

Obituary- Byron Gray : 1935 - 2007.

From Stan Allen -

When Herne Hill Harriers are asked to talk in public we normally set a time limit relating to the best performance of the club member. So a 4 minute miler will get four minutes and a marathon runner has to be persuaded not to talk for two hours plus. But this rule can't apply in Byron's case. Byron was really quick, and it is impossible to cover his achievements in less than 20 seconds.

Byron came back to track running some 40 years ago after originally retiring to re-start his racing career indeed his date of re-election in the club records is not a date but the phrase "Way Back". His origins go back to the West Indies when as a 17 year old he was reserve for the Jamaican 4 x 440 yards relay team and clocked around 47 seconds for the 440. He was a mean man in a relay where his legs would literally sparkle into high speed life. He ran in a HHH team that claimed UK records over 4 by 100 and 4 x 200 in 1978/9 with Keith Scott, John Howell and Jim Hurley. The 4 x 200 still stands as a HHH record and the 4x 100 only went last year. As a veteran he was competing for the club in a Southern League meeting on the last leg of the 4 x 100m and seemed to be racing with a fair degree of intensity as he stormed to victory. I asked about this and he told me that two youngsters had written off the old man in the outside lane and he had shown them!

He was even a multi-medallist in the over 60 group over 100m and 60m when he was 64 years old.

But the most important thing he ever did was coach, advise and mentor at Battersea Park track and Tooting Bec track. Those he helped know who they are and together form a roll of honour.

It is almost impossible to imagine the impact Byron had and still has on the athletic world. His influence will never pass.

From Barry Ferguson -

Byron Gray died on Sunday January 28th aged 71 finally succumbing to cancer. Born on the 19th of December in Jamaica, Byron competed mainly in the 400m as a Senior at the highest level, before

emigrating to England.

Here, as a member of Herne Hill Harriers and SCVAC, he competed as a Master, surprising many a younger man with his turn of speed. He "spoke" with his feet on the track!

His first love was athletics, as a coach, competitor, mentor and spectator. He spent many hours enjoying the atmosphere and the spectacle of local athletics competitions, introducing many others to the sport. He always seemed to have a calming influence on those around him.

His passing is a sad loss to the sport and to the many who loved him.



LETTERS TO THE EDITOR.

Ann Bath, Surbiton, Surrey.

I must write and say how much I enjoyed your Cross Country Championships at the Reigate Holly run. It was a very well organised event and the tannoy, super changing area / toilets / refreshments and friendliness made it seem an important event compared with the often very low key cross country events! However what was really great was the SCVAC awning, where I was offered mulled wine and mince pies afterwards!

It was such a shame that more members, particularly ladies, did not enjoy the race and the post race refreshments, hopefully word will get out and there will be a better attendance next year.

Bridget Cushen, Croydon.

I ran in the SCVAC cross country championships at Reigate in December. I am sure the other competitors will wish to join me in thanking Robert Murkin and his family for organising it and providing much appreciated hot refreshments. Robert, as well as taking on this task, is also the SCVAC Treasurer and acting

Secretary. A very enjoyable day.