

# The First Hundred Years

1886~1986



By Wilf Richards

#### INTRODUCTION

It is my pleasant duty to commend to you "The First 100 Years": I hope that somebody will write as good a story in 100 years' time.

Our special thanks to Wilf for his labour of love. Nobody but Wilf could have put so much work and devotion into this booklet. This matches his service of over 60 years with your club.

When I read an early draft I was abroad: it gave me great pride to be a member of a club with such an illustrious past and part of our British heritage. Let us all make sure that we make the future just as distinguished.

IAN BURNETT  
President

In the Beginning ...

To most Mancunians living in the first half of the present century, Manchester Athletic Club, or M.A.C. as it was more familiarly referred to, was thought to have started its career at Fallowfield. So closely linked was the club with the district in fact that "going to Fallowfield" more often than not meant a visit to the M.A.C. ground in Whitworth Lane, Fallowfield.

But it was in Old Trafford that the club started its existence and spent its first years. It came into being as a result of a circular sent to certain interested and influential citizens of Manchester, worded as follows;

"Private

Manchester, Aug 21, 1886

Dear Sir,

It has been frequently suggested that a club should be formed in Manchester, having for its object the encouragement of Purely Amateur Athletics, and in accordance with a requisition from several of the leading athletes of the district I beg to invite your attendance at the Victoria Hotel, Victoria Street, Manchester on Friday evening next, Aug.27 at seven o'clock.

For obvious reasons it is necessary that the proposed club should be kept secret and I enclose a Ticket of Admission, which please give up at the door of the private room engaged for the meeting.

I remain,  
Yours faithfully,  
T.R.SUTTON

Following this preliminary meeting a provisional committee was formed and on September 9, 1886, the General Meeting elected its Committee and the name Manchester Athletic Club was authorised. New members were soon added to those who attended the General Meeting and it was evident that a ground for training and the promotion of sports meetings must be sought.

The opportunity came with the opening of the Queen Victoria Diamond Jubilee Exhibition at Old Trafford. The Exhibition's managing committee were proposing to include several athletics meetings among their events and, after some very protracted negotiations, it was agreed that their committee should retain control but that M.A.C. would be given the task of organising and promoting the meetings, in return for which they would receive all entrance fees and be granted free training for the year for their members. Subsequently the club paid a rental of £50, which was later increased to £60. They were also able to purchase the small stand and some hoarding, fencing and hurdles. With a membership of around a hundred, the first year closed showing a balance of £4.11.8 in their coffers.

All things considered, that first year had given the new Manchester club a successful start, but now, without the support of the Exhibition Committee, they had to stand on their own feet. Membership fee was fixed at one guinea and a drive was made for new members. It is said that they came slowly - and demanded a lot. Races had to be provided for them and, if the aims of the club were to be realised, open sports meetings were an essential part of the policy. Financial support was not readily forthcoming and an appeal for an



extra half-guinea donation on top of the membership fee did not meet with the hoped for response.

The club survived by some judicious sub-letting and then, in 1889, they succeeded in arranging an attractive match between E.W. Parry and Sid Thomas, two of the top long-distance runners of the time. Such matches were very popular at that time and the venture brought a large crowd to the ground. As a result £70 was added to their funds and served as a boost to the club's confidence. Membership increased and the following year another profitable match over twelve miles was arranged between Sid Thomas and Sonny Morton. Prospects appeared to be more rosy still when in 1891 the A.A.A. Championships were decided on the M.A.C. ground.

But this injection of good fortune was followed almost immediately by some disturbing news. A development scheme intended to link up the railway with the canal was to be got under way the following year and this was to cut straight across the athletics ground. A new home had to be found and after several abortive efforts the answer came with the ground in Whitworth Lane, Fallowfield, where the club was destined to remain for the next half century, taking them through two world wars and a few more trials and tribulations.

The club had few regrets about leaving Old Trafford where their continued existence had always been in some doubt. They now had the chance of developing the Fallowfield site into a much more pretentious ground, but of course a good deal of hard work and capital would be required. They obtained £150 compensation from the Railway for the loss of their ground at Old Trafford. Then Mr. C.C. Harvey, a founder member who played a major part in so much of our early history, set about the task of raising capital, and his unstinting efforts brought the desired results. The early months were spent on completing the work on the new ground which was finally declared open for use on June 24, 1892. New Members began to filter through and at the end of the year they had a total membership of 404.

During that first year at Fallowfield, M.A.C. organised a very successful meeting on behalf of the medical charities of Manchester who benefitted to the extent of £100. Few football devotees will know that the Cup Final of 1893 was held on the M.A.C. ground at Fallowfield, the first time it had been held outside London. A very big attendance - some say 30,000 - brought record receipts to the F.A. A replay semi-final was also played at Fallowfield in 1894.

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### Championships

Club championships were introduced in 1894 and a glance at some of the early performance suggests that the club's "stars" were not without considerable ability. The 440 yards title in 1894 and 1896 went to H.S. Johnson with a best time of 52.8. He had joined the club in 1888 and in later years acted as auditor as well as helping in many other ways where his accountancy experience was in demand. Another 440 championship winner was Jack Donaldson who took the title in 1897 and 1898, with 53.4 as his best time. He, like H.S. Johnson, played a major part in the administration for a good many years. At the 880 distance H. Kenyon was club champion for the four years 1897-1900, his best time 2-00.4. In addition he won the 100 yards title in 1900 and the 440 in 1899 and 1900. These three all gained places in the A.A.A. Championships during the period 1897 to 1904. In the triple jump, or hop-step-and-jump as it was then called, R.A. Green won the A.A.A. Champion-

ship title in 1889 and 1890.

Moving on to 1908 we come to the most successful of all our early members, Emil Voigt. He was selected to represent Britain in the 5 miles event at the Olympic Games after winning the A.A.A. 4 miles title. Voigt pulled off a confident Olympic win with a time of 25min. 11.2 sec, some 13 seconds ahead of his nearest challenger. The following year he went on to win both the Northern Counties and A.A.A. 4 miles championship events, then in 1910 turned his talents to the one mile distance to gain yet another A.A.A. title.

Voigt emigrated to Australia and we have no record of him for the next sixty-odd years. Then a letter arrived at Fallowfield Stadium from our ex-Olympic champion advising us that he would be hoping to contact us while on a visit to England. As a result some of our officials spent a few pleasant hours with him and found him to be still very fit physically and alert mentally although close to ninety. He was small and light in build, had his own system of exercises and included as much walking as possible in his routine. He presented M.A.C. with a scroll which had been awarded to him by members and other citizens of Manchester at the time of his Olympic win.

Joe English was another celebrity of the club competing at the same time as Emil Voigt. He specialised in the steeplechase event, winning the N.C.A.A title five years in succession - 1906/1910 - and the A.A.A. championship in 1907 and 1910.

Two other personalities from that period should be mentioned. C.C. Harvey, a founder member, is a name that is still preserved to this day. On his death a Cup was presented to the A.A.A. by his family. It was to be named the Harvey Memorial Trophy and would go annually to the competitor adjudged the best champion of the year. The second notable personality was one destined to achieve worldwide fame much later, though not athletically. It was customary in the early 1900s to invite the Lord Mayor or an M.P. to become President of the Manchester Club. In the years 1905 and 1906 we find none other than Winston S. Churchill listed as President.

Among some world famous athletes to have delighted the spectators at the Fallowfield Stadium were three of the best distance runners in the pre-1914 era, Alfred Shrubbs, Fred Appleby and A. Aldridge, who were brought together for a special 15 miles challenge race. Shrubbs, holder of several world records and still considered worthy of a top place in the Hall of Fame, was the obvious favourite, but it was the youthful London athlete, Appleby, who upset calculations, with Aldridge also beating Shrubbs.

In 1906 a Bowling Section was formed - something unusual for an athletic club. But M.A.C. had reason to be thankful over the ensuing years for this addition to their membership, for the bowling members were not ungenerous when help was needed in some of the "lean" years. And there were quite a few of these lean years. Other sports that have been catered for at different times have been tennis, rugby football and lacrosse. M.A.C. were never backward in trying new ventures.

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#### Between the Wars

The year 1914 brought the country into war against Germany and for the next five years all hopes and aspirations at Fallowfield were brought to a halt. Virtually all the younger members disappeared into the Forces and about

the only activity left was that provided by the Bowling Section, who arranged a number of matches between veterans. Funds raised at these meetings were placed at the disposal of the various war charities.

With the end of the Great War, as the 1914-1918 war was called an entirely fresh start had to be made into the life of the club. A younger generation with new ideas took over the reins. They were a little less concerned with traditional ways of conducting the club policy and, it must be admitted, rather less class conscious. There was plenty to be done. Buildings were showing signs of decay and there was more grass than cinder to be seen on the track. But the new committee set about their formidable task with the same dedication and enthusiasm that had guided the early pioneers of the club in the 1880s.

Promotions were the staff of life for M.A.C., but only too often their hopes for a successful meeting were ruined by bad weather. In this respect they seemed to be less fortunate with their own promotions than with bookings for outside bodies. Even with favourable weather in 1921 at a summer sports meeting with first class and attractive competition, the public failed to respond and the result was a loss of £150. Yet, at a gala meeting on behalf of the Red Cross in 1917, they had been able to hand over a sum of £2,000, though admittedly this was more of an emotional response.

Help at last came in 1923 following another loss-making year. Sir Edward Hulton agreed to sponsor an M.A.C./Sporting Chronicle Carnival meeting. The outcome brought £309 into the club's coffers. Similar ventures under the title "Four Club Carnivals" in following years were also successful.

Until the middle 1920s, club championships were open to all members of the club whether first-claim or not. For much of the time there were well over a thousand members in the club, only a small percentage of whom were active, first-claim. The remainder paid their annual fee simply to spectate at the many meetings or to use the only cinder track for miles around, apart from one in Belle Vue. Quite a number of members of other club, therefore, trained at Fallowfield and a few competed in our club championships. Bill Nelson, one of Salford Harriers' leading distance runners, was one who gained our championship honours in 1923/25/26 and 27. Bill Rae, a Broughton Harrier, later to become well known for his work in connection with the schools five-star scheme, was another with a successful run in our one mile in 1928. Later the rule was amended to allow only genuine first-claim members to win championship honours.

One of the best of the early performances was Bill Lowe's 440 yards championship win in 1924. His time of 51.2 seconds remained a club record until after the Second World War, though Clem Allen went very close in 1933 with a time of 51.8. The one mile club championship best remained outside 4.5 minutes until Ian Drew took the title with 4-29.8 in 1933. Drew was a versatile athlete. In club championships he won the 440 in 1932/34/35/36, the 880 in 1932/34/35, the mile in 1931/32/33/35 and tied for the cross-country title in the 1932/33 season.

Two other notable winners about this time were Wilf Hardy with 100 yard victories in 1928/29/30 and 31, 440 yard wins in 1928 and 29, and the 880 title in 1928; and Ted Pilling who had his successes in the 440 in 1927/30 and 31 and at the 880 in 1929 and 30.

A brief mention should be made of our Cycling Section which lasted from the 1890s through into the 1940s. Here again, it is a little uncertain as to who among the early cycle champions were first-claim and who were second-claim. Certainly the Fallowfield crowds enjoyed their cycling heroes,

George Owen, Jack Sibbit, Horace Pryor, Sid Cozens, etc. and there was almost invariably a "full house" for the Manchester Wheelers' annual meeting, which could, it seemed, be guaranteed warm, sunny weather year after year.

Eddie Gorton and Wilf Higgins both had four club championship wins at the quarter-mile cycle distance, Gorton in 1929/30 and 31, Higgins in 1934/35 and 36. Higgins was also the Empire Games 1,000 metres champion for 1935.

As has been mentioned earlier, M.A.C. always had among their officials men with new ideas. One such venture which proved its popularity in succeeding years was the Withington Road Relay. A course measuring about three-and-one-third miles round the roads of Withington and West Didsbury was covered by six runners in the form of a relay, making a total distance of 20 miles. This was something quite new; in fact road races of any kind were a rarity in those days and relay racing was generally supposed to relate to the track only. However, 1928 saw M.A.C. launch its first road relay race with half a dozen or so clubs taking part. It became an annual event, with more and faster runners bringing down the team and individual times over the years to an extent that would have seemed unbelievable on that first occasion. Apart from the war years, the race continued to be held over the same course until 1962, covering a span of 35 years which, in itself, is a tribute to what was after all a quite unpretentious event for local clubs. There came a time, however, when increasing traffic in the area created problems and we decided to hold the race elsewhere. For the next year or two the Wythenshawe district was tried out, and then it was resolved to move away from the roads and its obvious disadvantages and switch over to parkland.

And so was born our present Heaton Park cross-country relay event with four runners to a team each covering an undulating course of approximately 3 miles. Looking at the result sheet for what appears to be the first of the Heaton Park races, there can be no doubting the high quality of the leading competitors. The six fastest were: Roy Fowler 13-12, Dave Atkin 13-20, Ron Hill 13-25, Mike Freary 13-26, Wade Cooper 13-29, Steve Edmunds 13-16. There were 37 teams on that occasion. Now the efforts of our race organiser, Alan Bocking, ensure that we have around a hundred teams taking part.

The usual form of competition for the bulk of club runners in the years prior to the 1939-1945 War was handicap racing. It was a system which was designed to give the less talented runners the chance of a prize by allotting them a start of so many yards on the back marker, much the same as we do now in our Christmas Handicaps. These races, because of their unpredictable results, were popular with the spectators and also gave the "rank and file" competitors the incentive to enter races with some possibility of success sooner or later. Meetings were put on by athletic clubs, police authorities, cricket clubs and other organisations almost weekly, mostly on grass tracks. A few, mainly in Yorkshire, continued to appear after the war, but generally speaking they were replaced by League Matches, Trophy Meetings and Open Meetings, and now most athletes compete purely to get a time.

M.A.C., while not entirely neglecting the handicap races, also used every opportunity of bringing to the Manchester public the very best national and international athletes. Two of Finland's famed Olympic champions, Hannes Kolehmainen and Paavo Nurmi, were included in a Finnish team that appeared on the Fallowfield track. Other Olympians to be seen there in the period between the two world wars were: Harold Abrahams (Olympic 100m winner 1924), Douglas Lowe (800m winner 1924 and 1928), Lord Burghley (400m hurdles winner 1928), Harold Osborne (American high jump Olympic winner 1924), Sid Atkinson (South African 110m hurdles Olympic winner 1928) and Salford A.C.'s stylish Walter Rangeley who crowned a great sprint career with a close second place in the 200 metres at the 1928 Games.

After this memorable period with its feast of top class athletics at Fallowfield, the pace slackened and we had a few less spectacular years. Then in the late 1930s, Fred Williams, the club secretary, in co-operation with the go-ahead Bryan Doughty, sports secretary, began to put together a series of short interesting evening meetings with the highlight a special event as the centre of attraction preceded by one or two interesting events of a local nature, with the full programme to last not more than two hours. Jack Emery and Peter Ward, two of Britain's top distance runners, appeared at one of these meetings in an attempt to beat the English Native record for two miles. An exciting race resulted in a win for Emery well inside the record.

These evening meetings brought a good response from Fallowfield supporters, but the really notable promotion in this pre-war period was in 1939 when the combined efforts of Bryan Doughty and Fred Williams succeeded in bringing London-based Sydney Wooderson, the world 880 and mile record holder, to Fallowfield. The 5ft.6in. British champion was to make an attack on the three-quarter mile world record just prior to competing in a "Mile of the Century" race in America. The event took place before a huge crowd on a perfect June evening. So many spectators were lined up along the lane leading to the ground that extra stewards had to be obtained to cope with the unusual pressure.

The attempt on the record succeeded, Wooderson winning in 2-59.5, and the publicity the club received both before the event and afterwards was a just reward for the drive and confidence that had marked the efforts of the club over the past two or three seasons.

Although less spectacular, another highlight of the 1939 season was the start of a Northern Schools cross-country and athletics championships. Few people realise that the mammoth cross-country event, now held annually in Lyme Park and in which over a hundred schools take part, was started by Manchester Athletic Club on March 15, 1939 over a course in nearby Platt Fields. After this modest start the organisation was left in the hands of a committee representing the schools and the event has become the most important race of the season for many thousands of schoolboys since the end of the war. The Northern Schools athletics meeting took place on the Fallowfield track on May 15, 1939 with 23 schools involved.

Things at this time seemed to be moving in the right direction for M.A.C. The Wooderson meeting had improved the club's finances and plans were drawn up for improvements to the ground so as to make it more attractive. The old wooden stand was to be demolished and changing accommodation for the athletes to be updated. But all the "best laid schemes" had to be laid to rest when war was declared against Germany for the second time. Once again the active athletes being young enough and fit enough were soon exchanging their running kit for battle dress, while a few older members did their best to keep things moving as much as possible, and for as long as possible, by helping to organise events for local schools and any of the armed forces stationed nearby. But for the next few years there is nothing to report, so let us have a look at a section of the club not so far considered, the cross-country side.

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### Cross-Country

Although a cross-country section was formed as early as 1890 there was not a great deal of support shown in this side of athletics by our club until after the 1914-18 war. It was at this time that a few athletes who had been



members of a small harrier club in the Whalley Range area pre-war decided to start a cross-country section with the Fallowfield club. Two of them played important roles with M.A.C., Frank Pepworth as cross-country and sports secretary, Harold Wilcox as handicapper and timekeeper.

In the first season after the war Harold Hunt tied with Jim Cummings for the club championship. The title went to Hunt for the next three seasons, after which he retired from racing. W.N. Neilson, a Scottish international who was working temporarily in Manchester, then came into our ranks. During his three years with M.A.C. he took the club title each season and had two decisive victories in the East Lancs championships of 1925 and 1927. Despite his influence, there was little noticeable effect on M.A.C.'s team performances as up to this stage in the club's history we were very much a track club.

With our only talented runner having returned to his native Scotland, our winter performances appeared likely to deteriorate even further. But a change for the better was on the way. It coincided with the arrival of Joe Halsey whose interest in running had been kindled after a win in a local newsboys' race. He took to cross-country running immediately; in fact it was only this side of the sport that appealed to him. Over the fields and hills he made running look easy as he loped along, often pushing well ahead on his own to give us a number one position in many an inter-club race.

Joe Halsey won our club championship four years in succession from 1928 and then tied for the title in the 1932/33 season. Other new recruits were now beginning to filter through and there was a steady improvement in team performances. We soon started to play a leading part in Manchester League races. Here it should be mentioned that this was a rather modest league with only four clubs involved - M.A.C., Manchester Y.M.C.A, Manchester Harriers (a club based in Gorton) and Winton Harriers. From 1929 onwards our cross-country headquarters were at Gatley (a Gatley very different from the present built-up area).

Apart from league matches (four meetings each season), we had regular inter-club fixtures, home matches one season, away the next, usually involving two clubs only. All races were on one-lap courses of seven or eight miles. They were marked by a paper trail, not by flags. This obviously called for a certain degree of care, both on the part of the trail layers, who were usually older members or sprinters, and by those following some time later in the actual race. Winds quite often made things less easy for the racing pack as the paper trail could be blown well off course on the harder surfaces.

In 1933 we demonstrated our improvement by finishing sixth in the East Lancs. We were led home on this occasion by Ian Drew, the Manchester University champion who had joined us. He finished 21st and was followed by another promising newcomer, Harry Hooton, in 24th position. At the junior end we had Geoff Brownlow making an appearance and finishing a respectable 14th in the under-21 race.

The senior winner on that occasion was Tom Evenson, the very talented Salford Harrier, who soon afterwards changed over to M.A.C. By the time the 1935 East Lancs came round his 14 months' suspension which was then in force for athletes changing clubs, had been completed and he led us into a best ever third team position. The six counters were: Evenson 3rd, Geoff Brownlow 11th, Cliff Baldwin 14th, Joe Halsey (still in good form) 20th, Cyril Warmsley 39th and Harry Hooton 49th.

There was further elation for the club when Phil Brownlow finished 5th in the Junior event and Ernie Evenson, Tom's younger brother, had a sparkling win

in the Youths race and led our team into second place. Ernie, in fact, was the second club runner to score a victory in the East Lancs Youths race. Ted Pilling, later to become our star 440/880 runner, surprisingly beat the field in 1927 but then concentrated on the track. We had a third success in 1939 when Dennis Hall took the title.

Our cross-country team's improved performances were not destined to continue much longer. Within the space of a year or two the successful group had disintegrated. The Evenson brothers had departed, to be followed by Geoff and Phil Brownlow and Cliff Baldwin. Then the cross-country secretary, Frank Pepworth, died suddenly. He had served in that capacity since the First World War and had worked unceasingly in the interests of the club. His loss was deeply felt and, coming on top of the departure of most of the star runners, it was clear that we were heading for a period of struggle.

There were still some members left who were prepared to face up to the task of rebuilding the active side of the club, but a glance at the results of the main club events for the 1938/39 season gives some indication of the effect the departures had had to our cross-country section. The senior championship resulted in a tie between Cyril Walmsley and Derek Warburton. In 3rd place was Harry Brownlow, the oldest of the three brothers who had remained with M.A.C. with Geoff and Phil moved on. Jack Davies won the 10,000 metres track championship, Harry Brownlow won the 7 miles sealed handicap from Cyril Walmsley who also took 3rd place in the Christmas Handicap won by Wilf Richards. It was mainly these few who kept things in motion during this difficult period.

But there was a more serious problem to be faced before long. War had been declared against Germany and one by one our athletes were receiving their "call-up" notices. For the first year or so a certain amount of competition was carried out. Members under the age for service took part in races with schools and against some local RAF runners and composite teams from different clubs were formed to fit in to any sort of competition that could be arranged. But this temporary phase was soon at an end and another blank spot occurs in our history.

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### Back to Athletics

Among the new arrivals after the war was a strongly built boy of fourteen. Although so far untried, he was sure he could run well and was desperate to prove it. His name was Walter Hesketh and it was not long before we had some evidence of his potential, first with a win in the East Lancashire Cadet one mile championship in 5min. 4sec., then an even more satisfying 2nd in the East Lancashire clubs youths championship and a 3rd in the Northern. Back to the track in 1946 he repeated his cadet mile win, this time in a much improved 4-47 (300 yards ahead of the next boy), then for good measure he took the half-mile title with a time of 2-10. In the National cadet championships he won his mile heat in 4-44 and the final in 4-47.

Further improvement came in 1947 when he won the junior club championship half-mile in a record 2-04.4 and clocked 4-32.4 when winning the Grenville Trophy mile at Birchfield Harriers' meeting.

About this time other young athletes of distinct promise were joining the club. One who quickly made his mark was Allan Bannister, a 17-year-old Urmston Grammar School boy. He won the A.A.A. 440 yards junior championship

in 51.7 in 1947 and reduced this time to 50.4 the following year in winning the N.C.A.A. junior title. At the 100 yards event he created a new track record of 10.5 at Chesterfield.

This was a vintage period for our sprinters. Les Goodall scored a sprint "double" in the Cheshire championships with times of 10.3 and 22.6, then went on to beat the club championship record when winning the 100 yards event in 10.1. Ken Crowe clocked 50.9 in winning the N.C.A.A. 440 championship and had the distinction of being selected for the 4 x 440 relay at the 1948 Olympics. It was inevitable that when the club 440 yards championship was decided, the record of 51.2 set by Bill Lowe as long ago as 1924 would be in danger. In fact, a full second was knocked off the record, with Crowe winning in 50.2 from Allan Bannister and half-mile specialist Frank Evans.

After this, a win in the N.C.A.A. medley relay championship came as no surprise. The Guardian correspondent gave praise indeed to our team (Evans 880, Goodall 220, Bannister 220 and Crowe 440) when he compared it with the very successful pre-war Salford A.C. team.

In 1948 Frank Evans won the Lancashire 880 title in 1-57.5 and the Northern in 1-57.7. He was a frequent winner in middle distance and sprint races in the following years, and in 1952, after a fine 800 metres win in Holland, a win in the Manchester Mile at the Fallowfield Games, time 4-13.1 (a race record), and a fourth place in the British Games mile, he gained a place on Britain's team for the Helsinki Olympics. He survived a closely fought heat, finishing third in 1-53.8 but was eliminated in the second round.

(Last year, some 33 years after his Olympic effort, we had the pleasure of seeing our former member in action again when he paid a visit to our Gatley headquarters while on holiday from New Zealand. He took part in a veterans meeting organised by Joe Moran and then went on to compete in the over-60 age group races at the World Veterans Championships in Rome. He won both the 400 and 800 metres events, putting up even better times than the 60.9 and 2-18 that he had surprised us with at Gatley.)

The 1950s proved to be one of the most successful of our decades. We were steadily gaining strength at all distances both with our senior athletes and with the younger recruits. Derek Warburton had returned to the club following his service in the Forces, Albert Christian, Norman Ashcroft, Jimmy Russell, Geoff Cheetham were others who helped to place M.A.C. on the map. We won the team race in the East Lancs cross-country 1950 championship by a big margin, placing all our six counters in the first nineteen. Walter Hesketh won the Junior event from Eastham of Bolton and the two were again first and second in the Northern, where our seniors finished third in the team placings.

Hesketh continued his winning spell with ever-improving performances. He completely dominated the National Junior race beating Gordon Pirie by almost a minute, with the third runner nearly the same distance further back. His runaway victory earned him a place in the England team for the International at the Caerleon Racecourse, South Wales. He more than justified his selection by finishing fourth.

Hesketh's reputation was further enhanced when he broke the existing British and Commonwealth six miles record on a rain soaked track on August Bank Holiday Monday, 1951. The meeting was a track and field match against France at the White City, London, and again, it was Gordon Pirie who provided the spur for Hesketh's victory. The pair made all the early pace but there was no holding the M.A.C. runner in the final mile.

There were several notable performances in 1952. Jimmy Russell won the

Lancashire mile championship, with Peter Thompson second. Bob Jackson finished second in the Sheffield Marathon and scored a win in the tough Radcliffe 20 mile race. The very popular and highly competitive Manchester-Blackpool Road Relay sponsored by the News of the World saw M.A.C. finishing third. On the country, after being beaten fairly easily by Bolton United in the East Lancs, we got within one point of their total in the Northern to finish runners-up. Peter Thompson had a great run in the Northern Junior to finish second to East Cheshire's Johnny Wild.

After our achievement in the Northern, hopes were high for a good National effort. These hopes were justified when we finished a best-ever third, led by Hesketh who again proved what a great competitor he was by beating Geoff Saunders (the Northern winner) and his old rival Gordon Pirie, the Southern champion. Our six counters on that memorable occasion were: Hesketh 1, Russell 22, Christian 29, Ashcroft 31, Coleman 89 and Newton 116. Dave Coleman has of course retained his enthusiasm for athletics though now it is channelled into a different direction.

Peter Thompson had an impressive run in the 1953 Inter-Counties cross-country championships, finishing 7th against all the top runners in the country while still only a Junior. He also put up the fastest time on his stage in the Manchester-Blackpool Relay in which the club did well as a team, finishing 4th. He added to his achievements with a Northern 3 miles championship win in 14-26.2.

Cycle racing at Fallowfield had become very popular in the years just after the war and the old shale track had been converted to one with a hard surface and steeper banking. The cost was met with money borrowed from a building society. Many exciting races resulted and for some years the crowds were responsive. Evening meetings were held on a regular basis and cycle races were included on most of the Saturday meetings. But the new track had the disadvantage of being unsafe in wet conditions. Inevitably the fickle Manchester weather brought a cancellation or reduction of the cycling events and eventually the threat of a wet afternoon or evening was enough to keep many of the supporters at home.

The result was that repayments to the building society got behind and the financial side of the club began to look anything but rosy. An offer to stage stock car racing on the athletics cinder track was reluctantly accepted as a last resort. Needless to say, the track was almost ruined from an athletics point of view and, to make matters worse, the promised financial benefits never materialised. As a consequence we were worse off than before and the only course left was to offer the ground for sale.

Manchester Corporation were approached but their offer was well below the amount required to clear our debts. Then came an offer from a company headed by the world famous racing cyclist, Reg Harris. Their conditions were found to be acceptable and the ground became known as the Harris Stadium, with M.A.C. members granted training facilities under certain conditions. Jack Davies, our Honorary Secretary at that time, had the difficult task of guiding us through these negotiations and subsequently steering us back into normal club life.

Since those momentous days Jack has served as Honorary Secretary of the East Lancs and Northern Cross-Country Associations, then as Treasurer of the English Cross-Country from 1960 to date. His long and loyal service was recognised recently when he received the A.A.A. Award of Honour.

The year 1955 was an eventful one for one of our most improved runners, Joe Lancaster. He had been running for six years, but without any real

success for much of that time. An increase in long, steady training brought improvement and encouraging results in minor races. His mind became set on the marathon event and a further increase in mileage, aided by an unusually strong motivation, made him one of the toughest opponents in the North and by 1955 he felt ready to challenge the best.

After winning the Macclesfield ten miles road race in heatwave conditions he was invited to take part in an attack on the world track records for 20 miles and 2 hours. The M.A.C. runner upset all expectations by beating a small, specially selected field which included the favourite, Gordon Pirie. Joe's time of 1 hour 47 minutes 43 seconds for the 20 miles and his 22 miles 418 yards for two hours were both well inside the previous world best performances.

Mike Berisford was our leading junior middle distance runner about this time. He confirmed our bright hopes for him when winning the N.C.A.A. 880 junior championship in 1-58.1. He went on to further 880 and mile successes but later decided to move to another club. Another title winner in 1955 was John Vallance; he won the Lancashire 880 junior championship.

One or two others had been toying with the longer distances as a result of Joe Lancaster's successes and in 1956 the club scored a notable team victory in the hilly Radcliffe 20 miles road race. They were led by Joe with strong support from Colin Colson and Norman Ashcroft.

By 1957 Ron Carroll was coming to his best. After a 5th place in the East Lancs at Royton he excelled himself by finishing 10th over a heavy Morecambe course in the Northern. Later in the season he led the way home in the club's 10,000 metres championship on the Fallowfield track in a time of 31min.38sec., a best championship performance at the time. An interesting 7th in 33-42 was our current President, Ian Burnett.

The 10,000 metres track championship which was first held in 1936, always proved more popular with our members than the races at the shorter distances. Even though Walter Hesketh and Ron Carroll between them accounted for twelve victories, these were not "walk-overs" by any means, for they covered a period when we had a distance running side of fairly high quality. Hesketh's wins were successive ones stretching from 1948 to 1953. Ron Carroll's six victories were spread over a longer period, with Les Armstrong taking the title in 1957 and Stan Taylor winning in 1959 and 1961. Ron improved on his previous club championship record in 1958 when he led the way home in 30min.33sec., which remains a best championship performance.

A quick summary of club cross-country championships between 1950 and 1966 makes interesting reading. Stan Taylor took the youths title once, the junior twice, the senior twice plus one tie; Ron Carroll had four outright senior wins and two ties; Peter Thompson had three junior wins and one senior plus a senior tie. All three were tremendous competitors and an inspiration to the rest of the team in many a struggle against rival clubs. Thompson in particular put us back in the picture on several occasions when we had slipped behind in road relays.

Another of our long distance stalwarts of the 1950s and 1960s was Sam Hardicker. Previously with the Y.M.C.A., he and his coach, Harry Peake, joined M.A.C. for more serious competition. Sam soon proved a regular 'A' team member in all road and cross-country races. As with Joe Lancaster in earlier times, his main interest turned to the marathon and some notable results followed. His big opportunity came when he was selected for Britain in the 1960 Kosice International Marathon. No British runner had been successful in winning this classic event, but the quiet-spoken, no frills

M.A.C. runner rose to the occasion and pulled off a totally unexpected victory in 2-26-47. It was not until 1974 that the race saw a British runner lead the way home again.

Sam was physically and temperamentally suited to the marathon. He was aware that he could only reach a high standard by dedication and under the guidance of Harry Peake he persisted with a schedule of training throughout the year aimed specifically at the 26-mile event. Among several noteworthy performances after the Kosice race was a 2-20-58 timing for second place in the Polytechnic Marathon in 1961, and another second place in a 25 kilometre race in Berlin where his time was 1-17-10 for the 15.5 miles.

The Lancashire Road Relay was always one of the highlights of the season, not only for our own club but for most of the rest of the clubs in the County. For the top clubs there was, of course, the incentive of continuing success, but even for those habitually in the lower half of the field there was still the excitement that relays always produce, plus the ever present urge of the individual to beat their last year's time. In October 1958, M.A.C. pulled off a fine victory over the eight stages of 3 miles 393 yards. It was an exciting race with the leading clubs constantly changing position. Les Armstrong moved M.A.C. from third to first on the second lap. A fast effort by Pembroke put them into the lead on Stage 4, with M.A.C. now 3rd again, only for Peter Thompson to take them back into the lead. The issue remained in doubt, with five clubs in close contention almost to the end. A gritty effort by John Vear on the seventh lap gave Ron Carroll his chance and he gradually pulled away to bring M.A.C. their first victory in the race. We were 22 seconds in front by the finish, with only 5 seconds covering the next three teams. This undoubtedly was a race to remember.

Les Armstrong and Stan Taylor were two members who had shown promise as juniors and then had to serve their two years of National Service. Both were fortunate in being able to pursue their athletics training and competition during that interval and both came back to Fallowfield eager for improvement. Armstrong had a good turn of speed as well as the ability to perform well at the longer distances. He won our club championship 440 in 50.2 in 1961 and was also one of our scoring six in the 1962 National Cross-Country Championship. Obviously he was a very useful athlete for any club.

Stan Taylor found his best form in 1962. After building up his stamina all winter, he put his fitness to the test with a run in the Pembroke 20 miles road race late in May and surprised many by turning in a time of 1hr.49min.26sec. Early in June he won the Lancashire 3 miles championship in a best championship time of 15-38.2. Later in the month came another championship best when he won the Northern 880 in 1-52.6, and this was followed by a A.A.A. mile win in 4-04.8. At the end of July in a representative match he brought his 880 personal best time down to 1-49.5.

Stan Taylor was certainly in tremendous form and on August 18 this was fully demonstrated when he ran against the top Americans in the Emsley Carr Mile at the White City, London. The two Americans, Beatty and Grelle, took first two places with Stan a close third in 3min.58sec., the second best ever by a British runner.

There were other classy performances by the stylish Stan Taylor, but none that surpassed those triumphs of 1962. In later years he gave much of his spare time to coaching some of our top junior middle distance runners. He now has his own rock factory in Blackpool.

John Vear was one of a number of boys to join us from Burnage High School, but it was not until he came into the senior age category that he began to



take training at all seriously. The improvement then was more than gratifying, both to himself and to his clubmates. Soon he was battling it out with our other distance runners, but he still retained an admirable sense of balance in his approach to athletics. There were plenty of good performances from John before his work took him to Sheffield.

It must be admitted that the sprint side of the club at this period was less successful than the middle and long distance group. Walter Parrott, one of our leading sprinters pre-war, had involved himself more in coaching on his return and his interests had been geared more to the distance runners, particularly to Walter Hesketh. Our sprint group could be described as a small one with some good results to their credit, especially in the relays, but without anything like the depth of quality that had been built up by the distance running members.

Wilf Myers held top place among our sprinters for some time. He was noted for his speed off the mark. At times there were doubts expressed as to whether he was faster than the starter. Be that as it may, there is no doubt that his reaction was very finely tuned and it was followed by a smooth but speedy conversion into top pace. Myers won our club championship in 1961 with a time of 10.6 (100 yards). Malcolm Wright was 2nd and Joe Moran 3rd. Wright's talents extended well beyond the 100. He won the 220 yards in 23.6 (Moran 2nd and Reg Cass 3rd) and took 2nd place both in the 440 and 880.

1962 was Malcolm Wright's year. He won all three club championships, the 100 in 10.6 (Myers 2nd), the 220 in 22.6 and the 440 in 50 seconds, beating Les Armstrong. He repeated his club championship treble in 1963. By this time younger sprinters were coming into the club, but more of them later.

There are some athletes who never hit the headlines but who, because of their reliability, are invaluable to a club. Paul Kilbey was one such member. He joined the club as a youth, winning our youth club championship across country in the 1962/63 season and continued into the senior ranks without doing anything spectacular. In the Lancashire Road Relay of 1965 as the youngest member of the team he put up a fine determined performance with a time only fifteen to twenty seconds slower than our top seniors. Paul found the longer distances to be his strong suit later and had several marathon times around the 2-30 mark to his credit. Although less effective at the shorter distances he did have a second place in our one mile club championships in 1966 and two further seconds in the cross-country championships of 1966 and 1968.

Our sprint group was strengthened in 1965 by some very promising young athletes introduced by Bryan Doughty. Best of these were David Pell, Alan Topalian and Athol Birch, all of whom had times close to 10 seconds for the 100 yards to their credit. Unfortunately their talents did not benefit the club for long. Apart from Pell, the remainder, or most of them, disappeared into University or College life and that was that. Dave Pell, however, continued to be our top speed man for several years until he took up a job in Germany, where he carried on for some time longer with further good results. Keith Rimmer was the next to appear on the scene. There was nothing to choose between the two; both produced even-time 100s. While the pair were still with us there were few inter-club meetings at which one or the other failed to gain maximum points.

One member in the middle 1960s who will not be readily forgotten is Colin Roberts. He joined us as a youth with a fair amount of speed despite a most unconventional style. In longer races he could usually be found toiling amongst the tail-enders. Yet it was the longer distance that appealed to him and he was confident that with more training he could make the grade. It must

be admitted that, whilst most of our members admired him for his confidence and determination, Colin was not taken very seriously. Their first surprise came when he entered a Junior mile in London, travelling alone by train, and returned having finished a close second in a very respectable time. He followed this in 1962 with a third place in the Lancashire mile championship.

By 1966 Colin was making something of a name for himself with some surprise victories on the Stretford track. If he was still with the leaders in the home straight there were few that could hold him as, head back and arms and legs "going all ways" he would drive himself past the finishing post to victory. He won one such 2 mile race in a competent 9min.5.3sec. and on another occasion a 3 miles in 15-05. Later in one of our club's annual one hour runs on the track at Fallowfield he came out on top with just over eleven miles.

It was about this time that John Davies, the talented son of our secretary, began to realise his potential. He and Peter Shaw, who was also showing very promising form, were both in the youth age group. In 1965 John won the Cheshire Schools 880 championship while Peter was equally successful in the Lancashire 880. Both qualified for the English Schools, with John finishing 2nd, so close to the winner as to be given the same time and with Peter taking 3rd place. Their best times for 1965 were: Davies - 440, 51 sec; 880, 1-56.6; Mile 4-40; Shaw - 440, 53.8; 880, 1-58.9; Mile 4.34.4.

In 1966 John Davies, now in the Junior age group, was in sparkling form. He won the Northern Junior 880 in a new championship best of 1-53.5, then a week later improved further when winning the English Schools in 1-52.9. That was followed by a victory in the A.A.A. Junior championship in which he brought his time down to 1-52. At the 440 distance he was twice under 50 seconds. At the end of the season he tried himself out at the mile event and again came out a winner with a time of 4-11.3.

Peter Shaw, still a Youth, also had his share of success. He won the Northern 880 in 1-59.5 and brought his time down to 1-57 in a race on the Sale track. At the English Schools he finished 2nd in the Intermediate 880 in 1-58.7.

Malcolm Pegler at the middle distances and Bob Snape in the sprint events were two others showing promising form at this time. One race that would live in Malcolm's memory was the 1967 Manchester Schools championships at Stretford. In a thunderstorm on a flooded track, Peter Shaw and Pegler left the rest of the field behind in the 880 as they raced for the title. An inspired Pegler won in 1-58.6, an excellent time for the conditions. They were first and second again in the Lancashire Schools championships, with Peter this time the winner. Also in the Lancashire Schools' list of winners that year was Chris Barber who had made the steeplechase his main event though he was equally proficient at the mile. He added the Lancashire Clubs steeplechase title to his victories.

At the sprint events Dave Pell and Keith Rimmer continued to turn in fast times. Both were recording times of 11 seconds for the 100 metres and 22 seconds for the 200 with Dave running a 10.6 at Sale, though this was wind assisted, and a genuine 21.6 for the 200 on the not-too-fast Oldham track. He also turned in a 10.9 and 21.9 when running for Cheshire in an Eight County match. Keith had a shot at the 400 metres distance on the (also not-too-fast) Gatley track and came up with a 52.2.

Another young sprinter was looking impressive at this period. He was Gary Armstrong. Unlike Pell and Rimmer who were both powerful types, Gary was the kind that made fast running look easy. The 400 was undoubtedly his best event

and he looked likely to win the A.A.A. Junior title in 1970, but a nagging injury at the time prevented his running all out and he had to be content with second place in 49 seconds.

Two other items from 1970 are worth recording. Stan Taylor, although now devoting most of his time to coaching the middle distance group and acting as team manager, still turned out in the occasional race. In one at Blackpool he clocked 51.3 for the 400. Malcolm Firth, who had joined us from Manchester Grammar, just failed to beat four minutes for the 1500 metres, good running for a junior.

The following year, 1971, saw Gary Armstrong become consistent around the 48 seconds mark for 400. He won the Northern Counties championship at that distance and had a 21.9 time to his credit for the 200 metres. Keith Rimmer was still sprinting well with a 100 in 10.7. Malcolm Pegler was down to 1-52.4 for the 800, Peter Shaw to 3-54 for 1500 and 8-21.4 for 3000, Geoff Plant ran a 2 miles in 9-06 and 5000 metres in 14-34, Maurice Oldham showed ability at the longer distance with a 10,000 metres in 32-44, while Paul Kilbey went farther still with an excellent 2-30-22 in the classic Maxol Marathon. Chris Barber, who had been out of action of a year, was now studying at Loughborough University. Dave Allen was at Sheffield University and was running better than ever. He was first home in the Northern Universities championships and then, running for the Northern Universities against the South and Midlands, he finished third.

Our Junior cross-country team were in fine form for the three major championships of 1973. They won the East Lancs, were second team in the Northern, and went on to a fourth place in the National. On the track Gary Armstrong was still improving as was evident with a 47.7 400 metres at the British Games, while Geoff Plant was also in great form with a second place in the Northern 1500 in 3-51, followed by a 4-06 at Stretford.

Chris Barber went closer to the four-minute mile in 1974 than any member had since Stan Taylor's superb 3-58. Running in the City Mile in London, Chris led the way home from a talented field in nine-tenths of a second over four minutes. He had previously finished second to none other than Steve Ovett in the Brigg Mile with a time of 4-02.1.

Our senior cross-country side had been well out of the reckoning even in the League matches for several years, mainly because of the absence of so many of our leading runners. But a special effort to improve the situation was made in 1974 with the result that Chris Barber made the long journey from London, Norman Morrison travelled from Sheffield and Malcolm Plant stepped up from the Junior ranks to play his part. We finished second team, beaten for top place by 5 points. And the following match proved even better, with Dave Allen finishing second, Maurice Oldham 7th, and the club beating Salford by 3 points for top place.

Meanwhile, Alan Mottershead, who had been developing into a middle distance runner of above average ability, earned himself an international vest when finishing second in the A.A.A. Junior 800 metres championship with a time of 1-52. He then finished third in the match against Spain in Madrid where he improved his time to 1-50.8 and that was followed by a defeat of the Junior champion in 1-50.1. Other good performances by our members included a 3-49.9 by Peter Shaw and a 3-55.5 by Malcolm Plant, while on the Cosford track at the Phillips Games Chris Barber beat international Barry Smith for second place in the 1500 with a time of 3-49.4.

The improvement in the senior cross-country team's performance was carried through into 1975 and was particularly evident in the club's Heaton Park relay

in which we finished second to a strong Bolton side, which included Ron Hill. Only 17 seconds separated our fastest man (Maurice Oldham) from our slowest.

Dave Allen, now training with the marathon in view, finished 2nd in a hilly 10 miles road race with a personal best 51-06. He was 3rd in the East Hull half-marathon in 68-56 and also had a personal best 10,000 track time of 30-29.8 to his credit. Andy Etchells and Peter Shaw produced steeplechase times of 9-08.4 and 9-12.2 respectively. Alan Mottershead, improving all the time, won an invitation 1500 metres at Stretford in 3-46.3 and then, a few days later, beat Walter Wilkinson in a one mile race with a time of 4-01.9.

So far we have covered most of the main events in the history of M.A.C.'s senior and junior athletes, leaving the Ladies' Section and the Boys' Section to be recorded separately up to the time of the amalgamation in 1977.

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### Boys' Section

Although M.A.C. had a handful of young members of the age of sixteen or so in the nineteen-twenties, it was not until much later that a special annual fee of half-a-crown was introduced for juveniles under sixteen. In 1947, however, the time seemed ripe to set up a separate section for youngsters from the age of eleven upwards. A little publicity in the local press brought quick response from the area around Rusholme and Fallowfield and so was born the M.A.C. Boys' Section.

The next few years brought a steady increase in numbers. Some of the early recruits had soon lost their enthusiasm but others were appearing from a wider area and these were the more serious ones. Once a reasonably thriving section had been formed, it was time to think about team competition. Matches were arranged with a few of the local schools where athletics were practised and these all helped enormously to foster team spirit and to maintain interest in the sport and in the club.

The advantage of having a cinder track (a rarity at that time) and a low membership fee was a key factor in the success of the section. Boys in the 15-19 age group were willing to travel from well outside the Fallowfield area to become members and take part in the training sessions and competitive events. Matches were so arranged that all members of the section were given the chance to compete. Schools where athletics had only a limited appeal gave our more moderate young athletes the opportunity of representing the club against opposition suited to their ability. Where our match was against, say, Manchester Grammar or Stockport School or Audenshaw Grammar, then it needed our best team.

In addition to competition against the secondary and grammar schools, we were able to arrange matches against several of the Home Office schools. The Boys School (Offerton), Mobberley School, Barnes Home and Saltersford School were all visited, and on one occasion we made a trip out to the Fylde Farm School, Blackpool. At all these places we always received a warm welcome.

Gradually we built up a thriving group of young athletes which included schools or area champions at most of the track events and a few of the field events. Among the most successful was Roy Johnson, winner of the Manchester, Lancashire and English Schools 110 yards hurdles championships in 1950 - his time in the English 14.6. This successful treble was repeated in 1951 with a best time of 14.5 which equalled the existing championship record.

We had a wealth of good young sprinters coming into the club. Among the younger ones were Carl Mayoh, David Swaine, John Hunt and Frank Skelton. Swaine had the additional advantage of being an exceptionally good long jumper. At the age of 14 he was regularly clearing over 17 feet. Skelton, the youngest of the four, was also the biggest and the fastest. In the under-19 age range there were five very closely matched sprinters, which sometimes made it difficult to know which one to leave out when selecting a relay team. The oldest of the group was Len Minshull who in 1949 finished 3rd in the Northern Junior 100 and 2nd in the 220. In 1950 Len Minshull was joined by John Minshull (not related), Bill Plenderleith and Peter Isaac for the 4 x 110 yards relay which formed part of the Birchfield Harriers' Grenville Trophy Competition. All four had conscientiously worked on their baton-changing at the training sessions and everything went like clockwork in the race itself. M.A.C. just held off a strong challenge from Polytechnic Harriers to win in 44.7 seconds. Some time later they reduced this to 44.4 in a race against a senior team from the club.

In 1948 the Fallowfield road relays for young athletes gave us an early glimpse of the possibilities of Peter Thompson, a fifteen-year-old boy who was later to become one of our top seniors. There were just nine teams in this inaugural race and M.A.C. proved easy winners with Thompson running the fastest time of 7min.21sec. for the one-and-three-eighths mile circuit. We added an under-18 relay the following year and it was in this race that we saw Peter Thompson at his best. When he took over on the final lap in 5th place some 44 seconds behind the leader the possibility of an M.A.C. win was certainly remote. Yet Peter steadily cut back those in front and brought us home the winners by a margin of seven seconds. His time of 6-37 was well ahead of anyone else's. The under-16 race was again won easily by M.A.C., with Peter Bennett running the fastest time of 7-02.

There were many more good performances for both Thompson and Bennett. In 1951 Peter Thompson won the N.C.A.A. Junior mile championship in a new record time of 4-26.4 and went on to finish second in the National cross-country Junior championship. Peter Bennett had an English Schools under-15 880 yards championship to his credit when he joined our club and that remained his favourite distance. He was very strongly built and was by no means lacking in stamina. He won the 1949 East Lancs Boys race in a very close finish and put up another good performance over the fields a fortnight later when finishing 8th in the very competitive Aaron Memorial race in Leeds. In the same race Peter Thompson was just beaten for first place by Yorkshire's Derek Ibbotson, later to become Britain's fastest miler. The two Peters helped M.A.C. to a second team placing.

In 1952 we had a new recruit to our boys' section in Eddie Stanley, a young lad of thirteen who was doing well on his school relay squad. A trial run at Fallowfield revealed potential at the 440 distance and the school was persuaded to enter him for this event in the Manchester Schools championships. He won in a championship best 57.8 seconds and went on to win the Lancashire Schools and to finish second in the English Schools. The following year he again won the Manchester and Lancashire races and finished 3rd in the English with a time of just outside 52 seconds. He had a number of other good performances in League 880 races but studies and then business were first priority and athletics had to take a back seat.

On the middle distance side we had Derek Browne (still competing regularly as a veteran), Rex Hearn, Brian Turley, Johnny Pollock and Ted Kelly, with no shortage of others to support them in team events. Although our strength was always in the running events we did have one or two in the group with considerable ability in the less popular events, such as Brian Royle, a 20 foot long jumper, and the hefty Bob Wilkins, a 45-50 foot shot putter.

One athletics match which stands out as the highlight of those years was a trip to the Isle of Man with a contest against the Manx schools included. Most of the responsibility for this was undertaken by Mr. Mayoh, the father of our young sprinter, Carl, and Bill Swan, a supporter, who arranged special rates so as to keep expenses to a minimum. A group of twenty-five boys between the ages of ten and nineteen made the trip, which took up four days of travel, sight seeing and competition, and was a great success. A victory over the Manx team added to our enjoyment.

All good things come to an end, and, with the loss of the ground as described earlier in this history, training at Fallowfield was drastically reduced to the senior side. Fortunately for the future prospects of the club the Gatley track had been built and, as we already had a few members from the Cheadle and Stockport area, it was decided to try to rebuild the Boys' Section using Gatley as a base.

One of our most talented runners from the Cheadle area in the earlier days was Bill White. In 1961 he won our youths 880 club championship with a time of 2min.3.4sec. He became the league cross-country youths champion in 1962, also winning the Cheshire County title and finishing second in the East Lancs. He was 12th in the Northern and 20th in the National, 43 seconds behind the winner. Back trouble brought an early retirement to this talented Gatley boy's career though he did reappear many years later, only to re-retire after a season or two in the road race boom days.

We must now move on to the nineteen-seventies, by which time Arthur Shaw had taken over as Boys' Section organiser. Athletics, particularly the cross-country side of the sport, had become a popular part of the Stockport and Cheadle schools' activities and we soon began to make headway with our recruitment campaign. In the 1971 Cheshire Schools cross-country championships we turned out no fewer than 18 members in the under-15 race, with Malcolm Plant the winner and Mick Naldrett the runner-up, both running of course for their school teams, but giving the club much satisfaction at their success. The intermediate race also went to a member, Richard Davies, while David Allen was all of 55 seconds ahead in winning the senior race.

A triple victory for Malcolm Plant in the 1972 Cheshire A.A.A., Cheshire Schools and East Lancs championships, all in the same month, earned him the County Express Sportsman of the Month Trophy. He carried his good form into the track season, just beating Richard Davies in an 800 metres with a time of 2-02.4, then finishing 4th in a B.M.C. 1500m with a very promising 4-07.8.

There was an impressive display by Mick Naldrett in the English Schools championships. Running in the 800m in his first year as an Intermediate, he finished second to Steve Ovett in 1-58. Alan Mottershead in the senior age group also finished second in the 800m and was selected to represent England in a schools international meeting. He justified his selection by winning comfortably. This year (1972), which was Alan's first in the Junior Men's age group, proved a memorable one. He won the A.A.A. Junior 800m in 1-55.6, the Northern Junior in 1-54.9, and then beat a good class senior line-up in a 1500m with a time of 3-56.

Malcolm Plant continued to lead the way in most races in his age group, with good support from John O'Brien, Nick Jepson and David Joyce. Brian Eden, Derek Smith, Steve Phillips, Nick Singleton, Chris Burnett and Keith Slater kept M.A.C.'s name to the fore in the younger races, and for some years there was always a ready source of supply to replace the inevitable "drop-outs". There was no shortage of good competition for all these boys, with races at Holmfirth, Worksop, Bolton and Warrington in addition to school and championship races.



Moving quickly to 1975, it was pleasing to return from Warrington with the C.J. Kelly Trophy after winning the Colts Relay at their Parkland meeting. The trophy had been donated by Charlie Kelly, then with the Warrington Club but previously one of M.A.C.'s best middle distance runners. Later he moved to the Midlands where he has since taken up coaching with much success. On the track there were two notable intermediate performances in the Greater Manchester Schools championships. Geoff Cooper won the 800m in a personal best 1-58 and Mark Scruton also beat his previous best 400 metre time when finishing second in 51.9. In the senior boys' 5000m Malcolm Plant proved to be still in good form by winning in 15-15.6.

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### Ladies' Section

It was not until 1929 that we find any record of the female side of the club being involved competitively at Fallowfield. It was then that Irene Phillips made her appearance with a win in the 100 yards club championship in 12.25. She held on to the title for the next four years and was back again with another victory in 1936, with Olive Moores the winner in 1934, 1935 and 1937. Edith Halstead and Ethel Johnson were two other prominent sprinters in the Lancashire area at that time, but athletics for women was very much a minor sport, and what competition there was was usually confined to the 100 and 220.

After the 1939-45 war another attempt was made to interest the ladies, with Harry Brownlow taking over the coaching. This met with some success, but it was short lived. When M.A.C. lost control of the ground, changing accommodation became limited and had to be centred on the senior side. M.A.C. was to remain a male preserve for a good many more years.

Gatley had been a happy hunting ground for the club's cross-country section long before the Williams Scholes track came into being. When it became our headquarters for the boys' section, a few girls from the local primary schools began to make an appearance and as some showed signs of being interested in joining the club it was decided to affiliate to the W.A.A.A. and start an official Ladies' Section. With Ian Burnett and Ron Carroll undertaking the general management and coaching in the initial stages it did not take long to get the new section off the ground.

Some twelve months later, in August 1974, we entertained teams from Stockport Harriers and Altrincham A.C. to a match at Gatley. Lynda Richardson won the under-15 200 metres on a heavy track in 29.9 seconds. Earlier in the season she had taken 3rd place in the Manchester Schools championships with 28.5

At another meeting on the Stockport track, Kaye Burnett won the 100 metres (under 13) in 14.9 and Nuala Keller, aged nine, showed unusual potential with an 800 metres time of 3min.10sec. Kaye a few years later won the Manchester Schools 200 metre title. Eight 5-star awards were gained by the girls in 1974 - an excellent start for the section.

By 1975 we were getting some encouraging results with our under-11 girls. At a cross-country meeting in Altrincham they gained an easy victory with Catherine McDonagh 1st, Fiona Keyte 2nd and Mhairi McPhee 5th. The 'B' team, led by Karen Wilkinson, were 3rd in the team placings.

From 1976 it was Fiona Keyte who claimed most of the limelight. She had

many fine victories both over the country and on the track. At Woodbank Park in the Parker Cup competition she led M.A.C. to a team victory, beating Catherine McDonagh for first place in a tight finish, with Mhairi McPhee 4th and Karen Wilkinson 16th.

With the increase in recruits on the girls' side extra help was needed and Ron Keyte willingly stepped in to take charge as secretary, carrying out his duties cheerfully and conscientiously until his tragic death some time later. Brian Massey then offered his services and kept the section moving steadily forward until Des Howarth filled the secretary's post on Brian's retirement.

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### Amalgamation

Manchester Athletic Club and Manchester & District Harriers had been strong rivals for many years. But it had been very much a friendly rivalry between the two Manchester clubs, with a number of the M.&D. seniors joining in the training sessions at Fallowfield. There came a time when the possibility of a merger began to be discussed and in 1977 at separate special meetings the members of both clubs voted in favour of such an amalgamation.

As this centenary history has so far made no reference to our partner's history, a brief outline of the M.&D.'s origins and development will be of interest. For this purpose the following summary kindly provided for our February 1977 Newsletter by Mr. Stan Dowson, the M.&D. President at the time of the merger, is here reproduced. It reads:-

"The original basis of Manchester & District Harriers & A.C. was, of course, the Lads Club movement in Manchester and Salford.

"Up to 1923 the larger Boys Clubs each had their own cross-country and athletics sections. In those days several of these clubs had a membership of 500 to 800 lads between 12 and 30 years of age, and although "running" was a specialised interest several of these clubs could still turn out 25 to 50 lads for cross-country runs and get them to take part in the Lads' Club Federation inter-club summer sports. Each club was affiliated separately to the East Lancs and Northern Cross-Country Associations.

"However, in the early 1920s it was realised that the Lads' Clubs were a feeding ground for the purely athletic clubs of the district, often due to 'poaching', which was becoming blatant. So, in 1923, a meeting was held in the Ardwick Lads' Club and it was decided to combine and form a single club, the "Manchester and Salford Lads' Club Harriers", in the hope that a bigger and stronger club would be able to hold its own against the purely athletic clubs and so minimise 'poaching'. Naturally, a combination of, say, seven boys' clubs did not of itself make a wonderfully outstanding athletic club. Some lads still went to the local well-established clubs and a great deal of hard work was necessary in the ensuing years.

"Mr. Charles Clift of the Salford Lads' Club was chiefly responsible for organising the merger and particularly for combating a vicious struggle by East Lancs officials to prevent this formation. However, we won our case and I became the first Honorary Secretary, which I maintained until 1960, after which I became Chairman and, later, President. It is interesting to note that

Harold Doggett was the first club captain, but because of some trouble he had in the Hugh Oldham Lads' Club he resigned and joined Salford Harriers. His son, Geoffrey, is the present Hon. Secretary of Salford Harriers.

"I was fortunate in my role as Secretary to gather round me a wonderful group of "workers". Each and every one was keen to see that the new club grew stronger. We won the East Lancs youths championship in 1928, when Reuben Robertshaw (now with Sale Harriers) was 3rd to finish, and we won the junior title in 1926 and 1933. Around this time, 1926 to 1939, our club did well to win many seconds and thirds in these younger sections.

Our next upsurge started around 1951. We won the boys championship at the East Lancs in 1951, the youths in 1951, 1952, 1953, 1954, 1956, 1957 and 1958, the juniors in 1955, 1956, 1957 and 1960, and the seniors in 1958, 1959 and 1963 to 1970 inclusive with the exception of 1968. In the Northern we gained several second places from 1951 in the boys and youths events and we won the junior title in 1956. In 1963 we won the senior race and held on to the title for the following five years. In the National our youths came second in 1955, our juniors second in 1956 and our seniors fourth in 1965.

"A final word. I believe one needs a group of dedicated workers to produce a 'good' club."

In such a brief account of the club's background, Mr. Dowson has confined himself to team successes only, but among their members over the years there were many talented athletes. Two who were particularly outstanding were Brian Hall and Ricky Wilde. Brian gained selection for the England team in the International cross-country championship, and got within one-tenth of a second of the four minute mile. Ricky in 1970 set a new world record for 3000 metres indoor with a time of 7-46.9.

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#### After the Amalgamation

The combination of the two club's forces brought a quick team success with a win in the East Lancs on a frozen course in Woodbank Park. It was a convincing victory in which we had all six counters in the first twenty positions to win by almost 100 points. Individually, too, the change seemed to have had a beneficial effect on performances. Fred Pendlebury won the Northern and National cross-country championships for veterans. Peter Shaw won the Lancashire 10,000 metres track championship in 30min.10.8sec. and Derek Blakeley was equally successful in the Lancashire 3000 metres steeplechase with a time of 9-16.8. The Cheshire steeplechase went to Mick Nolan, with Mark Hodson second in the youths' event. There was another good run by Peter Shaw when he finished second in the 3000 metres at a Great Britain v. East Germany meeting; his time 8-10.6. In a B.M.C. race at Stretford, Dave Gee clocked 4-06.5.

We were 7th in the National 12-stage road relay, well ahead of all our local rivals. Geoff Entwistle was in good form with a 49-03 timing in the Michelin 10 miles road race. Ricky Wilde, M.&D.'s top distance runner for many years, had a successful year too. He was 3rd in the Y.M.C.A. 20km road race in a fast 61min.22sec., with Manchester second team. Then he beat the

course record when winning the Snowdon Fell Race and there was a team win for the club. There were further convincing victories for Ricky in the Burnsall Fell Race and the Frodsham Hill Race.

On the track, Mark Scruton had a personal best 800 metres at Stretford with 1-49.06. Also at Stretford Malcolm Plant ran 8-06.4 in a 3000 metres race and Ricky Wilde clocked 14-05.4 for the 5000. Our sprint group had two respectable relay performances to their credit in a Northern League match - 45.7 for the 4 x 100 and 3-30.6 for the 4 x 400.

On the boys' side there was an impressive win for our under-11 team at Worksop with John Roberts 5th, Mark Golds 10th and Ian Keyte 13th. In the Cheshire cross-country championships our under-13 team were second with Chris Shepherd 6th, Ian Wilkinson 8th and David Riley 10th. In the East Lancs championships we were second team in both the under-13 and under-15 races.

The girls were making good progress. They were team winners in two age groups in road races at Stannington. In the under-13s Fiona Keyte finished 1st, Mhairi McPhee 3rd, Susan Driver 5th and Jackie Massey 6th. In the under-15 race Elaine Young was 1st, Kaye Burnett 4th, Jill Balmont 6th and Jackie Bradley 8th. On the track Fiona had a 1500 metres win in 5-03.5 and all-rounder Judith Hodson scored "firsts" in the 100 metres, long jump and hurdles. She also won a 200 metres in 28.4 at Stretford. There was an 800 metres win at Pilkington's for Susan Driver.

The year 1978 proved an auspicious one for the girls' group. After finishing 2nd and 5th with their 'A' and 'B' teams in the National Road Relay (under-13 race), they next tackled the long journey south to High Wycombe by coach (shared with East Cheshire). Despite having to start without two of their best runners who had to withdraw through illness, the girls were determined to do well and finish high up in these National cross-country championships. They far exceeded all expectations by winning the race and becoming National champions. A lot of the credit for this unexpected victory must go to Susan Driver, who finished 10th in a field of 500, just behind Fiona Keyte.

There was another victory for the under-13s when they outclassed the opposition in the Parker Cup competition held in Woodbank Park in incessant rain. Fiona Keyte was the individual winner. We gained team and individual honours in the men's race with Dave Gee leading the way home, and took first team place also in the boys' event and second in the youths.

Fred Pendlebury won the Lancashire, Northern and National Veterans Championships; a noteworthy treble. Ricky Wilde just got the better of Dave Bedford in the "National" at Leeds to finish 22nd and lead Manchester into 10th team place.

It is interesting to note that in the club relay ranking lists we finished 2nd at the Girls 3 x 800m and 4th at the Youths 4 x 1500m. At this time we had a fair number of boys and girls taking part in the Cheshire League matches. Often we would hold our own in the track events, only to drop behind when it came to the jumps and throws. But the main thing was that the club was being represented in most of the events that made up the programme. Later, with the loss of so many of our boys and the reluctance of the seniors to compete on the track, the situation changed completely. But more of that later.

In the Northern 6-man road relay, a good all-round performance took us into the third place behind Sheffield and Liverpool. Peter Shaw and Ricky Wilde were our two fastest, each timed at 20-57 for the 4.25 mile lap. We

were also a close third in the Lancashire 8-man road relay, with Pete Shaw our fastest. We took second place in the Cheshire 6-man relay, with our youngest member of the team, Mark Hodson, running very strongly to give us the lead on Lap 4.

For the first time in many years we had a team victory in the Boys' event at the Manchester Cross-Country League in Beaton Park. With Robert Wyr 3rd, Greg Vallance 7th, Ian Wilkinson 16th and Alan Morris 17th, we finished 9 points ahead of Sale. Malcolm Plant won the senior race and with the next five counters all in the first twenty we were easy team winners.

A newcomer to our club, Adrian Royle, made his appearance about this time. He had come to work in Manchester from Grimsby and had found his way to the Fallowfield track. After a spell with our training group he decided to become a member and quickly proved a valuable addition to the team. Before 1978 he had turned in times of 3-45.3 for 1500 and 8-08.8 for 3000 both while still in the Junior age group. Peter Shaw was also putting up some excellent performances with a 3,000 in 7-55.2 and a 5000 in 13-59.2, while Derek Blakeley had beaten nine minutes for the steeplechase with a time of 8-57.1.

The upward trend of 1978 continued to be a feature of the senior side's activities the following year. Malcolm Plant took his best mile time down to 4-01.8 in a B.M.C. race, then later improved on this at Crystal Palace with 3-59.7. At another Crystal Palace meeting he clocked 5-06.2 for 2000 metres. This was Malcolm at his best. Others too were putting their best feet forward. Peter Shaw had a 10,000 metres time of 29-12.2, Dave Allen ran a fast half-marathon - 65-40 - in the East Hull race, and Fred Pendlebury enhanced his reputation in the over-40 class when finishing third in the World Veterans 10,000 metres championship with a time of 31-03.

We were feeling this benefit of the addition of Adrian Royle into the team at this time. He finished 2nd in the Hyde 7 miles and led us to a team victory. We won the East Lancs, were 2nd in the Northern and 6th in the National cross-country championships. The National 6-stage road relay saw us finishing 3rd, with Ricky Wilde our fastest.

There were successes too for the girls. Clare Keller and Sheryl Cawood were 1st and 2nd in the Bingley road races, with Manchester team winners. This under-11 team was beginning to make quite a name for itself. There was also a win for the under-15 team, with Fiona Keyte the individual winner and the improving Julie Holland 3rd. Julie turned the tables on Fiona in the Holmfirth road races where Julie finished 1st, Fiona 2nd and Susan Driver 3rd. At Bolton Clare Keller led the under-11s to a team victory and this was followed by an under-15 relay win.

The Warrington Parkland Relays provided the kind of competition our boys' group needed - and enjoyed. We fielded two teams in the under-13 race and four teams in the under-15 event. Our 'A' team came out winners for the second year running, and even more encouraging was the fact that all four teams finished before any other club's 'B' team. In the Lep Cup cross-country meeting in Woodbank Park our under-15s were again in great form, taking the team honours against some really top class opposition and finishing first 'B' team for good measure. Greg Vallance was our leading scorer in 5th position. Later in the season he turned in a 2-04 800 metres when finishing 3rd at Stretford.

The confident running of our seniors was carried through into 1980. They finished 2nd team in the very competitive Burtonwood Relay, in which the youthful Ian Patten tied with Peter Shaw for third fastest time in the race of 18-05. They were also 2nd in the East Lancs, led by Adrian Royle in 2nd

place. The youths' team also did well, finishing 3rd. The Northern brought us another runners-up position, beaten for the title by the Yorkshire Club, Airedale.

In our own inter-club cross-country relay in Heaton Park we had six complete teams taking part. The 'A' team stormed away to a victory over Bolton, with Adrian Royle running the fastest lap of 14-31, and the 'B' and 'C' teams finishing 4th and 6th. Still holding their form the following weekend for the National at Leicester, they repeated their 6th position of the previous year, with Malcolm Plant our leading light on this occasion with a best-ever 19th position.

It was not just for the seniors that the years 1979 and 1980 proved noteworthy. The girls too had many successes. The under-15 team had victories in the Greater Manchester, Northern and National cross-country championships and were runners-up in the Northern road relays event. They were top team also in meetings at Bingley, Holmfirth, Frodsham, Bolton and Warrington. These victories were all achieved with a squad of six girls - Fiona Keyte, Julie Holland, Susan Driver, Julie Massey, Mhairie McPhee and Karen Wilkinson.

On the boys' side, Tony Gorst, Greg Vallance, Ian Wilkinson and Robert Wyer brought us a victory in the under-15 Cheshire road relay championship and this success was repeated by Paul Gibson, Tasso Asteriades, Andy Mayall and Ian Patten in the under-17 event. There was also a good win at Skipton where Greg Vallance outpaced the rest of the field over a very tough course and, with support from Robert Wyer 8th, Richard Morris 9th and Ian Wilkinson 10th, Manchester took the team honours. Greg's excellent form spilled over on to the track. At an inter-club meeting on the Stretford track he won the youths 800 metres event in 1-56.8.

Ricky Wilde had a number of outstanding performances in 1980. There were wins for him in the Darwen Moors, Fairfield Horseshoe, Lyme Park, Great Hill and Edenfield Fell Races, the last-named in a new record time. He also had 2nd placings in the Saddleworth and Kinder Downfall races. At the A.A.A. Marathon championship in Milton Keynes he finished 17th in 2-19-23.

Soon after winning the Northern Counties 1500 metres title in 3.47.5, Adrian Royle moved over to American college life and was soon making quite an impression. He turned in times of 3-43.6 and 4-00.3 for the 1500 and mile, a 5000 metres time of 13-59.8 and a 5 miles road time of 22-31.1 (though this suggests some doubts as to course accuracy). Even more sensational was his victory over Salazar for the American cross-country title. Adrian's best efforts came in 1982 when he finished 3rd in a 10,000 metres track race with a fast time of 27-42.2. With a 5000 metres inside 13-30 also to his credit, he hoped to attract the British selectors' attention. Unfortunately his best form was not reproduced when he spent a short period on the European circuit, and his big chance went by.

Frank Clayton made one of his rare appearances in the Cheshire cross-country championships of 1981 and led the club to a team victory, finishing 6th himself followed by Mick Nolan 9th, Dave Gee 10th, Maurice Oldham 12th, Ian Patten 20th and Tasso Asteriades 21st. Greg Vallance had a great win in the youths' race after Stockport's Hussain had built up a good lead and looked to be "home and dry".

In the Lancashire championship Malcolm Plant was our first finisher in 4th position, with Ricky Wilde 14th. Malcolm was again top scorer for us in the Northern. He finished 9th and led us into 3rd team place. There was an exciting struggle for team honours in the East Lancs championship. Salford



placed all their six counters in the first seventeen and Manchester replied with six in twenty-three. But our front runners were markedly superior to Salford's and victory was ours. Our leading three were: Malcolm Plant 1st, Ricky Wilde 5th and Dave Allen 7th.

We had four runners in relatively early positions in the mammoth London Marathon. Ricky finished 16th in 2-18-50, Des Austin was 18th in 2-20-16, Dave Allen 28th in 2-21-08 and Derek Blakeley 43rd in 2-22-59. Later, in a trip over the Atlantic, Ricky Wilde brought his marathon time down to 2-13-34 when finishing 4th at Minnesota.

At a Stretford track meeting in July our 400 metre runners were in good form, most of them recording personal best times. Phillip Knowles was fastest with 50 seconds to his credit, then Simon Brain with 50.6, Roy Harriott 51.3 and Tony Wood 52.2. Mhairie McPhee and Fiona Keyte also decided to give their speedier muscles a tryout in the Ladies 400, with Mhairie finishing 3rd in 60.8 and Fiona 4th in 61.4. At the same meeting Julie Holland took 3rd place in the 800 metres (under-17) with 2-18.4. Simon Brain had an 11.1 timing for 100 metres and Paul Bailey was the fastest winner of various under-13 races with 13 seconds. He also had equal fastest time in the 200 metres with a personal best 26.7. This very talented young member also cleared 4.64 metres in the long jump and competed at the 800 metres with a competent 2-23.9.

Further personal bests were achieved at another Stretford meeting. Junior member Greg Vallance finished 2nd in the senior 800 with 1-52.5 and Roy Harriott was 3rd in 1-53.5. Mhairie McPhee came 3rd in the Ladies' 800 in 2-15.1.

The indefatigable Paul Bailey was in his element at a meeting on the Oldham & Royton track. He took part in the 100, 200, 400, 800, Long Jump and Shot - and, believe it or not, won all six events. At a Stretford Sunday meeting he improved both his 200 and 800 metre times with wins in 26.4 and 2-22.9 respectively.

The autumn of 1981 was notable for two particular senior performances. The National Road Relay (for which we had qualified with a third place in the Northern) was held on the same day as the opening run of the Manchester League in Heaton Park. Our team for the League match was therefore very much a weakened one. As it happened, both teams rose to the occasion. In the National Relay at Crystal Palace Manchester finished sixth, just one second behind Bolton, with Ricky Wilde our fastest runner. Three of the six members of the team made a quick journey to Dunkirk where they had been invited to take part in a 20km road race the following day. The result - 1st Dave Gee, 2nd Malcolm Plant, 3rd Des Austin - was a highly satisfactory one. In the meantime Maurice Oldham had excelled himself with a second place at Heaton Park, leading our team to an unexpected League win from Sale Harriers, all our six counters finishing in the first nineteen.

There was something of a slump in performances in 1982. Three of our best young seniors, Ian Patten, Andy Taylor and Tasso Asteriades, were all away at University; Des Austin and Andy Etchells had moved south, Adrian Royle was still in America, and no new members were coming along to take their place. Among the younger ones, Andy Mayall, Mike Owen, Robert Wyer and Paul Gould had lost interest, and here also there were no newcomers.

Fortunately, the girls' side was in better shape despite some shortages in certain age groups. The Wilkinson twins, Michelle and Lynne, were now in the under-11 age group, joined by Lisa Howarth. They took third place in the Prodsham Relays and had a convincing win in our own Young Athletes Relays meeting, with Michelle and Lisa running fastest and second fastest laps.

Still eligible for under-11 races in the early part of 1984, the Wilkinson twins had been joined by Victoria McKinlay and Claire Stone and the group was rarely beaten for team honours. At the Warrington Parkland races all four finished in the first ten and they were easy winners also in the East Cheshire relays.

Later in the season, with the Wilkinsons now having moved up into the under-13 age group and Gayle Alberti for company, they continued their successful career with a win in the Northern Road Relay at Grimsby. Then, with Lisa Farrell this time in support, a second placing in the National Road Relay at Keele was a gratifying result.

The club's annual cross-country relay in Heaton Park found the seniors in top form. They not only won the race against strong opposition but also topped the 'B' team placings. The Hyde 7 miles road race brought them further success. It is a race which has always received full support from our club, but never before have we figured quite so prominently. Steve Torrance was the outright winner with Maurice Oldham second and Dave Gee third. Fred Pendlebury in 9th place was the first over-45 finisher, Ian Wilkinson 10th, took the award for first under-20 runner and 14th placed Tony Keller was first over-40. As usual, there was a good turnout for this popular event organised by Dave O'Leary and his band of helpers from the Y.M.C.A. It is a race run efficiently but in a friendly manner with the interest of all the competitors at heart.

Track runners from the club were becoming less numerous at this time but there were still one or two performances worth recounting. Phillip Knowles had a 49.4 seconds 400 metres in the Northern Counties championships, while Greg Vallance was also in good form with a time of 1-53.7 in the 800 metres.

Another noteworthy performance, this time in the Sale Harriers 15 miles road race, was Maurice Oldham's victory in 1hr.16min.45sec. after several years of steadily improving times in this event. His win was well deserved and a popular one by club members and rivals alike.

The Greater Manchester Women's Relays, held on the Stretford track in September 1984, found our girls fit and ready. The under-13 team won the 3 x 800 metres race in 7-35, a best championship performance. After good runs by Lynne Wilkinson and Lisa Howarth on the first two 800s Michelle completed the relay with a time of 2-23, the fastest 800 in the race. The under-15 girls (Antonia Wood, Jane Richardson and Sheryl Cawood) were third in their event. Another Greater Manchester championship win was achieved later in the season, this time in the cross-country event.

There were further under-13 victories in 1985. The girls repeated their Northern road relay triumph of 1984, then prepared for the National title in which they had taken second place the previous year. For this they had to make the long journey south to Aldershot, but there was no travel weariness apparent as they sped to a win against the best teams in the country, finishing almost half a minute ahead of their nearest rivals.

Meanwhile the under-11 girls were making headway with second team placings at Whitby Park, Hallamshire and East Cheshire. Victoria McKinlay, Sara O'Brien, Claire Stone and Donna Ousby were the forerunners of a group that would bring many successes to the club in the months ahead.

There were several good performances too by our seniors. In a half-marathon at Wilmslow which attracted a field of almost two thousand, Malcolm Plant finished 6th in 66-41, with Malcolm Firth 7th in 67-09, Tony Keller 21st (and 1st veteran) in 69-39 and Jim Firth 25th in 70-24. Tony was

first veteran again in the White Rose half-marathon and in the Horwich 10 miles race in which he clocked a very respectable 52.37.

John Higgins, who had joined the club just about the time that our top sprinter, Phillip Knowles, had changed over to a southern club, had been making steady improvement under the guidance of our veteran sprint coach, Joe Moran. Now, in 1985, he was having an impressive season. A 100 metres win in 10.9 at Cleckheaton was followed by a victory at Weymouth in a slightly slower 11 seconds. Then, in a Cheshire League match at Stoke he clocked 22.7 for the 200 metres. At the same meeting Joe Moran in the 'D' race proved to be still far from "past it" with a time of 27.5 - sprightly running for one in his mid fifties.

There was some interesting track racing too by the girls. At Warrington Sara O'Brien and Donna Ousby dead-heated for first place in an under-11 800 metres with a time of 2-37.1 The under-13 girls retained their hold on the 3 x 800 metres event in the Greater Manchester relay championships at Stretford and in doing so beat their previous year's winning time with a new championship best of 7-21.2 (Lisa Farrell 2-30.3, Lynne Wilkinson 2-28.7 and Michelle Wilkinson 2-22.2).

Back on the road, Michelle, Lynne and Lisa were still in winning form at Holmfirth. They took first three places and with strong support from Claire Stone 6th they were easy team winners. The under-11 girls followed suit with Sara O'Brien 1st, Donna Ousby 2nd, Caroline Spencer 9th and Katy Moran 10th. The Greater Manchester cross-country championships provided the under-13s with a further title, and the under-11s kept the flag flying with a Cheshire League victory.

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### 1986 - Centenary Year

Our hundredth year opened with Fred Pendlebury again demonstrating his competitiveness as a veteran. In the Lancashire Veterans cross-country championship on January 4 he won the over-45 title, beating the best over-40 runners in the process. Michael Cunningham was also in good form, finishing 3rd over-40.

Old and young in fact could be said to be progressing favourably. And none more so than the under-11 girls. In an inter-club match at Altrincham they placed five runners in the first six and repeated this in a Cheshire League meeting at Warrington where Sara O'Brien, Donna Ousby, Katy Moran and Caroline Spencer took first four places with Tracey Ashton a close sixth.

The under-13 girls also kept their heads above water - and their feet firmly on the ground - when winning the Northern Women's cross-country championship on an ice-bound course at Rawtenstall. Michelle finished 2nd, Lynne 7th, Lisa Farrell 18th and Victoria McKinlay 38th to win by a convincing 23 points.

On February 15, three weeks after their Northern victory, our under-13 girls' team tackled the National championships at Leicester. The occasion proved a tremendous triumph for Michelle Wilkinson who won in a close finish, for twin sister Lynne who also ran supremely well to take fourth place, and to Lisa Farrell, 42nd, and Victoria McKinlay, 51st, who gave such splendid support and brought the National title to the Manchester club. When one remembers that the team finished 14th last year, the improvement is a tribute

to the girls themselves and to the dedicated coaches who have their interests at heart. They can certainly be said to have made the club's centenary year an eventful one.

Another good sign for the future is the number of boys who have been turning out regularly in training and in races. At a Cheshire League match in Woodbank Park there were eleven of our boys in the under-11 event, with Craig Elliott 9th our top scorer. Full teams were out also in the under-13 and under-15 races. In the Greater Manchester Schools championships Gordon Shields in 17th position was fourth counter for the Stockport team, sound evidence of his steady improvement.

The under-11 boys were out again in force at Rochdale where Craig Elliott in 8th place was again their leading light, with Chris Bateman not far behind, 14th.

Tony Keller led the club to a team victory in the Northern Counties Veteran Championships at Runcorn, finishing second himself followed by Fred Pendlebury 4th, Mike Cunningham 10th and George Lawson 18th, with Fred the first in the over-45 section.

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#### Promotions

As has been mentioned earlier in these notes, M.A.C. has on several occasions led the way with new ventures. The Withington Road Relay was a case in point, the Northern Schools cross-country meeting another. In 1974 we contacted a few primary schools in the Gatley area to see if they would be interested in taking part in a cross-country meeting. On September 28 the first run was held, with 47 boys and 44 girls turning up. Seven races were held in that first season and from then on it became an annual League event which quickly grew in popularity. Even before we introduced separate races for the 1st/2nd years in 1977, the turnout was in excess of 500 on some occasions, though this inevitably dropped a little when other clubs began to hold similar meetings. Our Primary Schools Cross Country League is now a major event in the area with the Mayor of Stockport making presentations at the final meeting. It is the first taste that many youngsters get for our sport.

Another venture that grew from our Primary Schools League is a Young Athletes Relays meeting - started in 1975 and renamed the Charles Sumner Memorial Races after a member who emigrated to New Zealand and kept in touch with the club until his death. Today these races attract good fields.

Parker Cup (later named Lep Cup) cross country races for all ages and both male and female were organised in Woodbank Park, Stockport for a number of years. The hard work of Geoff Mayall and his team of helpers was well rewarded by entries up to the thousand mark.

In recent years a joint venture with Davenport Rugby Club has given the Stockport area a half-marathon which in our centenary year was sponsored by the Messenger Newspaper Group. Davenport Rugby Club has also been the partner for a new series of Road Races - Cheshire Chases - very popular and now in their second year. These two ventures were the brainchild of the Burnett family.

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### The People Behind The Scenes

No club would have survived 100 years without keen and enthusiastic workers to match the performances of our athletes. In our Centenary Year we are lucky to be still graced with many older members helping with club activities. Cyril Walmsley and Roly Taylor, both Life Members each with over 50 years service to the club, are often seen helping at meetings. Jack Little has for many years been our "flags" man marking out so many cross country courses especially our Primary League.

Jack Davies, also a Life Member, is active in the English Cross Country Union. He was formerly Club Secretary for many years, as was Cyril Walmsley. This passed then to Paul Chambers for a few years until he moved to Liverpool. In 1973 the present Secretary, Wally Smith, was elected. All have helped to guide the club through its golden moments and its more difficult periods. Charles Finan acted as treasurer for many years until he retired in 1976, when David Taylor took command of the financial side of the club. In pre-war days we had a cross-country secretary/treasurer, ably administered by Frank Pepworth who for a time also acted as sports secretary during the track season. Arthur Shaw took charge of the Boys' Section and did much to bring the club's activities to the attention of the local schools.

Socials have also been the life-blood of the club. In the early years, the Boys' Section at the end of the track season used the social for award presentations, a habit continued today for the club in general. The organising of games, entertainment and refreshments was in the hands of a small group of parents and much of the success of these social evenings was due to their efforts. Here it is interesting to note that one of that group of helpers of thirty-odd years ago, Mrs. Sally Fisher, mother of Eddie, one of our best under-13 boys at the time, still finds the time to assist, serving refreshments with Mrs. Hilda Smith at our Primary Schools meetings.

The Club Newsletter has been started several times by enthusiastic people. Even as far back as 1894 there appeared a "Manchester Athletic Club Magazine", contained in which was an article detailing the club's history to date. After the first few issues at irregular intervals, publication ceased. Other early attempts suffered the same fate. Much later, in the 1960s, "The Journal of the Manchester Athletic Club" made its appearance, with Ian Burnett the editor until he went to Japan on a two year business assignment. The Journal continued into the 1970s and then, after a break, took the form of a Newsletter, which later still developed into its present Monthly News Sheet.

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100 years that have been happy, successful and an important part in the history of the region and athletics in Great Britain. May the next 100 years be more of the same.



WILF RICHARDS AUTHOR OF "THE FIRST HUNDRED YEARS"  
JOINED MANCHESTER A.C. FEBRUARY 1925.

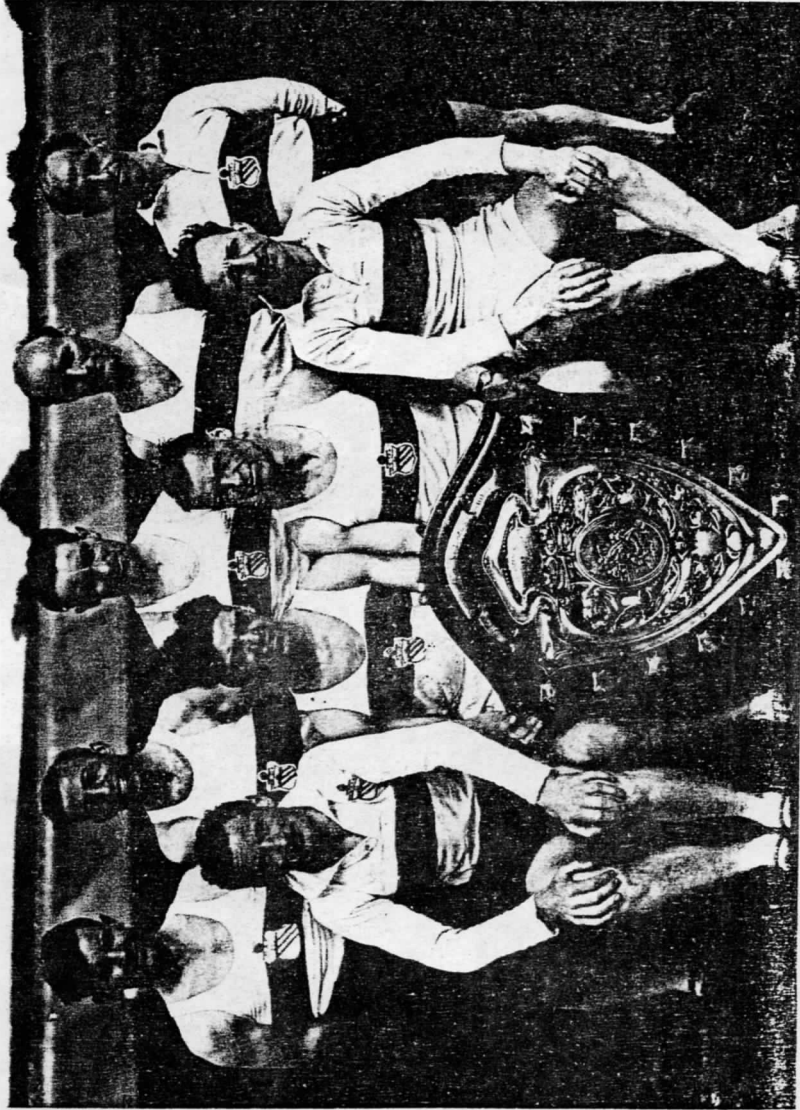


ENGLISH SCHOOLS CHAMPIONS WITH WILF RICHARDS.

BOB WILKINS-SHOT PUT, PETER BENNETT- HALF MILE,

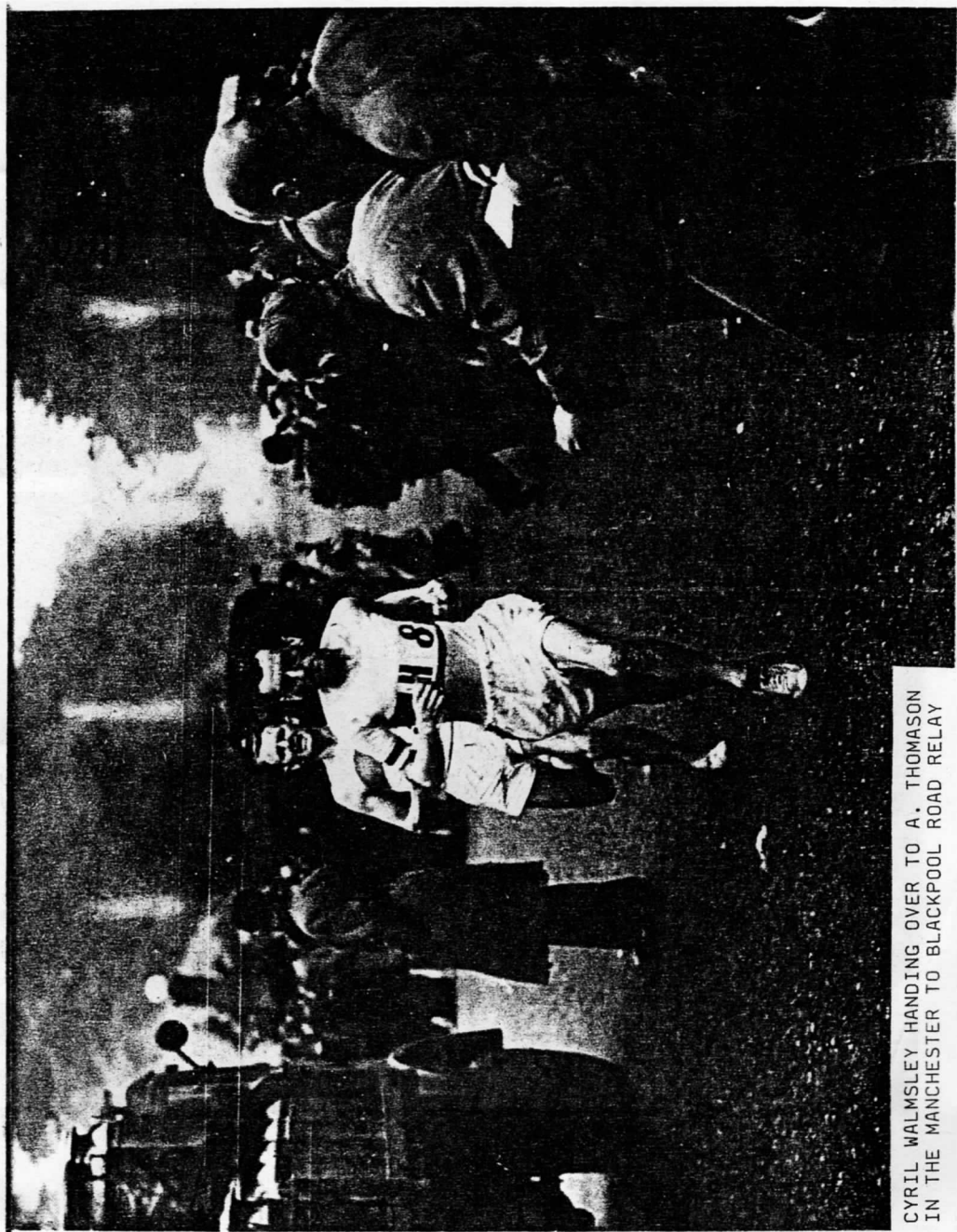
ROY JOHNSON- HURDLES





EAST LANCs. CHAMPIONS 1949.  
BACK ROW: N. ASHCROFT, C. H. WIDMORE, J. T. HARDIE, G. A. BAKER,  
H. C. BROWNLOW.

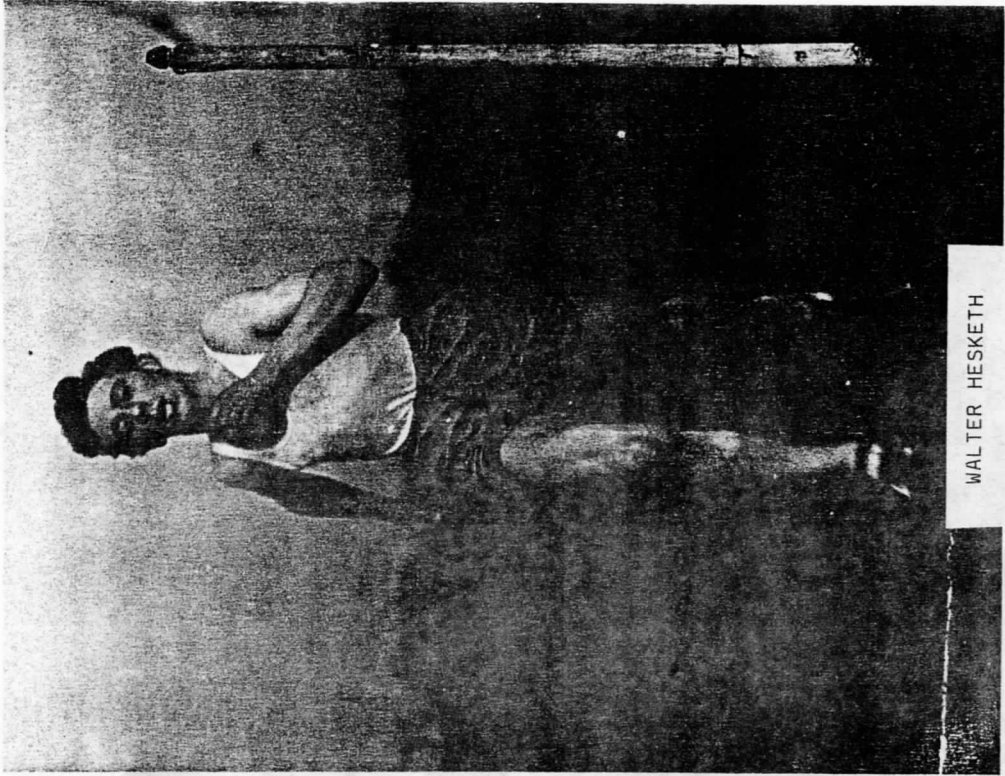




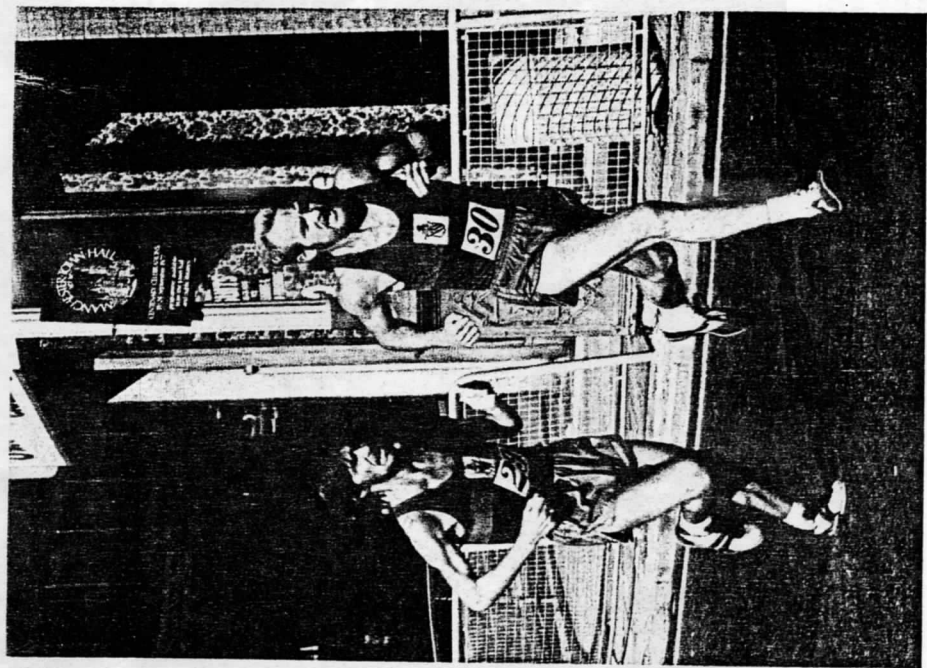
CYRIL WALMSLEY HANDING OVER TO A. THOMASON  
IN THE MANCHESTER TO BLACKPOOL ROAD RELAY



MALCOLM PLANT A WINNER OF THE ENGLISH  
SCHOOLS CROSS COUNTRY CHAMPIONSHIP



WALTER HESKETH



FRED PENDLEBURY: VETEREN CHAMPION



NATIONAL CROSS COUNTRY CHAMPIONS FEB.25th 1978.  
BACK ROW: HELEN CASELEY, CATHERINE McDONAGH, MHAIRI MCPHEE,  
NUALA KELLER.  
FRONT ROW: JULIE MASSEY, FIONA KEYTE, SUSAN DRIVER,  
KAREN WTIKINSON.



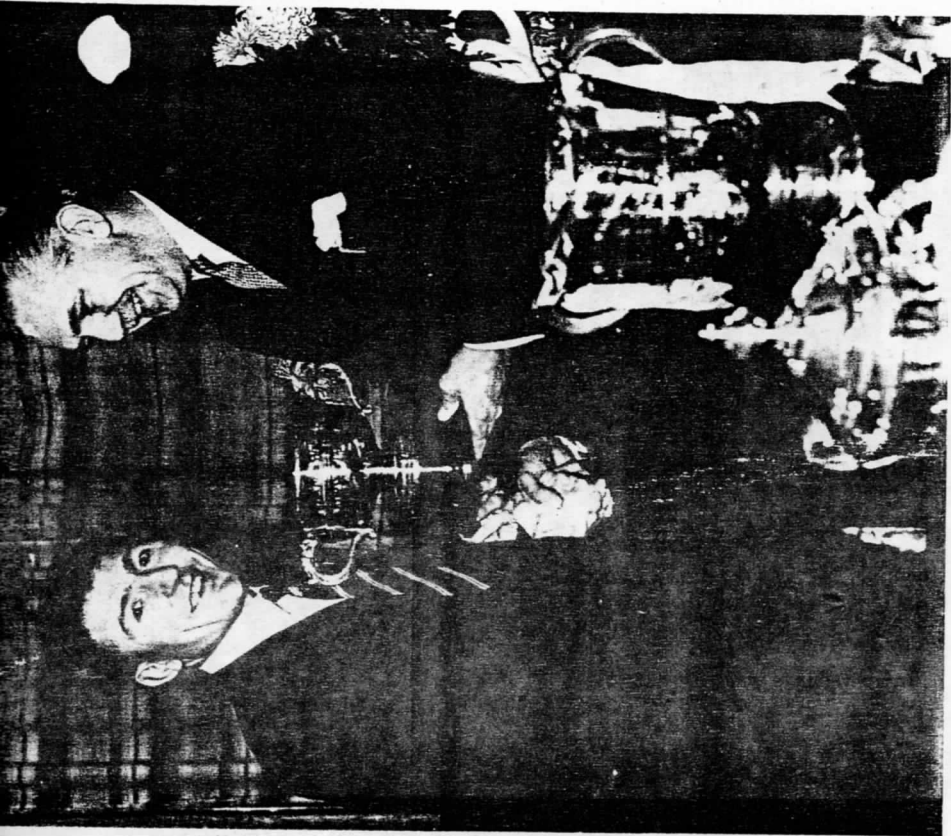
MICHELLE WILKINSON: NATIONAL CROSS COUNTRY CHAMPION



ISSUED 15th September  
BY THE PRESS  
at Ashburton Arena

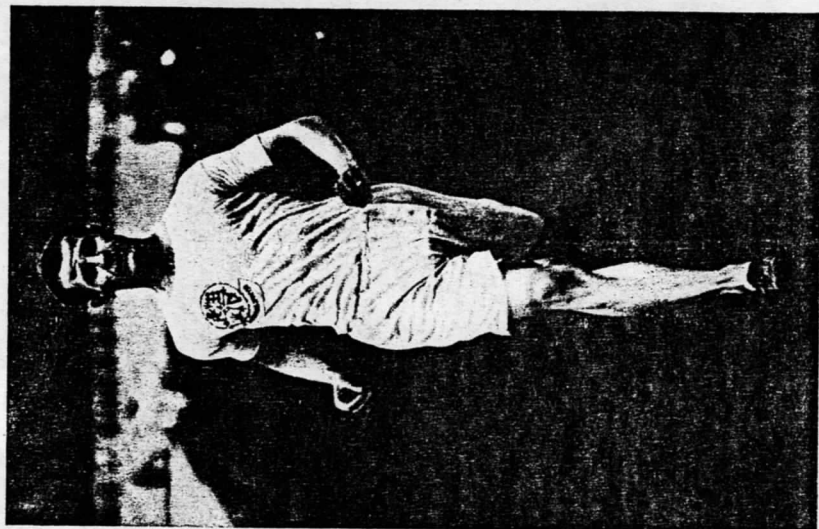


RICKY WILDE: WINNER OF EUROPEAN INDOOR 3000 METRES CHAMPIONSHIP

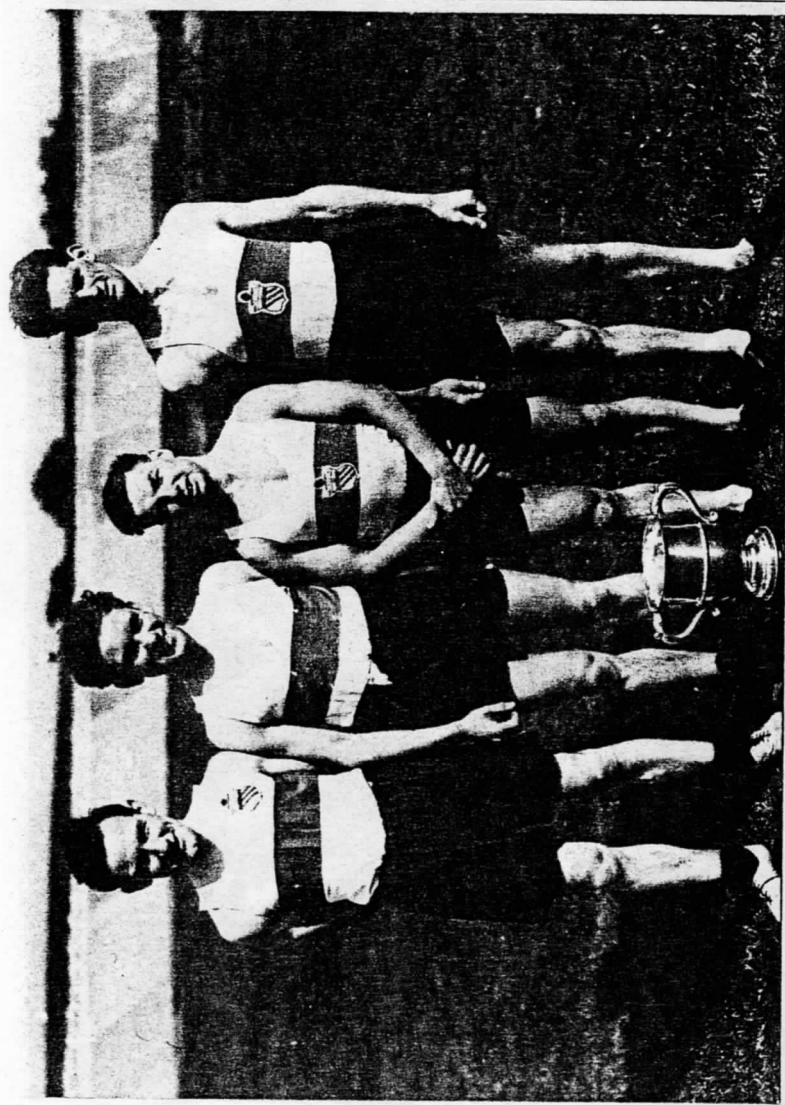


FRANK EVANS (A COMPETITOR IN THE 1952 OLYMPIC GAMES AT 800m)  
HERE WITH COUNCILLOR HARRY SHARP.





Voigt, victor in the five-mile run at the London Olympic Games in 1908.

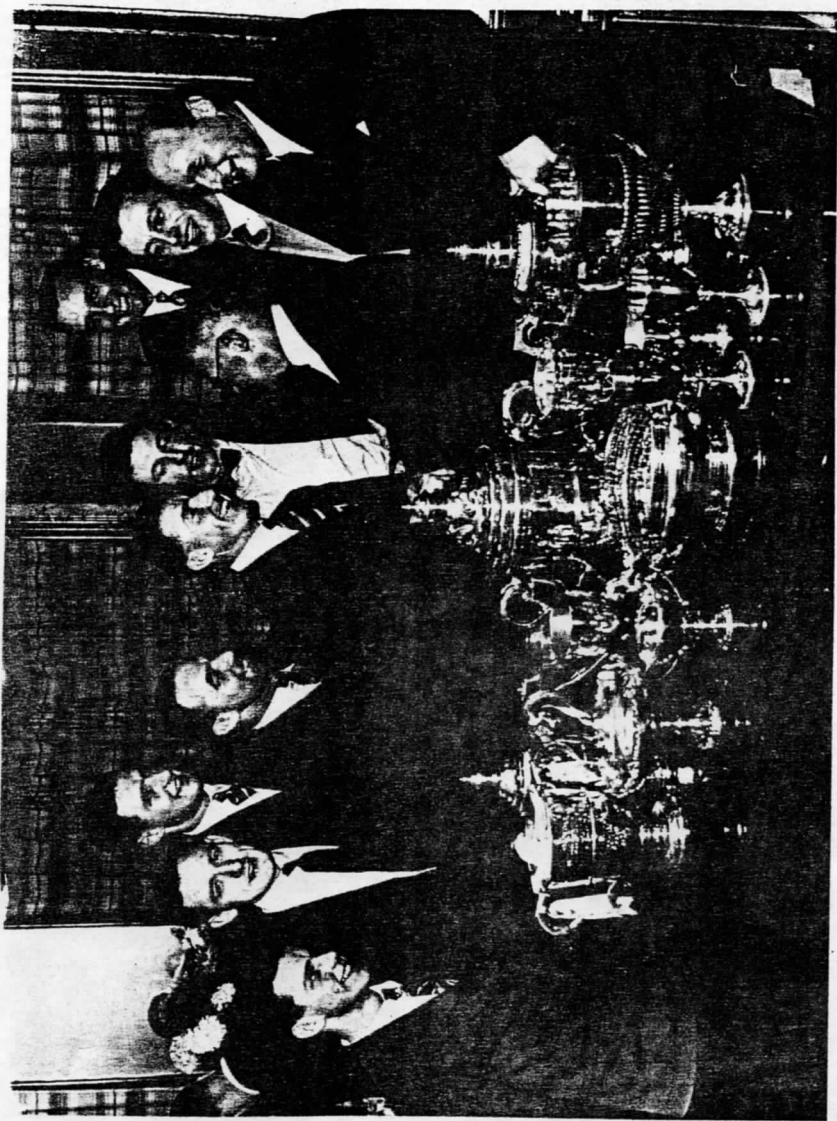


## MANCHESTER ATHLETIC CLUB

WINNERS OF JUNIOR

EAST LANCs. C. C. CHAMPIONSHIP 1949.

J.A. RUSSELL; J. BROOME; F.A. BARTLETT; K. WALKER;  
W. HESKETH AND J.K. ALLCOCK WERE ALSO IN THE WINNING TEAM.



NOVEMBER 1951, WHALLEY RANGE HOTEL BROOKS BAR MANCHESTER. TROPHIES WON BY THE CLUB'S 2 MILE AND RELAY TEAMS. THE TWO MILE TEAM WON 16 OUT OF 17 COMPETITIONS.  
FRONT ROW: P. THOMPSON, J. RUSSELL, W. PARROTT, F. EVANS, A.E. LOCKETT (CHAIRMAN), G. BAKER (SECRETARY).



NATIONAL ROAD RELAY CHAMPIONS-GIRLS 1985  
LISA FARRELL, LYNNE WILKINSON, MICHELLE WILKINSON.



63. This 1920s aerial view of Fallowfield Stadium overlooks what can lay claim to be Manchester's most versatile sporting arena. Not only has it hosted athletics and cycle meetings, but both soccer and rugby football have been played here. In 1893 a crowd of 45,000 witnessed Wolverhampton Wanderers' single goal defeat of Everton in the first (non-replayed) F.A. Cup-final out of London. Six years later, Oldham and Hunslet clashed in the final of the Rugby League Challenge Cup.



YOUNG ATHLETES RACES AT GATLEY