

COLIN HAINSWORTH

In the 23rd April 2013 edition of Heel & Toe, my Walker of the week went to South Australian Masters walker **Colin Hainsworth** who won the SAMA 8km Yacht Handicap the previous weekend with a time of 1:01:01 (81.07%). Born in 1929 and now aged 82, Colin is an inspiration to us younger walkers as he competes and then emails the weekly results from Adelaide.



Left: Colin on the right in the 2012 Australian Masters 5000m at Lakeside Stadium
Right: 1987 SA 5000m Open - starter Don Dohnt with Col Hainsworth (2nd), Don Cox (1st) and Geoff Peters (3rd)

The following brief overview of Colin's career is provided from George White's 2010 book *Age is an Advantage - A History of Veterans/Masters Athletics in South Australia*.

Like many who grew up in the depression years Colin walked and ran rather than rode the bus. At junior school he found that he was able to win running races but at high school, he found that he had begun to slow down. He decided to give walking a go and from then on he never ran (voluntarily) again. Eventually with coaching and time he gradually worked his way through the ranks until finally winning the Yorkshire Walking Club Championships. Colin continued with his walking in the RAF and for four years in the RNZAF.

On returning to the UK, Colin took a job at a large printing firm and entered the Annual Printing Industry Athletics Competition. Unfortunately he didn't have any suitable shoes and ended up wearing a pair of old work shoes that his Dad was wearing. The race almost killed him but he managed to win.

Colin married in 1957, came to live in SA and a few years later, met Stan Malbut at Elizabeth and was introduced to the Walkers Club. It wasn't long before he was back competing. Colin was one of the many walkers including Frank Leonard and Peter Fullager who regularly travelled to compete in the Federation events in Canberra. Colin was President of the Walkers Club in 1972 and 1973 but due to work, health and domestic commitments, retired from walking until about 1988.

In the early 1990's, Colin was competing with the Walkers Club again. An alternative walking group was formed in 1995 when Colin, Jack Weber, Geoff Peters, Geraldine Waites and Ruth Weber decided to meet on a Saturday afternoon and arrange their own walks. As the group continued to grow they became concerned by the problem of insurance. The simple solution was for the group to become part of the 'Vets' Club (some were members already). As a result, in 1997 Colin became a member of the committee, representing the walkers. The walking group ended up as the template for later winter running for the Vets - a format that persists to today.

Colin regards the highlight of his walking career to be in 1990 at the AVAC Championships in Melbourne when he beat Gordon Gourlay in the M60 20k road walk, in 1:19.09.

Colin served as a Committee Member, vice-president and then in 2000 was elected as President of SAMA, a position he held for five years.

As well as his success at the Nationals - 14 wins, Colin scored two gold medals at the World Masters Games in Edmonton in 2005.

Tim Erickson
Tuesday 23 April 2013