

The Oldfields -- The Perennial Migrants

Since this issue's *In Focus* had to be written before my return to Perth, I decided to feature the only two people that I had direct access to – John and myself.

For a brief spell in the early nineties, whilst living in Perth, we were members of both 'The Vets' and the Marathon Club and rejoined MAWA in 2005.

Some of you may not realise

that we are a bit like some of the birds that we enjoy watching. We spend northern hemisphere summers in England and, as autumn sets in, we fly south to enjoy the Perth heat. This way we have two athletic seasons and no winters. Over the past five years we have qualified as national and international athletics officials both in Australia and in the UK and

are hoping to be invited to officiate at the London Paralympic Games in 2012. As new kids on the block, we have no chance of getting to the Olympics.

However, we made good use of our qualifications and experience in helping run the Australian Masters Championships last Easter.

By Christine Oldfield

Christine's running high

I was born and brought up in Scotland and, on holidays, always enjoyed the walks I did with my father. But I loathed any sort of sport and, apart from hill walking, took no form of exercise until I was over forty. When John joined the Hash in Dubai I decided to give it a go. After a couple of years I did a 10km fun run and enjoyed the feeling of achievement as I crossed the finish line.

I was never a fast runner but over the next twenty years, road races became part of my life and I ran wherever in the world I was working.



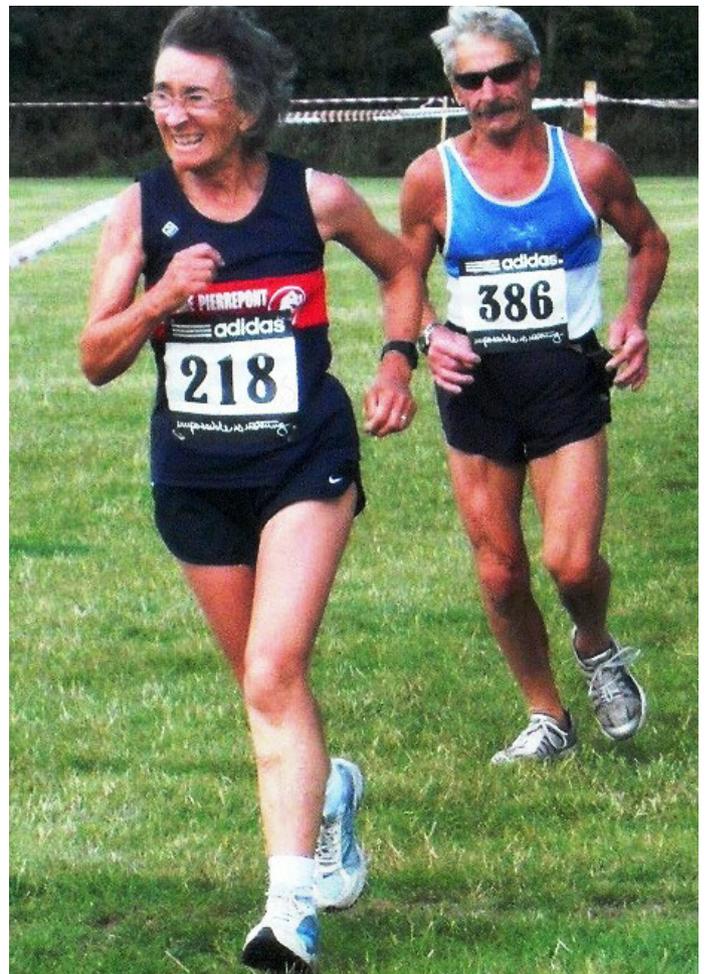
Christine receives her bronze medal as Jackie Halberg looks on at the World Championships in Lahti, Finland.

I thought the pinnacle of my achievement was completing the Edinburgh marathon at age fifty nine but when, at sixty, I ran it in 4:40, bettering my time by twenty six minutes, I felt I had conquered Everest.

Also around this time I began to run on the track with MAWA – just for fun. I can't imagine any other club where I would be given this sort of opportunity and where my efforts, no matter how slow, are respected and often applauded. Since there are not many 'old ladies' competing, it has been relatively easy to set relay records and win medals, especially at the State Championships. Most of these I regard as rewards for participation but I really value those where I have actually beaten someone and where my relay team has broken, rather than set, a record.

That I could compete at a World Championships was beyond belief but, in Riccione in 2007, I was amazed to have a significant number of competitors finish behind me in each race. And the bronze Team Cross Country medal which I brought home from Lahti in 2009, takes pride of place on our medal board.

John has always said I could run much faster if I did more training and I'm sure that is true but I think I would



Christine takes a male scalp in a UK 10km finish.

then feel that running was a chore rather than a pleasure. So I run when I feel like it but always try to have some goal in mind for motivation purposes. This might be a particular race or a PBA that I

want to beat. I am also aware of the positive effects that running has had on my health and hope that, inspired by the astonishing feats of our club's octogenarians, I will continue to run for many years to come.

John's thirst for life

John Oldfield was born in Nottingham, England, in 1943 to working class parents. His Dad was a county standard cross country runner and John remembers, at about seven years old, running at his heels along the cliffs when on holiday in Cornwall. At school he ran track and cross country but for some years thereafter he just didn't have time to run.

He married very young and graduated as a metallurgist. But, in one of several career moves, he ended up in the retail trade. In search of opportunity he took his family overseas, ending up in Australia. He served in the Royal Australian Navy and competed for them in races from 3000m to 10,000m – often on the old cinder track in Fremantle.

In 1975 his marriage broke up and he returned to the UK where he met Christine. John took up road running and completed many half marathons and some full marathons. Their teaching careers provided the opportunity for more travel and, as members of the Hash House Harriers, they ran (and



drank) in Dubai, Bahrain, the UK, Qatar, South Africa and Australia. As to John's solo trip to the World Hash *Thriller in Manila*, the least said the better!

In his sixties, he decided to try the MAWA track sessions and has had a go at every distance from 60m to 10,000m. But he admits he is not a sprinter and now concentrates on distances of 1500m and above. Last year,

for fun, he had a go at the 2000m steeplechase and, on his first attempt, took gold and became the M65 British Masters Champion, a title he retained this year.

Despite being plagued with injuries over the last two years, John has managed to compete in two World Masters Championships – in Italy and in Finland. In Lahti he surpassed expectations and qualified for the final of the

1500m. Running in the final, in the main stadium, is something he will never forget. Closer to home his most memorable experience was his 2009 State Championship 10,000m race against Bert Carse. He lost, but to run Bert so close was an experience to treasure.

In 2008 John won the club's Achievement Award. This was in recognition, not only of his success in running a fistful of PBs, but of his contribution to the club. He had served on the committee, organised the Tuesday track sessions for two seasons and also instigated this Track & Field Newsletter.

This year he took over as webmaster and the resulting restructured site is now regularly updated with a wealth of information and photographs. When not able to run, John is like a bear with a sore head so he hopes (as I do) that he will be able to continue for many years to come. He says he is inspired by watching the ladies as he follows them around the track and looks forward to feeling the same way when he's ninety.

T&F Programme for November

ECAC	UWA							
Oct 28	Nov 2	100m	800m	300m	3000m PT	Long jump	Discus PT	Wt throw
Nov 4 [^]	Nov 9 [*]	200m	60m	5000m r/w	400m PT	Triple jump	Shot PT	Hammer [^] Javelin [*]
Nov 11 [^]	Nov 16 [*]	1500m	400m	3000m r/w	100m PT	Long jump	Ham PT [^] Shot [*]	Wt throw
Nov 18	Nov 23	200m	4000m r/w	60m	800m PT	Triple jump PT	Discus	Javelin
Nov 25	Nov 30	400m	1500m r/w	100m	5000m PT	Long jump	Shot	Wt throw