

Nibbles: In this issue of Nibbles we're focussing on the Olympics. COVID-19 has certainly played havoc with the Olympics, resulting in it being postponed in 2020 and still somewhat uncertain for 2021. Well, it seems like it's going ahead, albeit to largely empty stadiums, so in the spirit of the Olympics, we're going to focus on the games of the 16th Olympiad, and you know where they were held, yes that's right, in Melbourne. Susan has found some interesting Olympic memorabilia in our museum collection, and our blast from the past is a short article on the Melbourne Olympics. But first of all the quiz ...

Quiz: Try your luck at these questions. The answers are towards the end of this issue (no peeking).

- Q.1. Who was the President of the IOC at the time of the 1956 Melbourne Olympic Games?
- Q.2. Who was the most successful individual competitor at the 1956 Melbourne Olympic Games?
- Q.3. Who has been Australia's most successful Olympic track athlete?
- Q.4. What events did Murray Rose win at the 1956 Melbourne Olympic Games?
- Q.5. Fifteen of our sixteen gold medals at the 1956 Melbourne Olympics were won on the athletics track or in the pool. In what event was our only other gold medal won?

Just in case you've forgotten, here are a few facts about 1956: Sir Robert Menzies was Australia's Prime Minister and Sir Henry Bolte Victoria's Premier. The national population was 9.4 million of which 1.6 million resided in Melbourne. The two-laned Geelong Road was one of the state's most dangerous, and driving to Anglesea from Melbourne in those days took quite a few hours. 115,902 fans attended the 1956 VFL Grand Final to see Melbourne defeat Collingwood by 73 points at the MCG. Parking meters and television came to Australia, and Johnny Ray and Elvis Presley were pop idols. Anglesea, then part of the Barrabool Shire, had only enjoyed its new name for six years, being formerly known as Anglesea River since 1884. The FJ Holden was about to be replaced by the FE.

A trip down memory Lane: The 1956 Melbourne Olympic Games.

Australia has long been renowned for the skill and bravery of its serving men and women, but it wasn't until 1949 when the then IOC President announced that Melbourne was to be the host of the 1956 Summer Olympics, that people around the world began to sit up and take notice. Many of the members of the IOC were sceptical about having an Olympics staged in the southern hemisphere and Melbourne only got the nod by just one vote over Buenos Aires. At first things didn't look too promising. For a start, Australia's equine quarantine laws prevented us from hosting the equestrian events which were moved to Stockholm and held some five months before the official opening ceremony. Delays caused by financial bickering between the state and federal governments almost led to the games being transferred to Rome, which was to host the 1960 games and was already ahead of Melbourne in its preparations. None-the-less the games went ahead despite the non-presence of Egypt, Iraq, Cambodia and Lebanon in response to the Suez Crisis, The Netherlands, Spain and Switzerland in protest at the Soviet presence following the crushing of the Hungarian Revolution, and the People's Republic of China over Taiwan's participation. The Games were officially opened by Prince Phillip, the Duke of Edinburgh, and the Olympic Flame was lit by Ron Clarke, accidentally burning his arm in the process. Ron confessed later that after lighting the flame, he travelled home on the train unrecognised by fellow passengers. 3,342 athletes competed in what became known as the "Friendly Games," down 33% on the 1952 Helsinki Olympics, and of which only 11% were women. By contrast, of the more than 11,000 athletes who competed in the 2016 Olympics in Rio de Janeiro, approximately 50% were women. Call it a home ground advantage if you like,



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but the Melbourne Olympics was certainly one of our most successful appearances on the world sporting stage. We won 13 gold medals, 8 silver and 14 bronze and finished third in the overall standings behind the Soviet Union and the United States. We won all the freestyle swimming events, Dawn Fraser, Lorraine Crapp, Murray Rose and Jon Hendricks being our stars in the pool, and in track and field, Betty Cuthbert was our golden girl winning three gold medals in the sprints. Shirley Strickland repeated her Helsinki win in the 80 metres hurdles and was a member of the gold medal winning 4 x 100m women's relay team. Unfortunately world record holder and popular favourite John Landy finished third in the 1500 metres men's track event, whilst in the men's 100 metres track event, a jubilant Hec Hogan finished third in a star-studded and highly competitive field of sprinters. Our best ever men's 100m sprint effort. A significant highlight of the games was an acceptance by the authorities of

the suggestion by young Melbournian John Ian Wing that at the closing ceremony, instead of marching in teams behind their national flags, athletes mingle together in this final parade, a practice that has been continued ever since. If you want to indulge yourself in a little nostalgia, we have a copy of a publication in our History House library called *"The Olympic Games: Melbourne 1956."* Next time you visit us at History House, have a look through it. If you're old enough, it will bring back fond memories. It does for me. Of course, we hosted the games again, this time in Sydney in 2000, but that's another story.

Items in our collection commemorating the 1956 Melbourne Olympic Games:



At the beginning of 2020 we set up a small display of Olympics-related items at History House. Of course this move proved premature when the Olympics had to be cancelled. The display is still there should you wish to view it. It contains three very different objects relating to the 1956 Summer Olympics: a tumbler, a brick, and a commemorative in the form of a relay torch. It also contains some ephemera in the form of tickets, a press pass, a staff pass, and a booklet.

The tumbler was produced by Greig's Honey, a company that seems to have specialised in promoting its product via sports-related items. Its tumblers featuring AFL football teams are sought-after collectables to this day. The tumbler features Faith Leech. Faith's nickname was Flying Fish. She won a gold medal in the 4 x 100 metre freestyle relay and bronze in the 100-metre freestyle.

The stamped design on the brick features the Olympic rings, with text below reading, "GLEN 1956 IRIS". The design is only on one face of the brick. The Glen Iris Brick Company, contrary to its name, was situated in Thornbury, in Melbourne's north. Such bricks were used in the dwellings in the Olympic village in Heidelberg West.

The design for the Melbourne 1956 Olympic relay torch was by Ralph Lavers, and originally used for the 1948 London Games. Made entirely of metal, the torch featured a cylindrical handle, with a bowl on top. The volatile chemicals hexamine and naphthalene were used to ignite the relay torch. The inscription around the bowl reads: "OLYMPIA-MELBOURNE: XVI OLYMPIAD 1956". The commemorative version is 13.5 cms high, as compared with 41 cms for the original.

The tickets and the booklet were donated to our collection by Jan Morris. The booklet was published by the Australian National Travel Association. The tickets were issued for two separate days, 29 November and 4 December, for the main stadium at the MCG. Jan remembers leaving home very early on the day she attended, and travelling on a special train. The day's outing included tea provided by the railway and apparently the meal was memorably unappetising!

Sources

Australian Sports Museum: <https://collection.australiansportsmuseum.org.au/>
 Faith Leech: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Faith_Leech

Anglesea & District Historical Society & Surf Coast Family History Group



MID WINTER MEET
 11.00am Thursday
 15 July 2021
 at Function Room Anglesea Hotel

First Fleet Fellowship Victoria
 Presentations in Costume
 Stories of the first fleeters and their descendants
Cost \$20 includes lunch
 Booking essential: Jan 0448 526 311 Susan 0438 070 560



Questions by 23 July to
angleseahouse@gmail.com
 Or Jan 0448 526 311
 Or PO Box 98 Anglesea

ANGLESEA & DISTRICT HISTORICAL SOCIETY
 2.00pm Sunday 1 August
 Function Room Anglesea Hotel
Heritage Places of Anglesea & Aireys Inlet - questions to panel
 Entry – Gold coin donation
ALL WELCOME



**SURF COAST
FAMILY HISTORY
GROUP**

10.00am Thursday 12 August 2021
at History House 5 McMillan St. Anglesea
Speaker: Susan Clarke
Topic: English Wills & Probates



**Entry free
All welcome**



ANGLESEA & DISTRICT HISTORICAL SOCIETY
Outing Thursday 9 September
Barwon Grange
Leaves History House 9.30am
Cost \$15 plus lunch
Lunch at Great Western Hotel



Bookings Essential
Susan
0438 070 560
Jan
0448 526 311

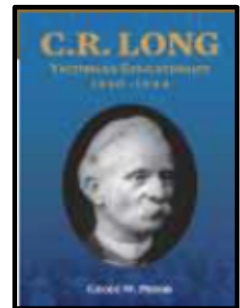


Book Reviews:

C.R. Long, M.A.: Victorian educationalist 1890-1944
by Geoff W. Pryor (Australian Scholarly Publishing)

Of interest to many of our museum visitors are our old Victorian Readers and also the old Victorian School Papers. These were both commissioned by C.R. Long, a teacher, who served as a school inspector and educational lecturer as well as heading up the Victorian Education Department's publications section for 30 years. This is an interesting read, especially for those who have worked in education in Victoria.

Jan Morris



Bellbrae Cemetery Across Time: A History
by Martin A Hooper (Beach Shack Publishing, Jan Juc, 2021)

This book by Martin Hooper does not aim to be a blow-by-blow chronological account of the history of Bellbrae Cemetery, but rather to provide the reader with some tales of the place. As such it is written in Martin's usual engaging style whereby the voice of the author is not suppressed.

Although the book is not weighed down with facts and figures, it does start with the context of the establishment of the cemetery, and includes quotes from early minutes and Victorian Government Gazettes of the time. The book is then divided into various themes such as "Graves of some Bellbrae pioneers", "Bellbrae cemetery centenarians", and "Surfing legends buried at Bellbrae cemetery".

In an appendix to the book the reader is invited to consider the conundrum of whether there are earlier settler unmarked graves at the cemetery. Martin ends by raising the issue of whether there should be another marker to acknowledge the even earlier settlers, the Wadawurrung people.

One of the strengths of the book is the inclusion of copious photographs which liberally illustrate the text. The book is now in the library at History House.

Susan Clarke

Thank You: A most grateful thank you to Barry Davidson for all the terrific work he's been doing in getting the History House garden back into shape. Well done Barry.

Answers to the Quiz: **Q.1** Mr Avery Brundage **Q.2** Soviet gymnast Larisma Latynina who won 4 gold, 1 silver and a bronze medal. **Q.3** Betty Cuthbert with four gold medals **Q.4** The 4x200m freestyle relay, the 400m freestyle and the 1,500m freestyle. **Q.5** Cycling, the men's 2000m tandem.

Olympic Joke & Quote:

At the Olympics a man walks up to a competitor who was carrying a very long pole.

"Excuse me, are you a pole vaulter?"

"Nein, I am German, but how did you know my name ist Walter?"

Emil Zatopek, champion Czechoslovakian distance runner and triple gold medallist at the 1952 Helsinki Olympic Games, when asked about his unusually serious facial expression when running, replied "I was not talented enough to run and smile at the same time."

