

# THE SPARTAN

**CLUB PATRON - Robert de Castella**

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

Here we are in the August of a year none of us will ever forget. I sincerely hope that you and your loved ones are making the best of our upside-down existence. As a result of increased time at home due to a combination of restrictions and industry closures, many have found skills they never knew they had while others have honed skills they previously had little time to hone. Some back yards, gardens and landscaping have never received so much attention ... and some relationships between family members that have previously only had brief interactions during the morning kitchen routine, have been strengthened (and some weakened) by the extra time spent together. We have all learned so much about ourselves, each other and society as a whole.

Hopefully you have managed to maintain your mental health by remaining as active as your circumstances allow. For the majority of 2020 there has been very little certainty about anything, including whether the Melbourne Marathon would actually take place or go the same way as the other great marathons and be cancelled ... or to have some other proposed token offering in its place. Suggestions have included staggered cohort starts to enable social distancing which could also have led to other potential challenges both at the start and during the event. Virtual runs have also been floated as a viable option but at this point haven't been recognised as an official result by any of the organisers of notable events globally that have cancelled their physical event. Virtual runs certainly have a very useful role to play in connectedness of runners globally and also with the raising of funds for some very worthy causes including our own patron Deeks' NAIDOC. However, to even consider using virtual apps as an equivalent of the physical event for statistical purposes, a number of seemingly insurmountable barriers would need to be overcome, which to date hasn't been done successfully anywhere.

Due to the current and ongoing holding pattern in Victoria, IMG has announced a suspension of new event registrations as from August 7 on the website and have posted a [concise explanation](#) of the currently available options.

For us as a Spartan Committee, our determinations have basically revolved around how we proceed if the event doesn't go ahead at all ... or doesn't proceed on the scheduled date. These are some of the proposals we will be dealing with at our next two meetings:

- Runners on a streak of runs will not have that streak broken due to a cancelled event.
- Spartans number (total) of completed Melbourne Marathons has always been inextricably linked to the recorded number of successfully completed Melbourne Marathons. This automatically rules out some well-intentioned suggestions we have received from Spartans proposing we ratify the attending of other marathons outside restricted zones and have them somehow count toward the official Spartan completed total. Even when we get to the other side of the current hard borders and movement restrictions, this is simply not an option, but again thank you for your suggestions.
- We have also had suggestions of organising a separate Spartans Marathon event which again, depending on numbers, would have some significant barriers, not only with organising an event during restrictions, but also with proportionate insurance coverage and infrastructure support like drink stations, first aid, weather contingencies, police and council approvals, etc ... but again we thank members for taking the time to send in suggestions.



- The Spartans AGM at the MCG has to be cancelled because of Stage 4 restrictions so we are planning to hold a Zoom AGM, without physical singlet presentations. We will be making further announcements regarding this and what the emailing of Zoom invitations would look like.

- Assuming the physical Melbourne Marathon event doesn't happen this side of December 31, 2020, we are exploring the scheduling of all 2020 incoming and milestone singlet presentations for the 2021 AGM. On the other hand, if IMG does go ahead with a rescheduled physical event this side of December 31, say November or even December, we may have to somehow go ahead

with presentations of milestone singlets to enable Spartans to run in their new colours this year (perhaps with a socially-distanced presentation of singlets at The Tan, or something similar). In this case we would still offer the option to these runners to be retrospectively included in the official 2021 singlet presentations at the MCG, along with the official 2021 milestone recipients. If the event gets cancelled this year, there would be no differential between 2020 and 2021 singlet recipients as runners' individual completed marathon totals would remain the same ... i.e. nobody new would become eligible in 2021 that wasn't eligible in 2020 as completed Melbourne Marathon numbers wouldn't have incremented by one.

We remain committed to keeping you informed of unfolding events in a timely manner. We thank you for your patience as we, in our humble position on Committee, are simply not in a position to know more than IMG announces, who in turn are not in a position to know more than the announcements of state restrictions, which in turn are strictly dependent on transmission rates and sources of COVID19.

I wish you and your loved ones the best journey possible as we run to the other side of this.

*'A man there was, and they called him mad; the more he gave, the more he had' – John Bunyan*

## My First REALLY Fast Marathon Wayne Thompson (S78, Spartan Legend)

In 1979, I ran my first sub 3 in Melbourne. 2h59m. Then I ran a 34m19sec track 10km in the December. Training hard all summer I thought I should be able to run a 2h48m.

So, in June 1980, I ran the VAAA at Laverton, went out on 2h50 pace, ran out of confidence, guts, sugar, at 36k, walked a half km, was handed a few jelly beans, raced on to a 2hr 55m bitterly self-annoyed.

In August 1980 I intended to run the Country Benalla marathon, I had trained hard for a year and was sure a 2.48 was in me, but a stressed inner lower leg tendon, (flexor digitorum longus) felt like a knife wound each step about early August and demanded two weeks swimming, no running.

So, came October, the Melbourne. Almost terrifying after really 18 months over 100km per week. On paper, ready for a 2.40. In my HEAD, I was a 2.55. That's all I had done so that's all I was.

I had really prepared for 4 marathons, the 79 hot run, where survival was the only objective. The VAAA failure. The country injury scratching. Now the Melbourne.

I headed out of Frankston solidly but still erring on the side of caution. A PB will be good. A sub 2.50 great. A sub 2.45, well, butterflies in the tummy, can I do that, I took 2 years, 1977 to 1979, for the 3.13 to 2.59 improvement, who am I kidding that now I can run 2.45? Certainly keep your mouth shut boy.

Around half way, along comes Trevor Vincent, and Tony Cook. Two former Olympic Games athletes. Tony has been a friend for a year and I ask if I can sit in behind them? Fine, welcome, do some work too if you can, we are on a sub 2.50 train. We encounter a petite young lady at 25km who says she is Rosemary Longstaff. On reflection my well-meaning comment "you're doing well" was patronising, and I noted much later that her 2hr 46min to be first female was a superb job.

The miles just go by and I focus on Tony's pale blue Glenhuntly singlet. 30k OK! I love it as Tony and Trevor are my heroes, (as was Ron Clarke, Glenhuntly world record holder supreme, my absolute hero), so just focus on Tony in the blue. No idea how we are going but somewhere around 36k Tony slips back, I am now terrified I am a fool going too fast, but, it's really comfortable, and I am just sliding with Trevor. Don't think, relax, float, keep smooth.



At St Kilda junction we leave Beach Road, and Trevor says "come on, let's go", we have been flying for ages, it's surreal, I feel good but just can't comprehend staying with a Commonwealth Games Gold medallist over St Kilda road. He moves away and I hold good form, feeling great but don't stuff up. 4.5k to go!

The town hall appears, the line, I blast through, it's ridiculous, tired but not ragged. I turned and something, or someone tells me, it's 2h 42m, which would be nice, but no, I correct them, it's about a 2.46 I reckon, no, this time Patty has come to me, it's a 2hr 42m Wayne. No, I can't run that fast, it's a mistake. Finally,

enough evidence convinces me. 2h 42m19sec. Ok. I am a 2.42.

The lessons learned are many and help to bring a 2.40, a year later, a 2.36 just 18 months later and a couple more soon after. ( Canberra course. )

**First**, a few years is needed for a really good improvement.

**Second**. A single event focus over at least 6 months without other efforts tiring me is my best prospect. Not a series of lead up sub events.

**Third**. Caution in first half is not going to ruin a marathon. Speed will still be available in the second half to enable a several minutes quicker section.

**Fourth**. Don't despair if one preparation is not used, just continue to prepare.

**Fifth**. The Ten Km Time Multiplied by 4.666 is a very good guide, or 4.7, for a marathon time estimate, if 100km weeks for about 8 weeks are done. (*Ed note: 10 times your Parkrun time is also a good rule of thumb.*)

**Sixth**. Certainly at least 6 runs of 30km are a huge help in the 12 week build.

**Seventh**. A good group can be a significant mental, possibly physical help.

I hope this helps some of the readers.

I am not anything special, hero, legend, or even very good.

I am just a bloke who trained, got a result he liked.

That's all. Not modest, just that's all I am.

Like all runners I just want everyone to have a great, fun, satisfying, happy, healthy life. If all this babble helps you then I am happy.

Best regards to all.

You have a long life to do, have, what you want.

We are the most fortunate people on this planet.

Be grateful and love every minute, and people.

## Road to Spartan Kai Ooi (S1346)

### Life through the lens of a Singaporean based in Australia

My running journey started when I was a kid. Winning medals of all distances with dreams of going to the Olympics...yeah right... I did not grow up in a very active family. Unlike many Aussie kids, sport and running did not feature in my childhood, and the few times it did, I was reluctant.



I grew up in Singapore & Malaysia, before coming to Australia for university in 2009.

For as long as I can remember, I was a fat kid for the majority of my childhood. Going through primary and high school in Singapore meant being fat automatically entered me into the 'TAF Trim & Fit' club, reserved for the select group of students who were horizontally challenged. People in the TAF club had to do runs/exercise usually before school or during recess, supervised by a physical education teacher. Canteen stall holders were instructed not to sell TAF club kids certain food, mainly oily, unhealthy fried stuff, and even milk.

Being in the TAF club was a negative label. Kids can say some mean things! 'Haha, TAF club means you're fat' was common, but it was the truth. I was not motivated to get fit. All I wanted to do was to stuff my face with ice-cream and get the dopamine hit. Why wasn't I motivated? I think the best answer is that the source of motivation has to be innate. You actually have to want to achieve something yourself. Telling someone they are overweight does not motivate them to get fit. Smokers know smoking is bad for their health, but they still smoke. Same analogy. I hated anything physical, but I did love watching sport and screaming at the TV (Life long Liverpool FC supporter.)

So, why did I decide to get fit? Maybe it was to prove that I could? More realistically, it was to save 2 months off serving in the Singapore army. At age 19 after Year 12 in high school, Singaporean males have to serve National Service for 24 months. Here's the incentive. If you could pass a fitness test at age 18, time served would be reduced by 2 months. The fitness test consisted of a 'sit and reach', sit-ups, standing broad jumps, shuttle run, chin-ups, and a 2.4km run. To get fit, I started running around the block, increasing the distance gradually. Somehow I passed the test and saved myself 2 months.

My first half marathon was at 2007, aged 19. Every fit person in the army had to participate. At this stage I ran (walked) it because I was forced to do it, finishing in around 2.5 hours. My first marathon was a year later. Unlike the half marathon the year before, no one forced me to run the Singapore marathon. I wanted to do it. This coincided with a running boom in Singapore/Asia. I wanted to say I was a marathon 'runner'. Also, I would not normally admit this, but I wanted to get the finisher T-shirt. So I started training. Well...I thought I started training. My longest training run was 18km. I had no idea regarding training, nutrition, carbohydrate loading, tapering or recovery. I thought I could 'wing it'. But as we all find out, in running and life in general, you get out what you put in. Over a marathon distance, there's no hiding a lack of training. I had 2 toilet breaks where I had to do a number 2, and loads more where I had to do a number 1. Brown fluid was coming out, and it hurt. My kidneys were in overdrive, but I didn't know what was happening to me. I was scared. 5:45:27 for my debut marathon. After the race I forced water down my throat. I survived.

In 2009, I left Singapore for Australia. Naïve 21 year old ready to explore a new land. My sister had already been living in Melbourne for a few years, so settling in was easy.

My first Australian marathon (Melbourne) was in 2010. The experience was amazing. The vibrancy, tense energy, nervousness and months of training, all to battle that 42.195km. There were 3 pacers, 1 in the front running to gun time, 1 in the middle keeping the group together, 1 at the back running to chip time, all wearing balloons. Bruce Hargreaves (S39) aka Digger was the 4:30 pacer. By far one of the best pacers I have met. I cannot imagine someone running a 4:30 marathon, and still have the energy to chat, motivate and inspire. I lost sight of Digger's group when I had to stop for a pee, and subsequently missed the 4:30 time, finishing 4:34, still very happy with that time. I did catch up with him afterwards to give thanks. Digger was the Australian ambassador for the Comrades Marathon in South Africa, advertising Comrades while pacing! 2010 was my introduction to Australian marathons, to Digger, and to Comrades.

I would probably consider 2013 my best Melbourne Marathon. It was the first race where I did not walk. Around the 31km mark at the bottom of Fitzroy St in St Kilda, mentally I was done, I was prepared to stop. Glen Lockwood (S1348) aka Horrie from Sydney was the 4 hour pacer, he saw me and announced to the whole bus/group that 'Kai is not walking up



this hill'. I wanted to kill him, I wanted to walk/stop. But how could I, when it was announced publicly that 'I would not walk'. So, no I didn't stop, one foot in front of the other, kilometre by kilometre ticking away. That got me my first sub 4.

2019 (Spartan Year) was disappointing for me. I trained for it, but fell ill. I have a tendency to fall ill with a cold before big races, usually the week before. Why? Man flu? I am not sure, but it has happened more than once. Wonderland 2018, Melbourne 2018 and Melbourne 2019 come to mind. I was in great shape leading into the run, but the body just did not perform as well as it could. I tried to follow my race plan/pace, but I couldn't cope. I was recovering from a cold, and should have known to go out slower. A friend from parkrun gave it to me straight 'As a Spartan, you should know better.' He was right, I should have paced better. Nonetheless, glad to have number 10 Melbourne Marathon ticked off ☺

Running in Australia has shown me the difference in mentality between Singaporeans and Australians. Disclaimer: This is a broad generalisation. In Singapore, people 'run' a marathon in 7 or 8 hours. There's no shame in walking the whole course, you still get the medal and T shirt. In Australia however, sub 4 seems to be the unofficial benchmark for a true marathon runner. Singaporean pacers are extremely focused, very professional. They are there to get a job done, even pace, come in at a certain time, like a metronome tick tock tick tock. Aussie pacers also get the job done, but they tend to talk, tell stories and drum up motivation better.

Here are some interesting statistics using gun time:

There were 10184 runners who finished the 2019 Singapore marathon.

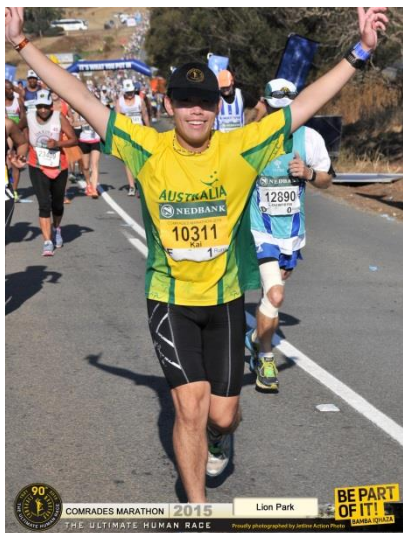
Running a sub 4 would get you 365th position. Top 3.58% in the field.

Running a sub 3 would get you 42nd place. Top 0.41% in the field.

In comparison with the 2019 Melbourne Marathon, there were 7020 finishers.

Running a sub 4 would get you 2965th position. Top 42.24%

Running a sub 3 would get you 339th position. Top 4.83%



No story is complete without mentioning the Comrades Marathon. Why it is called a marathon and not an ultra, I have no idea. Comrades is a hilly 86-90km race held in South Africa, alternating between Durban and Pietermaritzburg every year. There is a 12 hour cut off, and strict time limits along the course. Sounds daunting...yes it is. However, it is an experience of a lifetime. Imagine the Rainbow nation coming together for that one special day, cheering on 21000+ runners brave enough to tackle the route. For the whole day, there is a live feed of the race on South African TV, and on YouTube for international viewers. Thousands of spectators line the streets, cheering on runners while enjoying a beer & braai (barbecue). No one cares about your skin colour, race, religion, class or the things that segregate us in day to day life. Everyone is cheered, making us feel like superstars. And when the going gets tough (it does), there is always someone to help. In 2014, I was 30km into the

race, with 60km to go and wanted to pull out. I was wondering what I was doing on the other side of the world, running such a hard race which I had no hope of completing. I went to the side of the road, slowed down to a crawl, glad I was wearing sunglasses so people around me could not see my watery eyes. At that moment, a big black South African guy put his arm around me, and said 'Just keep going, one foot in front of the other.' I followed his

advice, one foot at a time, 1km turned into 2km, which turned into 5km. It was magic. I was ok! I was going to make it, and I did. I never got his name, and cannot remember what he looked like either, but thank you!

I have 2 finishes, 2014 & 2015, a 'back to back'. 2020 was supposed to be number 3, but life has unfortunately been put on hold. I would like to make it back next year, with Covid-19 hopefully a distant memory. Comrades is one of the best race experiences I have ever had. Words can do this run no justice. You have to experience it in person.

I will finish this article with a quote from Bach, an ex-teammate of mine when I used to play hockey. Bach used to say 'If you're lazy on the pitch, you're lazy off it.' I believe this rings true for hockey, running and life in general. You need to put in the effort to achieve what you want. Success does not just appear magically, but with some motivation, action & luck, you are one step closer to the goal.

### The Imperial 20 – a King Island Odyssey Peter Seal (S1218)

(with apologies to Homer)

**Day 1 - Thursday, March 5** The King Island Imperial 20 has long held a fascination. My wife Gerri did not require much persuasion. We couldn't think of a better way to spend a holiday long weekend in March, especially as it happened to coincide with our wedding anniversary. We hadn't visited this little gem before, a beautiful and rugged outpost of Tasmania. It would not have been out of place in one of Homer's epics.

At a time and in a world which thankfully was prior to the COVID-19 lockdown, we set out from Essendon Airport, grateful that we were about to embark on our own mini-Odyssey. Travel to King Island is possible only by air. Our 19-seat twin turboprop metroliner with its crew of two effortlessly and safely transported us away from the gloomy and drizzly conditions in Melbourne, to our destination in Bass Strait, approximately half way between Cape Otway and Tasmania's northwest tip. It was not quite rockstar travel, but the closest we would be likely to be in a Learjet! The guys from Sharp were abundantly friendly and professional in their duty. We shared our cabin with some golfers who were heading to another of the island's chief attractions. The finale of the approximately 45-minute flight drew us to our destination on an elongated stretch of terrain shaped a little bit like a cigar, reminiscent of Kardinia Park. Our black-and-white leaning President Jay, with a monocular vision not dissimilar to one of the Cyclops (Book 9), would be thrilled with this reference to the mighty Geelong Football Club!

Arrival at the not quite bustling King Island Airport was quickly succeeded by the reception of a hire car, organised well in advance. With no formal taxi service or ride share option, care hire is a necessity. A short 10-minute drive brought us to King Island's main town Currie and served as an appetiser to the scenic delights that lay ahead. We had booked a cosy hotel cottage which would serve as our warm and restful base for the next 5 days. Accommodation is plentiful, and consists mainly of the bed-and-breakfast variety.

Currie is a small coastal hamlet featuring a harbour, a lighthouse, a kelp farm, some shops, places to eat and drink, a town hall, some churches, a school, a bush medical centre, a racetrack, and of course, a footy oval. With limited internet access, and without a Telstra

phone plan, a SIM card was a necessity, and easily bought from the general store. The virus of panic buying hadn't quite yet spread to King Island. Toilet paper was available still!

For dinner, we sampled some delightful local produce at the King Island Golf and Bowling Club, less than 5 minutes' walk from where we were staying. As the sun sank westward, we had an unblemished view of the well-kept fairways of the 9-hole course, the craggy



coastline, and the potentially hazardous waters of Bass Strait. If a boat set out and headed due west into the face of the roaring forties, just slightly north of the 40th Parallel South, it would next hit land in Argentina about 7000 km away!

**Day 2 - Friday, March 6** After brekkie, in the misty cool of the morning, we both jogged a short loop of the Currie township. The crisp conditions did not deter the cute but not very intelligent native wallabies. We were to learn that these bounding bundles of fur were ubiquitous on King Island, particularly around the roads.

En route on the run was the Currie Recreation Reserve, headquarters of the idiosyncratic King Island Football Association, a unique Aussie Rules league which has comprised just 3 clubs for almost the last 40 years. It is possible for a team to be wooden spooners and premiers in the one season! Each winter there is a fierce triangular rivalry amongst the Currie Robins, the Grassy Hawks, and the North Bulldogs. The weekly sole KIFA match is one of the strongest social glues on the island. We would be venturing over to Grassy in a little while.

We picked up the race bib, and met some of the event organisers at their King Island Hotel base, immediately outside which the finish line set would be set up. The Imperial 20 merchandise was eye-catching and well designed. I acquired a hoodie and some shirts. We had booked dinner for the evening in Grassy, and decided to drive over there in the afternoon for a reconnoitre.

Grassy is an old scheelite mining town on the south-east coast. Scheelite is a mineral ore of tungsten, a rare and precious metal used in the manufacture of certain alloy steels and electric-light filaments. King Island has heaps of it around Grassy, where it has been mined for a little more than a century. During the 1970's, Grassy had a population of around 700 and was thriving. A decade later, tungsten prices worldwide began to decline, and by 1992, its mining there became non-viable despite its vast reserves. It was then that the scheelite mine ceased production after operating for 75 years. Grassy once proudly boasted a picture theatre and an indoor pool, whilst currently it is a shadow of its former self. It wasn't quite a sojourn to the ghosts of the past in Hades (Book 11), but it obviously had seen better days. There is a more optimistic air right now, with the tungsten market on the rise once more, and much talk about a resumption in the scheelite trade.

We returned to Grassy in the evening to celebrate our wedding anniversary with a beautiful meal at *Wild Harvest*, undoubtably the premier restaurant on King Island. I was able to wine and dine my Penelope (Book 19), without any concerns about pesky suitors. We were



treated to the very best of the native delicacies, and to sample a little of the vast cellar. The chef and owner was somewhat someone of a local hero. Some time ago, legend has it that with the township of Grassy on the brink of extinction, he purchased it for one dollar!

Prior to our return in the relative hustle and bustle of Currie for the night, we were encouraged to visit the parading penguins as they emerged from the shallows on the Grassy foreshore. After a seeming eternity before we spied the first waddle, the biting breeze and a feeling of impending hypothermia put paid to our continuing forbearance.

**Day 3 - Saturday, March 7 (Race Eve)** We enjoyed a delicious egg and bacon roll at the Golf Club on a bright, sunny and crisp beginning to the weekend. The Produce of King Island, or POKI, market was worth a look at the Currie Town Hall. We headed east for Naracoopa, a small coastal village, to check out where tomorrow's long trek would commence. Naracoopa was solely a collection of seaside dwellings, and not much more.

Next stop was the northern point of the island, the magnificent Cape Wickham. A postcard picture golf course has been constructed, and opened less than 5 years ago, known as Cape Wickham Links. It is a mecca for golfing aficionados, who often stay in comfort for a few days. The links have been rated in the top 25 courses in the world by *Golf Digest*. It is watched over by the tallest lighthouse in Australia. The majestic Cape Wickham Lighthouse stands 48 metres high. It was commissioned during the late 19th century in order to provide some nocturnal illumination over the western part of Bass Strait, with its counterpart at Cape Otway.

Off the Northwest coast, we had time to go for a bit of a trail walk, and to check out the only visible wreckage of any of the many shipwrecks that have plagued King Island in its maritime past timeline. The old boilers from the steamer ship *Shannon* still can be seen easily from the beach in Quarantine Bay.

The afternoon brought the commencement of the Imperial 20 festivities. It kicked off at Porky Beach on the west coast, north of Currie. There was a 3.2 km Fun Run popular with kids. This was followed by the Free Willie nudey sprint for the more intrepid, particularly those less inclined to 'feel the breeze', as the motto goes! They ran as if they were negotiating some safe passage between the Scylla and Charybdis (Book 12)!

Saturday evening was when the Carbo Dinner was held, perfect for loading in anticipation of the exertions which lay ahead on the following morning. The *Boomerang by the Sea* restaurant was the venue, and this was very convenient for us, as it was a short stroll up the hill from our place. The traditional guest speaker spot fell to a 20 year-old elite cyclist, Liam Edwards. Liam didn't disappoint, and gave an inspiring and gruelling account of his return from a car accident in which he sustained a severe hand injury. He is hoping to be selected for Tokyo, now to be in 2021, for either the Olympic and Paralympic Teams, or both. He will be one to watch. In the spirit of the occasion, he would be competing in one of the relay teams, as needless to say, he also was a decent runner. We met many locals and fellow travellers alike, and we felt that we were in fine company. There were loyalists who had hailed from as far away as New York!

**Day 4 - Sunday, March 8 (Race Day)** Race day had dawned! Perhaps as a premonition of the social distancing that was about to be imposed upon the nation and the entire world, I elected not to catch the 6am bus to Naracoopa. Gerri kindly allowed me some extra kip, and drove me out there a little later. Before setting off, we were sheltered from the cold

at *Baudins*, a lovely place across the road from the sea. It unfortunately no longer functions as a restaurant. There was plentiful warmth and breakfast food, and of course coffee.

The run is handicapped, with the runners having their starts spread out over about 90 minutes. From 7am onwards, the individual walkers, walking teams, runners and running relays were dispatched by the starter. There were several events, mainly over either 32 km or 8 km. 32 km, or 20 miles in the old imperial measurement, hence the name, is the distance from Naracoopa to Currie. The King Island Imperial 20 apparently is the only coast-to-coast race anywhere in Australia. The 8 km short course, from the wind turbines at the Power Station, sees walkers, including many baby strollers, runners with many school-age kids, and relay teams. Completing a full card is a junior dash for the littlest athletes, near the finish.



The handicapper could not be nobbled, as I found out beforehand, and I commenced too far towards the rear of the pack for my liking, along with the running teams of 4. The 32 km itself comprised a gentle, constant uphill for the first third, with an undulating remainder. The scenery was magnificent, with plenty of cattle country. An added bonus was the lack of rain which threatened at the start. It was a foot journey which required stamina and perseverance, but there was plenty of support along the way. Almost every one of King Island's 1600 inhabitants has some connection with the race, from the generous volunteers to the event participants. Present always along the way was the mind's occasional calling song of the Sirens urging us all to call it quits at any time (Book 12). Unlike Odysseus strapped to the mast, we were free in limb and body to plough onwards towards the finish. The joy of reaching Currie is countered somewhat by a wicked twist, in which the competitors run around and past the finishing chute, at 19 miles, towards Currie's harbour area and back, ensuring that the actual west coast features in the route. The last half of the ultimate mile is a fairly steep final hill climb, simultaneously quite tortuous and torturous! Traversing the finish line brings the usual feelings of relief and sense of achievement, not to mention a chance to be fed with more fine King Island fare, including the cheese and beef!

This year's overall winner was Vanessa Wilson, who smashed the women's 32 km running record and stopped the clock at 2.02.20. As the back marker, she ran like a machine in mowing down almost all of the field. Given that this was the Imperial 20 in the year 2020, it was a time that would have sent Stan the Statistician from Stradbroke Island into a rapture! She didn't quite catch Kate Hecker, who was the 2020 champion by handicap. Kate cruised home with an actual time of 2.53.55. Yet another female, Ricci Bishop, won the walk in 3.52.42. Congratulations to Vanessa, Kate, Ricci and everyone else who competed.

The Imperial 20 already has achieved a legendary status among the running community, occupying a pride of place in the Australian running calendar. The great Steve Moneghetti holds the men's 32 km running race record, set in 2002, of 1.37.48. Australia's current male record holder over 10km is a King Island local, Stewart McSweyn. Stewart wasn't there in March, but last month he belted out a Tan time trial in 10.12, second fastest ever and only

four seconds behind the best from Craig 'Buster' Mottram. Surely Mona's legacy in the Imperial 20 will be challenged by Stewart sometime down the track! Meanwhile in the walks, the talented Tallents set the respective 32 km events bests in 2016. Claire waltzed away with the women's in 2.52.54, while Jared strode to the men's in 2.36.33.

During the afternoon, whilst chilling out, we visited the King Island Historical Society museum just down the road, and learned some more about the island's extraordinary settlement over the past 200 years, starting with the sealers, as well as the tragic tales of multiple shipwrecks.

The night-time Recovery Dinner at *Boomerang by the Sea* rounded off the celebrations, with humorous speeches, and further fine fare and drink.

**Day 5 - Monday, March 9** We had one more full day of rest and recreation, and we made the most of it. We returned to Cape Wickham again where we enjoyed a very scenic lunch. Then we drove the length of the island from north to south, passing no more than a handful of cars. Traffic is never an issue on King Island. In many ways, it felt like a welcome step back in time.

In the evening we made it to the King Island Club where we enjoyed a hearty old-fashioned counter meal. The walls were lined with photos depicting the heroes of the Currie Football Club.

**Day 6 - Tuesday, March 10** For our last hurrah, we again ventured down beyond the 40th



Parallel to the southern-most tip known as Stokes Point. The stunningly savage setting easily could have resembled Ogygia in the Mediterranean from where Odysseus finally set off before eventually making it home to his beloved Ithaca (Book 5).

With heavy hearts, we reached the end of our journey on King Island. Like Odysseus, we finally reached home (Book 13), but only after a thoroughly enjoyable stay away.

The King Island Imperial 20 is a weekend celebration that includes something for everyone, from competitors, to volunteers and spectators alike. It is a handicap race which is nurtured by the entire rural community.

It is a must for the true believers, and a wonderful opportunity to enjoy some time in a place where nature truly remains untouched and untainted by modern urban sprawl and busyness. The festival has been in existence for 26 years now, and viruses aside, shows no signs of losing its health and prosperity. We were indeed blessed that it was held at a time, over the Labour Day weekend, prior to the isolation brought about by the pandemic.

King Island has something for everyone, from running to wonderful nature, from golf to gorgeous cuisine, from football in winter and horse racing in summer to cultural festivals, from rich history to the generous spirit of its people. It holds a timeless essence.

## CLUB RUNS

The run scheduled for September 6 has been cancelled. Watch [here](#) for details of future runs.

## 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)

## SPARTAN MERCHANDISE



Spartan buffs make a great mask for running. We are selling them for \$16, postage included. Jon Holmes (S0203) is our model



Helen van der Nagel (SF0043) is shown at left wearing the new 10 year T-shirt. [Check out the other options](#) available, including a generic training shirt.

Our caps, mugs, stickers are described [here](#).

If you would like a Spartan jacket you can order [here](#).

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).

## **MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL NOW BEING ACCEPTED FOR 2020/2021**

The Spartan financial year is 1 July to 30 June, so fees for 2020/2021 are now being accepted. Can't remember if you have paid for 2020/21? Look up your name via this link: <http://melbournemarathonspartans.com/financial-spartans/>. If you are not there you haven't paid so here's how:

<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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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.

## **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 run ten Melbourne Marathons.

The benefits of membership include regular newsletters, organised training runs, being presented with a Spartan singlet after ten years and subsequent milestone Spartan singlets each five years, the opportunity to attend our AGM and hear a top-line guest speaker, being able to avail of refreshments and free massage after finishing the marathon.



**Life Members**

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

**COMMITTEE**

<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>Secretary</b>	Anne Ziogos	9592 4481
<b>Webmaster</b>	David Foskey	0432 146 747
<b>Immediate Past President</b>	John Dean	9337 7179
<b>Committee</b>	John Dobson	0412 688 287
<b>Committee</b>	John Kaparelis	0447 447 448
<b>Committee</b>	Colin Silcock-Delaney	5598 6090
<b>Committee</b>	Felicity Doolan	
<b>Committee</b>	Matt Callaghan	
<b>Committee</b>	Vicky Chung	

If you'd like to be part of the committee, contact an existing member as shown above. Nomination forms can be found [here](#).

**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](#)