

WHAT'S IN A NAME ?

A Calliope is a set of steam whistles producing musical notes, the name deriving from the Greek muse of epic poetry Kalliope. In 1846 a gunboat called HMS Calliope, named after the musical instrument or possibly the Greek muse, entered Auckland Harbour. However, it was another Royal Navy ship, the screw corvette HMS Calliope (presumably named after the earlier vessel) which is most well-known and which gave



*Opening of Harrier Season, May 9, 1931, Highbury Corner. Calliope, Technical Old Boys, University.
Known Calliope runners from right - J. Silvester, B. Taylor, A. Clayton, A. Gilfillan.*

her name to the road and thence to our running club. The HMS Calliope was launched in 1884 and in 1888 it was the first ship to enter the Calliope dry dock at Devonport. The corvette is famous for steaming out of Apia Harbour to safety at the height of a cyclone. Most of the other vessels were wrecked and only HMS Calliope was able to successfully leave the harbour. A Mr J A Mackay in 1968 recalled that in 1914 his father had bought a large residence named Calliope and its accompanying farmlet. He immediately had it subdivided. The subdivision was called Calliope Estate and the road was also named Calliope. Mr Frank Taylor was living in Calliope Road (then Calliope Avenue) in the late twenties when his son Bill Taylor returned from Wellington. Neal Taylor, Frank's grandson, said that Calliope Harriers was the result of a family who loved the outdoors and loved a "cuppa" with their friends. Bill, his four brothers and sisters and their father and mother Frank and Flora would meet their friends at the family home on a Saturday afternoon. They would have a social run which always ended with the traditional "cuppa"

and hot scones provided by Flora. So Calliope Harrier Club was born. Bill's association with Calliope Harriers was cut short around 1932 because of the Depression. To make life a little less difficult for his parents he left home to live and work in Wellington. He continued running, returning to his old club Olympic. Bill always maintained an interest in Calliope. His parents, Flora and Frank lived at Calliope Road right through to the 1960s. In 1968 Birkenhead Borough Council, despite strong protests from residents and the Calliope Club itself, changed the name to Wernham Place, citing confusion with Calliope Road Devonport. Wernham Place was named after Mr W J Wernham who between 1919 and 1936 was headmaster of Northcote School which became Northcote District High School. A worthy choice, but it is a disappointment that Auckland's oldest surviving harrier club had no opportunity to suggest a more appropriate new name.