

IT NEVER RAINS ON BURNLEY RUNNERS

*The History of the Burnley Runners
1980 to 2021*

by Vin Martin

July 2021

Dedicated
to
the memory of
John "Jack" Salter
and
Jenny Caldwell

Foreword

The Burnley Runners group is a truly amazing group. It has stood the test of time and various members of the group still meet to run 3-4 times a week after 40 years.

One has to wonder why on earth would people get up at 5.20 to go running at 6am winter or summer, rain or shine! (Correction: it never rains at Burnley between 6 and 7am, and the running is mostly in the dark which is why old people fall over!)

Some people get up to go running with like-minded people, some just like to chat before, during or after the run with friends and some may just come for the coffee afterwards.

Over the years, changes in careers, partners, and injuries have seen people come and go. Some have come back after successful treatment for cancer.

Three members have died during the time (Gregor, Jack and Jenny) as Vin mentions and we remember them fondly.

The one constant during the last 30 years has been the coordinator, Vin Martin who compiled this history. What an amazing job he has done both as coordinator and writer. One cannot overestimate the importance of his role. He has always been available to help with running advice and so many of us have used one of his "running programs" for our first marathon.

From all us fellow members Vin,
Thank You!

Paul Shekleton

Burnley Runners – the Concept

Since 1980, men and women have assembled in the carpark of the Burnley Golf Club just before 6 a m on selected weekdays. Following a quick hello, they head out on runs that are typically between 8 and 12 km in length. After some early experimentation, the courses for standard Monday, Wednesday and Friday runs were largely settled by 1990 and remain untouched ever since.

Approximately 300 different people ran at Burnley over its history. Many runners came to Burnley at the invitation of another runner in their neighbourhood, at a local athletic club, at a physiotherapist's surgery or in a municipal swim class. Many Burnley Runners ran a marathon and some got the bug to run more. An extraordinary number of Burnley Runners became Melbourne Marathon Spartans by completing 10 or more Melbourne Marathons.

Wednesday runs tend to be most popular today; in the 1990s Fridays were most popular. Between 1992 and 2000, several runners prioritised a Sunday long run option over attendance on Mondays. Since 2001, long runs have tended to occur on Saturday mornings, so Friday morning runs have become less popular.

For runners leading busy lives, the starting time of 6 am (or 5.45 am on Wednesdays) enabled them to leave the carpark by 7 a m to organise the remainder of their day. Parents of young children, professionals with city workplaces and other runners all found Burnley Runners a good fit for work-life balance. The start time also allowed runs to finish ahead of the build-up in city workers cycling to work after 7 a m along the bicycle paths adjacent to the Yarra River.

Many Burnley Runners have been turning up rain, hail or shine for more than 10, 20 years or even 30 years. Why do runners keep coming back? Connection, community, camaraderie, friendship and the generally positive vibe within the group are the most common reasons given. 'Run once at Burnley, you are a first timer; run twice, you become a life member'.

In 2021, there remains a good core of Burnley Runners ready to carry on.

Burnley Runners – pre-history

Following trends in the USA and the UK in the 1970s, a recreational running boom took hold in Australia. Thousands of people took to distance running for the first time. Both overseas and in Australia, running a marathon became an aim for experienced athletes and novices alike.

Running shoes, magazines for runners and groups catering for recreational runners all sprung up to meet growing demands for good safe equipment and knowledge on training and racing. Nike, Adidas, Brooks and ASICS were some of the first shoe brands. Australian Runner and Fun Runner were names of locally produced magazines.

The first Melbourne Marathon was held in 1978 and training for this event became a focus for many Victorian long-distance runners. A field of 2,500 starters in 1978 doubled to over 5,000 in 1979.

The Origins of Burnley Runners: 1980 to 1990

In 1980, a small group of runners in their 30s and 40s began to meet in the Burnley Golf Club carpark to run for an hour or more, starting at 6 a m on Monday and Thursday mornings. Variety was a key ingredient and runners ran towards the city, through the hilly streets of Toorak and into the hills of Studley Park.

Peter Power and Wayne Jonas were early members of Burnley Runners. Peter remembers John 'Jack' Salter and a runner named Roger running with the group. Peter and Wayne both ran the Melbourne Marathon in 1981 and Jack ran in 1982.

By 1985, Peter and Wayne had moved on, but Les and Jenny Caldwell trained at Burnley and ran their first Melbourne Marathons.

Burnley Runners was one of several groups established in this era. The Tally Ho group centred in Ashburton and Knox Roadrunners were others. The Victorian Veteran Athletics Association (now known as Victorian Masters Running Association) was established in the late 1970s. The Victorian Road Runners was formed in 1982. Many people were introduced to distance running through running clubs established at head offices of large businesses (e g Mobil, ANZ Bank, Reserve Bank of Australia (the origins of the Melbourne Midday Milers) and the National Bank of Australia). In the late 1980s, a weekday Corporate Cup was held in Autumn and Spring at the Tan track; Melbourne Business Runners conducted a similar weekend competition (Puma Corporate Cup) in major Melbourne parks. The Victorian Marathon Club (VMC) had catered primarily for long distance runners of registered athletic clubs for over 30 years and now found its ranks swelled by recreational runners with no connection to athletic clubs. The Associated Public Schools Old Collegians Amateur Athletic Association (APSOC) enjoyed expanded numbers in its winter cross-country competition.

While the Melbourne Marathon was a key focus of training at Burnley, the 4 Peaks Bright Alpine Climb run up Mystic Hill, Mt Feathertop, Mt Hotham and Mt Buffalo conducted on Melbourne Cup weekend every year was another popular event for Burnley runners who liked a challenge.

During the 1980s, Burnley Runners expanded with runners who had some connection to Jack Salter or Jenny Caldwell. Clients, professional colleagues, friends and runners from nearby athletic clubs, notably Malvern Harriers, came on board.

Stuart Doyle, Mike Eveston, Dan Gearon, Shondra Hill, Heather Lacey, Bruce Longden, Caralyn Shekleton, Stephen Ellinghaus, Robyn Fairweather, James King and Cathy King were among those to join Burnley Runners towards the end of this decade or the beginning of the next one.

Burnley and an Opisometer: 1991 to 1999

When I first ran at Burnley in November 1991, between 10 to 20 runners gathered at Burnley on Monday, Wednesday and Friday mornings. This pattern of weekday runs continues today.

The following summary of the weekday runs could equally have applied at any time during the past 30 years:

- 6 a m, Mondays, a flat 8 km course beginning through Richmond streets, crossing the Swan St Bridge and returning to the carpark via the Yarra Trail.
- Alternative Monday hill training (9-10km): involving a zigzag course on the roads between Robinson Road and Glenferrie Road Hawthorn.
- 5.45 a m, Wednesdays, an 11 kms course through Richmond streets and the Fitzroy Gardens, along Collins St, turning left into Swanston St and left again at Princes Bridge to rejoin the Yarra Trail.
- 6 a m, Fridays, 9 - 10 kms, a rollercoaster run through Toorak streets including the challenging Glen Road hill which first timers were told was a 'minor undulation'.
- An alternative Friday run in summer (Oct – Feb) follows the Yarra Trail to Bridge Road and runs through Hawthorn streets and parks towards Kooyong before heading back to the carpark.

A detailed description of these courses is set out in Appendix A.

A typical communication circa 2013 conveyed the informality of the group:

No money or registration. We are not a formal club as such. It is just a group of running mates and friends.

The group ranges in age from 20 to almost 70, more being younger than older, and (since the year 2000) with women outnumbering men.

Just turn up about 5 minutes before the times set out above, as they begin right on time.

Runners pick their own pace - fastest runners go about 4 mins per km, slowest around 6 mins per km. Plenty of runners in between those times.

Just pick people around your pace and stay with them (so you don't get lost!!).

If you turn up on your own, just ask any runner in the carpark and they will make you feel welcome.

Temperatures at 6 a.m. were between 7 and 18 degrees most of the year round with only occasional outliers under 5 degrees or over 20 degrees. These conditions are ideal for distance running. And, of course, it never rains on Burnley Runners. The only hazard at 6 a.m. is poor light, particularly from late Autumn to early Spring when half the run occurs before sunrise. Several runners have tripped or fallen.

In 1991, regular runners included Sandra Bacash, Jenny and Les Caldwell, Stuart Doyle, Mike Eveston, Dan Gearon, Gisela Hamacher, Shondra Hill, Heather Lacey, Bruce Longden, James and Cathy King, Peter Robertson, Jack Salter and Brendan Schwab. Most lived in the nearby suburbs – Hawthorn, Toorak, Camberwell and Armadale.

Existing Burnley Runners would invite neighbours, fellow runners at other clubs, clients or business associates, and as the years passed by, sons and daughters. Dan Gearon and Heather Lacey invited me to Burnley during a 16km run one Sunday morning with the Malvern Harriers.

I first ran at Burnley in November 1991. Richmond Harrier Kristine Cook joined a month later. Kris's enthusiasm led to fellow Richmond Harrier Pam Jonas joining in March 1993. Pam still runs at Burnley 28 years later. Elias Sahely, my training buddy in Hawthorn for the previous 4 years, got involved; he introduced John Harrington to the group. By 1994, Paul Shekleton had joined. Kelly Davis and her friend Marie were others to run with Burnley at this time.

At Peter Robertson's invitation, John (Jack) Nevins ran for the first time in April 1994; a few years later their wives Deb Robertson and Sue Nevins joined. Jack Salter introduced his nephew Sam Coates who in turn brought along Damon Krongold and Justin O'Brien. Peter Day was one of Jack's many clients and friends who came to Burnley for a run. Peter's wife Jodie joined and she introduced a work colleague, Heather McBride in around 1996. Jack also introduced Alex Stockman to Burnley.

In 1994, Janet Canny, Jill Gleeson, Ingrid Wilson and Tricia Dohrmann, who all knew each other from living in Hawthorn, ran at Burnley. In the years to come, Jill joined Cathy King and Sandra Bacash on many exercise walks.

Encouraged by experienced marathoners and training partners Julie Barbarczy and Lyn Nugent, Gregor Rusden joined Burnley Runners at 58 years of age in December 1994 and ran his first marathon six months later. On the same day Chris Yeoman, another marathon novice, joined Burnley and ran his first and only marathon at 55 years of age. Sadly, Gregor died in a car accident 5 years later.

Connections with other running clubs and groups were important. Between 1992 and 1994, runners from the Collingwood Masters venue came to Burnley Runners. Westly Windsor joined in weekday runs and has run at Burnley for 27 years. Westly invited Phil Lanigan to Burnley Runners. A few Burnley Runners had a go at Masters running, notably Shondra Hill who made lifelong friends wherever she ran.

The Victorian Road Runners (VRR) was another good connection. In 1992, Melody-Anne Shultz won VRR's Marathon Trophy for fastest woman in the 1992 Melbourne Marathon and came down to Burnley a few months later. Jack Salter and Paul and Caralyn Shekleton ran monthly VRR Tan Time Trials, while several VRR members joined in long Sunday runs. Gisela Hamacher followed in Melody's footsteps by winning the VRR's Marathon Trophy for fastest woman in the 1997 and 1998 Melbourne Marathons. Paul Ban joined Burnley Runners following a conversation with Gisela Hamacher after an Angela Taylor fun run organised by VRR. Paul introduced John Pietzch to Burnley Runners.

Between 1992 and 1994, the overlap between members of various clubs and the Burnley Runners included:

- Richmond Harriers (Kristine Cook, Pam Jonas)
- Malvern Harriers (Gordon Stephens)
- Collingwood Masters (Paul Ban, Jan Brimacombe, Laurie Brimacombe, Brendan Kennedy, John Merori, Ian Morgan, Jo Oates, Graham Roberts, Graeme Huntington and Westly Windsor)
- Victorian Road Runners (Graham Jenkins, Barry Leek, William Loads, Sheila Mayer, John Morris, Denis McGuigan, Denese Perry, Doug Scott, Melody-Anne Shultz, Alex Stockman, Alan Wallace and Barry Watson)

My first experience of a Burnley Runners' social occasion was a dinner organised in a Spanish restaurant in Johnston St Fitzroy to celebrate Jack Salter's imminent trip to the 1992 Olympic Games in Barcelona to provide physio services to the Australian athletes. In the previous Olympic Games in 1988 Jack was physiotherapist for Debbie Flintoff-King when she won the Gold Medal in the 400 metres hurdles.

A social calendar soon developed with annual events:

- December 1993 – 1997: Shondra Hill generously hosted five annual breakfast runs at her home in Elwood for friends from Burnley Runners, VRR and Masters;
- October 1994: 30-minute run plus 30-minute BYO breakfast on the Friday morning before the Melbourne Marathon;

- December 1994, the first annual Wednesday morning run to see the Christmas Windows at the Bourke St Myer store was held;
- December 1994, a short 30-minute Friday morning run was introduced to enable runners to gather and chat for a further 30 minutes over BYO Christmas treats; and
- Mid-90s onwards, a dinner was held in the evening of the day on which the Melbourne Marathon was run. The first events were held at the Manhattan restaurant in Toorak Village, when Elias Sahely owned it. Two decades later, Giorgios Restaurant opposite the Malvern Town Hall was the regular venue.

Between 1995 and 2000, attendance at the weekday runs remained strong. Heather McBride joined in 1996 and became a 20-year member. Charlotte Davis arrived from Canada and ran at Burnley for the five years she lived in Melbourne. Both Heather and Charlotte formed lifelong friendships at Burnley. Gisela Hamacher introduced several friends to Burnley, notably Andrew Hely who in turn invited Alex Gibson.

Social connection at Burnley took many forms. The Burnley & Brunswick Book Group comprising Burnley Runners and friends began in February 1994 and continues to this day. In the late 1990s Gisela Hamacher invited a few Burnley Runners to her 40th birthday dinner at Elias's Manhattan restaurant. Burnley Runners have celebrated many milestone birthdays down the years. Several Burnley runners have hosted informal social gatherings, such as pizza nights, at their homes.

At the Melbourne Marathon Dinners the distribution of chocolate bars to marathon finishers was a highlight. Pam Jonas selected the treats individually to reflect a characteristic of each finisher's performance. There were plenty of puns (an abundance?). Pam introduced the awards and presented them most years. Jenny Eason, Heather McBride, Sue Nevins and Kathy Carberry helped Pam on these gift-buying missions and filled in as presenters when Pam was unable to attend the dinners.

The first Sunday long run took place on a hot Sunday morning in February 1992. Runners headed into Studley Park and took in large sections of the Boulevard. Jim Grellis led the way that day with keener runners completing 26kms and others running 20 kms. For seven years (1992 to 1999) long runs were held on Sunday mornings. Starting at 6.30 a.m. in the Burnley Golf Club carpark, the courses were between 19 to 35 kms in length. The design of the courses involved a Melways, an opisometer and a little local runner knowledge. Viewed together the courses formed a four-leaf clover fanning out from the golf course carpark. The four basic courses were:

- The Elwood run – this 19km course is a triangle bordered by (1) Williams Rd / Hotham St, (2) the bicycle path between Elwood and Middle Park and (3) Kerferd Road / Albert Road / the Domain or Tan Track / Yarra Trail. (Variation: additional laps of the Tan or Albert Park Lake add 4 kms or 5 kms respectively to the length of the run).

- The Caulfield Run – this 16 km run follows the railway line to Caulfield Park, crossing into Malvern on Grange Road, passing through the beautiful Hedgeley Dene gardens and returning to Burnley via the Gardiners Creek Trail. (Variations: runners turn right at the Gardiners Creek trail, join the Anniversary Trail, and return to Burnley via the Ferndale Trail at Summerhill Park or Riversdale Road).
- The Melbourne Zoo run – 25 km plus including the Merri Creek trail, the Capital City Trail and a lap of the outside of the Melbourne Zoo before returning to Burnley through a series of parks including the Carlton Central Gardens, the Fitzroy Gardens and Yarra Park by the MCG.
- The Kew Run – 20 kms plus. Typically, these runs head towards the Rathmines Road Reserve in Hawthorn and then to Stradbroke Park, Hays Paddock and the Anniversary Trail towards the Chandler Highway. The return to Burnley involves either the Princess St Hill in Kew or the Yarra Trail from the Skipping Girl sign to the Burnley carpark.

More details on the sections of these courses are set out in Appendix A.

A one-direction long run was rare. In November 1992 a small group including Kris Cook, Vin Martin and Doug Scott ran from the Burnley carpark along the Gardiners Creek trail to join in a Victorian Road Runners' 5km fun run in Jells Park before returning to Burnley by car. On a second run a few months later a small group of runners took the Merri Creek trail to Coburg before returning by car.

Consistency allowed runners to train with the confidence that injury wouldn't be just around the corner. The sharing of knowledge within the group was also a contributing factor to low injury risk. Jack Salter would give advice freely on stretches and strengthening exercises that runners might do before a workout or at home. Westly Windsor advised many runners on the virtues of speedwork in a well-balanced training routine. Experienced Burnley Runners willingly discussed training and racing tips with runners at the beginning of their distance running journeys.

Burnley Runners ran with their own personal goals. A personal best or strong finish was as much a cause for celebration for a slow or fast runner alike. That said, a glance at the fastest Melbourne Marathons run by Burnley runners in 10-year age groupings reveals the calibre of the faster role models within the group.

AGE GROUP	NAME	Year of Melbourne Marathon	Fastest Race Time by Burnley Runner	Age-related Grading (%)
M30-39	Mark Nash	2007	2:55:30	71.5
M40-49	Paul Garbett	2002	2:47:49	80.2
M50-59	Westly Windsor	1995	3:06:11	74.9
M60-69	Westly Windsor	2007	3:28:17	75.8
W30-39	Gisela Hamacher	1994	3:13.32	71.8
W40-49	Meta Vincent	2010	3:15:52	72.6
W50-59	Meta Vincent	2021	3:21:24	80.4
W60-69	Heather McBride	2014	4:07:57	79.0

Some of the achievements were team-based. A win in the female section of Melbourne Business Runners season in the early 1990s was a forerunner of what was to come. When Gisela Hamacher, Heather Lacey and Pam Jonas were at their peak in 1990s, Burnley women began entering Melbourne Marathons as a team. Burnley women had 5 team wins under the banner of Wild Women Do or Burnley Runners:

- 1998 – Wild Women Do
- 1999 – Wild Women Do
- 2001 – Wild Women Do
- 2003 – Wild Women Do
- 2005 – Burnley Runners

To this day, Wild Women Do has been used as a name for teams of Burnley women entering various events including OXFAM Trailwalker events in Australia and overseas.

A Second Wind – 2000 to 2010

As the 21st century began, Burnley Runners experienced another major wave of recruits.

Westly Windsor invited young runners whom he had coached at Camberwell High School and the Box Hill Athletic Club to a Burnley Christmas run on 21 December 1999. Jessica de Bruin, Jocelyn Keage, Prue Healy and Hayley Tomlinson turned up that day and continued to appear at Burnley over the coming 15 years. Michael Dowel, Amy Carrig, Jack Hill, Harriet Hodgkinson, Fiona Forsterling and Jessica Eeles came in the years to follow.

Jenny Caldwell led a swimming session at Hawthorn Recreation Centre and several runners came from that community (Mike Bourke, Davina Calhaem, Grant Cameron, Nadine O'Connor, Alan Owen-Jones, Roseann Sheridan, Amanda Donohoe, Diane Tyson and Stuart Campbell). Debbie Robertson and Sue Nevins were prominent in swimming and fitness communities in Ashburton and Chadstone so others from that area ran at Burnley: Di Lee, Julia Blackham, Russell Glasser, Joe Kuriel and Vicky Kuriel.

Alex Stockman invited his daughter Lisa to join. In turn, Steve Ballek joined. Steve invited his colleague Rae Sharp. In December 2001, AFL umpires Mark Nash and Shane McInerney came down for a run with Mark staying almost a decade until he moved to Singapore with his young family in 2010. Mark introduced Kerryn Flatt and her partner Dave in 2002; Kerryn ran her maiden marathon that year in a time of 3:30.

Caralyn Shekleton was a neighbour of Jenny and Les Caldwell, when she first ran at Burnley in the late 1980s. Caralyn still runs at Burnley in 2021, making her the longest-running member of the group. Paul and Caralyn invited several doctors and administrators to Burnley including Bec Chalmers, Rowena Downie, Nalda Mannix and Alice Robinson. All four joined Burnley between 2012 and 2014.

Serendipity played a part. In April 2001, four friends from Balwyn and Camberwell ran into the carpark asking if they could join in a Burnley run. Jenny Eason has since become a stalwart of Burnley and her husband Stu and daughters Olivia and Sophie are all Burnley runners; Kathy Carberry ran marathons consistently until she fractured her hip in a fall while on a long Burnley run in March 2008; Pauline Fogarty and Anne Giddings ran their first marathons in 2001.

The next decade and beyond saw many other arrivals (approximate year of first run in brackets): Jenny Whiting (2001), Meta Vincent (2001), Clare Carberry (2002), Viv Trapani (2003), Erik Birzulis (2003), Grant Clark (2003), Alan Owen-Jones (2004), Amie Fitt (2005), Monique Kelley (2005), Mandy Weir (2005), Michael McVeigh (2005), Brian O'Brien (2005), Ian Frost (2006), Petie (2006), Joe Trapani (2007), Trish Ramler (2008), Stacey Ford (2008), Jessica Hunter (2008), Paul Dumbrell (2008), Karen Moir (2008), Felicity Doolan (2009), Julia Blackham (2010), Phil Hoopmann (2010), Kylie Doyle (2010), Carol Cunningham

(2010), Heather Danks (2011), Olivia Collins (2011), Sam O'Donnell (2011), Janine McDonald (2012), Courtney Blood (2012), Rebecca and Kristen Rowe (2012), Suzanne Pelz (2012), Katlin and Nick Harper (2013), Amanda Donohoe (2013), Bec Speed (2013), Shane Nagle (2013), Robert Thomas (2014) and Meg Chin (2014).

The above list is not exhaustive. Many runners appeared once or twice at Burnley. It is not possible to list them all.

In the early 2000s, the overall number of participants in the Melbourne Marathon fell away. There were doubts over the future of the event. The route from Frankston to Melbourne was abandoned in the mid-1990s and it took a decade of experimentation to settle on a new course weaving its way through St Kilda, around Albert Park Lake and along the Esplanade between Elwood and Port Melbourne.

In this time the half marathon grew in popularity. The half marathon was an easier distance for keen runners to aspire to, but without the training load required to complete a marathon. While many Burnley Runners maintained their enthusiasm for the Melbourne Marathon, others embraced the half marathon too. In 2004, 12 Burnley Runners entered the Marathon while 10 entered the Half Marathon.

The decade was not without its dramas and challenges. A spate of burglaries of cars and contents in 2004 shook everyone's confidence.

With group numbers still quite strong at the end of the decade, Sue Nevins organised the printing of a Burnley Runners singlet which some still proudly wear to this day.

In 2001, long weekend runs on Saturday mornings took the place of long Sunday mornings conducted in the 1990s. Nadine O'Connor ran with Burnley that year and Pam Jonas, Heather McBride and Vin Martin all traveled with Nadine to Traralgon to successfully complete the Traralgon Marathon – the oldest running marathon in Victoria. In the months leading up to the event, this group ran long runs on Saturday mornings. Over time, other Burnley Runners joined in on Saturdays and a Saturday morning group still meets 20 years later. For around 15 years, runners adjourned to Tracys Cafe in Toorak Village. In recent years, the Kanteen by the river near Como and Friends of Mine in Swan St have been popular cafe choices.

In the 2000s, a hills session was introduced on every second Monday in the early months of each year. In Burnley Runners folklore, Jenny Caldwell is credited with inventing this training session. While Burnley Runners zig-zagged the streets between Robinson and Glenferrie Roads Hawthorn to complete 3 long up-hills, Jenny's original work-out is said to have included 5 long up-hills.

The additional hill training prepared Burnley runners to enter one or more of several hilly events that have grown in popularity over the past two decades:

longstanding runs such as the Great Train Race in May each year and the De Castella Fun Run in August and new runs such as the Great Ocean Road Marathon (from 2005) and the Run for the Kids (from 2006).

The OXFAM Trailwalker events and the King Island Imperial 32km held annually in March each year were popular among some Burnley runners in the past decade. We all celebrated overseas triumphs of Pam Jonas in several international marathons and Paul Ban in both the Comrades in South Africa and the Marathon de Medoc (when he wore an outfit expertly sewed by Karen Moir).

A few 10km handicapped Time Trials were run on Saturday mornings. Beginning at a lamppost on the Yarra Boulevard east of the Kevin Bartlett Reserve, the out-and-back run followed Yarra Trail for 5 kms to the Morell Bridge at Anderson St. Runners expected to run slower times started first, faster ones later with the aim that all runners would cross the line at approximately the same time. Jessica de Bruin and Darren Templeton made short work of their “backmarker” status to run past all the runners in front of them.

Beyond Burnley, the recreational running scene was changing significantly. From the early 2000s onwards, new recreational running groups sprung up all over the place. Increased connection by phone and computer and the introduction of Facebook in 2006 gave this trend a big boost. Historically, only coaches attached to registered athletic clubs could easily maintain their accreditation, but Athletics Victoria had the foresight to introduce courses for recreational running coaches. Qualified recreational coaches were able to establish community-based running groups with insurance backing. By 2021, there are many coach-led recreational running groups around Melbourne catering for runners of all levels of experience. Coaches can guide novice runners through the first months and years of becoming a runner and encourage experienced runners to reach their potential with up-to-date approaches to training and racing. Two Burnley Runners Alan Owen-Jones and Karen Moir qualified as running coaches and began their own running groups. Other running groups within a few kilometres of Burnley include the Hawthorn Running Group (coach: John Braszell), De Castella Runners (Anthony De Castella), the Crosbie Crew (Tim Crosbie), the Studley Park Run Club (Jason Rawlings) and GoRun Australia (Chris White).

Whether a group has a qualified coach or not, the general camaraderie and the formation of long-lasting friendships keep runners returning to their groups month after month, year in year out.

Celebrations and New Beginnings – 2010 to 2021

Women are responsible for most of the achievements at Burnley Runners in the decade to 2021.

Heather McBride ran her first marathon while training with Burnley and went on to become a Melbourne Marathon Spartan. At 65 years of age, Heather ran a superb 4:21 in the 2015 New York Marathon to come 5th in her age group - a mighty achievement in one of the world's largest marathon fields.

Meta Vincent had an incredible work ethic. Stories of Meta doing long runs in the short break between morning and evening shifts at work are common place. Meta, who has built a successful career in the Victorian Police Force, won two marathons and achieved a Top 5 placing in at least 5 others. Together with her partner and fellow Burnley Runner Monique Kelley, Meta has participated in many triathlons and ironman events. In July 2021, Meta ran the fastest marathon ever by a female aged 50 to 59 at Burnley, eclipsing a long-standing record by Melody-Anne Shultz by a couple of minutes. In setting this record, Meta recorded the highest age grading for any marathon runner at Burnley (80.4%).

Following the early example of Jenny Caldwell, several Burnley runners maintained an overall base of fitness incorporating swimming and cycling as well as running. Davina Calhaem, Mon Kelley and Meta Vincent are prominent in podium finishes in their age groups in high-profile triathlons, while Roseann Sheridan, Rae Sharp, Deb Robertson and Sue Nevins are regular participants in annual ocean swims.

Several Burnley Runners completed the arduous 100km OXFAM Trailwalker events including Sue Nevins and her daughters Rachael, Hannah and Bridgette, Deb Robertson and her daughter Ashleigh, Di Lee, Pam Jonas and Julia Blackham.

Felicity Doolan, Jenny Eason, Heather McBride, Sue Nevins, and Meta Vincent all became Melbourne Marathon Spartans – 10-time finishers in the event. Pam Jonas ran 15 Melbourne Marathons during her years at Burnley to add to her tally of 10 finishes prior to joining Burnley. When Sue Nevins became the 118th female Spartan, 1 in every 19 female Spartans was a Burnley Runner.

Around 2015, Felicity Doolan volunteered to be Secretary for Melbourne Marathon Spartans, a role she performed with aplomb for several years.

The following Spartans ran regularly at Burnley:

Regular Burnley Runners who finished 10 Melbourne Marathons

Paul Ban
Kim Bowring
Felicity Doolan
Jenny Eason
Mike Eveston
Dan Gearon
Phil Lanigan
William Loads
Heather McBride
Sue Nevins
Elias Sahely
Jack Salter
Paul Shekleton
Meta Vincent

Alan Wallace

Regular Burnley Runners who finished 20 Melbourne Marathons

Pam Jonas
Vin Martin
John Morris
Jack Salter
Westly Windsor

Other runners at Burnley who finished 10 or more Melbourne Marathons

Ian Andrew
Julie Babarczy
Rod Bayley
Jim Grelis
Phil Lanigan
Lyn Nugent
Kai Ooi
Gordon Stephen
Jane Sturzaker

Following Jack Salter's death in 2010, a perpetual trophy was established in his honour. Each year the trophy is awarded to the Burnley runner with the largest improvement in their Melbourne Marathon time as measured by the difference in minutes from the best time recorded in the previous three years. Felicity Doolan (twice) and Alex Gibson were early winners of the trophy.

A sense of fun was never far away from the celebration of achievement. One Burnley Runner who completed the Melbourne Half Marathon would receive custody for a year of a wall-clock with character. Sue Nevins, Vin Martin and Paul Shekleton were among the winners, but no photos exist of the clock hanging prominently in their homes. The clock's demise came when Phil Hoopmann accidentally(?) dropped it at a post-marathon dinner in 2017.

A favourite memory of mine will always be the many rousing renditions of the Richmond Football Club theme song in September 2017 as the Tigers charged towards their first premiership since 1980. As Paul Shekleton wryly observed, there had never been such excitement generated during the nine premiership campaigns won by the Hawks since 1980.

The sense of community and changes over time can be illustrated by the lists of attendees at three Christmas events in 1995 and 2020 and an ordinary Friday summer run in 2004:

Friday 22 December 1995 (Christmas run): 24 runners including

- Sandra Bacash, Ian Brown, Les Caldwell, Jenny Caldwell, Janet Canny, Carolyn Eveston, Noga Freiberg, Mike Eveston, Gisela Hamacher, Dan Gearon, Shondra Hill, Pam Jonas, Damon Krongold, Heather Lacey, Bill

Loads, Bruce Longden, Vin Martin, Jo Oates, Jack Salter, Doug Scott, Westly Windsor, Chris Yeoman.

Friday 6 February 2004 (Scotch run) 24 runners:

- Sandra Bacash, Steve Ballek, Paul Ban, Erik Birzulis, Davina Calhaem, Claire Carberry, Kathy Carberry, Jenny Eason, Ian Frost, Alex Gibson, John Harrington, Phil Hoopmann, Cathy King, Vin Martin, Heather McBride, Mark Nash, Jack Nevins, Sue Nevins, Alan Owen-Jones, Graeme Prossor, Deb Robertson, Viv Trapani, Graeme Jenkins, Westly Windsor.

Friday 22 December 2013 (Christmas Run): 32 runners including

- Sandra Bacash, Steve Ballek, Erik Birzulis, Courtney Blood, Davina Calhaem, Heather Danks, Felicity Doolan, Shaune Egan, Alex Gibson, Katlin Harper, Nick Harper, Olivia Harper, Pam Jonas, Di Lee, Nalda Mannix, Heather McBride, Mon Kelley, Vin Martin, Janine McDonald, Shane Nagle, Suzanne Pelz, Rae Sharp, Caralyn Shekleton, Paul Shekleton, Conor Sheridan, Roseann Sheridan, Viv Trapani, Hayley Tomlinson, Meta Vincent, David Wain, Westly Windsor.

Wednesday, 23 December 2020 (longer Christmas Run to Myers Windows)

- Sandra Bacash, Paul Ban, Davina Calhaem, Grant Cameron, Bec Chalmers, Rachel Callaghan, Rowena Downie, Phil Hoopmann, Pam Jonas, Monique Kelley, Nalda Mannix, Sue Nevins, Alice Robinson, Ashleigh Robertson, Rae Sharp, Caralyn Shekleton, Paul Shekleton, Roseann Sheridan, Robert Thomas, Viv Trapani, Meta Vincent.

I estimate that around 300 different runners or more have run at Burnley over the years. Great runs, great memories.

Looking Forward - Burnley 2030 and 2080

From the 1990s onwards, many runners invited their sons and daughters to join them at Burnley. Sometimes the occasion was a Christmas event, but at other times the offspring shared running goals with their parents – completion of a marathon, half marathon or participation in an OXFAM team. Runners who received their introduction to Burnley Runners from a parent include:

Lisa Ballek
Luke Caldwell
Tom Caldwell
Hannah Callaghan
Rachael Callaghan
Samantha Carberry
Sophie Doughton
Olivia Eason
Olivia Harper
Huw Lacey
Morgan Lacey
Pamela Martin-Dines

Sarah Martin
David McBride
Anna Officer
Bridgette Peacock
Ashleigh Robertson
Matthew Robertson
David Rusden
Wil Salter
David Shekleton
Julia Shekleton
Conor Sheridan
Elizabeth Windsor
Matthew Windsor

Will future generations of today's Burnley Runners still run at Burnley in 2080? I wouldn't bet against it. Sophie Doughton's daughter will be 60 as will Nalda's grandchildren. Sixty years of age has proved to be no barrier to running at Burnley.

At the very least, there should be sufficient interest to celebrate the 50th anniversary in 2030. Let's place it in the diary now:

- 6 a m, Friday 11 October (two days before the likely date of the 2030 Melbourne Marathon)
- 5km run or 2.5 km walk followed by BYO drink and /or something to share
- A shout-out to Melbourne Marathoners in 2030 and, in particular, anyone running their first marathon or becoming a Spartan.

Vale Jack Salter and Jenny Caldwell

Jack Salter was in the first group of runners at Burnley in 1980 and Jenny Caldwell joined Burnley around 1984. They were both physiotherapists. Jenny qualified as a physiotherapist before Jack who came to the profession as a mature adult. Jenny was Jack's mentor when he gained early career experience.

Jenny and Jack had the foresight to realise that many injuries could be avoided if runners took precautions to train correctly, undertake appropriate stretching and strengthening routines and engage in parallel lifestyle activities such as yoga.

In 1988 Jack was physiotherapist for Debbie Flintoff-King when she won the Olympic Gold Medal in the 400 metre hurdles. In 1992 Jack accompanied Australian athletes to the 1992 Olympic Games.

Jack encouraged Burnley Runners to undertake some warm-up exercises (e. g. hopping on one leg) before the start of weekday runs. He ran a stretch / yoga class in Armadale for many years on Tuesdays and Thursdays and many Burnley Runners attended to experience some poses held for 30 seconds or more at a time. I first met Jack at the Malvern Harriers where he enjoyed both running and racewalking and became captivated with the marathon. After running his first Melbourne Marathon in 1982, Jack began a consecutive run of 26 Melbourne Marathons before missing in 2008. He ran his 27th and final Melbourne Marathon in October 2009. Jack trained at Burnley for all his marathons.

Due to arthritic knees, Jenny Caldwell's running career was relatively short. She ran 4 consecutive well-run marathons between 1985 and 1988 and followed this with a time of 33:16 in a Victorian Road Runners 8km two-lap circuit of Melbourne's famous Tan track. For a woman in her mid-40s, this time equated to an elite age grading of 80%. As the years passed, a problematic knee led Jenny to focus more on cycling and swimming. She left a large legacy in all three activities.

A woman for others, Jenny inspired people to look beyond their self-image to explore their potential. She ran fitness classes at Anderson Park in East Hawthorn with an emphasis on ballistic running and a broad base of fitness. Several Burnley Runners recall Jenny's swimming sessions at the Hawthorn Swimming Pool before she and Les moved from Melbourne to Byron Bay. Memories of Jenny shouting encouragement as a volunteer at drink stations in the final kilometres of Melbourne Marathons are etched into many memories.

Jack died on a holiday in Thailand on 11 May 2010 while Jenny died in an accident in New South Wales on 14 May 2015.

APPENDIX A

DETAIL ON COURSES

The courses for the weekday runs were as follows:

- 6 a.m., Mondays, a flat 8 km course through Richmond streets (Madden Grove, Lesney St, Church St, Swan St), crossing the Swan St Bridge to join the Yarra Trail back to the carpark.
- Alternative Monday hill training (9-10km): head east along Gardiners Creek trail to Kooyong, turn left into Glenferrie Road, right into Gardiner Road, continuing along Reserve Road. At the foot of Robinson Road, the course turns left up Robinson Road to Riversdale Road, before zigzagging down Illawarra Rd, up Kooyongkoot Road, down Berkeley Road and up Glenferrie Road. A left turn at Riversdale Road takes runners back to the carpark.
- 5.45 a.m., Wednesdays, an 11 kms course through Richmond streets (Madden Grove, Lesney St, Church St, Rowena Parade), past the MCG, through the Fitzroy Gardens, along Collins St, turning left into Swanston St and left again at Princes Bridge to rejoin the Yarra Trail. (In the lead-up to the Melbourne Marathon, runners detoured around the south side of the Tan or along Domain Road to Anderson St to add additional kms)
- 6 a.m., Fridays, 9 - 10 kms (Feb - Oct) The Toorak Run heads along the Yarra Trail to Como Park, then roughly follows a rectangle. The western side includes Como Ave and Hawksburn Rd. The southern side involves several streets: Gordon St, Selborne Rd, Sargood St, Grant Ave, Irving Rd, Albany Rd and Whernside Ave. The eastern side comprises Hopetoun Rd, Toorak Rd and Moonga Rd. The northern section runs along Glen Rd, Glyndebourne Ave, Kooyong Rd, Tyalla Crescent, Heyington Place, Torresdale Rd and St Georges Rd.
- Alternative Friday summer course, 9-10 kms (Oct to Jan): The first section is the Yarra Trail to Bridge Rd, crossing over into Hawthorn. The second section includes Burwood Rd, Coppin Grove, Isabella Grove, Yarra St, Yarra Grove, the Morang Road Reserve and the Wurundjeri Gardens. In the third section, a path by the Yarra leads to the Wallen Rd Reserve and Fairview Park before heading towards Scotch College via Hawthorn Glen, Fordholm Rd, Callantina Rd and Glenferrie Road leading to Kooyong. The fourth and final section of the course has several versions. (1) turn right from Glenferrie Road into the Gardiners Creek Trail; (2) staying on Glenferrie Road through the level crossing at the Kooyong Station run alongside the rail line on a trail to Heyington Station and crossing to the northern side of the Yarra via a footbridge; (3) on Glenferrie Road after the level crossing at the Kooyong Station, turn right into Warra Rd, left into Moonga Rd and right into Glen Rd before following the final kms of the Toorak run.

The weekend runs in the 1990s were as follows:

- The Elwood run – (19km) from the carpark runners head along the Yarra bicycle path before turning left into Williams Rd that becomes Hotham St at Dandenong Rd. Crossing the Nepean Highway runners run through Elsternwick Park to the bicycle path on the Elwood/St Kilda foreshore. Runners hug the shoreline before turning right into Kerferd Rd / Albert Rd. After crossing St Kilda Rd, runners head towards the Yarra Trail at the bottom of Anderson St either by running either up Domain Rd and down Anderson St or clockwise on the Tan track. Joining the Yarra Trail, runners head back to the carpark. (Variation: an extra lap of the Tan track (4 kms) or Albert Park lake (5 kms) adds distance to a long run.
- The Caulfield Run – (16 km) runners head south from the carpark on Grange Rd / Canterbury Rd before taking a left turn at Lambert Rd adjacent to the railway line heading to Caulfield. The run continues along Beatty Ave, Northcote Rd and Inverness Ave. After veering south into Valentine Grove, runners cross Dandenong Rd into Hawthorn Rd to Caulfield Park where they run on the path adjacent to Inkerman Rd the along Balaclava Rd and through a pedestrian tunnel under the railway. In Malvern the run involves Tooronga Rd, Kerferd St, Burke Rd, Kardella St and Hedgeley Dene Gardens. Crossing Malvern Rd, the course follows a path to the Allenby Walk Reserve and a tunnel under the Monash Freeway to the Gardiners Creek trail. Turning left, runners head back to Burnley. (Variations: a right turn at the Gardiners Creek trail leads runners to join the Anniversary Trail. One variation involves joining the Ferndale Trail at Summerhill Park leading back to the Gardiners Creek trail closer to the city. In a second variation runners continue along the Anniversary Trail and turn left at Riversdale Rd).
- The Melbourne Zoo run – 25 km plus: after a short 2km run from the golf course through Richmond streets, runners enter Studley Park at the Walmer St Bridge to join the Merri Creek trail. Turning off the trail at Rushall Station, runners travel along Park St to the Capital City Trail, staying on this trail to the Melbourne Zoo. After circling the outside perimeter of the Zoo, runners head through Royal Park, the streets of Parkville, Tin Alley (University of Melbourne), Carlton streets, Carlton Central Gardens, the Fitzroy Gardens and Yarra Park by the MCG. A jog along Richmond streets or the bicycle trail by the Yarra from Punt Road completes the return to the Burnley carpark.
- The Kew Run – 20 kms plus. Typically, these runs head towards the Rathmines Road Reserve in Hawthorn and then to Stradbroke Park, Hays Paddock and the Anniversary Trail. The return to Burnley involves either the Princess St Hill in Kew and a continuation along Denmark St / Power St to Swan St or a winding run around the Studley Park Boulevard meeting the Yarra Trail at the Walmer St Bridge.

SOURCES

Ausrunning Resources, marathon times, <http://ausrunning.net>.

Caldwell, J. (2011), private e-mail to Vin Martin. 2011.

- Jenny suggested that I approach Peter Power. Jenny Caldwell talks of “fancy runs” on weekends in the 1980s, but details of the courses are unknown.

Eason, J. (2017), recollections from a conversation with Wayne Jonas.

- Wayne Jonas ran with Burnley in 1981.

Higgins, B. (2017), *In the Long Run, Celebrating 50 years of the Traralgon Marathon*.

Martin, V. (1990 to 2020), personal running diaries.

- Since the mid-1980s I have kept a daily running diary. I took a note of the first time I met someone new at Burnley, which often coincided with their first run at Burnley. In some years, my running diaries are deficient on detail during absences due to injury. Since 2014, my appearances at Burnley became less frequent and accordingly my diaries contain less detail on Burnley runners in recent years.

Martin, V. (2020), phone interview with Peter Power.

Martin, V. (2005), notes taken after a chat with Jack Salter on a run in 2005 on the origins of the Burnley Runners.

Martin, V. (2007), *Melbourne Milestone*, Runner’s World magazine.

Masters Athletics, Age-Graded Calculator,
<http://www.mastersathletics.net/index.php?id=2595>

Melbourne Marathon (1980 – 2019), event results (see Ausrunning Resources).

Melbourne Marathon Spartans (2020), list of all Spartans,
melbournemarathonspartans.com.

Muirden, C. (2012), *The Wall – The History of the Melbourne Marathon 1978-2012*.

Runner’s World on-line age grading calculator, runnersworldonline.com.au.

Shekleton, P. (2000), audiotape of recollections by Burnley Runners.

Tomlinson, H. (2013), interview with Joe Trapani, reported in *Stride Out* published by the Victorian Road Runners for its members.

NOTES

Most of the research and writing was completed during lockdown in 2020 with some editing and updating in 2021.

Wherever possible I have named runners by their currently preferred names. Apologies to anyone for whom my information is out-of-date.

Despite my best efforts, there are bound to be errors and omissions for which I take full responsibility and apologise in advance.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Special thanks to Paul Shekleton for urging me to write this text and for organising its distribution.

Finally, thank you to all Burnley Runners, past and present, for making the effort to rise early to run or walk at Burnley over four decades and making the story of the Burnley Runners possible.