

“Ian, what have you done?”



Ian Wainwright

Introduction

When I wrote the early parts of this I had no real plan as to the purpose or outcome of the exercise but as I progressed it became clear that it was to be a narrow piece of writing which outlines how I turned into a respectable runner after unpromising beginnings. Hopefully there are positive lessons to be learnt and mistakes to avoid.

Whilst I qualified as a coach in 1960 I just drifted into an advisor/facilitator so I have quite deliberately not written about coaching. As Michael and Gillian grew up their school sport experience was disappointing so with the help of other parents we set up a Saturday Club. We had a regular attendance of about thirty and those kids certainly seemed to enjoy the experience but I am very unsure if this was the age at which to get them involved in the sport and almost certainly I was far too enthusiastic. When is the right time to get children participating and for what reasons are questions I do not have clear answers which is why my thoughts outlined are tightly focused.

Ian Wainwright

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Where it started

The die was cast on a mild March afternoon when my mother took me up the hill to Graves Park to see the last major race of the legendary Sydney Wooderson. It was an outing I suspect she subsequently regretted for that afternoon my life was irretrievably shaped. I was just two months short of my ninth birthday so this was, presumably, a highly impressionable age. We had our sporting heroes in Sheffield in 1948 – footballer Jimmy Hagan, cricketers Len Hutton and Bill Bowes – but even from within Bramall Lane these giants were always viewed from afar. That afternoon not only did I see Wooderson's seemingly effortless perfectly measured victory, but I actually, after a bit of a chase, touched his black Blackheath vest.

That summer I saw the Australians, including Bradman, play before a sell out Sheffield crowd but despite hours of solitary ball-against-the wall practice I was not to be a cricketer.

One would have reasonably assumed that Bradman's last tour would have been the highlight of the sporting summer but even with Lindwall and Miller the Australians had to yield centre stage to the Olympics - the first such event since Berlin twelve years earlier. On my first visit to London I saw some of the competitors out sightseeing but in those pre-television days the Olympics only truly came to life for me when the official film arrived in Sheffield. I suppose I must have been thrilled by the dramatic 100 metre victory of Harrison Dillard whose real event was the hurdles and the tall Jamaican Arthur Wint, later to appear on a 353 yard grass track in Sheffield (how times have changed!) but for me the abiding memory was of the marathon. The records show that the winner was the Argentinian Delfo Cabrera in a time nine seconds under 2 hours 35 minutes, but he suffered the same fate as Joe McGhee in Vancouver six years later, for just as 1954 is best remembered for Jim Peters epic failure so, for me, the '48 marathon belonged to a twenty one year old Belgian. Etienne Gailly having briefly held the lead in the closing stages staggered round the Wembley track and held onto a medal despite being passed by Tom Richards of South London Harriers. Many years later I met Tom at Parliament Hill when on being asked for his autograph by my son Michael, he commented "nowadays small boys usually throw stones at me".

Over twenty years later I ran close to eight minutes quicker than Gailly but I wonder just how much running he had done in the years leading up to those Games because for some of this time he had been stationed as a paratrooper. In 1948 Etienne Gailly was simply the third best marathoner in the world and more importantly, for me, his courage re-encouraged the impression forged by Wooderson that here was an activity that might be ideal for a young boy anxious to achieve in sport but already aware that I lacked the talent necessary for football or cricket.

Graves Park, where I saw Wooderson's victory, continued through the fifties to strengthen my interest for in 1951 it was there that I saw (for the first time) the twenty year old Gordon Pirie. Gordon it was who transformed British distance running training, establishing routines that influenced so many of us and possibly paved the way for the successes of Coe, Ovett, Moorcroft, Cram, Hill and Eliot. Pirie briefly held the World 5000m record.

At my junior school, much as I would have liked to, I was never to be one of the chosen but here there were signs that I could do some things better even than Terry Egginton. Terry was clearly the best footballer in the school, he looked hard and certainly in my mind he was hard but on the odd occasions that playtime was given over, apparently spontaneously, to non-stop running races I would survive as well as anyone – Egginton included. Perhaps my fear of school dinners helped for it meant two extra runs a day. As something of a loner I seemed to prefer, even at ten, mad all-out gallops across Meersbrook Park to sedate slow walks home with my peers.

In 1950 I left Carfield School which, happily for me, went to great lengths to prepare its charges for the 'eleven-plus' exam so that my year saw well over half of us pass for the Grammar Schools. In my case I spurned the more prestigious King Edwards and on the basis that my choice had massive playing fields, I went to High Storrs – an all boys institution. In no way do I look back to my days there through rose tinted spectacles for the school had many shortcomings- some of which were very apparent even then but with an all male staff, many of whom had fought in World War II, you knew better than make any criticisms! However, as far as running was concerned it turned out to be a memorable experience. In those days of long ago there was lots of inter-house sport, or to be more correct, lots of cricket and football (tennis and hockey were considered effeminate and as for badminton.....). There were eight houses and I was a Spartan. I enjoyed running in particular as one of our house-masters, being a young history teacher, encouraged us without bullying which was probably a little unusual at that time.

Cross Country was an item in the inter-house programme and perhaps because it was master minded by a science teacher rather than either the Games Master or P.E. teacher, it was conducted in a well-thought-out way. There was no overt compulsion to take part but rather a series of after school trials and a generous qualifying time to permit entry to the 'final' which was run in lesson time with the finish watched by the whole school. So here was a system that ensured the qualifiers felt a sense of achievement and gained considerable status in the eyes of their classmates. Certainly it appeared to work at High Storrs with more than a decade of success at cross country equalled only by such schools such as Bradford Grammar and Manchester Grammar School. I well remember that introduction to distance running – the sore legs, desperately long steep hills, muddy paths in smooth soled, unpadded plimsolls, and overwhelming fatigue. But the drug of success (the 17th place against rivals up to two school years older over a distance of three and a quarter miles) more than made up for all the discomfort.

The following winter, as a weedy second year, I was a fringe member of the junior team - or more correctly a reserve - and as such allowed to run in the races. Most Saturdays we had a dual "fixture" with a local grammar school – our head would have been highly distressed at even the idea of a fixture against a secondary modern though in truth in the early fifties such schools appeared, certainly in Sheffield, not to be interested in the sport. Sometimes we travelled outside the city into North Derbyshire and the old West Riding revelling in the excitement of journeys, by public transport to places such as Rotherham, Penistone, Staveley, and Chesterfield. The fact the school subsidised our travel added to the importance our trips and fixtures had added treats, such as at

Doncaster Grammar School (now Hall Cross) where we were allowed a free swim.

Training was not a concept that had yet entered my life although I did, in my early teens, go for occasional runs but as these were as hard as races I'm not sure how useful they were. At school nobody encouraged us to get fitter and though Mr. Presgrave, the Chemistry Teacher, was magnificent in his constant willingness to take us for many years to over twenty fixtures a year he never commented on our performances or how we might do anything to improve. Of course in the fifties, teachers at a grammar school just didn't fully engage with their pupils and a degree of aloofness went with the job so we didn't expect anything else. The athletics books of the time reflected the training ideas of the thirties which were presumably worded well enough if you had the talent of Lovelock and Wooderson but the general standard of British running was still way lower than it was to become in the next ten years. Much of the credit for the vast improvement in standards over this decade could well be attributed to Gordon Pirie who, learning from Emil Zatopek and coached by Woldemar Gerschler, set new standards in both racing and training that were gradually adopted by more and more British runners. Not being a member of an athletics club until 1956 and unaware of the existence of Athletics Weekly – which might have made me a little better informed – I stayed ignorant of the massive changes in training that were transforming distance running for ever. Until the mid fifties a person of average talent could get by on two or three runs a week but in the future things were to be very different.

At about the same time that I joined Sheffield United Harriers I came across a book which seems to have been one of the first to reflect many of the new ideas in the sport.

'Running' reflected the ideas of, amongst others, Franz Stampfl who was influential in the achievements of Roger Bannister, Chris Chataway and Chris Brasher who between them ran the first sub four minute mile, held the world 5000m Record, and won the Olympic Steeplechase of 1956. This was my introduction to interval training and in the summer of 1958, with the help of Jim Sanderson – who could have developed into a reasonable athlete – the long days after our exams were given over to imitating what Bannister had done in 1954 at Paddington Rec. That summer Cardiff hosted the British Empire Games, which allowed us to see Herb Elliott and the other great Antipodians such as Halberg and Thomas. One afternoon we sneaked out of school to see on a tiny black and white set, Elliott run the legs off Brian Hewson in the 880yards. A 50 second lap from the man who lacked a finish saw off the kicker!

What chances we took that summer! For another afternoon we again absented ourselves from school to hitchhike to Manchester for the Mancunian Games held at the White City Manchester. Many great athletes did compete but a huge disappointment was the absence of Tom Courtney the reigning Olympic 800m champion.

Finally, and with considerable relief, I left school. Immaturity and an inability to really apply myself meant I was 19 before I had enough qualifications to enter higher education. Between school and Borough Road College there were six weeks with the British Schools Exploring Society in Labrador. It was hard but a

learning experience. Physically it was very demanding and for the first time I met public schoolboys and army officers – definitely a learning experience! I ran a few times on the beach of Lake Melville and heard, on the World Service, of Elliot's amazing mile record in Dublin. Towards the end of the expedition came the results of the Europeans in Stockholm. Looking back the summer of 1958 was, for me, a formative few months with my PBs developing towards respectability – 2.04 for 880 yards on a less than flat grass track. Just as importantly, there was because of the Empire Games in Wales and the European Championships, the emergence of role models from whom I learnt a great deal.

On returning from Canada I was soon away to college to train as a secondary school teacher – not that we got a lot of useful advice about how to deal with reluctant learners or how to cope in secondary modern schools when most of us were grammar school boys. Borough Road College – now part of Brunel University – was located in Isleworth just four miles east of Heathrow. The local running was fine with a medium sized college field, a cycle track alongside the A4 and Osterley Park with lots of paths. Further afield but reachable as I got stronger was Richmond Park even then a famous training venue but now a favourite training spot of Sonia O Sullivan and various Kenyans.

Borough Road was my first choice college because of its fondness for sport and I was not disappointed. On the two year course there was a total of about three hundred men and such was the enthusiasm for sport we could regularly field two hockey teams, a rugby fifteen, three soccer sides, and still have no difficulty in finding ten or eleven runners. How favourably this compares with nowadays when so few of the hundred plus universities can manage a team in the BUSA Cross Country.

Certainly there is more choice nowadays but the knock-on effects for athletics seems obvious to me both in the short and longer term. In my first year the running standard was not strong and though my training was hardly demanding – typically three runs a week and less than fifteen miles in the week – there were regular races and I made some progress. We travelled around the London area to race against other training colleges and the trips were in themselves a reason to keep competing. We ran against St Mary's College, Twickenham (supposedly in the minds of the inactive experts, our bitter rivals) but actually we had more in common with the St Mary's team in that they were more serious about their sport with two of them coming from Yorkshire. Terry Bentley was a Halifax Harrier and Chris Windle of Bingley I raced against many years later in the Yorkshire Veterans Championships. Despite a lack of real structured training I improved in my first year at Borough Road and on the superb Motspur Park track I got down to 4.33 for a mile. Presumably I was just getting stronger and was now just puny rather than frighteningly weak. As a coach I have come to appreciate that some young men don't seem to acquire enough strength to really train effectively until their late teenage years so that with such individuals it is wrong to dismiss them too soon. Bob Moore, once of Longwood Harriers was such a person in that he ran for Canada in the 1970 Commonwealth Games, had a marathon best of around 2.16 yet at Leeds University started out in the 5th team.

Running wise things improved considerably in my second year with the arrival of at least five enthusiastic and able runners. We now had a good team that was the equal of any college in the London area and, as importantly, there was a

group of people with whom to train and empathise. Most significantly we had a leader in Robin Campbell, a member of Essex Beagles, who was older- he had done his National Service – highly enthusiastic about the sport and successful having finished second in a National Junior Cross Country. His knowledge and experience drove us into training better so our confidence grew and we trained even harder. It was all very simple!

Throughout my developing years as a runner there were these watershed moments usually when an individual happened along, bringing new ideas or stimuli to raise my own standards and expectations. One session we did a great deal involved 250 yard runs in around 40 secs with 100 yards jog. Not that impressive but a typical helping was 40 runs and on occasion 60. The speed was modest but it began to develop strength that I came to realize was so much more important, for most runners, than speed.

I left BRC in June 1960 and was to start teaching in Hounslow the following September but before that I had a memorable three weeks in Italy. Rome was the venue for that year's Summer Olympics to which rather unexpectedly I went when cancellations meant tickets and accommodation were suddenly available. Work for British Rail (£7.45p/week) at the long departed Wicker Goods Depot and twelve hour shifts at Batchelors Peas suggested that teaching wasn't such a bad idea and, more importantly, raised the money for the flight back from Italy. Martin Robinson, a fellow BRC runner, and I hitchhiked from Boulogne to Domodossola in northern Italy. This took us five days and involved five lifts. It was a great experience – arriving in Paris for the first time and in the back of a fish van. One lift took us from eastern France, through Switzerland, in a millionaire's Mercedes, with a free meal in Montreux finally being deposited in an Italian mountain village.

For the Games we stayed on the coast at Anzio where I remember a superb interval session on the beach finishing each run in the sea. Another interesting run was at the conclusion of the first night of Athletics. Eschewing the brawl to get on the busses back to the station we ran and only later did I realise that the huge, very runnable square was in fact St Peter's.

For us the Games of the XVII Olympiad were not about sightseeing although on my last day I did come across the Coliseum which a few days later was to be the scene of the Marathon start (men only in those days). Athletically the high spots for me were New Zealander Murray Halberg's long run for home in the 5000m, Peter Snell's unexpected 800m win and Herb Elliott in his 1500m heat.

Influences

Four people have had a significant influence on my running. Robin Campbell was the first of the influences. When Robin arrived at Borough Road in 1959 he was already a class athlete with vast experience and full of ideas but most importantly hugely enthusiastic which helped to bring structure to my training and further strengthen my ambition. He helped the college team improve so that we became amongst the best student teams but it was only in relays that we got to race against the universities. With hindsight I realise that being part of a successful team helped me to progress. This had been the case at school and was during the 60s important for me with Sheffield United Harriers and Toronto

Olympic Club. There were good athletes to train with and the success of the team added to my self belief.

In the summers of 60 and 61 I ran second claim for Southall A.C. and I was fortunate to be advised by George Brogden who gave me a short training schedule and, with some success, worked on improving my action. The help of George further moved me forward and made me more prepared for the next stage.

When I returned to Sheffield in the summer of 1961 I soon came under the guidance of Harry Fowler. With Harry I improved at 2 miles by 50 seconds with a best of 8m59.6. A big improvement in a matter of five years. Harry was an irascible and stubborn man but loyal to his athletes and full of ideas. For me the key idea we devised was mile reps all to be run in under 5 mins and the number of reps governed by my best times. So until I could break 15m for 3 miles it was 3 x mile with the recovery decreasing by a minute per session until I could go 12 laps in 15 mins with zero recovery. Other sessions were based on this but all at the same pace and with proportionate recovery. We devised a one man paarlauf so that if I was up to running 5 x mile with three mins recovery then in the paarlauf I would run 20 x 440y at 73ish in 45 mins with a short jog forward and re-starting at a new place each time. All tough but it worked. Harry was not a book coach but highly intuitive and had a terrific feel for endurance running. Hard to please but ultra reliable. I owed Harry a lot.

In September 1964 I started at my third school, Spurley Hey – Rotherham, and after my marriage to Margaret we moved to live in the town. Training became easier as we now had a car so sometimes I would run home having already run at lunchtime and Margaret would drive my clothes home. Midday a regular training companion was Alan Simpson (4th in the Tokyo 1500). He liked company and it forced me to run hard just to keep him in sight. Alan introduced me to his coach Wilf Paish, and in conjunction with Harry, Wilf had me running some faster and more intense sessions. Being helped by a national coach was good for my morale and got me into better races. One of my better races was at Rotherham, in 1967, when I won the Yorkshire 3k steeplechase in 9.07.6 only beating Peter Braithwaite by ten metres. The training I did with Harry and Wilf was about to be realised in a new environment.

Sweden

An event, which was influential to my development as an athlete, was my visit in the summer of 1962 to a centre in Sweden. I joined a small party of Sheffield University athletes for a training holiday at Lidingo, an island on the edge of Stockholm. Boson, the training camp was near perfect with measured trails through forest, a 380m track and free use of canoes. In this environment we trained harder than usual with good results. A week of training went thus...

Sunday 5/08/62 am fartlek 6 miles
 pm paarlauf 10 mins (380 x 5 in 59 sec), 15 mins. of stride
 straights, and jog bends.

Monday am 20 mins paarlauf (11 x 310 in 45seconds (ish))
 pm 2 x 1k on trails.

Tuesday	am ten mins jog pm race 1k in 2.31.6 (pb at 800m 2.00.5 – previous best of 2.04).
Wednesday	am in forest 5 x 1k, with 2 mins in between
Thursday	am 380m laps with 3 steeplechase hurdles. 5,4,3,2,1 laps pm 2 x 1k in forest
Friday	race at Tureborg 3k in 8.51.2 (8 th)
Saturday	7 miles easy.

Forty-seven years later it seems a crazy week and clearly a rested body would have raced a lot faster on the Friday but we were so energised by the environment that common sense went out of the window. Mike Sudlow, Roger Norton and I opted to stay longer, working twenty hours a week (weeding, painting and car park creation) for free board and lodging. Roger and I got into a couple of higher grade meetings in Skovde and Gothenburg. I managed a 4.19 steeplechase (1500m) which at that time was, for me, a good result and thanks to a couple of Icelandics I was not last. The meeting in Gothenburg was a whole new experience. We had to sign autographs for boys who were aware of our runs in Skovde. We mingled with Americans at the after meet party who were heavy with Olympic medals and I met Ralph Boston who was also born on May 9th 1939. He was to be 2nd to Lynn Davies in Tokyo 1964. Very innocently we also declined generous expenses.

Our last night in Sweden was at a meet in Malmo where in a rough wet race I managed 3rd in the 1500 B race. We took the last ferry to Copenhagen as the rain cleared and, but for the long train ride to Holland, our holiday was over. I had gained enormously from the four weeks at Boson.

This trip had shown me what I could do in training and I think prepared me certainly for the immediate future and paved the way for the work I was startling to do with Harry. I was gradually getting more serious.

I revisited Boson, for a week in 1964, where it became part of a mini build up after a gradually deteriorating track season. Through the six weeks holiday I drastically cut down on racing and just trained and perhaps gained from the absence of after school sessions for the school athletes! In September the results were much improved with a 14.05 three miles at Keighley – a PB by close on twenty seconds.

Training in Sweden 1964

Halsingborg Thurs 6.08.64. One-man Paarlauf 35 mins 19 x 400m (72s) + 260 in 35 mins

Gilleleje, Denmark Friday. Very hot 8 miles.
Sat travelled to Stockholm

Boson, Sweden

Sun (am) in woods 6 x 1k fast, short recovery..hard!
pm 2 x 400m (59s, 58s) 15 minutes paarlauf with GLO – 7 x 380 in 0.58, 4x400m in 73 seconds.

Mon (am) 4k steady
pm in woods 6x 1k in 3.14 average

Tues 4 miles easy

Wed Race won in 3k 8.48, very wet

Thurs 23 x 380 in 35 mins. Better than in Halsingborg two weeks previously?

Friday in woods 1k course in 2.57, 18 x 380 easy

Saturday 22.08.64 set off for home.

Canada

In August 1967 Margaret and I sailed from Liverpool for Canada where my running was to take a significant step forward. We both had teaching jobs with the Toronto Board of Education and it was a step into the unknown. In the week long crossing of the Atlantic I maintained some fitness but was happy on our arrival in Toronto that we soon found a flat and I was quickly back into daily running. Living on the westside of the city, five miles from downtown, close to High Park, and little over a mile from the lakeshore was well near ideal for training. I soon joined Toronto Olympic Club with its very high standards and presided over by Paul Poce who seemed to be coach and secretary and generally invaluable.

I was soon into racing too with a mixture of road and cross country at which I was generally successfully. The success of the team combined with the novelty of just about everything, boosted my confidence and added zest to my running. That fall TOC won everything possible – the championships of Ontario, Eastern Canada, Canada and the USA. This meant subsidised weekend trips to Calgary, Ottawa, and Chicago and in the Canadian capital, in the absence of the very best, I was able to take the individual title. We took the sleeper train to Chicago for the US champs and with our strongest five we were overjoyed to take the winners medals ahead of a San Diego club who had Billy Mills (64 Olympic 10k winner) in their team.

The brief North American cross season was over and it is maybe of interest as to why I had become a rather better runner.

1. I had now been training regularly for eight years and the cumulative effect was ready to kick in.
2. Canada was different. New races, new rivals, new training venues with some modifications to training sessions.
3. The success of the team and being a part of it all boosted my confidence and encouraged me to try harder.

4. The subsidised trips to races all helped to make me feel more excited about the sport and eager to give that little bit more.
5. The arrival of a fellow Yorkshireman, Bob Moore of Longwood Harriers, also helped for we often trained together and there were no easy sessions with Bob. Possessed of a similar sense of humour, Bob and I often confused our Canadian colleagues for whom irony was an unfamiliar concept. I had raced against him often in England usually coming off worst but gradually some of his toughness seemed to be rubbing off.

In summary it was a growth in confidence that had made the difference and continued to do so through the summer of 1968. The most memorable run of the season was at an all comers meet on a soggy high school track when I broke 14 minutes for 3 miles taking over ten seconds off a PB that dated back to 1964.

Our life was not all about running. By our previous standards we had big salaries so that over the two years we were able to travel a lot including a week in the Bahamas, go to NHL games, eat out more than in England, own a car and still save most of our salary. This was not something we had anticipated!

In September 68 I started at a new school over four miles from home. I had not enjoyed my first school, although it was close to our flat, largely because of the principal who seemed disinclined to like any of his staff who hailed from outside Ontario.

At King Edwards School I taught geography to grades 7 and 8 with most of the pupils having been born in Europe in either Portugal or Italy. I was soccer coach and we won our competition which involved just six games and the season was over. Given the winter weather this was understandable but I rarely found the 5 to 20F temperatures too taxing as I ran the four miles to work. This way I was getting thirty miles in just as transport and some evenings I would meet Bob Moore to run intervals on the university indoor track which was no more than 150m round but despite the tight bends and 60 lap interval sessions we generally avoided injury. Bill Crothers the Tokyo silver medalist also used this track and his speed on such a tight course was remarkable. Another indoor training venue was a concrete 330 yards circuit where I managed a few sessions with Bob Finlay of 16 x 220 in 30 seconds with 30 seconds for the 100m recovery. To be able to hang on to an Olympic finalist was heartening and no doubt contributed to two pleasing indoor races.

At Eastern Michigan University, in Ypsilanti, on an unbanked 220 yard track I ran 3 miles in 13.49 and in Philadelphia a 2 mile win came with ease and assurance running 9.03 on a tiny 176 yards lap track (so 10 to the mile). Only in Ottawa the previous autumn had I run with such total ease. Why more races were not as simple is mystifying!

Summers in Toronto are hot and humid with not infrequent thunderstorms. Running home after school in May and June was usually tough, along the lakeshore was more pleasant but further, and a huge contrast to January when frostbite was possible. Evening races in the summer were warm but tolerable and well contested so fast times were always possible especially as, frequently, we would agree the pace and swap the lead. On one such occasion I ran a

14.20ish 5k on cinder with 29 seconds for the final 200 but lost out to Dave Bailey who was the first Canadian to go under 4 minutes for a mile.

My final race of our two years was right at the start of July when I lost out in the final stride to Welshman Nigel Rees who ran a PB of 13.45 for 3 miles. With hindsight had we stayed in Canada a further six weeks I think I might well have got close to 14 minutes for five kilometers and other PBs for I had neglected the mile and steeplechase. However, we needed to be back in Britain for we had never intended to stay more than two years and we discovered that income tax didn't have to be paid on such a short residence. Our cargo ship docked in Swansea in July and by the end of the month we had jobs for the new school year and a house to move into in October but a lot of time to fill in August. Here I made a mistake by both showing off my improved form and rushing around the country visiting friends and getting away from parental homes. I raced far too much when a little competition and much more structured training would have been much wiser. I ran well for the most part on a variety of surfaces including a fell race at Rawtenstall where I was good on the ascent but far too timid going down.

Hurlfield was the name of my new school and from my parents home it was a longish run so with the start of the term I soon settled into a better pattern of training. In late October 1967 we moved into our house costing £4,500 and just minutes run from open country with Stanage little more than half an hour away even though the city centre is just four miles away. I only stayed at Hurlfield for one year for even though the school at that time was not too difficult I was never settled. Too many of my colleagues seemed to spend time complaining about the kids who I found to be generally acceptable. On average, I spent three after school training sessions with the cross country team at what was still an all boys school. The team was successful and popular which is hardly surprising if the enthusiasm is there from the coach. We won the Sheffield Schools' league but not to the delight of everyone for teachers from other schools warned me that I took it too seriously!

At all the schools I worked in I put in a lot of time with runners, mainly because I enjoyed coaching, but also in the sixties in Britain it was normal for none P.E. staff to be involved in sport. In all six schools the progress of those who trained regularly was marked whatever training we did. Although maybe the aerobic fitness of boys was higher anyway because of walking to school, fewer cars, and more general involvement in sport whether formal or casual?

I only stayed at Hurlfield for one year when before moving into Further Education at Granville College close to the city centre. My days of school boy runners were over though I helped a good many of our students over the twenty years I was at the college. Clearly, the best athlete to pass through Granville (now Castle) was Jon Brown – two Olympic fourth places, 2000 and 2004 and I had some input in his decision to continue his education at Iowa State University. Chris Mason was another Hallamshire Harrier who studied in the U.S. at Villanova (1969 – 1972). Both gained a lot from their scholarships and both now reside in North America. The American university sports system cannot be replicated here as we lack the alumni funding but seeing how much talent is lost on entry to higher education it is a huge pity that we cannot come up with a

structured system across the hundred plus universities and not just at a handful of institutions.

The Marathon

In October 1970 I attempted my first marathon having always vowed I would only do so when confident that 2hr 30 was very possible. I was fit and quick after the track and road relay season but had only got four weeks of 70m and two 2hr runs as specific preparation. However, all went well on a less than flat course and I had little trouble in running 2.27.54 which proved to be the fastest I ever managed! Why? Off barely adequate preparation I now think I was able to run a satisfactory time simply because I had so much speed in reserve. Five miles in 28 plus seemed, as it should, extremely easy considering at that time I could still manage around four minutes faster for that distance. In 1974 unwisely I upped my mileage to about 330 a month. For me this didn't work as I just got better at plodding. Perhaps I was getting too old or maybe not enough rest as the increase in volume did coincide with the arrival of Gillian. I did break 2.30 once more on a day I should never have started, being full of cough and cold; it could have been worth 2.26 and a AAA team medal rather than missing third scorer by a hundred metres had I been well. In truth I was unsuited to the event, lacking the confidence over such a distance, so that I merely survived rather than raced. To go sub 2.20 the athlete has to also have the physical ability to do enough training – say 100miles a week and the only way to test this is to try. I tried and found it beyond me.

Sleep

An athlete cannot manage without an adequate amount of sleep. This would seem very obvious but at certain stages of their athletic lives – in the early months of university for instance – athletes are likely to forget the importance of regular early nights. Rapid recovery from training is dependent on an enzyme that only works effectively when we are asleep. One of the real benefits of being a full time athlete are the opportunities for siestas though many school and university athletes could snatch twenty minutes before an evening session of study and/or training. Of course to do so may not seem normal to many peer group non-athletes but running regularly singles you out as odd anyway, you just have to get used to it.

Achieving Success

Success means many things but at the very least it is to get the maximum out of your body both in the short and in the long term. This is obviously hard to achieve and it doesn't mean that every session has to be eyeballs-out. For you to do that would be to take a lot of pleasure out of the sport and if you don't enjoy it most of the time then you are not likely to stay around long enough to really get anywhere.

It seems to me that to do well as an endurance athlete, that there are - apart from a reasonable amount of luck - three main components.

1. Continuity. By which I mean many days, weeks, months and years of uninterrupted running and obviously this is hard to achieve because

there are likely to be colds and injuries. However with common sense some of these are avoidable. Some people like and benefit from the occasional break perhaps at the end of the season and in this respect it is an individual thing. However too many breaks brought on by holidays, work, social life, studying etc do break the flow. Being away from home is an opportunity to run in a new environment and as for studying/work running is often a useful therapy. Running is a very natural activity though racing may not be, but in our country many of us are further away from this natural state than we were and certainly further away than people in Kenya and Ethiopia hence the need for continuity in order to transform the body into a running machine.

2. Specificity. By this I mean that a significant amount of your running has to mimic racing both in terms of the speed at which you hope to race; the surface on which you are racing and the distance of the race. If you are hoping to do well in the National Cross Country over 12km of hills and mud then 25 miles a week of steady road running with a Tuesday session of 12 x 400m will allow you to get round Parliament Hill but it is not likely to guarantee a place in the first three hundred. If you wish to run hard for whatever distance then out of courtesy to your mind and body you have to simulate the situation. If all of your running is at a comfortable pace you become fitter but not as fast in a race as you want. With too much hard running, injury or illness beckons. The secret is to learn what is the ideal balance for you.
3. Belief. I feel that many runners do not really have a true belief in their own ability to not only improve a little but to actually become good. I honestly believe that between the ages of 20 and 35 a normal male runner is capable of at least two of the following....

1.56, 4.00, 14.50, 31.45 and 2.32 Marathon.

I don't feel qualified to give equivalent statistics for women.

So why do so few people achieve these standards? Is it sheer bad luck, circumstances, lack of enthusiasm, lack of sustained training, inappropriate training. Just as possibly it is lack of ambition or belief. I think these last two apply even to British athletes who run internationally. The Africans are good and have the advantage of coming from altitude and poverty. But they (the Africans) can be beaten. Look at the performances of John Brown, Craig Mottram, Dave Moorcroft, Richard Nerurkar, Benita Johnson and Paula Radcliffe.

Footwear

This is very much a personal thing but it is desirable to decide what sort of shoe suits you and not be influenced by style or pseudo-scientific gimmicks. The wrong shoes can cause injury. If a twinge, or worse, develops soon after starting with a new pair of shoes then immediately consider that they may be the cause. Cheaper to abandon them than to pay the physio!

Conversly, worn out shoes – however much you like them – can be an injury source. Look at the shoes; are they unduly worn at the heel? heel wear is very normal but a frequent cause of problems. Are the shoes twisted either inwards or outwards? Remember that incorrect foot placement, sometimes a result of worn or unsuitable shoe, can cause pain elsewhere such as the knees, hips or even the back. (Likewise an incorrect running action can cause pain in the feet or knees and also accelerate shoe wear.)

At any one time I would be using six or seven pairs in a week, which may seem a trifle excessive but is actually no more expensive as the shoes last longer (and may actually gain in value if they acquire a retro look!). I think the merit of this approach is that I am not subjecting my feet to weaknesses of a particular shoe run after run.

Clothing (or lack of)

My main concern is that when racing and training in winter too many athletes don't wear enough on the upper body. I think it is important when its wet and below 8° or 9° C that the shoulders and upper arms (and stomach!) are covered up. When its colder still then it seems a good idea to opt for full arm cover and gloves. It seems unwise to let your body become cold so that energy is used in maintaining warmth that would otherwise be used to drive the body forward. Additionally, when racing, runners can become so aware of their discomfort that their focus is diverted from the race.

After training or racing, when the body is hot it is vital to maintain body heat and only cool slowly. Partly this is achieved by a sensible warm down but beware standing around chatting without putting on lots of extra clothing I feel that rapid cooling is a very good way of starting a cold. There seems to be little scientific evidence to support this idea other than my personal experience. Don't underestimate the baseball cap or woolly hat as a fashion statement and more importantly as a way of keeping warm. The head is certainly the No 1 source of heat loss and wet hair will only speed up this process so however uncool it looks get a cap or tea cosy... you don't have to look like a Year 10 boy. If you do get a cold then only time will shift it but there are suggestions that the whole process may be accelerated by the use of Vitamin C, Zinc, or Echinacea.

If it's just a head or nose cold and doesn't involve a sore throat, cough or swollen glands then personally I would carry on running but otherwise it is foolish to carry on exercising. Have a few days off and the whole thing will probably clear up quickly and at the same time any minor niggles will have had a chance to settle down.

Because serious training is imposing a stress on the body the immune system is often less effective than in normal folk. The committed athlete is therefore probably more prone to minor colds but as I have tried to suggest there are ways to reduce the number of times your training is interrupted.

Cross Training

Running is about running, just as if you want to swim well then you need to do lots of swimming, but other activities can probably help. Circuit training was not

for me. In 1965/66/67 I circuit trained regularly under the guidance of Wilf Paish. I am not convinced that it did me any good physically for invariably it took three days for the stiffness to recede which was not at all helpful for running and I was about ready to race by Saturday. Obviously it helps some people but perhaps I was just too extreme an ectomorph.

I first tried orienteering in 1970 at Bishop Wood, near Selby, so had forty years at the sport. An unsuitable temperament meant that I was a very erratic orienteer, though many suggested I tried to run too quickly. Sometimes this may have been true, but once the basics of technique have been acquired then I think for variety and the gaining of leg strength it is an activity that can bring great pleasure and provide variety to the normal routine and is often conducted in pleasant surroundings. Some of the top orienteers have run very quickly. Carston Jorgenson went sub 27.55, Jamie Stevenson ran 65mins+ for half marathon and very recently Rob Baker went under 2.27 in the London Marathon. It puzzles me why orienteering is a separate sport for surely distance runners have more in common with orienteers than hammer throwers! Swimming and cycling are obviously tremendous ways of enhancing fitness at any time and certainly valuable when injured. Indeed some people may benefit from permanently including other aerobic exercise and indeed the Brownlee brothers do not seem slowed by their triathlon work. Cycling and swimming do seem to cause some people to become bulkier but this may depend on body type or just the intensity put into the activity. Ideally I would have liked to include cross country skiing, rowing and canoeing but I was not a full time athlete whatever people think of teachers!

Altitude Training

Clearly this is beneficial and can be just a part of a fine holiday in places such as St Moritz or Font Romeu. My personal experience is limited and restricted to three weeks in Canada in 2001. Starting in Edmonton at about the height of Snowdon we gradually travelled to over 5000ft at Lake Louise where I felt easy in morning runs and gradually we motored back to Saskatchewan (2000ftish). After a month away I was running really well and able to train at a higher tempo for perhaps three weeks which has to be helpful. The timing for racing may differ from person to person. Give it a try.

Also of great benefit are training weeks such as are available at Club La Santa or Monte Gordo, in eastern Portugal where there is an excellent track, measured trails, woodland runs, flat firm beaches and a positive vibe from the many quality athletes using the facilities. As you can only train for an absolute maximum of two hours daily there remains lots of time for a near normal holiday.

Later on

It is interesting to speculate why I failed to improve after the age of 35. I did not sustain many injuries and kept up regular training. I also increased my mileage but much of it was running to and from work and therefore was of much less quality which was a mistake. Margaret and I had other priorities and, whilst I was still enthusiastic, my place in the pecking order quickly returned to where it had been before 1967. Having a strong club team delayed my decline and dabbling with marathons provided a further incentive and I discovered

orienteering. As an over 40 I ran around 15.30 for 5k at 43ish but I was never very motivated by times getting slower and slower, nor did I have the same competitive urges as those veterans who had only recently got into the sport. I now realise how much I ran just because I so enjoyed it for its own sake. I think I am going to finish at the point for my life changed so much with my fall though obviously a deal of this has been written after that event and I have had time to reflect on running in general. Thanks to all who helped us through a bad time and I hope what I have written may be helpful.

Ian W. September 2010



High Peak relay (Owen Williams in the background)

Scrapbook of Photos



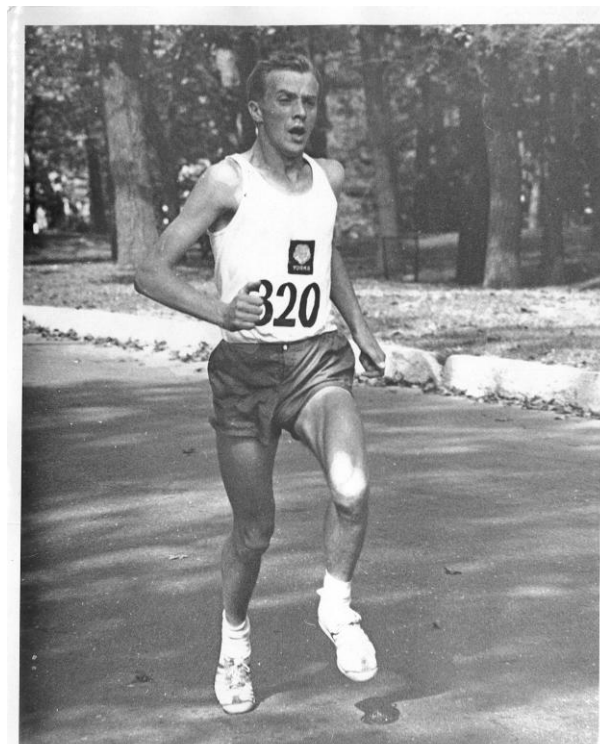
Hyde Park relays (1960s)

Canada

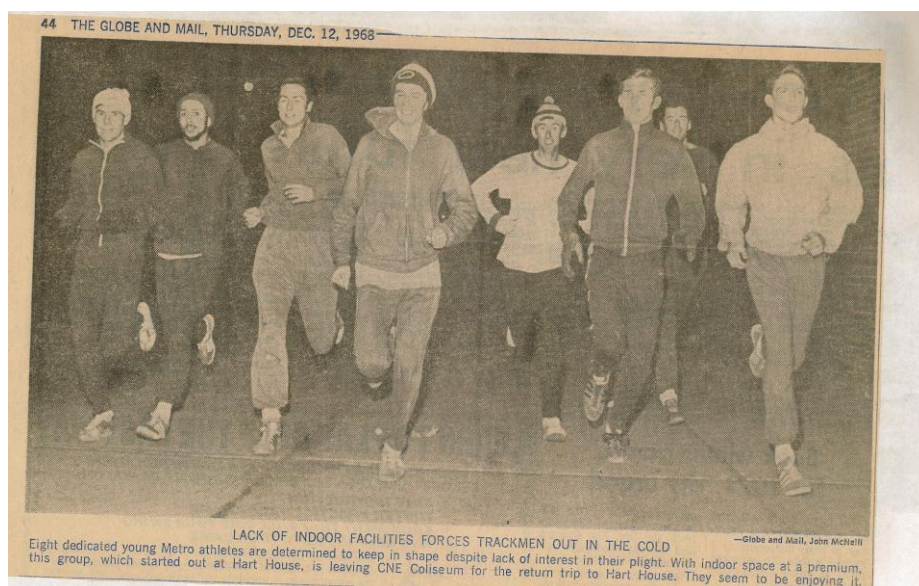
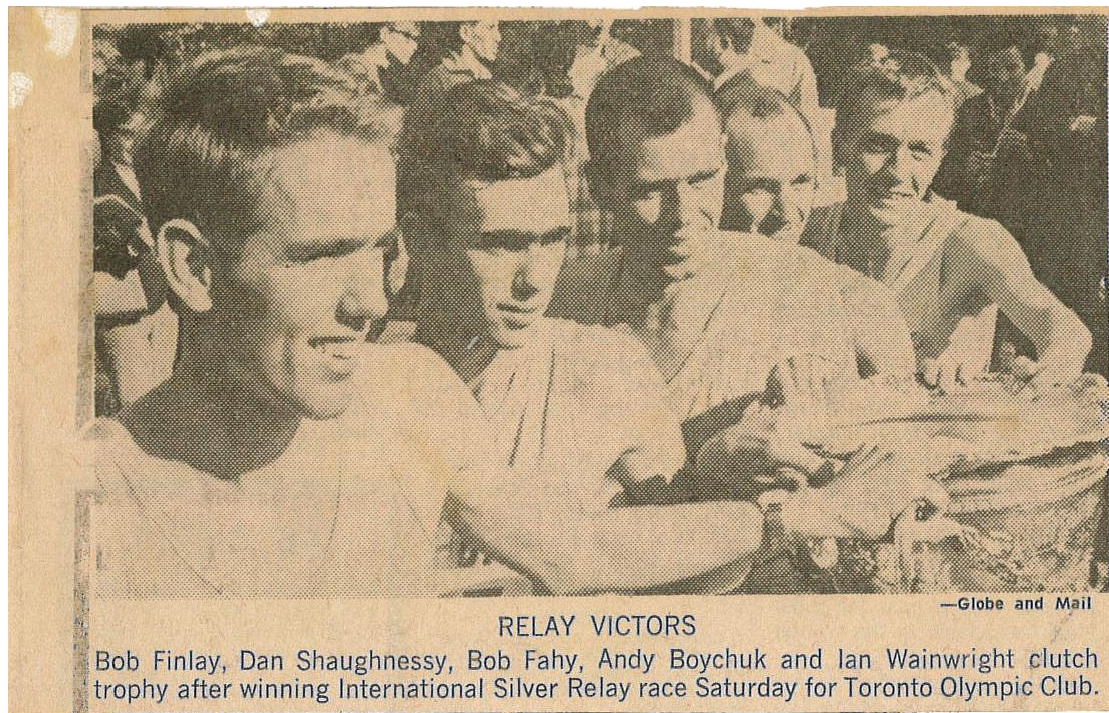


A Spring Road Race in High Park with Bob Fahy and Brian Richards.

A Spring Road Race in High Park with Bob Fahy and Brian Richards



Oct 1967 Ian winning a race in Toronto running in a Yorkshire vest



More Canadian press – The Globe and Mail 12 Dec 1968 “Eight dedicated young Metro athletes are determined to keep in shape despite lack of interest in their plight. With indoor space at a premium this group, which started out at Hart House, is leaving CNE Coliseum for the return trip to Hart House. They seem to be enjoying it.

Relay captured by TOC team

A Toronto Olympic Club relay team won the International Silver Relay race Saturday at High Park in record time.

The team, made up of Bob Finlay, Andy Boychuk, Bob Fahy, Dan Shaughnessy and Ian Wainwright completed the 16½-mile race in one hour 21 minutes 56 seconds, to take almost a minute off the mark held by the Hamilton Athletic Club.

Finlay had the best individual time, finishing his leg in 16:06.

Another team from the TOC finished in second place, Montreal Franc-Amis was third and Hamilton A. C. fourth.

A team from Markham District High School won the high school competition with Danforth Tech second and Streetsville third.

1. R. Finlay, TOC, 16:06; 2. A. Boychuk, TOC, 16:15; 3. R. Fahy, TOC, 16:18; 4. K. Hamilton, TOC, 16:27; 5. B. Armstrong, TTC, 16:31; 6. R. Wallingford, HAC, 16:31; 7. I. Wainwright, TOC, 16:33; 8. D. Shaughnessy, TOC, 16:44; 9. R. Moore, TOC, 16:47; 10. B. Richards, TOC, 16:47; 11. M. Rowlands, MRFA, 16:48; 12. W. Yetman, NYAC, 16:49; 13. J. May, NYAC, 16:49; 14. R. Cairns, TOC, 16:51; 15. D. Lach, MRFA, 16:58; 16. W. Peel, MRFA, 17:00; 17. M. Jaouhar, MRFA, 17:00; 18. B. Drewatt, HAC, 17:06; 19. J. Mowatt, TOC, 17:10; 20. W. Varey, HAC, 17:11; 21. R. Gisler, TOC, 17:18; 22. R. Pyne, TOC, 17:21; 23. R. Evans, HAC, 17:21; 24. J. Dextras, MRFA, 17:25; 25. G. Dickson, HAC, 17:29.

Ian (and team mates) in the press

Wainwright 1st In 1000 After Rallying Twice

By BILL SIMMONS

Of The Inquirer Staff

Ian Wainwright, a 29-year-old Canadian competing for the Toronto Olympic Club, came from behind twice in the final two laps to win the two-mile run to highlight Friday afternoon's open competition in the second annual Philadelphia Track Classic at Convention Hall.

Wainwright, a schoolteacher who was born and reared in Sheffield, England, took the lead for the last time around the final turn and broke the tape in 9:03.6.

Charles Shrader, of the University of Maryland, held the lead through most of the 24-lap event. With two laps to go, Wainwright overhauled both the tiring Shrader and Jim Dare, of the New London, Conn., Naval Base.

CAN'T MATCH KICK

Dare stayed with Wainwright and got the lead on the backstretch of the last lap, but was unable to withstand the Canadian's closing kick and finished second in 9:05.6. Shrader was third in 9:06.2.



Hot. I.W., Bob, Don Shaughtersay, Andy Boychuk, Peter Burrows, Dave Ellis, Bob Finlay.
all of T.O.C.



Canadian 5000m Championship 1968

Some clippings from Ian's Canadian scrap book



After a National in the 1970's running for SHU (Sheffield United Harriers) with club colleague Peter Rawnsley (now running for Skyrac)