year, at the World Masters Athletics championships in Puerto Rico, she was a member of the winning 4 x 100m relay team – which earned the Masters Team of the Year Award at the 2003 Australian sports Awards Ceremony -- and came 5th in the individual 800m and 1,500m. In the 2005 World masters held in Spain, she scored silver medals in both the 800m and the 4x400m relay. What's more, Cris shows no signs of slowing up, running superbly to make the final in the 2007 World Masters 800m held in Italy.

Another standout performer over the years has been Carole Coulter. Carole not only won the Open in 1993, but in the same year also won the Handicap, which she would go on to win again in 1999. Carole had got back into running in her mid 50s, after bringing up three kids and living a high pressure corporate lifestyle. She was inspired to join the Joggers when her father Lal Lawson won the President's Shield in 1990, and was also encouraged by her children. "I couldn't run around the block when I began, and it was tough to keep going, but my kids wouldn't let me stop" Carole recalls. She says, however, that Lal would not let her turn up at the Joggers until she had reached an "acceptable" standard of fitness. "I felt nervous and quite honoured to have reached this high level!" Carole would go on to have an extraordinary running career, running 13 City to Surfs and regularly winning a podium finish in her age category. She has won her age category in the Sydney Half Marathon six times, and most recently has been the oldest female to finish. Carole has also won her age category in many other major fun runs. She has also added swimming to her repertoire, winning her age category in numerous events including the Champion of Sydney Biathlon. She ran her first marathon at age 59. Her best training tip? "Get out of bed early"!

Carole tells of one time when she ran into a steel post after being distracted by a dog. The incident happened just outside the house of the world-famous Balmoral artist Ken Done, who came to Carole's rescue with some ice cubes wrapped in a tea towel. Carole ended up keeping the tea towel and likes to think of it as a genuine Ken Done original – it's just too bad that the "decoration" is her own blood!

Of all our runners over the years, Carolyn Luxford has to rank as one of the unluckiest – in the twelve Opens since 1995, she has been placed in the top three an amazing

nine times, but the top spot has always just eluded her. Carolyn has also been placed in the Handicap three times. Carolyn is one of our hardest trainers, and has also notched up an impressive record of marathons and half marathons. Her time will come!

Handicap highlights

It is a tribute to the Handicapper's art that it is a championship that has proved to be very hard to win, and even harder to win twice. Since 1978, only Hannah Paxton, Dave McGrane, Carole Coulter and Phil Worrall have managed the double, and none has been able to achieve the feat in consecutive years. Our club secretary, well-known palaeontologist and media personality Rob Jones, has also gone agonisingly close, finishing second on three occasions over a period of four years, before finally breaking through for a win some 13 years later. Keith Spackman has also been an unlucky runner-up three times.

But perhaps the best-performed Handicap competitor over the years has been the indomitable Toshi Konishi. Toshi left his native Japan at the age of 23 to see the world and eventually wound up in Sydney. In 1992 he joined the Joggers after deciding to give up smoking and get fit. After starting off by not being able to run at all, he soon had success, winning the Handicap in his first year, then repeating his victory in 1995 and 2003, and fitting in a couple of close second-placed finishes for good measure. Toshi's secret? *[what is it??]*

Our City to Surf highlights

The Joggers have always had a close affinity with the City to Surf, the iconic mass fun-run from the CBD to Bondi Beach that started in 1971. For the Joggers, the City to Surf was a confirmation that this weird sport of jogging that they enjoyed was becoming almost respectable. In those days, the race started from the Town Hall. Just 2,000 runners entered the first run.

Jogger Jargon proudly reported that no fewer than ten Joggers competed in the inaugural event -- John Anderson, Reg Conway, John Curtis, Jim Farquar, Alan Farrell, Dennis Garland, Jim Nicols, Trevor Nixon, Gus Risman and Peter Stebbins. All proudly sported the newly designed club t-shirt – and all finished, with five in the first 500.

Our first female City to Surfer was Judy Cameron, who was one of only about 50 women who started in that year. As an indication of how things have changed, the race now has over 60,000 competitors, and more than half of those are women.

During a large part of the 70s the vivacious Judy was one of the few women runners in the club. Judy enjoyed a joke, and could give as good as she got. Bill Kerr recalls that Judy was once refused admission to the Leagues Club because of the shortness of her mini skirt, and was only allowed in after someone procured an overcoat from the locker room. Judy later married Jim Burke, the Australian Test cricketer, who had been a Wisden Cricketer of the Year in 1957.

Many of our early City to Surf competitors went on to greater things. Lal Lawson, was about 60 at the start, and would go on to run every City to Surf for the next 20 years. Amazingly, he would do his last one at age 81. Dennis Garland would similarly notch up more than 20 in a row. Reg Conway would do 19 of the next 20, losing just one year because of illness. John Anderson and Doug Ford are still going strong, though their City to Surf days are behind them.

Alan Farrell, startlingly youthful and hairy back then, recalls that he had genuine hopes of winning the first City to Surf, and actually led the eventual race winner Kenny Moore after a kilometre. Unfortunately, a couple of kilometres later, Alan was reduced to walking. Denis Garland and then Peter Stebbins passed him, but he joined up with Peter and still turned in a sub-60 minute performance. After the race, all the Joggers met for a picnic. In the early years, this was held at Bondi but later it was moved to the less crowded Parsley Bay.

For Alan, this race would start a streak that would continue unbroken to the present day – a total of 36 City to Surfs. Alan has been officially recognised as a City to Surf Legend, an honour currently held by only 50 runners who have run 25 consecutive City to Surfs. Legends receive a privileged position at the start of the race, a significant benefit now that the race has grown so large.

Since that time, by a happy coincidence, three other official Legends have joined the Club, with the result that almost 10% of all the Legends are, or have been, Norths Joggers. The first of these to join was Phil Worrall who joined in 1969, attracted by – of all things – the dream of sporting stardom. At that time he was only 19, and still at university. He heard that Channel 10 were planning to do a feature on the new-fangled sport of jogging and turned up at Balmoral, wearing his tight shorts, and wafer thin Mizuno track shoes. To all the established Joggers' annoyance, he was interviewed and appeared on TV. Phil would later recall his first City to Surf appearance in verse:

*I don't know why I ran that day
Or what I was in for
Small shorts, thin shoes, long hair I had
A fashion sight so poor!*

*But join the hardy band I did
With others 2,000 plus
I did a course that hitherto
Was only done by bus!*

The next Legend to join was Laurie Coleman. As recorded in a special feature in *Runner's World*, Laurie recalls: "In those days, I enjoyed the thought of running but didn't do much. I only had one training run before the first City to Surf, and that was a four mile run three weeks before the event. I was happy just to finish, and couldn't walk for days, but I was hooked." Laurie is now our trusty Club Treasurer, and keeper of the Mileage Book. A winner of both the Mens Open and Handicap Championships, and a Presidents Shield nominee, he is also one of the very few City to Surf Legends who has also run every Herald Half Marathon since its inception in 1992. For some years in the late 1990s, Laurie organised a Joggers team in the Hopetoun relay, raising much needed funds for mildly intellectually handicapped children. Laurie was also justly proud to carry the torch during the 2000 Olympic Relay, as a reward for his work as a volunteer for the Sydney Olympic Games.

As *Runner's World* reports, our fourth Legend, John Tisdale, was drawn to athletics in his early high school years. John's proudest running moment came when he won the combined GPS sports under 17 mile race in 4:39.4, the time Ron Clarke ran at the same age. Although John did not keep up to this lofty level in future years, he was certainly no slouch. For the first 10 years of the City to Surf, John ran under the hour, his fastest time being 51:18 in 1980. His best result has been 51st placing, achieved in the first run, but leaving him disappointed. "I was trying to get into the first 20, because only they got a medal!" he recalls. John, with his infectious laugh, is a great joker, and enjoys the camaraderie and banter of Sunday morning runs. He has competed in hundreds of fun runs, including several marathons, and was our President's Shield nominee in 1994.

Having built up a such a streak, there is one fear unites all City to Surf Legends – the fear that a crippling injury will prevent them from competing in the next City to Surf and break their streak. However, having observed Alan, Phil, Laurie and Johnny in action, all of them are quite capable of getting out of a hospital bed and crawling over broken glass with broken limbs if it is necessary to get to the finish.