



MARATHON RUNNING
IN
SOUTH AUSTRALIA
CENTENARY 21 August 1920–2020
RE-ENACTMENT of the FIRST EVENT



Notice No. 9

Wednesday 19 August 2020

As we draw closer to the Centenary Marathon on Friday and over the weekend I am touched by the offers from several people to assist with the cost of staging it. Obviously the news that the medals have arrived from overseas in time has prompted this. I had intended to provide some sort of memento of the run but had not figured out what form it would take until I was contacted by Jim Docking who registered soon after the Adelaide Marathon was moved to 20th September. Jim correctly pointed out that people would be expecting a medal of the same type everyone receives after every event and distance, something I thought I could get away with NOT providing, given the nature of this unique event. I had no idea how the system of designing and ordering those bulky medals worked, but I always marvelled that they were there, at the end of the race.

Therefore I relented and found out from Claire Sims of Trail Running SA who to contact. After a false start because of confusion over Claire's email to me with pictures of samples TRSA had obtained, I was pointed in the direction of Pieter de Wit of PinSource and Jim and I visited him and thrashed out a design in an hour. After some fine tuning the order was placed and we settled on 40 medals with the word "finisher" on it and 60 without. At the time we had about a dozen participants. This number looks like being justified. There was uncertainty over when they would arrive but I believe Pieter was able to pull some strings and get them here on time.

I also visited a trophy shop near where I live and saw a huge range of trophies, medals and all sorts of other weird and wonderful items. Fortunately a very knowledgeable lady named Helen was able to point me to the athletics section and I worked out what I wanted to do. The current trend seems to be "heritage" or perhaps "retro" design which is what I was after. Therefore everyone will receive another medal at the presentation ceremony which now looks possible to have. Also there are (small) trophies or medallions for achievement in specific areas which will remain secret for now. I did this for two reasons, firstly because I simply thought it was appropriate for the occasion and secondly I needed a contingency plan in case of non-arrival of the "modern" medals before the event.

Returning to the cost, this is entirely my shout because from my perspective it's the only way the event could have happened. I am in no position to handle the red tape for a "community event" status the re-enactment would have acquired had I accepted money in the form of an entry fee. I marvel that I have even got this far but everyone has been terrific. In a normal year I would have already been on several trips to the country for running events at a cost of around \$500 a time, so in that sense I'm still ahead! Therefore thank you for making the offer. Shout me a beer after I've finished on Sunday!

This week's featured runners are John Csongei and Mandy Towler. Both have been prominent in the past ten years, especially in the Pichi Richi Marathon and in 2017 their respective wins there were notable for the unique achievement of breaking the 30 year old course record when the (now aged) record holder was also in the event (Csongei) and being the first Australian to win the same event ten times (Towler). I considered that this was news that any reputable running magazine would lap up but when I prepared articles about these achievements and sent them to R4YL magazine they ignored them and never even acknowledged my emails. About a year later the magazine folded.

The Course

The section maps have been updated to provide more information about what to do upon reaching West Terrace. This is in red text on page 2. See below for more information about the course.

List of Participants

The following people have registered their interest in this event. Some basic information about their marathon running career, as much as can be ascertained from dedicated statistical sites such as ausrunning.net and the Australian 100 Marathon Club is listed. Thanks to participants who have provided updates to the preliminary list from last week (shown in red).

<u>Name</u>	<u># marathons</u>	<u>Personal Best</u>	<u>Year of PB</u>	<u>More recent PB /Notes</u>
Peter Allcroft	14	3:07:09	1999	3:54:20 in 2017
Neil Atkinson	1	3:14:22	2015	
Tony Ayris	6	4:38:48	1996	5:20:47 in 2004
David Billett	132	3:24:04	1998	3:33:26 in 2020
Jim Docking	10	3:38:03	2015	
Anthony Elder	1	4:37:03	2010	+3 ultras, 1 Iron Man Triathlon
Michael Fraser	10	2:39:39	1983	3:08:21 in 2016
Chris Glacken	243	4:04:07	2013	
Steve Guy	60+	2:27:58	1982	3:54:43 in 2011
Kirsty Gwynn-Jones	14	3:38:15	2015	
Ian Hill	74	2:28:15	1985	3:31:28 in 2015
Tim Horton	78	3:49:29	2014	
Rick Jenkner	38	3:00:36	1998	3:53:47 in 2017
Ted Jennings	7	3:38:20	2018	
Darren Linney	31	2:51:50	2019	
Carolyn Modra	5	4:50:23	2016	
David Qu	4	4:25:38	2017	
Rob Robinson	68	3:19:33	2015	
Peter Worley	47	2:53:38	1985	5:32:50 in 2011
Susan Worley	52	3:20:58	1984	5:16:22 in 2011

Note that some people have run mainly ultra marathons and therefore the number of marathons is not necessarily a reliable guide to their experience.

Start, finish and other arrangements

Start

I will be at the start line in Victoria Square from 9:15am on Friday 21st August. Participants may start from 9:30am. Your attendance and start time will be recorded.

You can provide a gear bag to be transported to the finish. Please label it. If you have only warm-up clothing we will put it in a separate plastic bag and write your name on the bag. All this will be secured in my car parked at Central Market. If you plan to finish before 2:30pm at the Uni Loop please let me know so that someone can be there with your gear.

Hopefully we can record your start with a photo and/or video. It's possible an ABC crew will be there at some stage.

Along the course

The social nature of this event means participants look after their own refreshment needs. There are plenty of shops available as well as some taps suitable for drinking from. Also, we have been offered a voluntary food and drinks table along the right side of Portrush Road at Bus Stop 11 (in case of rain), 20 metres past Sturdee St – thanks to Ted Jennings' family. His son Nate will be clocking up some volunteering hours for his school, Glenunga International College. Ted's partner Alice will also be there. I'm sure everyone will find this very welcome at that stage, approx 23 km. Thanks Nate, Alice and Ted!

If anyone becomes distressed and needs assistance they can contact Catherine or me. We will be in my car driving around the course. Our phone numbers will be listed in the text of the email.

Finish

Ideally everyone should finish after 3:30pm and preferably before 4:30pm at the Uni Loop, just after the 400m post at Graduates Oval. It's likely that cones will direct you on to the grass Parkrun-style. I'm hoping to have a finish tape for you to run through and be photographed and I will also have my video camera set up (weather permitting). Your centenary marathon finisher medal will be given to you.

Record your own time which will be moving time not elapsed. Please let me know your time straight away but if that is not possible send it to me via text later on.

The Graduates Clubrooms have been hired from 2-7 pm. We do not have access to the change rooms (below the clubrooms) as they are booked by a junior soccer team. However toilets are available inside the clubrooms to change in. Showers will NOT be available.

Drinks, lollies and bananas will be available to consume at the finish.

Your gear bag or warm-up clothes will be available inside the clubrooms.

Special Guest

Grenville Wood will be at the finish area from 3:30pm to greet participants as they complete their final 1500 metres and he may jog along the course to chat to you for a short while. He will also assist with the presentations. Thank you Grenville for your support!

Presentations

I am planning to hold this around 5pm or earlier if everyone is ready. There are a number of awards, some of which are:

Fastest time: Ladies and Gentlemen – trophy and medal in enclosed case

Second and third fastest times: Ladies and Gentlemen – medal in enclosed case

Everyone: another medal – old style with your name already on it*

Special Categories: still a secret but available to all participants

* The last three people to register with me will receive this later as I had to finalise the order before they registered.

Note it may not be possible to determine the winners of the fastest times for gentlemen until after the weekend participants have finished.

Unregistered runners

It is possible that people who have not registered with me just turn up at Victoria Square. As long as they are willing to register on the day (including a compulsory phone number for Covid-19 reasons), they will receive a finisher medal but will not be eligible for the awards. If anyone just turns up and “takes off” without registering they will be deemed to be on a training run and not receive anything at the finish line if they cross it. They can still contact me later as a “virtual” participant to receive a medal but they will have to wait two weeks for it.

Important – Covid-19 Plan

An unavoidable condition for hiring the Graduate Clubrooms was to fill out a Covid-19 Plan and appoint a Covid-19 Marshal. It's my obligation to attach the plan to this email sending and I ask everyone to read it. The Marshal will be Catherine James and she agreed to undertake the required online training, which only took about 30 minutes. Thank you Catherine.

We are obliged to practice social distancing inside the clubrooms and the capacity is 50 people. Catherine may give anyone a friendly reminder to move a few steps away.

Course GPX file

Ted Jennings made a GPX file of the course for people to have the course on their devices. Thanks Ted!

More detailed profile of Rick Jenkner

As to my marathon career, I have completed 38 official marathons; 36 in North America (6 at Boston, two at NY), one in NZ, and as you found, Adelaide in 2018, which stands as my last marathon, although I have done over the distance twice since in ultra events. My PB is 3:00:36 in 1998, and my most recent PB was 3:53:47 (a BQ) at New York in 2017. I have not kept track of my ultras, but I have done 'several' including a bronze medal Comrades in 2016. I've been bothered by several different injuries since 2018 and have not been able to train normally since 2017, when I admit, I over-raced.

Rick adds that his NZ run was 3:05 in 1999.

This was a combination of a rapid rise in middle age women taking up the marathon from about 2008 and a complete decline of men aged under 40 moving away from the sport in the 1990s. The reason - I put it down to the advent of social media and particularly Facebook from about 2008. Older men aged 60+ were another demographic on the rise. Something applicable to both sexes was the movement away from a lifelong sport (eg netball, surfing) to running and the marathon appealed. Additionally there was the “bucket list” impact.

This resurgence seemed to peak about the middle of the decade and then started to fall as people had run their marathon and wanted to do something else. A mild panic occurred amongst race organisers thinking it was somehow their fault, but it was a worldwide trend with a few exceptions in the very big marathon races. The SARRC management had a solution – change the date from August to May and this started in 2018 and was a big success. The rationale was to take advantage of the 2018 Commonwealth Games at the Gold Coast and be the first big city marathon after that.

Men’s winning times started to return to the mid 2:20s for a couple of years. In 2016 Josh Harris won in 2:24:13 and in 2019 Dane Verwey won in 2:24:26. For most of the decade they remained in the mid to high 2:30s. Women’s times remained consistently fast at around the three hour mark.

Pichi Richi Marathon

The Pichi Richi Marathon continued to have good fields of around 25 until 2006 when it jumped to 56 because there was a real possibility it would be the final one. Perennial race director Phil Edge moved to Geelong and there were doubts that a new organiser would step up. However the Old Willows Brewery Restaurant took the job on and the marathon continued to maintain 50+ fields. Men’s winning times were still 10-30 minutes slower than those of the 1980s until 2017. John Csongei turned up and was there to obliterate the course record of 2:38:59 set in 1987 with his run of 2:36:23.



Photo by Rob Robinson

John Csongei (left) with the former record holder (yours truly) who had finished 80 minutes later!

Mandy Towler set a new women’s record of 3:19:03 in 2009 (which was broken by Nicole Butterfield in 2011 with a time of 3:13:16).

Mandy's win in the 2017 Pichi Richi Marathon was her tenth and she joined only a handful of women in the world who had achieved that milestone, ten wins in the same marathon.



Mandy Towler and her brother Shaun Hughes in the 2016 Pichi Richi Marathon

The article I sent to R4YL magazine is here:

<https://ausrunning.net/stats-sa-distance-events/PRM%20article%20for%20R4YL.pdf>

More detailed articles about Mandy and John's performances can be found under "Pichi Richi Marathon" at the SA Distance Stats Page at ausrunning.net

[Barossa Marathon, Coober Pedy, Kangaroo Island, Tower Trail and Coastal Marathons](#)

Time does not permit a detailed coverage of these marathons which started in the 2010s. I'm hoping to have an article about the Barossa and Coastal Marathons at least in the next issue, which of course will include reports about the re-enactment!