

REMINISCENCES OF CALLIOPE *by Keith Stone*



K. Stone,
Wellington-Masterton, 1969

The first day I went to the Calliope Harrier Club they were holding a pairs race. I explained that I hadn't done any running since I left school a couple of years before but I was told that wasn't a problem and I would be paired with a very nice runner who would look after me. I don't remember all the details but I know the course consisted of at least two circuits through the Highbury shopping centre. After the first circuit I had had enough and was ready to stop but my partner urged me to continue on. The second time through the shops I stopped and vomited in the gutter – my partner got the message that I really had run too far and too fast on my first day.

That was in 1961, I was 20 years old and despite my introduction to the club, it began a most enjoyable experience that was to last until the 1970's. During that time I competed in many different places and met many different people, some of whom are still good friends of mine today. Calliope may not have been the strongest harrier club in those days but we had a lot of fun and many wonderful experiences.

Here are some of the things I remember from my time with Calliope – in no particular order –

- Our clubrooms, which were opposite the RSA down a long driveway off Birkenhead Avenue. The

clubrooms weren't new but they provided the basic necessities and were the venue for many happy times.

- Pack-runs, in which we followed the pack leader wherever he led us. Once when running over farmland beside Glenfield Road this meant swimming across a large pond.
- The annual competition for the Patterson Cup against the Hamilton Harrier Club, the venue alternating between the two clubs each year.
- Mid-week night training runs from the clubrooms down Onewa Road, round Lake Pupuke and back up Hillcrest Road. These often developed into races from Hillcrest and were followed by table-tennis matches that went on into the night.
- Club trips to compete in the Round the Lake relay in Rotorua, the Cambridge relays and the Waipu to Whangarei relay.
- Saturday night parties at our clubrooms or those of other clubs especially at our good friends at Lynndale.
- The Round-the-Harbour relay from Highbury to Grey Lynn organised by Calliope and Western Suburbs clubs each year. In 1963 we practised by running our own laps and some others on the two previous Sundays and our A team won the relay in 5th fastest time 3h 14m. The A team was Chris Harvey, Peter McGregor, Laurie Vincent, Albie Prendergast, Barry Jones, Keith Stone and Bob Cheshire.
- The Calliope A team won this relay again in 1970, again 5th fastest, in 3h 10m 45s. The team was Bill Fell, Keith Orchard, Roger Weatherley, Keith Stone, Greg Bassett, Ray Amon and Ian Studd.
- Club picnics on Motuihe Island.
- Helping re-activate the athletic section of the club which had been in recess. At first we ran on the track at Northcote College then later moved to Birkenhead War Memorial Park. I remember Lloyd Darroch's old Durant car parked across the track at Northcote College for one race – you had to climb through the car each lap.
- The 24-hour relay organised by Takapuna Harrier Club in October 1962. After a race of varying fortunes by 12.30am we were in front and there we stayed. The Calliope team was John Henderson, Laurie Vincent, Barry Jones, Gary Allott and Keith Stone, ably supported by lots of other club members. In 24 hours we ran 221 miles 1719 yards or 357.24 km – an average of over 70 km each! John & Laurie were the only experienced distance runners – I had never run more than 15 miles (24 km) at one time before.
- The club trophy races that were held every year – Ambler Shield, Clayworth Pairs, Osborne Cup, Kohn Cup and Eyre Teams Race.
 - The Eyre Teams Race was held over one lap of Lake Pupuke. I had finished second in 1963

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(20m 30s) and 1964 (19m 23s) and was hoping to get near the record of 18m 46s (which had stood for over 20 years) in 1965. I ran 18m 45s but only finished 3rd, with Laurie Vincent setting a new record of 18m 28s and Kevin Harvey (still a colt) finishing 2nd. I did manage to win the race in 1967 but a fraction slower in 18m 52s.

- Sunday training runs which sometimes took all day. We would start from the clubrooms and head off towards Waiwera or Parakai 40-50 km away. Some would run all the way while others stopped when they wanted and were picked up by other members in cars. A leisurely afternoon followed a welcome soak in the hot pools.
- The first winter marathon in New Zealand in August 1965. Until then all marathons were run in the summer and a group of us from Calliope decided to try and establish one in the winter when it would be cooler. The two Reid brothers of Reidbuilt Homes Ltd agreed to sponsor the race and asked for it to start in front of their premises in Wairau Road. I measured the course using a wheel and painted the 5-mile check-points on the footpath. Jeff Julian of Owairaka Club was the winner of the first race in 2h 21m 28s, with Ian Studd 6th in 2h 32m 59s and me 7th in 2h 36m 23s.
- Travelling to Tauranga for the Easter Carnival for several years with a group of Calliope and Lynndale members. Sometimes we camped and other times we rented a house – there was the 15 mile road race on Saturday and track events on Monday, and a lot of beer to drink in between. In 1966 we held a “Steinie” race on the track on Sunday – you had to run a mile on the track within 7 minutes and then drink a bottle of Steinlager beer within a total time of 15 minutes – fairly easy really. But then you had to run another mile and drink another bottle within the next 15 minutes and continue on in this way as long as you could keep within the time limits. I managed 12 miles but Eddie Rompleberg of Lynndale beat me by a mile. My training diary shows no run on Monday.

- Trying for some years to enter a team in the Wellington to Masterton relay which required 10 senior members to run

the 62.4 miles (100 km). We finally managed it in 1968 and my wife Lesley organised the trip to Wellington by bus for the team and supporters. Our team finished 11th in 5h 36m 26s, 21 minutes behind the winners, Owairaka. The team was Peter Douglas, Ken O'Donnell, Lloyd Johnson, Murray McKinnon, Jack Ralston, John Taylor, Bill Fell, Keith Stone, Greg Bassett and Kevin Harvey.

The club also sent teams to the Wellington – Masterton relay in the next two years. In 1969 their time was 6h 8m but in 1970 they improved to 5h 52m 25s despite a strong head-wind on most laps. The 1970 team, which again finished 11th, was Roger Weatherley, Greg Bassett, Ray Amon, Graeme Bateman, Geddes Weston, Keith Orchard, Albie Prendergast, Ian Studd, Bill Fell and Keith Stone.

It was through the Calliope Harrier Club that I met my future wife, Lesley Rattenbury, who joined the club with her sister Frances in 1962. Lesley and I married in 1966. Over the years we were both active in the administration of the club as well as competing. Lesley was secretary in 1965 & 1966; I was treasurer from 1962 to 1966, and chairman from 1967 to 1971. My mother also supported the club in many ways and was secretary from 1967 to 1972.

Apart from the achievements noted above, some of the other highlights of my time with Calliope were – Auckland senior ‘B’ grade cross-country champion in 1963, club senior cross-country champion and senior road champion in 1964, club senior athletic champion 1964-65, fastest time on leg 1 of the Auckland – Huntly relay in 1966 (3h 1m 53s for 30 miles) and my best marathon time of 2h 32m 2s for 5th place in the 1966 Owairaka marathon.



To Rotorua Relay 1965 - K. Stone, J. Ralston, I. Studd, G. Blair, L. Rattenbury, J. Batty, L. Vincent