

# SOCIAL ACTIVITIES

Definition of a Club. "An association of persons united by some common interest, meeting periodically for co-operation or conviviality." This exactly describes Calliope. From its earliest days Calliope Harrier Club embraced the concept of being a supportive grouping of people working towards the common goals of successful competitive exercise and social interaction. Pack runs were conducted in the 1930s (and generally speaking through to the present day) as they were meant to be, with packs of runners of reasonably even levels of ability working together running as social groups exploring the countryside and other interesting courses, in the process helping each other to retain fitness and to get fitter. After run-ins to test and hone the harriers' running skills, the socializing continued with after-run activities.

As John Silvester, a foundation member, said "The social life of the club was tremendous." It must be remembered that the members in those days were mainly young men, so it is not surprising that John went on to say "A lot of the attraction was the three Taylor girls." Life was simpler in those days and there was not a lot of money around. Calliope members and associates had of necessity to generally make their own fun. Afternoon teas after pack runs were a regular feature. To make the final run of the year in 1938 a special occasion, Calliope invited Charlie Weller who had won the New Zealand cross country championship at New Plymouth the previous Saturday (he had won twice previously as well). The Mayor of Birkenhead, Mr E J Osborne was present as were twelve Hamilton runners. A six and a half mile cross country course was covered. The most popular part of the day was the serving of light refreshments by Mrs Clow and her assistants. Mrs Clow was generally known as the

"mother" of the club, and her regular afternoon teas were legendary.

A common occurrence in the early years was invitations by Calliope Harrier Club to other clubs to visit as guests for friendly runs. In 1940 for example, the Wesley and Lynndale Harrier Clubs were guests and an eight mile cross country course was covered. Run-ins were held over the last three quarters of a



*Nancy Walker*

mile. Calliope won each one and for the record the winners were: First pack D Delaney, Second pack D Daley, Third pack R McMillan. Of course, the most well-known event on our calendar which has run every year Calliope has been active, is the annual contest against the Hamilton Harrier Club for the Patterson Cup, as detailed elsewhere. John Silvester had fond memories of the event. "Visits from and to the Hamilton Club were most important social occasions."

Picnics were popular. These were often quite simple affairs but one held at Redwood Park, Swanson, in 1951 was a special occasion. President Frank Taylor presented cups and trophies won during the 1950 harrier season. The

picnic was aimed largely at the children, with sack races, treacle buns, ice-cream, drinks and lollies being the order of the day. To their delight each of the children present received a rubber ball, donated by a local businessman. In April 1959 a picnic held on a Sunday at Silverdale took place with transport provided. Picnics were held on an annual basis during this period. A glimpse into the past is given by an item about the 1953 Calliope prize night at Northcote College, where members were entertained with films, magic, club-swinging and elocutionary and vocal items. Dances were other social activities through to the early 1960s, and the club participated in community events; Miss N Walker for instance



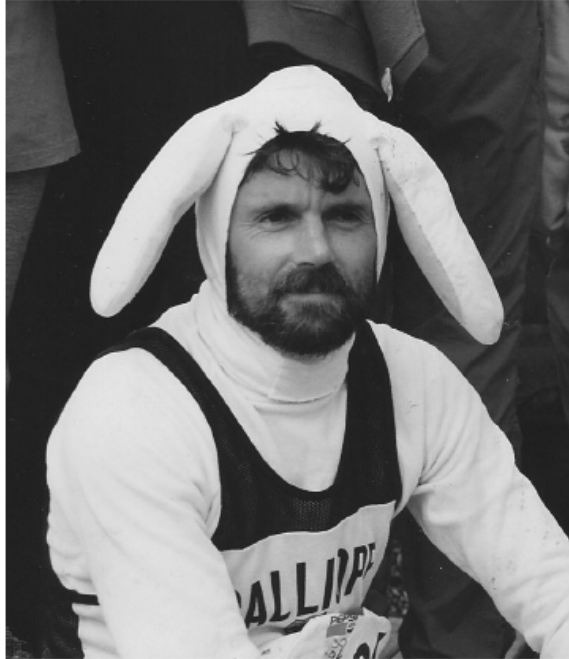
## SOCIAL ACTIVITIES *cont.*

representing the whole club at the Birkenhead Queen Carnival. A ball was held in 1970 to celebrate Calliope's 40th anniversary.

There was a place for social runners in Calliope Harrier Club from day one, with pack runs being organized according to ability or fitness levels, and run-ins were almost always in the early years on a handicap basis to give equal opportunity to all. In July 1962 the North Shore Joggers Club was formed with runs on Sunday mornings. Calliope generously threw open its clubrooms to the new club to help it become established. Colin Kay, founder of the Auckland Joggers Club, and Arthur Lydiard were to be present at the first run. These two men were brought together by Calliope's Bert Whitcombe. This was the second official joggers' group in the world, and Calliope is proud of its active involvement in helping it to get started. The joggers who were allowed to be away for no longer than thirty minutes, ranged in age from 10 years to over 60, and it was reported that even women were being caught up in the craze! This jogging group continued through most of the 1960s. The next reported reference to social runners was in 1975 when it was recorded that joggers groups were meeting at Calliope on Sunday mornings and Tuesday evenings.

At the start of the 1981 season there was a special release to the local paper highlighting that the Calliope Harrier Club was to cater fully for social runners, joggers, beginners and family groups. Every Saturday through the season there were to be runs for the more social section ranging in distance from a kilometer or so upwards. The release did not really mean a change in policy. It was more a re-emphasising that Calliope Harrier Club was a family orientated club, that it was the same all-inclusive club

that it had been from its first days. The philosophy and rationale behind Calliope's approach to its more social members, was outlined particularly well by club captain Alan Moore early in 2002 when on behalf of



Calliope he requested that the National body give serious consideration to the inclusion of a social walking section within the National road relay championship events which were to be held later that year in Feilding. His words: "Our club, like many clubs, has had a strong history of teams competing in this event. The club whilst retaining a strong runners' section, now also has a strong walkers' section. The club really enjoyed the 2000 National road relay

at Nelson as it involved both sections of the club (runners and walkers). It is fair to state that last year, the walkers were disappointed that they could not participate at Christchurch. Walkers are important to our club. Most of our runners are men and the walking section provides an opportunity for many of the wives to participate in club activities, whereas previously they would not have been interested. This then flows on to more involvement from children. We are now finding that as fitness levels increase in the walkers, they are joining the runners and thus strengthening the club further."

It is not surprising that as the result of common interests and socialising there have been right from the start and over the years many marriages among Calliope members. Gail Mouldey's entertaining contribution brings Calliope's social activities through to the present day. She emphasises that just as there is a place for serious competition in a club, equally there is a place for humour and good fun. Calliope was and remains a traditional family orientated harrier club.