

CALLIOPE MARATHONS

There was probably no marathon ever run in the world other than Calliope Harriers' Reidbuilt marathon where the major prize at stake each year was a brand new house. This was the prize promised by Calliope patron and sponsor Mr E Reid of Reidbuilt Homes. The only small catch was that the house would only be built for any runner who went under two hours! Jeff Julian won the first marathon in 2h 21m 28s, a time never bettered subsequently and an excellent time for the circuitous course. No new house though for Jeff.

In the mid-sixties Auckland's marathon runners only had two opportunities each year to compete over the distance, both occasions being in the summer. Calliope felt a winter marathon would be welcomed, and so the Calliope winter marathon first run in 1965 came into being. Right from the start it was successful. Laurie Vincent was one of the instigators.

The start was from Reidbuilt Homes, Wairau Road, and included six and a half laps of the Taharoto Road / Anzac Street / Hurstmere Road / Kitchener Road / Shakespeare Road circuit around Lake Pupuke, with the finish in Dodson Avenue, Milford. Race manager in 1965 and 1966 was Bob Crowe and with 35 officials required for the first running, virtually the whole of Calliope Harriers was involved. Jeff Julian narrowly beat Neville Scott (2h 22m 0s) with Murray Halberg coming tenth in 2h 40m 18s. There were 36 finishers. Calliope's first three were all top runners, Ian Studd 6th in 2h 32m 59s, Keith Stone 7th in 2h 36m 23s, and Chris Harvey 11th in the same time as Halberg. Parker, Baillie, Keats, Weatherley, Pincham, Thomson – all winners, some more than once, in subsequent years and all fine athletes.

Notable among these names are Calliope's Roger Weatherley and Scott Thomson. In 1973 Weatherley won in the third fastest winning time for the Reidbuilt, 2h 23m 25s, nearly seven minutes ahead of Ivan Keats. Two years later on a blustery day he won again in 2h 28m 31s, a great time for the adverse conditions and 43s ahead of Tokoroa's tough Don

Mckenzie. In 1978 in the last Reidbuilt run round the Lake Pupuke circuit it was the turn of Scott Thomson who won well in 2h 26m 53s. Second in a triumph for Calliope was team-mate Derek Tremain who recorded 2h 31m 36s, well clear of Ivan Keats. In 1981, accomplished Calliope harrier Helen Gaeta won the Women's Open event in 3h 21m 48s with Felise Adams 4th.

Over the years, Calliope runners participated in large numbers in their marathon. In the 17 years of the race, 70 Calliope harriers finished the marathon, many more than once. Bill Fell finished eight times, Roger Weatherley seven times, Peter Forbes five times, and Keith Stone and Allan Harrison four. After testing the waters in 1973 and 1974, Forbes, a life member of Calliope, put in a supreme effort in 1975, collapsing impressively over the line. It was three years before he could face the starter again, and his finishing sprawl to respectful applause surpassed that of 1975. Three years once more elapsed and Forbes, at peak a sub-2h 40m marathoner and never a quitter, had recovered sufficiently to do it again. In a strength-sapping sprint finish he inched out Calliope's Ray Tricker (both recorded the same time of 3h 7m 35s), the race culminating for Forbes in an uncontrolled swallow-dive. The awed crowd could only stare. When interviewed Forbes was speechless, stricken by the supreme effort.

The number of finishers in the Reidbuilt averaged in the forties from 1965 to 1974 but then started to climb. In 1977 94 finished and 137 in 1978. This dramatic increase in numbers made the circuit difficult to manage due to lap scoring and traffic problems, and footpath congestion. Laurie Bassett, never one to take a step



Roger Weatherley, 1st, Reidbuilt marathon 1973

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backwards, became the first Calliope harrier to finish a marathon with a broken thumb, sustained in an altercation with spectators at the 5k mark during the 1978 Reidbuilt.

Matters were obviously getting a little out of control, and the decision was made to move the event to a new three-lap circuit based on Whenuapai airbase and Herald Island. From the start to 1978 the sponsors were Reidbuilt Homes and in 1979 Reidbuilt and Sport Drinks. In 1980 sponsors became Runners Inn. The new course was undulating but not too daunting and it was only the strong winds in 1979 which slowed times. Mark Trotman won in 2h 29m 55s from a record field of 139 finishers. In 1980 Trotman again won, this time in 2h 24m 7s with former Calliope star Geoff Shaw flashing into second in 2h 28m 33s. The last Calliope marathon was held in 1981. Won again by Trotman in an impressive 2h 22m 42s, the event was somewhat of an anticlimax. No sponsor could be found and Calliope itself had to find the prizes. In 1982 the event was to be claimed by the City of Auckland for an international marathon.

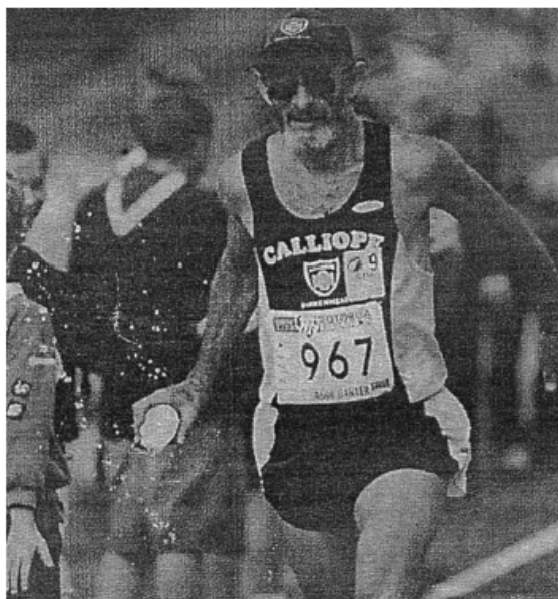
In the 17 years the event was held, over 1100 harriers finished the marathons, most of them serious runners and many accomplished. From 1975 through to 1981 the race was the Auckland marathon championship and it created a high profile for Calliope, enhancing its deserved reputation as a club that was a competent organizer and manager of major events.

Competitors not mentioned so far and taken at random from the results are: blind runner John Stratford, jogger organizers Colin Kay and Reg Williams, Olympic medalist Barry Magee, athletics guru and former temporary Calliope member Murray McKinnon (we let him run once for us – we had no choice – we were one short for a relay team), Dennis Stephenson, Dick Chase, John Cornega, Max Telford, Don Bergin, Danny Warden and Cy McLaughlin.

The fastest ten Calliope performers were: R Weatherley 2h 23m 25s, S Thomson 2h 26m 53s, C Harvey 2h 30m 39s, D Tremain 2h 31m 36s, I Studd 2h 32m 59s, R Diamond 2h 34m 55s, K Stone 2h 36m 23s, C W Fell 2h 39m 0s, J Schooltink 2h 39m 35s, T Appleby 2h 40m 38s. All fine runners who ran excellent times on a demanding course.

CALLIOPE CLUB MARATHON CHAMPIONS

The club runner first to finish in the Calliope-held marathons between 1965 and 1981 became Calliope marathon champion. Since then the club member who has run the fastest marathon in the year has his name engraved on the Calliope Marathon Cup. The winners have been:



Roy Davis, Fletcher marathon 2000

1965 I Studd, 1966 C Harvey, 1967 J Schooltink, 1968 K Stone, 1969 C Harvey, 1970 K Stone, 1972 to 1975 R Weatherley, 1976 R Diamond, 1977 D Tremain, 1978 S Thomson, 1979 S Lyle, 1980 and 1981 R Weatherley, 1982 to 1985 R Joy, 1986 and 1987 M Glen, 1988 M McAlpine, 1989 M Lea, 1990 to 1993 M McAlpine, 1994 and 1995 P Rourke, 1996 R Davis, 1997 P Rourke, 1998 R Davis, 1999 P Gallop, 2000 R Davis, 2001 P Gallop, 2002 M Wade, 2003 and 2004 P Rourke. There are many illustrious names on the list, with all performing to a high standard.

OTHER LONG DISTANCE CHAMPIONS

In recent times Calliope Club half-marathon champions have been determined on the same basis as above, first in 1993 for Women, and not until 2002 for the Men and 2003 for Walkers.

CALLIOPE MEN HALF-MARATHON CHAMPIONS

2002 R Davis, 2003 R Davis, 2004 P Rourke.

CALLIOPE WOMEN HALF-MARATHON CHAMPIONS

993 R Strachan, 1994 C Smith, 1995 C Smith, 1996 C Smith, 1997 C Smith, 1998 C Smith, 1999 Y Jarvis, 2000 Y Jarvis, 2001 Y Jarvis, 2003 L Davis, 2004 R Legge.

CALLIOPE WALKERS HALF-MARATHON CHAMPIONS

2003 L McAlpine, 2004 T Murfitt.