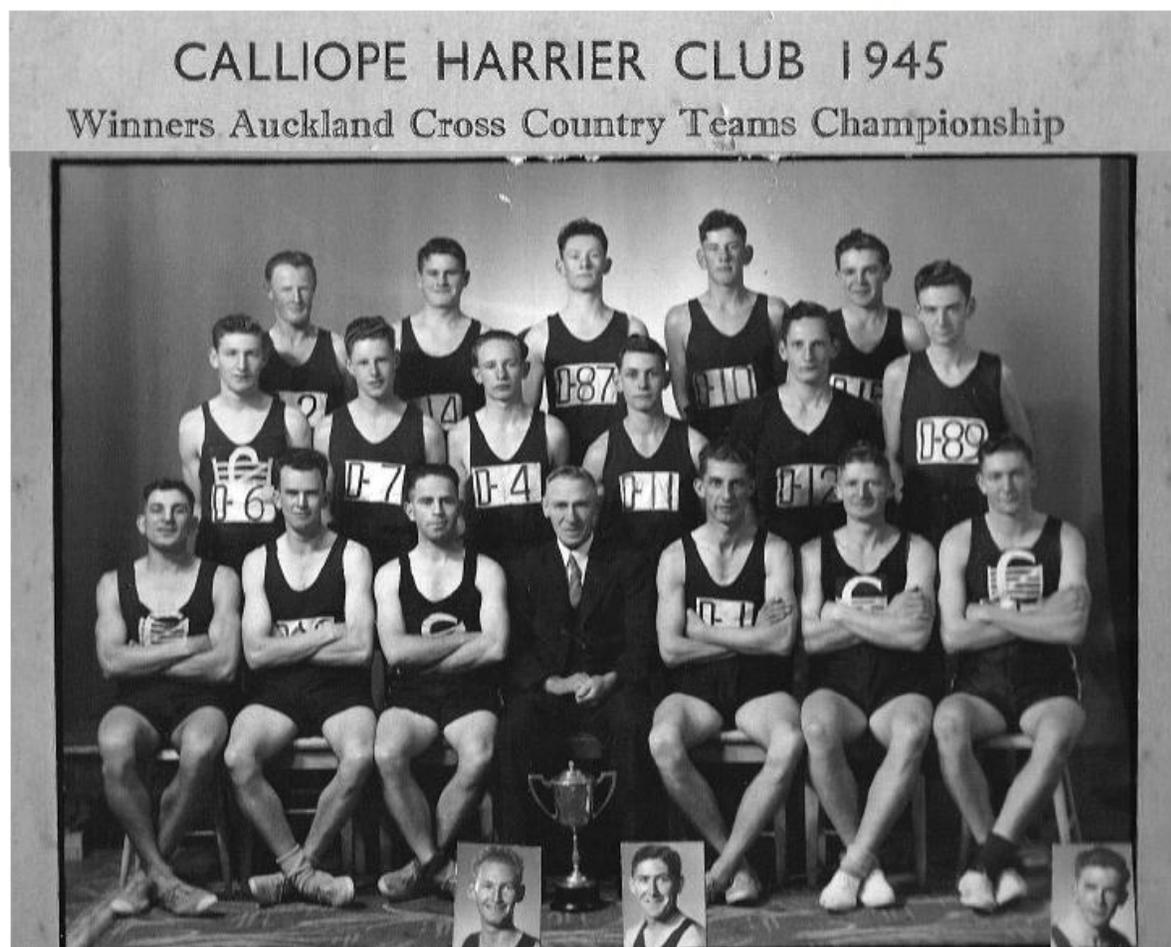


EARLY INTERCLUBS

On May 9 1931 the official opening of the Auckland harrier season took place from the Birkenhead Borough Council offices. About sixty runners from Calliope and from the newly formed Technical Old Boys and Achilles (University) Clubs took part in pack runs, with a 440 yards run-in, resulting in J Silvester of Calliope winning from Technical's L C Barker. Earlier in 1930 and every year the Club has existed since, the Patterson Cup against Hamilton has been contested. This is described elsewhere. Through to the end of 1935 Calliope harriers performed enthusiastically but not successfully in the major Auckland interclub races. Only W Clapham who was second on handicap in the 1935 Onehunga to Auckland broke the drought. However in 1936 N Ambler burst on to the scene. A youngster he won the second Calliope-run "Round the Lake" interclub and took third fastest time. L J Lanigan was second in the race. N Ambler went on to win the Auckland junior cross-

country championship over four and a quarter miles by 21 seconds. Calliope was third in the junior teams' event, its first ever placing in an Auckland interclub teams contest. The comment was made about a harrier in the 1936 senior event: "Among them passed a runner in the Calliope all-black outfit, with the white 'C' and the barred gate on his vest, wearing only one shoe and limping slightly, who collapsed at the winning post." A further comment: "In the dressing room after the race, there was a babel of voices, a smell of cigarette smoke and embrocation and the bustle of more than a hundred harriers dressing." In 1937 Ambler won the Auckland junior championship over four and a half miles held at Birkenhead in a fast 22m 51s, 2m 04s ahead of the second placegetter. He also won the sealed handicap and Calliope was second in the teams championship to Lynndale. A 1938 highlight was Calliope's clear win in the Auckland junior championship teams' event. Led by



A. Clow, B. Stuart, M. Hocking, P. Davies, E. Hopkins
N. Jenkins, M. Western, R. Good, R. Merz, M. Haynes, R. Morrison
N. Ambler, A.E. Clayton (Secretary), L. Lanigan (Captain), F. Taylor (President), T. Collins (Vice Captain), A. Darroch, T. Jenkins
Inserts: D. Moller, W. Opperman, R. Crabbe

EARLY INTERCLUBS *cont.*

N Ambler, B Short (6th) and H Thompson, Calliope scored 25 points to Technical's 53. Ambler won or took fastest time in everything he entered in 1939, with the exception of the Auckland senior cross-country championships held at Birkenhead on August 26 when he was third. The event was "plotted and managed" by L.J Lanigan. However that day was a great one for Calliope because they were a clear second in the senior teams' event to Lynndale A. Points were: Ambler 3, J A Darroch 15, W Charman 16, B Short 17, for a total of 51, 17 ahead of Technical. Calliope also won the team sealed handicap.

Many of Calliope Harrier Club's members joined the Forces and after struggling through 1940 and 1941, the club was forced into recess. Calliope's revival in 1945 was doubtful. It was however reported: "Thanks to stalwarts of the club like L J Lanigan, N Ambler, J A Darroch, A E Clayton and T E Collins, interest was revived and the result has been more than gratifying." With only seven Calliope senior runners in the event, three finished in the first

five at the Auckland cross-country championship (Ambler 1st, Darroch 2nd and R Crabbe 5th), and almost incredibly those same three finished 2nd (Ambler), 4th (Crabbe) and 6th (Darroch) in the New Zealand cross-country championships held at Wingatui a fortnight later. The only disappointment was that Ambler was a certainty beaten. A huge highlight at the Auckland championships was Calliope's "highly popular and most meritorious victory in the senior teams' race. For the first time Calliope Club carried off the honours." The team was Ambler, Darroch, Crabbe and T K Jenkins, first with 29 points over Hamilton 35, and Lynndale 48. The

course was over six and a quarter miles from Ellerslie racecourse. Lanigan said "It was a great thrill for me as Club Captain to receive the Trophy Cup". There would have been jubilation on the ferry home that day. In 1946 the prestigious Great Eastern Road Race was won by N

Ambler. Calliope also triumphed in the teams event, defeating Lynndale who previously had won eight times in a row. The winning team was Ambler, Crabbe, Darroch, Stuart, Crompton and Collins. Ambler was second in the Onehunga to Auckland event and Calliope second in the teams' event. Ambler won the 1947 Onehunga-Auckland with J A Darroch third. In 1948 Darroch ran second in the Auckland road championships, one place better than in 1947. Earlier he had in 1945 won the championship which was run as a 12-mile waterfront race. His best time was 67m 15s.

Other top performances in the late 1940s were R Crabbe's win in the Auckland cross-country championship in 1946 and N Ambler's win the following year. Crabbe was 4th in the National

cross-country in 1947, J A Darroch 7th and Ambler 9th, another great performance for Calliope but one wonders about Ambler's temperament in the really big races. He did used to get very nervous. The Onehunga-Auckland interclub again saw success for Calliope in 1948 with S Taylor winning the B grade event and H Seay the A grade sealed handicap. In the first twenty years of its existence Calliope Harrier Club after initially reinventing harrier running in Auckland, stamped its mark by firstly supporting and assisting new clubs and then competing vigorously and often successfully against them.



Ron Crabbe, Auckland cross-country champion 1946 and twice fourth at the Nationals.