

# Lynne's 'new world'



ORIGINALLY a Perth girl, sprinter supreme, Lynne Choate, became a high school maths teacher. So she has been well equipped to record and remember all the statistics associated with her brilliant athletics performances, some of world class standard. Her 35 year teaching career finished with 14 years at Mandurah Catholic College where she held several responsible positions. She retired in 2012 and lives in Mandurah with Clive, her husband of 38 years. They have three adult children and two grandchildren.

Lynne has always loved sport, particularly athletics, and has run from primary school age. She played netball through her high school years and as a member of Nedlands Athletic Club she competed, from age 12, on the cinder warm-up track at Perry Lakes (no Little A's in those days!). She continued through the ranks to Seniors,



## In focus

With Christine Oldfield

doing well in interschool and state competitions. At 15 she broke the state record for 60m. But Lynne says “*it wasn't until I was around 21 that I 'matured' as a sprinter*”. This was the mid-70s and from then on she won medals, open state titles, was part of the open state team for 100m and sprint relays and set an open 60m state record of 7.3s in the late 70s. In 1977 she had transferred to Melville Athletic Club where she was coached by Shirley Strickland de la Hunty.

Lynne also enjoyed success at many of the annual South West Championships at Capel and at Intervarsity competitions which gave her several trips over east. In 1980 “*with much sadness*” she retired from athletics to have a family and she and Clive moved to Mandurah. But she was tempted back to competition in 1985 when the inaugural South West Games were held in Bunbury – and she won the open 100m and 200m. She competed again in 1988 when the Games were hosted in Mandurah. Here she caught the eye of David Carr who told her about the Vets and persuaded her to compete in her first AAVAC Nationals which were held in Perth in 1989. And, Lynne says, “*a whole new world opened up*”.

She went on to win many vets/masters state titles and still holds a number of state records in the 60m, 100m, 200m and 4x100m relays. She has competed in nineteen national championships, winning thirteen 100m titles and has always finished in the top two in the 100m and 200m. She has also had success in 400m, long jump, triple jump and pentathlon. She won seven medals at two Oceania championships and nine at three World Masters Games. There have been 11 World Masters Athletics championships since 1993 and Lynne has competed in nine of them, taking full advantage of the marvellous travel opportunities as well as taking home eight individual medals – one gold, three silver and four bronze plus 17 relay medals – six gold, four silver and seven bronze.

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# opens to the world



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Particularly memorable for her was winning the W45 100m title in Brisbane in 2001 – “a long-held goal”. In Porto Alegre in 2013 she also thought it was pretty exciting to be part of the W60 team that broke the 4x100m Australian record. 2014 saw her, as a W60, taking on the cambered track for the first time at the world indoors in Budapest. In a “fantastic atmosphere” she picked up a 60m individual bronze along with a silver and an Australian record in the 4x200m relay.

Very much an all-rounder, Lynne competed in orienteering in the late 70s and took second place in the state championships at Dryandra Forest. In 1988 she was part of a team that won the veterans section in the World Triathlon Teams Championships held in Perth. And from 1990 to 2006 she also found time to run with the professional West Coast Athletic League, competing in a variety of venues. She ran against a 16-year-old Cathy Freeman in Northam but her most memorable win was at Mazenod in 1992 when she beat Dean Capobianco in the 120m handicapped race.

Lynne is extremely dedicated and has been making the round trip of 200km between Mandurah and Perth, up to three times a week for the past 21 years, just to be able to train and race. In all her endeavours she is encouraged and supported by Clive, who stayed at home to look after the children while she travelled to championships. It was not until the worlds in Sacramento in 2011 that he accompanied her and competed himself. She has made many friendships during masters’ competitions and, more recently, at Sunday runs which she added to her training programme for the worlds in Puerto Alegre in 2013. For ten years she has been training with Dave Wyatt’s sprint group and she says “he has been a driving force in trying to get the best outcome for me”.

And Lynne also likes to put something back into her sport. Nedlands AAC, the West Coast Athletic League, the WA Women’s Association, Mandurah Triathlon Club (of which she is a Life Member), Mandurah Little Athletics and the schools she taught at were all beneficiaries of her time and expertise as she served on committees and involved herself in coaching, officiating and organising.

In April Lynne will be chasing a win at the nationals in Sydney but says that, with the current competition, “it’s getting harder and harder”. Later in the year, she is going to the world championships in Lyon with two aims - to make the finals of the 100m and 200m, as she has always previously managed, and to be selected in the 4 x 100m and 4 x 400m relays again, where she’d hope for a medal. She is motivated “just by the sheer love of the sport” and would like to think that she is still competitive enough to challenge some state records. She “certainly will be trying to”.



Lynne (second from left) celebrates her gold medal with team-mates Kathy Heagney, Wilma Perkins and Lyn Peake at the world championships in Porto Alegre.