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To Our Empire Visitors,

The news received from the Union of South Africa that Hardy Ballington was to visit the Motherland as well as W.H. Hayward, F.J. Morris, Jackie Mekler, J.M. Goldie and H. Gezorko gladdened the hearts of all Members of the Road Running Club, and I take this opportunity of extending to our distinguished visitors on behalf of the Club a most hearty and sincere welcome.

May your sojourn amongst us in this Coronation year further cement the bonds of sportsmanship, which have always been such a glorious feature of the relationship which exists between Athletes of the Empire.

May success attend your efforts in the London-Brighton Race of 1953, and may you return to your homes happy in the knowledge that you have not only made athletic history but have enjoyed to the full all that the old Country has to offer.

REX CROSS,  
President.  
The Road Runners' Club.

Dear Road Runner,

This issue of the Road Runners' News Letter follows closely on the previous number so as to give due and proper notice of the Annual General Meeting. The issue of each News Letter will in fact be partly governed by such considerations so that members may be notified of coming events.

Elsewhere you will see mention of the Len Hurst Belt, which has been presented to the Club by the Widow of the late Len Hurst. Negotiations respecting this magnificent Trophy have been proceeding for some time, and we are happy to announce that acceptance of the Belt by the Club has been approved by the A.A.A.

The belt was presented to Len Hurst, the famous professional runner by the "Evening News" for his run to Brighton in 1902, and we intend to publish a history of his career in a later issue. Mrs Hurst and the family felt that this trophy should not just lie in the back room, and the final outcome was her splendid offer to us.

The belt will be presented as the Team prize in the London-Brighton run, to be held by the winners for a year, and we feel that the Trophy, which we are proud to accept, could not be put to a better purpose.

LONDON to BRIGHTON RUN, 26th September 1953.

Rumour has it that the Durban Athletic Club will send over their first Club member to finish this year's "Comrades" Marathon. This is of course in addition to W.H. Hayward and his friends of Germiston Callies. Accommodation is still wanted for two of the visiting runners.

H.A. Fry of 19, Gassiot Way asks anyone interested in selling programmes during the race to get in touch with him, and offers to act as an Attendant or to accommodate provincial competitors overnight will be welcomed by the Hon. Secretary.

HARDY BALLINGTON.

It is hoped to arrange an informal evening at Blackheath Harriers' Head Quarters to enable Members to meet Hardy Ballington who arrives in this country on May the 22nd. Ballington, who will be staying with Arthur Newton, will unfortunately have left the Country before the South African competitors arrive.

THE NEWTON 100.

Our apologies to George Hubert the author of this article in our last number whose name was incorrectly given.

## MEETING AT RIVERHILL, SURBITON TOWN SPORTS CLUB, SUNDAY MAY, 10th.

Some fifty members and their families gathered for a most enjoyable meeting at the Sports Club, which incidentally is the registered Headquarters of the RRC. Situated in Tolworth, Surrey, the house stands in an estate of 32 acres surrounded by trees and may be truly described as having the country house atmosphere. Furthermore it was a bright sunny day and the English countryside was at its best.

During tea Members and their families had an opportunity of meeting old acquaintances and of making new friends. Some members found added interest in studying the record books, which had been kindly, sent by Mr Roberts, a friend of Tom Richards, who was unfortunately unable to attend. Mr Roberts has made a hobby of collecting results of all road races and his records cover every race run in this country since the War and also many earlier races with a number of races held on the Continent and even further afield. Another volume gives the personal performances of 553 long distance runners.

The President, Rex Cross, thanked the Surbiton Town Sports Club for their generous hospitality and Ernest Neville then spoke of the Cup, which Edgar Lloyd had given to the Club for 50 mile Track races. This cup has already been referred to in an earlier News Letter. Edgar Lloyd then came forward and presented the Cup, which he won in 1912 to the President, and Mrs Edgar Lloyd afterwards gave the Cup to Derek Reynolds the present record holder.

The President then accepted from Mrs Len Hurst the magnificent Belt referred to in the Editorial, and this was then given by Mrs Hurst to Reynolds representing Blackheath Harriers winners of the 1952 race.

The gathering then moved out onto the terrace where photographs were taken of this historic occasion. Members then settled themselves in chairs on the lawn and got down to the serious part of the proceedings. The ladies meanwhile wandered away to enjoy the pleasant surroundings and the children to collect bluebells in the woods. Occasionally a rabbit was seen to lope out of the undergrowth a few yards from where world famous athletes were discussing their favourite topic. The sun shone down on all.

SAM FERRIS opened the discussion with a short carefully thought out discourse. He thought that nowadays that there was much less fear of distance. Twenty years ago a Marathon was regarded as a feat of endurance beyond the power of most individuals but today this idea had been dispelled. Whereas in the old days most athletes approached a Marathon cautiously with a carefully planned schedule consistent with their ability, the race was nowadays run much more according to the "feel" which varied considerably with weather conditions. It was therefore run at a much faster tempo from the start. The present day long distance runner with his far greater weekly training mileage was able to stay the course better; moreover younger and faster men were turning their attention to the distance.

The main problem was how much training was really necessary for a Marathon. Until the idea of frequent short fast training runs, an idea revolutionary to most distance men became popular, we were content to carry on with weekly mileages of varying severity, but the new method had set everyone thinking. There seemed no doubt that it developed stamina, but Sam wondered whether it developed the mental attitude sufficiently to give full confidence to the Marathon runner. He felt that there must be longer training runs in the programme as well as the shorter faster runs, but he did not advocate the habit of long slow training all the time. The faster a runner was over the shorter distances, the faster he would be, relatively, on the longer runs. As in all other events, the emphasis must be on speed.

Sam reminded us that Cerutti tells us that strength and stamina may be built up by fast mountain climbing with a heavy pack, but many of us never get such an opportunity even supposing we had the inclination. Muscular strength and suppleness were of course essential, but Sam thought that another word was best given to the term "strength" as applied to Athletics and suggested it be termed elasticity and quality of muscle which could be developed by training. Another great asset was a quick recovery rate and this might be primarily regarded as hereditary.

Sam thought that a runner coming fit from the Cross Country season could, if he trained on 60 miles a week, run a reasonably good Marathon in June, and he suggested that this mileage should be done in four or five outings a week. He did not think that to spread it over ten outings would be so beneficial. Nobody coming fresh to Marathon running should work up to a weekly mileage of 100 miles without three or four years of preparation. Success could not, however, be measured entirely in terms of mileage (e.g. Pirie 100 miles a week and Sando only 30).

Sam stressed the importance of the mental attitude and said that the Marathon runner must not consider the Marathon an ordeal but rather that it was merely an increase in distance, which must be tackled calmly. Mental resistance to fatigue could be developed, and to feel tired was not necessarily to be tired.

Humidity of the atmosphere also played a large part in determining the speed of a long distance runner who must be well versed in meteorological changes and must adjust his schedule accordingly.

A well known runner set himself a schedule in a certain race and strictly adhered to it thinking that those in front would eventually come back. The inexperienced men came back as expected but two more experienced runners stayed in front and fought out the finish between them whilst our schedule man came along some three minutes later in fine fettle. He now leaves his watch at home.

Factors to be taken into account included incentive and inclination, employment and time available for training, domestic responsibilities and recovery rate, and if there was a secret in training it perhaps consisted of finding out just what suited oneself and regulating training accordingly. Quite a lot of runners were seriously wondering whether success was

really worth the hard work involved nowadays or whether it was better to be content with a mediocre performance with less frequent training.

Geoff Dyson has said that to reach the top an athlete must be saturated in his event, and the athlete aiming at an Olympic title must make this his one ambition in life. In the end everything depends on hard work and determination. He thought that if Gordon Pirie was stranded on a Desert Island and he was given one wish for a companion his answer would be "Zatopek".

After a word of thanks from our President for this thought inspiring address, the meeting was thrown open for general discussion.

EDGAR LLOYD said that he was aghast at the amount of work, which present day athletes such as Pirie put in, but he agreed with all of it and repeated that an athlete must be saturated in his event. Old time Athletes did not do enough work. He himself found with his cycling that the more he did the better he rode. On the subject of coaching he pointed out that just as the best tennis coaches were not necessarily Wimbledon players, so it was not essential to be a first class performer to be a good athletics coach. Edgar also stressed the importance of the mental outlook, and Sam Ferris as an example told how when Nurmi came over for the six mile record he asked what time he would have to do and was told 29- minutes. He thereupon did it in 29- minutes. Sam thought that if he had been told 28- minutes it would have been the same making due allowance in his training.

REX CROSS was interested to know the cause of cramp and Harold Lee (our Club Hon. Medical Adviser) told the meeting that Dr. Ledell working in Nigeria had confirmed that cramp was in part due to loss of Common Salt. This was not however the complete answer and he would be continuing his research into the subject upon his return to this country shortly and would perhaps wish to use members of the RRC as "guinea pigs". Asked whether he thought cramp increased with age, Lee thought this might perhaps be so and Arthur Newton confirmed that this was his own experience. Harold Lee mentioned that the body had no physiological compensation for excessive relative humidity.

MR MATTHEWS spoke on the theory that all muscles of the body should be developed and strengthened as well as those normally used in running. Lee was doubtful whether there were in fact any muscles which were not used in running, with the possible exception of the facial muscles, and one very well known performer managed to use even those. Arthur Newton was all for training for running by running and Sam Ferris mentioned that Sgt Sunderland used to lay off as far as possible from his normal duties as a P.T. Instructor upon the approach of a big race because it stiffened him up accustomed to it though he was.

ERNEST NEVILLE mentioned that National Service men frequently lost form when they joined up and this might be due to the P.T. in the Forces. He also said that walking in addition to running was the basis for all muscular exercise. Holbein in training for his Channel swim walked 40 miles a day. He asked whether any Walker or Runner had ever strained his heart and Lee answered that no healthy heart had ever been strained by exercise. It was however possible that a heart weakened by flu or by rheumatic fever might not be equal to the strain for some time and easier training might in this case be advisable.

On the subject of the effect of an Athlete's occupation on his running Edgar Lloyd told how Ernest Glover left his Yorkshire Pit, travelled by night train and arrived just in time to change for a 10 mile race which he won in 52 minutes. What might he have done if he had worked in a different occupation?

Arthur Newton asked whether Sea Salt was preferable to Common Salt but Lee said that his experiments seemed to prove otherwise. He also said that the hormone cortisone appeared to suffer depletion during severe muscular exertion, and this might be a further reason for fatigue. In reply to Derek Reynolds he agreed that even paced running was important in a Marathon, provided it was at the correct pace.

Reverting to Mathew's theory, John Jewell said that there was no factual data that weight training improved runners. Advocates of Weight Lifting training appeared merely to be pushing their own line. Mark though that this was perhaps being a little hard on the Weight Lifters and pointed out that American Athletes did a lot of rope climbing in training. Deer however developed only their running muscles and many lessons could be learnt from nature. Arthur Newton thought that records could only be broken by specialisation and everything else must be cut out.

There followed an interesting discussion on the minimum and maximum ages for running Marathons and Harold Lee said that, with common sense, one was never too young or too old. A youngster was far more likely to become "Browned off" than to suffer any physical damage.

Sam Ferris agreed and mentioned that he himself at the age of ten used to run three miles in the morning and three at night. Sammy Westbrook seemed to be an example of getting "browned off", but there was no reason to imagine he had suffered physical harm. He thought there was no upper age limit but that retirement was usually due to force of circumstances.

Asked by Kauffman whether it was possible to fix an upper age limit for taking up running Sam said that Newton himself had started at 38. It was not a good thing to start off with Marathons but it was best to develop speed when young and graduate through the distances. A runner would get far more enjoyment from running this way. It seemed to him that as a general rule no one should run a Marathon under 22, but he had himself started at 24. In answer to this Edgar Lloyd instanced the case of Legge who completed the Brighton run at the age of 22.

It was the general opinion of the Meeting that a talk by Lee on the medical aspects of long distance running would be of great interest and it was hoped that this could be arranged for some future occasion.

A fine summer evening was drawing to a close when the gathering arose and entered the house for further refreshment before finally breaking up.

### THE BOSTON MARATHON 20<sup>th</sup> OF APRIL 1953

At Boston Yamada, a 25 year old mining engineer, one of the five man Japanese team competing in this year's race, scored a notable victory in a new world best time for the Marathon, namely 2hrs. 18m. 51s.

Yamada, who weighs 7 stone 10 pounds, finished 26th in the Olympic Marathon at Helsinki and one wonders whether he is capable of such a time over a carefully measured course such as the one from Windsor to Chiswick. Newton and Gavuzzi have definite views on this point and these runners have had experience of the Boston race.

Leandersson of Sweden took the lead early in the field of 158, which included many foreign stars, and, aided by a strong cold following wind, he set off at a great pace and had established a lead of 200 yards at two miles. Yamada and Karvonen let him go, confident that they would be able to catch him on the hills over the last eight miles.

Leandersson's times at 5.9 miles were 31m. 16s, at 9.8 miles 51m. 17s, at 12.8 miles 1h. 7m. 22ss and at 16.8 miles 1hr. 29m. 48s.

As expected, Yamada and Karvonen closed in on Leandersson on the first hill climb and after a short spell together, Yamada spurred away and was leading at 21 miles in 1h. 52m. 35s. Passing 23.8 miles in 2h. 5m. 49s, he reached the finish unchallenged his time being 6m. 48s faster than the previous record made by Bok Suh in 1947.

Karvonen finished second in 2h. 19m. 19 with Leandersson third in 2h. 19m. 36s. Nishida, the Japanese champion was fourth in 2h. 28m. 19s. Gerald Cote was 16th in 2h. 42m. 40s.

There were 116 finishers, sixty five year old Clarence de Mar, who has seven victories to his name, being 82nd in 3h. 36m. 32s.

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THE CLUB BADGE. These will be available at the Annual General Meeting on the 5th of June and may also be obtained from the Hon. Secretary. Price 5/- post free.

SUBSCRIPTIONS. These are now due for 1953 and should be sent to the Hon. Treasurer. Members who were elected after the 1st January 1953 pay no subscription for the year 1953-1954. The minimum subscription is 5/- but it is hoped that those who feel so inclined will pay more than this amount.

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