

SPORTS REPORTS & TALKS

AUTHORITATIVE : CHATTY : INFORMATIVE



WEEKLY ATHLETIC NOTES BY

JOE BINKS

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AND

DOUG WILSON

British Olympic Runner

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THE SCOTS ATHLETE

PRICE
6^D



BEN BICKERTON (Shettleston Harriers) former 2 miles steeplechase champion and present 6 miles flat title-holder, won the 2nd inter-counties 6 miles cross-country race held at Stirling.

Photo by H. W. Neale.

JOHN EMMET FARRELL'S
RUNNING COMMENTARY.
GROUND-WORK FOR TRACK AND FIELD.
SCOTTISH RANKING FOR 1950.
JACK HOLDEN SPORTSMAN OF THE YEAR.
ARE YOU AN "ALSO RAN?"
INTERNATIONAL REMINISCENCES.

SECOND ANNUAL INTER-COUNTRIES' C.C. CHAMPIONSHIP

6 Miles Race, Stirling,
16th Dec., 1950.

Details:

1. B. Bickerton (Lanarkshire) 35m. 34s.
2. C. Wallace (Lanarkshire) 36m. 08s.
3. E. Bannan (Lanarkshire) 36m. 09s.
4. W. Gallacher (Dunbartonshire)
5. D. Clelland (Stirlingshire); 6. A. C. Gibson (L.); 7. J. Stevenson (L.); 8. J. Jarvis (L.); 9. P. Ycurger (D.); 10. J. McGhee (S.); 11. W. Lindsay (Renfrewshire); 12. A. Kidd (D.);

13. J. R. Morton (L.); 14. J. McNeil (L.); 15. M. Kaney (S.); 16. D. Brown (L.); 17. D. Coupland (D.); 18. A. Farmer (L.); 19. J. Gunn (D.); 20. T. D. Reid (L.); 21. A. Galbraith (S.); 22. A. Fleming (L.); 23. H. Gibson (L.); 24. H. Cook (D.); 25. A. Cook (S.); 26. J. Campbell (R.); 27. C. Kirk (R.); 28. H. Kennedy (R.); 29. W. Hannah (L.); 30. H. Fenton (R.); 31. D. Muir (R.); 32. P. Reynolds (D.); 33. T. McKenzie (L.); 34. A. Arbuckle (L.); 35. F. Robertson (D.); 36. J. McCann (R.); 37. G. King (R.); 38. G. Bell (R.); 39. R. Lennie (S.); 40. D. Barclay (R.); 41. D. Nicol (S.); 42. J. Kane (S.); 43. A. McGregor (R.); 44. R. Lennie (S.); 45. E. Hanson (D.); 46. D. Skinner (S.).

TEAM CONTEST—

1. Lanarkshire (1, 2, 3, 6, 7, 8, 13, 14, 16)—70 Points.
2. Dunbartonshire (4, 9, 12, 17, 19, 24, 32, 35)—197 Points.
3. Stirlingshire (5, 10, 15, 21, 25, 39, 41, 42, 44)—242 Points.
4. Renfrewshire (11, 26, 27, 28, 30, 31, 36, 37, 38)—264 Points.

CLYDEBANK-HELENSBURGH ROAD RACE—1st January, 1951.

Twenty-four competitors were sent on their way by starter Gordon in a heavy shower of sleet, and for the first two miles the field remained bunched together. Thereafter the weather improved and with C. D. Robertson, A. Maclean and Jack Paterson setting a merry pace the leaders reached Gavinburn in 21 mins. 23 secs. Piling on the pressure Robertson and Maclean—running shoulder to shoulder—gradually drew away from the field and at Dumbarton, reached in 45 mins. 33 secs. were 35 secs. in front of J. E. Farrell and 38 secs. in front of Paterson. At this point Monkland H. were packing 5, 6 and 7, and looked reasonably good for the team race. On the climb out of Dumbarton the real race developed. Robertson dropped Maclean, Farrell grimly hung on to third place and young Arbuckle of Monkland came into fourth position. By the time Cardross was reached Farrell had dis-

S.A.A.A. COACHING SCHEME (WESTERN DISTRICT)

Hon. Secy.—D. McL. Wright,
17 Polwarth Gardens, Glasgow, W.2.

Athletes are cordially invited to participate in and support this scheme.

DETAILS:

No. 1 (Now)—

Marathon Runners, Clydebank Baths,
Monday night at 7.

Coaches—D. McL. Wright and J. McNamara.

No. 2 (Now)—

Track Runners (sprint or distance).
Helenvale Park, Glasgow, Tuesdays
7 till 9.

Coach—Alan Scally.

No. 3 Commencing 17th January till 28th March, 1951—

Coaches and Senior athletes. Glasgow
Police Training Hall, Oxford Street,
Wednesdays, 7 till 9. Films, Dis-
cussions, Lectures, Practical Training
by Chief National Coach—H. A. L.
Chapman.

This is a repeat of last year's successful
class; concentrating more on track
athletics.

placed Maclean in second place and shortly afterwards Arbuckle went up to third. Maclean suffering from cramp was later forced to retire. Disaster had also befallen the Monkland team as a result of the enforced retirement of Farmer and Maryhill now appeared the likely winners.

With three miles to go Robertson still led Farrell by 53 secs. but a tremendous effort by the latter saw the gap reduced yard by yard and at the finish a fast weakening Robertson had barely 8 secs. to spare. A gallant winner and a courageous runner-up. Congratulations also to young Arbuckle on gaining 3rd place.

Maryhill Harriers won the McLeod Williamson trophy for the team race and T. K. Wilson (Maryhill), J. Bissell (Springburn) and J. M. Lindsay (Bellahouston) claimed the handicap awards.

Certificates were awarded to all competitors who completed the distance and a very pleasant tea was provided by the Helensburgh people in the Grant Restaurant.

THE SCOTS ATHLETE

TO STIMULATE INTEREST IN
SCOTTISH AND WORLD ATHLETICS

"Nothing great was ever achieved without enthusiasm."

EDITED BY - WALTER J. ROSS

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JOHN EMMET
FARRELL'S

MORE ASPECTS
OF CROSS-COUNTRY
TRAINING



WE have now passed the half-way mark of the cross-country season, yet the recent award by the A.A.A.'s of the Jackson and Harvey Memorial Trophies is worthy of mention. Jack Holden was voted the former as the British athlete whose performances were considered the best of the year, while Frank Aaron and walker Roland Hardy received the latter jointly for the best champion of the year.

It is a curious fact that Jack Holden now a veteran and after 25 years' activity has only now reached the fame that has made his name a household word.

His marathon victories over younger competitors have captured the imagination. Before his marathon debut Holden had a magnificent record of athletic achievement including his wonderful 4 wins in the International Cross-Country championships, yet he was known more or less chiefly by intimate athletic

enthusiasts unlike now when he is almost public hero number one in Britain.

Now that we have started the NEW YEAR the cross-country season has taken on a sense of urgency for racing enthusiasts aiming particularly for the National. Partly this is due to the knowledge that time is fleeting and the bigger events are drawing near but there is perhaps an added psychological reason. Up to the end of December there is a feeling that there is plenty of time: that we can get down to business after the NEW YEAR. When this arrives the race seems ostensibly nearer; we feel that we have rounded Tattenham corner and are now into the straight making for (we hope) the winning post.

The New Year is therefore something of an artificial and fictitious barrier like a man suddenly becoming old at forty, yet comparatively young at 39 years 11 months and so many days.

In view of the recent severe weather those athletes who have been training consistently from the start of the season and are reasonably fit will have an advantage over those who have pursued the gospel of manyana. Apart from the actual physical fact of fitness the former can regard an enforced curtailment of training with some indifference while the latter may be filled with anxiety.

I hold that up to the New Year the emphasis should be mainly on stamina. After that the rough edges can be polished up and brisker work balanced with steady runs indulged in.

In training for stamina steady runs over hilly trails and heavy country with plenty of obstacles could be useful.

Later to gain more fluency, flatter trails and path or golf course type of country trails would be recommended.

I do not, of course, infer that the first section should contain all heavy stuff and the second all easy but that there should be a general graduation from heavy but easy stamina runs to light but brisker ones.

Stamina First

Despite the fact that my good friend Reg. Gosney considers that speed is the thing to aim at all the time rather than graduate from distance to speedier running, I disagree. I hold that stamina should be the first and main consideration before one thinks of speed.

Speed I regard as mainly inherent and not until the runner has built up what I may call his hard condition by consistent and steady running has he an urge to, and is he able to express the speed that is in him. In other words I disagree with "striving for speed." Gradual training makes one imperceptibly fitter and faster without striving.

Patience is Required.

When one wants to run fast it should be because the runner feels like it. He should graduate to speed naturally rather than strive artificially to fit into a schedule.

To put it another way; training should not be straining; and one should never train outside the limits of one's strength. That does not mean that one should not run as often as possible, just as swimmers



Photo by H. W. Neale.
REG GOSNEY the well-known English cross-country Internationalist.

should swim and golfers golf as much as possible.

Consistent with the retention of interest and enthusiasm, I should say it would be impossible to set a limit on the amount of work done.

The question of staleness and apathy must be considered however; and as mind and body are so intimately and closely connected it is difficult to ascertain how much of staleness is physical and how much mental.

Thus to sum up the problem is largely an individual one. One should try to get to know one's own requirements.

Mottoes Worth Remembering.

I believe that two epigrams should be heart of every aspiring distance runner, carved in letters of gold on the mind and one "hasten slowly," two "know thyself." The first emphasises the quality of patience and as youth tends to be impatient the benefits of patience should be stressed. The second is recognised as an outstanding Greek concept of living. As the athlete gains in maturity he may find it also a wholesome and indispensable philosophy of training.

GREETINGS.

The Editor wishes to thank those athletes, officials, clubs and readers at home and abroad who were so kind as to send cards and letters of goodwill at Christmas and New Year.

May we, on behalf of the Scottish movement, send greetings to every athletic enthusiast o'er the Border and across the seas. With eyes on Helsinki, 1952, may 1951 be an even greater year than the past but memorable 1950. May the bonds of world friendship be tied still tighter through the united zeal for our cherished sport.

Lanarkshire A.A.A. C.C. Championships, 2nd December, 1950.

Senior—

1. T. Tracey, Springburn H.
 2. B. Bickerton, Shettleston H.
 3. E. Bannon, Shettleston H.
- Won by 150 yards.

Youths—

1. J. Finlayson, Hamilton H.
 2. A. Brown, Motherwell Y.M. H.
 3. T. Limerick, Hamilton H.
- Won by 1 yard.

Team—

1. Hamilton Harriers.
2. Springburn Harriers.
3. Motherwell Y.M. H., Shettleston H., Cambuslang H. (Tie).

Perth Strathay Harriers were successful in winning the first North-Eastern League race held on December 9th. Five clubs took part in it, Dundee Thistle, Dundee Hawkhill, St. Andrews Univ., H.M.S. Condor, Perth Strathay. The individual winner was C. Robertson (Dundee T.), who covered the 5 mile course in 30 mins. 33 secs. A. Hunter (H.M.S. Condor) second in 30 mins. 49 secs. I. Newton (Strathay) third 31 mins. 28 secs. P. Boyle (Strathay) fourth 31 mins. 30 secs. P. Dobbie (Strathay) 5th 31 mins. 31 secs. F. Sime (Strathay) 6th 31 mins. 31 secs. D. McIntosh (Strathay) 8th; M. King (Strathay) 16th.

Team Places—

Strathay—3, 4, 5, 6, 8, 16—Total 42 points.

Hawkhill—7, 9, 12, 13, 14, 15.—Total 70 points.

Thistle—1, 10, 19, 25, 34, 35.—Total 124 points.

Condor—2, 20, 22, 26, 29, 33.—Total 132 points.

St. Andrews Univ.—11, 21, 31, 32, 40, 41.—Total 176 points.

Teviotdale Harriers' Junior Championship over 3½ miles was retained by D. J. Campbell.

FIXTURE LIST

Jan.

- 7—Maryhill Harriers 5 Miles Open Road Race Maryhill
- 7—Dumbartonshire 7 Miles C.C. Championships (Youths' 2½ Miles) Dumbarton
- 20—Eastern District League 6 Miles C.C. Edinburgh
- 20—Renfrewshire C.C. Championships

Feb.

- 3—Eastern District 7 Miles Championship
- 3—Midland District 7 Miles Championship (Youths' 3 Miles)
- 3—South Western District 7 Miles Championship (Youths' 3 Miles)

Mar.

- 3—Scottish C.C. Championships (Seniors, Juniors and Youths).
- 10—English National C.C. Championships Richmond
- 31—INTERNATIONAL C.C. CHAMPIONSHIP Newport, Wales

Apr.

- 14—England, Ireland, Scotland, Wales match Sheffield
- 28—Dumbartonshire Road Championship Balloch—Clydebank

June.

- 16—Scottish Schools' Championships.
- 22 and 23—Scottish Senior Championships Hampden
- 23—Scottish Marathon Hampden

July.

- 7. Scottish Junior Championship New Meadowbank
- 13 and 14—A.A.A. Senior Championships White City
- 28—A.A.A. Junior Championships Birmingham
- 28—A.A.A. Marathon Birmingham

Aug.

- 4 and 6.—Great Britain v. France London

THIS COACHING

GROUND-WORK FOR TRACK AND FIELD

By T. MONTGOMERY (Hon. Sen. Coach).

IN my previous article I stated that training should start when we are still quite young, say twelve years old or thereabouts. I firmly believe that immense benefit is to be gained from this early training. First of all, simply let the youngsters play at athletics, gradually introducing a little bit of technique not of course in technical language but nevertheless teaching the youngsters the ins and outs of the various events. Also encourage the boys to have a go at all the events and aim always for a balanced development, using both sides of the body. This training can well be restricted to the late spring and summer when homework, etc., does not make such great demands on the youngsters. I have seen the results of a scheme of this nature, carried on for two or three seasons, in my own club conducted by my friend C. M. Rainbird, S.A.A., and the results have been most encouraging, and I am confident that the results of the scheme will become very apparent in the next few seasons.

Turning now to a track athlete of one or two years experience. When should he start preparing for his next track season and how should he go about it? I am of the opinion that he should have started preparing by the middle, certainly by the end of October. This will have given him a rest of about six weeks after his previous season, his rest period will of course vary with the individual and the circumstances. Why start in October for the next May or June? Well to start with, I share the view of many, that a track man, to reach the top, must run or train more or less the year round, and over a period of years building up physique, stamina and technique. Remember it is just as necessary to serve an apprenticeship in athletics as in anything else.

Having decided to start preparing in October what should we do? Do all-out sprints, half miles, see how high or far we can jump or how far we can putt the shot? No, not that, but rather carry on the build up. Now as our athlete has

had a year or two's training his coach will have noted the various deficiencies in his physique, technique, stamina, etc., and the main purpose of this early period of preparation must surely be to set about correcting and building up these deficiencies.

Let us assume that our athlete can turn out for training say three times a week. This seems to be about the average time available which is good, but should not be all as I consider a short daily session of exercises is **essential**. Say ten to fifteen minutes daily.

All training sessions should start with a "warm up." For those who are not yet familiar with the term, the warm up commences with "shacking" over say a lap of the track taking five minutes to cover the lap. This is done with a definite heel, ball, toe action, with very short steps, and although the leg action will somewhat stiff everything else should be as relaxed as possible. Follow on immediately with one or two laps of "jogging," this is an easy trot, trying all the while to acquire form. This is followed by a series of "Winders," slow fast slow running down to a walk, repeated without stopping. After the prescribed number of "Winders" a series of stretching exercises should be done making sure every joint is moved through its full range of movement. Now have a short rest, fully relaxed and keep warm.

Now whether the building or strengthening exercises are done before more running or other work, will depend on the facilities available. While on facilities it is not necessary to have a fully equipped gym, or a proper track. Somewhere which is fairly warm and dry to change in and rest, any reasonable bit of ground, grass field or the like, a little improvisation and we can manage without the gym, or track.

Dealing with running first. I recommend to all runners up to middle distance to put in, at this stage of their prepara-

tion plenty of running alternating fast and slow without rest, or in quick succession if taken as a series of fairly fast bursts, the amount done depending on the individual and the event. This form of training has the advantage of improving form and building stamina at the same time. How can this improve form? In the case of say, the half miler of to-day, what is required, surely increasingly faster and faster running. That being so, why not adopt more of a sprinter's action, and in our fast running that can be perfected. There is no doubt that considerable stamina will also be required, and this can only be built up by ever increasing demands being made on the lungs, heart and limbs. That is got by increasing the number of repetitions of the fasts and slows. It may be said why bother about fast and slow work simply make it all fast and increase the distance but that in my opinion is more likely to cause loss of running form and cause fatigue rather than increase stamina, and the resilience of the muscles would be impaired.

I have mentioned "track," but I used in the sense of an enclosure, and I am of the opinion that all our work at this stage should be done on grass rather than on hard tracks or roads.

What building stretching strengthening exercises should we do? Again this will depend on the individual and the event and the deficiencies noted by the coach. Maybe some technique could not be mastered because of a group of weak muscles, well now is the time to strengthen that particular group of muscles.

Excepting distance running where the arms and shoulders do not play such a prominent part, we find from a study of the various events, that our whole body needs strength in one way or another, and so the work done for any one event will depend on the amount of strength required, and the movement required to perform that event, but exercises which can be safely be included in any schedule are the following; press ups, chinning the bar, trunk bending all ways; trunk circling on hips, lifting knees to chest, deep knee bending with high heel raising; hurdle exercises on floor behind head, arms sideways stretch, leg raise and touch alternate hand with toes, legs raise and

circle behind head; prone position with head and leg raising. These and many others of a like nature can be used to vary a session's exercises. Rope climbing (without feet), ring work, horizontal and parallel bar work are all beneficial.

Special attention should be given to the hips as mobility in this region is most important in all events, and I think that performances will improve if more attention is given to this region. Comparison of our athletes with foreign athletes brings this point out very clearly and to our disadvantage. Weight training (which is quite apart from weight lifting) can be used to advantage for building and speeding-up but it must be remembered that an athlete who does manual work does not generally require the same amount of strengthening work as one who works in a sedentary occupation.

A word to throwing men, learn to do a bit of sprinting irrespective of bulk or weight it will do you no end of good. Too little has been done in the past and speed of movement is got from sprinting, and is essential to throwing.

Advertisers Announcement

The Best Food for Athletes

In 1922 J. P. Clarke, of Belfast, was lacking in stamina and almost unknown in the athletic world. But early in 1923 he overheard a crack runner commending Orzone Emulsion for stamina, so he began taking it. A month later he became the half-mile and mile champion of Ireland. Next year he repeated his principal 1923 victories. During those two seasons he carried off 160 prizes.

A most interesting article about Clarke and his method of training will be found in a little book entitled "The Easy Road to Health," 9d. post free from The Orzone Shop, 72 St. Vincent St., Glasgow, C.2.

Don't you think it would be a bright idea and all for the good of the sport if you obtained another copy of this magazine for a friend? We do!

We're agreed, ours is a grand, vital and best-of-all sport. Don't hide the fact, advertise it!

A SCOTTISH RANKING FOR 1950

TOP "5" ALL FIELD EVENTS MEN!

SOME time ago and in a light mood we worked out this ranking of Scottish Athletes (Track and Field season only). Publishing it now should create interest and at the same time be a tribute to some excellent performances achieved as well as being an incentive for a greater standard in the coming season which will be fast on us. Now, we confess to being only a novice at this sort of thing, but we can remind readers who have never tried the game that it's not so easy to do as perhaps our list looks. It took some time and caused much reflection, and at the end of the day we're not yet convinced that we've got it finally right! But being egotistical we say it's pretty near it!!

All right then, if you, dear reader, can do any better, let's hear from you. If someone should be up a few places or someone else included,—just say so—the editor won't be offended if you remind him he's hopeless!

To give those who have never tried this game before, an idea of the difficulties involved let's take our contributor, J. E. Farrell's 1 hour run, a record which impressed both at home and abroad being incidentally 153 yards better than the American record. This, we feel, was worth being ranked—but where? Similarly Jim Drummond was but a few inches off a long standing record in the Shot and 5th best in Britain, 1950, with 142 ft. in the Discus, and "he's not on our list."

We must give honourable mention to others who just "missed" our ranking (not in order):—G. N. Fisher (Cambridge Un.) and G. A. Bell (Heriot A.C.) (Javelin), "Tiny" Milne (Oxford Un.) (Discus), J. McAslan (Trinity A.C.) (120 Hurdles), R. H. Boyd (G.U.A.C.) and D. G. Stewart (E.U.A.C.) (440 Hurdles), Tom Tracey (Springburn) (3 miles), J. Smart (Edin. Southern H.) (880), W. Jack (Vict. P.) (220), W. Ramsey (Vict. P.) (High Jump), A. S. Lindsay (Shotts) and Roy Smith (St. Luke's College) (Hop, Step and Jump).

Andrew Forbes with his 30 mins. 31.9 secs. for 6 miles as runner-up at the Empire Games last January merited a top position, but on account of his not competing during our track season we have preferred to exclude him for consideration as with young A. Hanlon (Pole Vault) on account of him being a Junior.

Well, here it is:—

1. **Alan S. Paterson (V.P.A.A.C.)**—European Champion. Maintained a great standard. Excluding the Empire Games, had only 1 defeat but for 2nd place did 6 ft. 6½ ins. in the G.B. v. France match.
2. **Duncan McD. Clark (R.U.C.)**—Empire champion, and on the same tour achieved his personal best Hammer throw of 183 ft. 9½ ins. 6th European Games. Also maintained great standard being only twice under 170 ft. Raised his Scottish record to 175 ft. 11 ins.
3. **E. C. K. Douglas (Atalanta)**—Overshadowed by Clark. Stock soared with 178 ft. 5½ ins. (G.B. v. F.), the 2nd best ever by a Britisher in Europe.
4. **S. O. Williams (G.U.A.C.)**—Until discounted through following wind his 25 ft. 2½ ins. (L.J.) at the Kinnaird meeting, was ranked as Best in Europe, 1950. Was consistent throughout also in H.J. and H.S.J.
5. **H. J. Duguid (E.U.A.C.)**—The 23 year-old was "find" of the season. Consistently beating 140 ft. with the Discus. His 148 ft. 2½ ins. ranked him 2nd in Britain. Beat British record-holder Savidge several times being winner of the Triangular and 1st Britisher in the A.A.A.'s.
6. **Andrew T. Ferguson (Highgate)**—Recently made a life member of his club on account of his international recognition. 3rd position and 2nd Britisher in the A.A.A. 3

EUROPEAN CHAMPION

ALAN PATERSON TOPS THE LIST



Photo by H. W. Neale.

- miles with 14 mins. 11.6 secs. (compare with Andy Forbes' brilliant Scottish record of 14 mins. 18.2 secs.). Also 6 mins. 49 secs. for 1½ miles.
7. **Norman G. Gregor (Herne Hill H.)**—Won Triangular and 2nd equal in A.A.A.'s Pole Vault. Scottish record of 12 ft. 8 ins. at Cowal.
8. **Harry Howard (Shettleston H.)**—Scottish champion and City of Edinburgh marathon winner. Close 3rd in A.A.A.'s with 3 hrs. 37 mins. 15 secs.
9. **J. S. Petty (St. Modan's A.A.C.)**—1 min. 54.6 secs. in England. 1 min. 55.4 secs. in Scotland.
10. **W. Laing (St. Andrews Univ.)**—48 ft. 5½ ins. Scottish record ranked best in Britain and 11th in Europe. Though runner-up in A.A.A.'s he was not so impressive in major competition in latter part of season. Otherwise he'd be up our list several places.
11. **J. S. Hamilton (V.P.A.A.C.)**—Scottish Quarter-mile champion (49.5) and A.A.A. finalist.
12. **D. K. Gracie (G.U.A.C. and Larkhall Y.M.)**—Grand start to season beating "stars" in London. Mid-season shaded by Hamilton but ended season in good style, including a 48.9 (400 metres) equivalent to say 49.3 "quarter."
13. **Norris D. McWhirter (Achilles)**—22 secs. for a "220." Beat a star-studded selection with 31.6 for 300 yards at Murrayfield.
14. **Tom Begg (G.U.A.C.)**—Scottish and Inter-varsity champion. 1 min. 56 secs. May also have ranked higher if hadn't dropped competition half-way through season. What we saw of him was grand.
15. **A. T. Bruce (E.U.A.C.)**—Scottish champion, with 10 secs. "dead." A best performance of 9.9 secs.
16. **Frank Sinclair (Greenock Wellpark H.)**—Scottish mile champion. 3 mins. 56.8 for 1,500 metres in the Triangular. We'd like to have seen him out in the A.A.A.'s superb mile field.

ARE YOU AN "ALSO-RAN"?

By ARTHUR F. H. NEWTON,

Author of "Running," "Commonsense Athletics," etc.

THERE is quite a large body of men who invariably appear among the "also ran" brigade and do so intentionally. They want exercise and pleasure combined and ask for no more. That is as it should be. At the same time there is a considerable percentage who become "boxed in" among them because they haven't discovered how to get out, even though they'd much like to do so. What I've got to say is for these latter, not for the "hardy annuals" who, after all, are part of the basic material on which all our races and competitions are built. I'm not suggesting any alteration for the hardy annuals: they're doing a right good job and providing plenty of encouragement for the more covetous few, as well as the possibility of stardom to those who are bent on achievement. Having got over that hurdle I'll proceed to deliver the goods.

If you are keen on making a mark for yourself in cross-country or any other form of athletics you'll do well to ponder what I've got to say, for the principles I deal with apply to all athletics and not to running only. It is astonishing how many athletes still try to cut a bit off the time of their previous workouts without giving a moment's thought as to the result of such practice. It may be because the idea of revision doesn't occur to them. Admitted that their present method improves their form, but that isn't the point: if they stopped to consider they might find it was by no means the best method available. Yet it's "the best" and nothing else they reckon they're always striving for.

Goodness only knows why the teaching of athletics should have been so neglected compared with that of all other sciences; perhaps because it is only recently that the real value of fitness has been recognised. A few decades ago, when highly qualified coaches were almost non-existent and only the young in each generation indulged, there wasn't so much incentive to extend the field of knowledge. Yet knowledge—in athletics

as in everything else—is what we live for. Fortunately the position is changing now and people of all ages and conditions are exhorted by their governments to "get fit and keep fit." So it is time our teaching was gingered up and brought into line with other sciences.

When you learnt a subject at school the question of speed was omitted entirely while you were in the early stages. It was useless to hurry through a sum in arithmetic or a translation from a foreign language if the result were to be wrong: you were told to take greater care over it, regardless of speed, until accuracy was obtained. That was just plain commonsense and it should be the keynote of all your athletic practice as well.

Very good then, with that as a basic principle, so far as you can, make quite sure by advice from outside as well as your own intuition and supervision, that your technique in any event is really sound before you begin speeding up at all. It is mere waste of time and energy to run really fast, for instance, if commonsense tells you that you will be able to go even faster when various mistakes have been corrected. Besides, the longer you practice a mistake the more trouble you'll have to eliminate it: you're only postponing the time when you'll become the champion you've so longed to be.

You'll agree, won't you, that unhampered energy will produce speed and stamina at their best? And since faults, like everything else, involve the use of energy, once you have dropped their braking effects you will have more energy left to apply to the purpose in hand. Your first business—and this you've already recognised when competition is in question—is training, and you'd better think once more, and think carefully, how to set about it. You can carry on like everyone else does and, like almost everyone else, continue as an "also ran," in which case you're not likely to become anything else during your athletic career. Prod your mind for a start until it realises that its business is to reach a mark above

DREAMING OF CROSS-COUNTRY IN NIGERIA

Dear Walter,

I am very pleased to say that I have just received issues of the "Scots Athlete" and, as far as I know, I think I have you to thank for this kind gesture. It's now a good few months since I last had a copy of the magazine, and truthfully speaking I have felt quite out of touch with things since not getting my regular information through the magazine.

Now in order to avoid any future mix-ups, I'm enclosing ten shillings to pay for one year's subscription, and at the same time, Walter, I hope you don't mind me not sending on the official application form which is on the back of all the issues, the truth is that I don't like to cut up the book as I like to use it for references, and as I'll explain later on I'm handling my little book so often that one doesn't feel like cutting away some of it.

Before going any further, let me just say how much I really like our "Scots Athlete." At home I always made sure of getting my copy whenever they were on sale at the Club, but it is looked forward to, even more now that I'm abroad. I think I am quite safe in saying that I'm not the only person (away from Scotland) who gets his, or her, issue of the Athlete, and after giving

the general ruck and that you've little hope of doing so unless you train distinctly in advance of general methods. Men of Finland, Sweden and U.S. of America, among other countries, learnt this some time ago but we, British are only just beginning to find out that bi-weekly training efforts will never get us anywhere worthwhile. You're after distinction in your event and that means more diligent and efficient work to obtain it: in fact you will have to cram in a spot of training six days out of the seven, or at any rate as near that as possible. Too much like hard work? All right, then distinction is not for you. Yet it CAN be done: only those who did it ever got to the top in recent years, and what they did you too can do if you are a man of determination. Are you game enough to tackle it?

it it's first read will put it on the special pile of "Scots Athletes" and from that day on the book may be read and re-read during any spare moments

I envy you very much on a Saturday afternoon because out here the usual pastimes on this particular afternoon are that you either go out visiting or else you have lunch and go to bed. As you can quite imagine, the idea of going to bed is merely because it's usually so hot that you can't do anything else. In my own case, when I do go to bed on an afternoon, I usually fall asleep dreaming of a great big pack running over the fields in the Westerton area.

In Lagos here we have several Athletic Clubs, but of course they are all African and into the bargain they are nearly all attached to Private Trading Companies or Government Departments.

If I ever get the opportunity I think I would like to help in some small way with the training of any young boys of one of the Clubs, but so far the chance hasn't cropped up and it's doubtful if it ever will.

You know, out here it's quite common to see small boys of the ages from six and upwards making a high jumping and pole vaulting stance out of two Bamboo sticks as uprights and a thinned stick as the crossbar and then playing at high jumping and pole vaulting just in the casual manner that the kids in Glasgow play "tig" or "rounders." The country is still very backward and the children are not compelled to go to school (simply because there are, as yet, no free schools), but in the days to come, I must say that with the correct training and necessary equipment the young men of this country should be able to put up really good performances in all "jumps." At the present moment the general standard of the Athlete out here is low, but there are one or two who in their own events can put up very commendable performances.

Before closing I'd like to send my kindest regards to all the boys in the Garscube. Best Wishes for 1951.

WILLIE ROBERTSON.

Lagos,
Nigeria, B.W.A.

JACK HOLDEN was Sportsman of the Year

MOST of our readers being Joe Binks fans will have noted in a recent "News of the World" the Sports Editor's ranking of Britain's ten leading sportsmen of 1950 with Jack Holden in topmost position. For that reason readers may be surprised at our reproducing the reference to Holden, but to our mind we feel it is worthwhile, even as a further tribute to Holden, having it recorded in this magazine.

It is a common, but perhaps not the best, trend these days to concentrate on personalities and not so much on the sport. At times we are left unmoved by ranking lists and we doubt if they lead to satisfactory conclusions or can give proper regard to individual sportsmen or sportswomen or their sport. Nevertheless, that we find Jack Holden being acclaimed as a No. 1 of the year, can be accepted pleasantly by athletic enthusiasts as he has undoubtedly kept athletics to the forefront in the public's eye as a colourful sport, and as none other since the golden achievements of the one-and-only Sydney Wooderson.

With a heading reference "Jack Holden, Miracle Marathon Man," the "N. of the W." Sports Editor introduces his ranking list thus:—

JOHN THOMAS HOLDEN, greatest distance runner this country has ever produced, heads my ranking list of Britain's ten leading sportsmen of 1950. The men I have chosen are supreme in their own sport and yet each is so outstanding in a general sense that he compares favourably with the leading performers in all the others.

Then giving his list he goes on to his reason for his choice of Holden as his No. 1:—

Jack Holden, of Tipton Harriers, Staffordshire, is grey-haired and 43, and when a man wins five 26-mile marathons in a year at that time of life he is my idea of a superman.

In cold print that fact may not hit you hard, but when I add that his five-timer is a record unequalled in the world, I do it in fairness to emphasise



Photo by H. W. Neale.

a great athlete. His victories were:—
February, at Auckland, New Zealand, Empire Marathon, won by four minutes in 2 hrs. 32 mins. 57 secs.

May, Coventry, Midland Marathon, four minutes, 2 hrs. 38 mins. 23.6 secs.

June, Windsor, Polytechnic Marathon, five and a half minutes, 2 hrs. 33 mins. 7 secs.

July, Reading, A.A.A. Marathon, six minutes, 2 hrs. 31 mins. 3.4 secs.

August, Brussels, European Marathon, half-a-minute, 2 hrs. 32 mins. 13.2 secs.

At Auckland he battled through three terrific rainstorms and finished the last 10 miles shoeless and with feet blistered.

His Windsor win was a "trot" and his Reading victory was his fastest ever. But at Brussels, Karvonen, of Finland, and Vanin, of Russia, really gave battle and the trio stuck together almost all the way until Holden won by half a minute before a crowd nearly crazy with excitement.

When he was 22 Holden first appeared as a cross-country runner of note and represented England. From then on he gained honour upon honour until at 39—an age when most athletes have retired—he took to marathon running, and only once since then has a Briton finished in front of him.

Holden is attached to a factory, is married, with two daughters, and trains hard in the evening after work to a 100-mile-a-week schedule.

Yes, 1950 is Holden's year.

The Tipton man gained further limelight when he was the guest of honour at a Sports Writers annual dinner. He was commented on as giving "a marathon but sincere speech." He was quoted also of having said in his speech, "I'd rather be a bad winner than a good loser." Unfortunately, to our mind, this theme was taken up by hacks to imply "win at any price" even if hitting below the belt.

However quite a colourful report of his speech appeared in B. McElwaine's column of the Sunday Pictorial on 17th December, 1950, and we make acknowledgement to our contemporary for here reproducing it as a most interesting commentary:—

Two Years Secret is Revealed.

After guarding the bitter secret of his heartbreaking failure in the Olympic Games for two years, miracle marathon man forty-three-year-old Jack Holden told his story last week.

Winning the Olympic marathon was the dream of Holden's life and failure would have crushed anyone but a great-hearted champion.

Listen to Jack: "After my failure in the Olympic marathon some of the people nearest and dearest to me came and asked if I had taken a £1,000 bribe to lose the race.

"I lost seven pounds worrying about it and nearly had a nervous breakdown. The truth is that I trained too thoroughly."

Pickled Feet.

Holden pickled his feet in permanganate of potash until they were like leather. After running eight miles blisters formed under the leathery outer skin which was so tough that they couldn't be broken.

He ran on to the limit of human endurance, beyond it, and when flesh and spirit could do no more he had to give up.

Ugly rumours, worry, and disappointment could not long keep him away from running although he had actually put away his track suit for good.

Holden went out one night to test himself over a known course of eight miles. He timed himself at forty-three minutes. "I must be crackers," Jack thought.

Holden's Vow.

He went out again another night. His wife timed him. She said, "Forty-two and a half minutes." Holden replied, "Now I know we're both crackers."

Then he went out yet again. Both he and his wife timed the eight miles. Verdict, 41 mins. 32 secs. "Now I know I can beat the world." Holden vowed.

He did, in New Zealand and in Brussels. In gruelling twenty-six-mile man-killing marathons that give new meanings to the words "guts" and "courage."

For the Sports Writers whose guest Holden was at their annual dinner his confession was the sensation of the evening.

And now this amazing athlete, who does anything from seventy to 100 miles training a week, has his eyes fixed on the 1952 Olympics in Helsinki.

HAVE YOU READ RACES & TRAINING

(ILLUSTRATED)

By

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NEWPORT INTERNATIONAL REMINISCENCES

WHEN SCOTLAND BEAT ENGLAND!

By JOHNNY GIRVIN.

A notice in the club-house at Westerton intimating that seats were still available on a special bus to Newport Mon. for the cross-country International at Caerleon racecourse in March 1951, started the train of thought which prompted this article. Caerleon—the ancient capital of Wales,—to the historian the name conjures up visions of the Roman occupation, and King Arthur and his Knights of the Round Table. To me however, it brings back nostalgic memories of the two visits I paid to the town as a member of the Scottish International team.

The first of these was in 1927 the other in 1933. I well remember how thrilled and excited I was at the thought of running for Scotland, as any young athlete would naturally be. I had finished 7th in the "National" at Redford Barracks with my Garscube club-mate R. Roxburgh 8th. Memories of that trip come rushing back. The stripping accommodation was the most atrocious it has ever been my lot to encounter, and I have stripped in some queer places. I remember Robin Roxburgh running in the race with a huge lump of cotton wool on top of his head held in place by a bandage under his chin, as a result of a bad cut sustained when playing football in the guard's van with a paper ball on the train going down. Little Frank Stevenson ran the race of his life that day to finish a magnificent 4th. Myself, I was quietly pleased that I managed to finish in 31st position and 5th counting man for Scotland.

Six years later I was back again, with a different bunch of runners this time. How I remember the infectious high spirits of Harry McIntosh, the expression on the face of Suttie Smith at dinner the first night in the hotel, when he put his teeth in an olive in his hors d'oeuvre. R. R. Sutherland's tremendous finish which took him to within a few yards of the winner Jack Holden, who scored

the first of his many triumphs in the International that day. The frantic last minute rush round the shops to buy an Easter Egg for Sammy Tombe's little daughter.

But the incident that is most vivid in my recollection, however, occurred on the journey home. We had to leave by train very early on the Sunday morning and eventually reached Crewe. There a reserved carriage awaited us alongside a quiet platform, but we found we would have a wait of over 2 hours for the connection to take us North. It was raining very heavily and we could not venture outside the station, so the inevitable paper ball was produced and an impromptu game of football was soon in progress on the otherwise deserted platform. Presently another party arrived and we found they were to share our carriage. They turned out to be a touring company of Theatrical Variety Artists, all of them English on the way North to fulfil an engagement in some Scottish town. They immediately challenged us to a match, and in spite of the cheers and encouragement of the ladies of their party they were soundly defeated.

By this time they had learned that we were harriers, so one of their number, who evidently fancied himself as a sprinter, challenged any one of us to race him over 100 yards. We told him of course that we were all long distance men, with not a sprinter among us. We had responded without our old friend George Dallas, who, as Secretary of the N.C.C.U., invariably accompanies the team on these journeys. Well the bold George took up the challenge, and, divesting himself of his jacket and handing over to us his watch, handfuls of loose change, and the usual wad of banknotes and scraps of paper George always seems to have in his waistcoat pockets, he finally kicked off his shoes and declared himself ready. The distance was paced out along the platform and the

doughty George beat his much younger opponent "out the park."

Somewhat crestfallen, by now, the Englishmen produced their trump card. One of their number evidently a bit of an acrobat offered to race any of us at walking on the hands. This had us pretty well stumped, but only for a minute. In his quiet voice with its pronounced Dundee accent, Suttie Smith murmured "I'll tak ye." Once again the distance, about 30 yards this time was paced out, and with the rest of us lining the edge of the platform, lest either of them should stray off their course the race was on. Need I say that the little Scot won literally "hands down" to complete the discomfiture of the Auld Enemy. We learned later that the little Dundonian had been a champion gymnast before he took up running.

Strange how these incidents remain in the memory long after the details of the race itself are forgotten. All of them are trivial in themselves, but when shared with a happy band of team mates on an occasion like this, they serve to cement the friendship that is brought into being among the members of the team. Even many years afterwards, when one meets one of the old team mates, the welcoming

smile is the warmer and the hand-clasp the more sincere, in consequence. Truly indeed, The Comradeship of Sport.

ROUND THE CLUBHOUSES

Edinburgh Eastern Harriers' Twenty-Eighth Annual Open 3½ miles New Year Handicap round Queen's Drive was won by Robert Irving (E.E.H.) (all 3m. 5s.) from a field of 56 runners; 2nd T. Sergeant (E.E.H.) (2m. 35s.); 3rd A. Clark (E.S.H.), 2m. 40s.

David Webster (E.S.H.) recorded the fastest time for 15 year with 17m. 14s., only 10 secs. outside the course record.

Valc of Leven A.A.C.—Xmas 5 Miles Handicap.

1st—F. Lacey (1.50), 27m. 13s.

2nd—W. Crowe (3.20), 27m. 20s.

3rd—W. Stevenson (4.30), 27m. 29s.

Fastest Time—F. Lacey, 29m. 03s.

Ballot Team Race—

F. Lacey (1), D. McPherson (4),

P. McConnachie (12).—17 pts.

Morpeth—Newcastle Road Race (13½ miles), held on 1st January, 1951, was won by a previous holder, Bert Hemsley (Gosforth H.), in 1 hr. 12m. 3s.; 2nd G. Huntly (Bedlington H.), 1 hr. 12.45; 3rd J. Childlow (Sutton H.), 1 hr. 13.36. Scottish marathon champion Harry Howard was 7th.

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