

The Young ones

It's hard to believe that Gillian hasn't always been a runner but she was never an athlete until, at home with young children, she started to play netball and loved doing so for many years. In her forties she was encouraged to join the Hills Hash House Harriers and started running with her children and other families. Here she met the Ellards who took her along to the 'Veterans' on a Sunday morning. Her first run was Point Walter where she just managed to run/walk the 6 km course.

With encouragement from other members she progressed to the 10, 15 and 25 km races in the Road Racing Championship. She is the current holder, at W55 and/or W60, of seven road racing state records including these events and also half marathon and marathon – the latter one of the highlights of her athletic career.

She started running on the track in 2002, using the sprints as interval training and relishing the satisfaction of doing PBs. For Gillian, her first couple of years a golden period setting road records, she set, and still holds, state records on the track in the 1500m, 5000m, 10000m and relay records from 4x100m up to 4x1500m. Her W60 4x1500m relay is also an Australian record.

That her 5000m and 1500m records were set at State Championships, where she enjoys the camaraderie and friendly competition, gives her particular pleasure. She was thrilled to come away from the 2010 Nationals in Perth with several medals - two gold, three silvers and a bronze.

Always a 'doer', Gillian and partner Mark (her "number 1 coach" and the person who commiserates and celebrates with her) have been race directors for the age-graded Sunday morning

run for six years. Their first run was a bit nerve racking but they now enjoy the day.

She recently retired as Business Manager at Kalamunda Senior High School but keeps as busy as ever doing the things she actually wants to do.

And the fact that she is now joined on Thursday evenings and

Sunday mornings by Melissa and Kevin and (occasionally) her grandson Callum, gives her great pleasure. There are obviously some strong running genes in this family.

Gillian is now on the road to recovery after injury forced a break from running and is hopeful that she will be able to compete in the State Championships again this year – and to continue setting PBs. At least some of her motivation to keep going comes from the support and encouragement received from everyone in the club. But she is still motivated by her Dad who was extremely fit and still riding his bike most days and doing his annual 100km ride for charity until the age of 93. When he passed away one of the things that the family had to do was cancel the order he had placed for a new bicycle. Gillian says "I still hear him saying 'go girl' when I am out there trying to find the strength to keep running".



Photo: VIC WATERS