

# THE SPARTAN

**CLUB PATRON - Robert de Castella**

**April 2023**

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## **FROM THE PRESIDENT**     **Jay Fleming (S1012)**

### **Specialness and Other Thoughts**

Welcome to our April Newsletter and the lovely autumn palette adorning our running landscape. On Committee, we continue to explore and investigate initiatives to further increase the specialness of being a Spartan. It could certainly be asserted that donning a Spartan singlet is specialness enough and nothing else is necessary. That might be true if our club was purely a record-keeping club, a body of people that simply curates a spreadsheet and sends out emails and coloured garments when runners Melbourne Marathon tallies end with a 9 or 4 enabling them to run their milestone marathon in the garment. At the risk of flattering ourselves, we really do like to think our club is so much more than a record-keeping club. This issue of specialness surfaces on Committee discussions quite regularly and I find it to be one full of contradictions. The humble side of our personality might say we shouldn't set ourselves apart from other runners, but ironically that's exactly what we do once we don a Spartan singlet, either running around the Tan or in an official event. Over the years it has been quite challenging getting Spartans to send in their special achievements or to even talk about them. I guess for those of us on the other side of sixty it allegedly comes from a good place in that most of us were raised not to gloat or big-note ourselves or our achievements ... that indulging in self-deprecating behaviour or running ourselves down instead was a somehow more noble pursuit vaguely associated with humility. During social distancing parameters of the COVID years, particularly 2021, we lost our specialness due to there being no Expo Tent and Race-day Tent. On Committee, we were scratching around for anything to facilitate some specialness for Spartans on the day. We were very fortunate to be supported by IMG, allowing us to set up a Spartans photo podium just to the right of the Finish Line on the famous turf of the MCG. We slightly improved the podium and the experience itself in 2022 and are planning further improvements to both this year. What I'm getting at here is that on Committee, as a representative body we are mandated to think objectively in terms of what would enhance the Spartan experience (the average Spartan whoever that is, everyperson Spartan, the quintessential Spartan, the majority of Spartans) instead of subjectively what we ourselves personally would or wouldn't be comfortable with. Importantly, whichever version of anything is decided upon in any group around the world won't have 100% consensus, so

with our specialness initiatives, some Spartans will think some proposals are too 'out-there' while others not 'out-there' enough. Additional to current measures, other initiatives being tossed around are framed certificates issued at the Tent for incoming and milestone Spartans, several Spartan cheer-squad stations comprising family and significant others scattered around the course as well as a separate Spartans finishing chute at the Finish Line leading to the Spartans Photo Podium.

We have quite a few Spartans flying off to exciting international events so whether you're jetting off overseas or perhaps interstate for our iconic Oz marathons please drop us a couple of paragraphs or pics for the Newsletter. Additionally, if you're participating in other events such as Triathlons, Comrades, Ultras, City to Surf or Around the Bay in a Day, do share your experiences and pics as these are also fantastic experiences that keep us all in good nick for our own beloved Melbourne Marathon.

Wishing Peter Seal a speedy recovery after tweaking his knee during this morning's run. Hopefully the scans are favourable mate!

Our Spartans Club Runs at The Tan on the fourth Sunday of every month have a terrific and therapeutic vibe and after everyone does as many laps as they feel like doing, we generally consume some caffeine and stick around for a couple of hours. If you haven't joined us yet or for a while, we'd love to see you so please pop down! I find the conversations quite insightful and often downright hilarious which is a fantastic way to start a Sunday. We're also getting Spartans pets and family members attending which contributes to a relaxing homely atmosphere. And I'm not quite sure how we have managed this but the Weather Gods always look after us as I genuinely can't remember ever getting drenched at a Club Run. Happy autumn running Spartans!

*"You are gold. Do not set yourself on fire to keep other people warm."*

- Sade Andria Zabala

## **The Auburn Hotel**

Special shout-out to Spartan Membership Secretary Felicity Doolan for investigating and negotiating venue options for our Committee Meetings as we move past the COVID Zoom era. We are over the moon with our new home at the Auburn Hotel (formerly the Geebung Polo Club). On Meeting nights, some of us will meet for a bite of dinner around 6pm and then retire upstairs to the Boardroom for the Meeting proper. We also plan to schedule Spartan fundraiser trivia nights there for CPEC or book a Spartans table at their existing trivia nights.

## **Spartan Membership**

To further enhance the Spartan experience, we will be seeking to raise the annual Spartan Membership. Several costs have increased in the 12 years since we last raised fees so at the September AGM we will be moving a motion to increase membership fees which will help enhance benefits for our ever-increasing membership base.

## Nine-year Spartans

Going forward, we are extending the opportunity to Melbourne Marathon 9-year runners about to be presented with their green singlet at the next AGM to be our guest on a Committee night of their choice. Invitations will be emailed to gauge expressions of interest as our Meetings are on a Monday night in Auburn which may be unsuitable for many. We figure that by the time someone has completed 9 Melbourne Marathons, they are likely to have much to contribute regarding initiatives to improve both the event and the Club. It is also a good opportunity for runners to attend a Committee Meeting to see if it might be something for them going forward. I strongly believe a representative body like ours ought to be as inclusive as possible by opening itself up to attendance and contributions.

## Spartan Networking

As well as being inclusive with our Spartan members, I have also attempted to network with similar milestone organisations linked to notable marathons in Australia and around the world. I have already received several replies and expressions of interest from interstate and overseas. We are certainly no Parkrun, but I've been totally blown away by what Parkrun have managed to achieve. Basically, what I see 'networking' looking like is:

- inviting their member/s online to one of our Committee Meetings or
- organising reciprocal homestay arrangements for a night or two with runners' families or
- participating in one of our regular club runs or
- joining us for one of our Club dinners, trivia nights or movie nights or
- sharing any effective initiatives for members at Committee level
- contributing noteworthy or human interest pieces from their club/members to our Newsletter/website

I would like to increase the visibility of Spartans on the international landscape so if you have overseas contacts to pass on, please help me take Spartans around the world. My longer-term goal is to gauge interest in forming an International Association of Milestone Events Clubs, which may come to nought, but I won't know unless I try!

## Odd Spot

A NSW-based GP has found herself embroiled in controversy after [race organisers discovered](#) she used a car for part of an 80km ultra-marathon in which she claimed third place.

## I've been thinking ...

We've had some real 'thinking outside the box' initiatives explode from some Spartans as they channel their version of '[the ideas man](#)' from 'The Castle'.

One such initiative from a regular Spartan 'ideas man' is the re-tooling of old penny coins with the Spartan logo on one side as pendants or keyrings. We'll explore this further as I have over a hundred of these.

## Recipe

# Anzac Biscuit Recipe

## Ingredients

- 125 grams (4oz) butter, chopped
- 2 tablespoons golden syrup or treacle (see tips)
- 1/2 teaspoon bicarbonate of soda (baking soda)
- 2 tablespoons boiling water
- 1 cup (90g) rolled oats (see tips)
- 1 cup (150g) plain (all-purpose) flour
- 1 cup (220g) firmly packed brown sugar
- 3/4 cup (60g) desiccated coconut



## Method

Preheat oven to 180°C/350°F. Grease two large oven trays; line with baking paper.

Stir butter and syrup in a medium saucepan over low heat until smooth. Stir in combined soda and the water, then remaining ingredients.

Roll level tablespoons of mixture into balls; place 5cm (2in) apart on lined trays, then flatten slightly.

Bake for 12 minutes or until golden. Cool biscuits on trays

## Tips

Spray your measuring spoon with a little cooking oil spray before scooping up the golden syrup; this will help prevent the syrup sticking to the spoon. Make sure you use rolled oats rather than quick-cooking oats as they will produce a different result. Store biscuits in an airtight container for up to 1 week.

- Courtesy of Women's Weekly Food Recipes

## Shameless Clickbait to get you to visit our website – Dad Joke

Q. What do you call a woman who throws her bills on the fire?

A. [Bernadette](#).



**MY STORY** Nick Toovey S0293

It all began in 1975 when John Waite (S158), a colleague from NZ whose gracious welcome to me was to invite me to join him on a run one lunch time at the school we worked in. Having played AFL footy during my schooldays in the late 1960's, I had never really thought about long distance running as a sport for me. But being light of frame and a competitive bloke by nature, I found I could keep up with John during our regular run. You see John (whose nickname was 'Wizza') was known for his sub-three-hour marathon running reputation.

It wasn't long before John invited me to join him one Sunday morning on the Annual Frankston-Hastings run on the Mornington Peninsula to celebrate the Battle of Hastings. When I finished in the top ten, not far behind John, I felt I had won my own little battle over those 13k.

**From those early days, I soon graduated to longer distances and had a crack at my first marathon in 1978. To my horror, I really hadn't thought it through, finishing my first Melbourne Marathon in the time of 4h18m. I was wrecked! But I was not deterred. With one Big M under my belt, I knew what kind of training and preparation was needed if I was to improve. With John's on-going encouragement, my second Marathon was a much happier experience, finishing in 3h17m.**

**And so, year by year, and with regular running of 10-12k pretty well every day, my times gradually came down to 3h7m, then 2h57m, then in 1982 my personal best of 2h47m.**

**I could not have improved my times like this without the support, advice and encouragement of John and of my wife and growing family of four kids during the 1980's and 1990's who loved to look out for their crazy dad along the route from Frankston to Melbourne.**

**Since those great days, my times began to go in the other direction, bottoming out at 3h35m, and then slower still. But of all the clubs I belong to, it is the SPARTANS that I value the most and prize the most passionately. You can't buy membership to this club and no one can gift it to you. You have to run ten marathons to earn it, pure and simple.**

**That green singlet takes pride of place in my drawer dedicated to all my running gear. I was horrified earlier this year when I feared I had left it behind in Coober Pedy where we stayed on our way to Alice Springs for a teaching role at an aboriginal boarding school this term. Kindly the manager found it for me and forwarded it to the school. In the meantime I had ordered a replacement anyway. To be without my SPARTAN 'badge of honour' would be like losing a leg.**

Sadly, it's my knees that have given out. Osteo arthritis has taken up residence in my right knee which never came back after a second meniscus 'tidy up'. I have not run since early 2012.

But I continue to enjoy the legacy of my forty-odd years of running. Using the core fitness my running gave me, I have walked the Kokoda track four times and plan a fifth one in June this year. I have also enjoyed strong mental health and I have managed the anxieties and pressure of life all the better for my running and belief in the value of physical exercise. My four children have adopted the same core belief into their adult years too.

So thank you SPARTAN for giving me more than I could ever have imagined when I first went for that lunchtime run with John Waite, my inspiration all those years ago in 1975. John passed away two years ago and I had the privilege of speaking at his funeral where I shared the story of how his handshake of welcome was to invite me on a run. We could never have known then what that gesture would lead to. Go Wizza! Go Spartans!





**293 MELBOURNE MARATHONS**

**David Foskey S25**

The photo below shows a gathering of veteran Spartans late last year. At the left hand of the table are Wayne Thompson, John Dobson and David Foskey who have all finished 44 Melbourne Marathons. From back right we have Jim Yatomi-Clarke (34), Bruce "Digger" Hargreaves (43), Bryan Flegg (41) and Roger Weinstein (43).



The occasion was Bruce's visit to Melbourne where he joined Bryan, Roger, Jim and David who run regularly around Malvern streets, starting and finishing adjacent to the John Landy Oval. Wayne and John visited. "Coffee and Soul" provide coffee and the venue.

**TATTOOS**

**David Foskey S25**



The above is a selection of the Spartan tattoos we have seen. We would like to add them to a page on the website, but we need MORE. If you have a Spartan tattoo, please send a clear photo of it [to me](#).

**GRAPHS**

**David Foskey S25**

Over the years I have published several graphs in newsletters and collected them [on the website](#). Some haven't been updated for recent marathons, so please [let me know](#) if you would like to see any graph recalculated with current data.

## **WOULD YOU LIKE TO CONTRIBUTE TO THE NEWSLETTER? David Foskey**

Do you have a story about your path to becoming a Spartan, or would you like to pay a tribute? We prefer articles in the range of 200 to 2000 words, but that's a guide only. Contact us to discuss at [djfoskey@ozemail.com.au](mailto:djfoskey@ozemail.com.au) If you have missed a deadline, don't worry, there is always the next issue!

If you have some photographs that you would like to add to our [photographs collection](#), please send them in!

## **JOIN OUR MAILING LIST**

If you would like to be added to our mailing list or if you know someone who might like to join, [please use this link](#)

We have lost contact with many of our older members. If you know a Spartan who doesn't receive our emails and is on email, please encourage them to use the above link. We deliberately limit the number of emails we send, and all have an unsubscribe link.

## **MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL NOW BEING ACCEPTED FOR 2022/2023**

The Spartan financial year is 1 July to 30 June, so fees for 2022/2023 are now being accepted. Can't remember if you have paid for 2022/23? Look up your name via this link: <http://melbournemarathonspartans.com/financial-spartans/>.

<b>\$20 via EFT:</b> Melbourne Marathon Spartans Club BSB: 633-000 Account No: 139201743  Please include name and/or Spartan Number	<b>Cheque for \$20 via Post:</b> "Melbourne Marathon Spartans Club" PO Box 162 Rosanna Vic 3084  Please include name and/or Spartan Number
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You can also now [pay online](#).

If you are a current member, you do not need to fill in a Membership Form\* but please advise of any changes to your contact details via [spartans.team@hotmail.com](mailto:spartans.team@hotmail.com). OR\*: download the [membership form](#) and email or post it in.



## SPARTAN MERCHANDISE

Merchandise can now be ordered online through [this link](#).



T-Shirt Models Candida Baskcomb SF0106, Mandy Skipper SF0066, Vilim Podreka S1052, Jay Fleming S1012, Lorraine Allen SF0011, Anthony Egan S1158 above are wearing different milestone T-shirts. [Check out the other options](#) available, including a generic training shirt which can come with long-sleeves.

There are also still copies of ["The Wall"](#) available at the bargain price of \$10.



We have clips that can be used to secure race numbers to race tops. They have been adopted by many clubs here and overseas, and look as if they were designed for our logo. The selling price is \$5 plus postage.



Bufs are available again, just in time for Winter training.

Just \$16



Caps and visors are available in black or white, priced at \$25.



Lapel pins are a new item, priced at \$5



Anyone seeking a jacket or vest will be pleased to know that we now have a [Melbourne based supplier](#).

We have some copies of Doug Wilson's book "Kundalini Running" available for \$20. Contact Jay Fleming at [flemingjay2@gmail.com](mailto:flemingjay2@gmail.com).

Our buffs, caps, lapel pins, stickers are described on the website [here](#).

## **SPARTANS' CLUB STATEMENT OF PURPOSE**

To advance the sport of marathon running to athletes of all ages and abilities and to encourage and assist all runners to achieve Melbourne Marathon Spartan status.

To provide a platform and environment for runners to receive and to build upon their achievements enabling progression through the various Spartan milestone singlet colours.

Assist in the promotion and publicity of the Melbourne Marathon and the charities it supports.

## **BENEFITS OF BEING A SPARTAN**

The Melbourne Marathon Spartans Club is a club consisting of marathon runners from all walks of life, ages and abilities that have achieved Spartan status by having completed ten Melbourne Marathons.

The benefits of membership include [regular newsletters](#), being presented with a Spartan singlet after ten years and subsequent milestone Spartan singlets each five years, and the opportunity to attend our AGM to hear a top-line guest speaker.

Our [monthly Sunday runs](#) enable members to do a lap or two of the Tan at their own pace and enjoy a social coffee afterwards.

We have a stand at the pre-marathon expo to meet with members, exhibit some of our memorabilia and sell merchandise.

On marathon day we have a tent where bags can be stored securely. After run refreshments and free massages are provided as well as the opportunity to rest and chat. In 2021 we began photographing Spartans just past the finish line to create a [gallery of finishers](#).



**Life Members**

Paul Basile, Peter Battrick, Rod Bayley, John Dean, John Dobson, Peter Feldman, Jay Fleming, David Foskey, Jack Fredrickson, Christine Hodges, Ken Matchett (Dec'd), Conor McNeice, John Raskas, Peter Ryan, Colin Silcock-Delaney, Maureen Wilson, Ron Young (Dec'd), Shirley Young (Dec'd)

<b>COMMITTEE</b>		
<b>President</b>	Jay Fleming	0418 374 783
<b>Vice President</b>	Paul Basile	0439 718 281
<b>Treasurer</b>	Rod Bayley	9077 7192
<b>Co-Secretary</b>	Anne Ziogos	9592 4481
<b>Membership Secretary</b>	Felicity Doolan	0411 405 529
<b>Co-Secretary</b>	Vicky Chung	
<b>Committee</b>	Kai Ooi	
<b>Committee</b>	John Zeleznikow	
<b>Webmaster</b>	David Foskey	0432 146 747
<b>Committee</b>	John Dobson	0412 688 287
<b>Committee</b>	John Kaparelis	0447 447 448