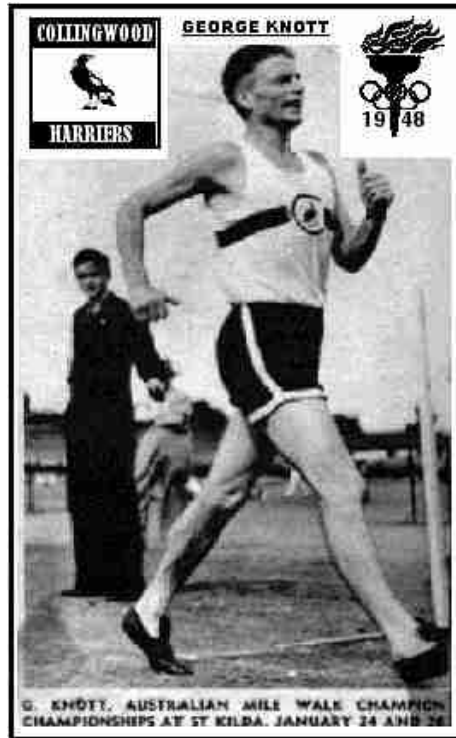


George Knott

1948	Olympic Games	London	10,000m	6 th in heat
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George Knott joined the Collingwood Harriers on 2nd December 1929 and thus was started an athletics career that lasted some 70 years.



He competed in many events as most did then, but preferred middle distance and pole vault. In 1930 he had his first race walk in a club championship, and from then on mixed running and walking.

Coached by lifetime friend Bill Tunaley, George improved his times and finally won his first championship medal in 1936 – 3rd in the Victorian 1 mile walk. He followed this up with a win in the Victorian 1 mile walk event in 1938 and was placed second to Athol Stubbs in the inaugural Australian 10,000m walk championship in 1939 in the good time of **46:06**. With this success highlighting his rapidly rising star, he then won the local double in 1940 (Victorian 1 mile and 3 mile titles).

By 1940, George was VAWC club captain and Victoria's top walker but the increasing effects of the war saw competitions stopped and VAWC disbanded and his career on hold.

It was not until 1946 that re-establishment occurred and after things settled down, he was once again in top form.

He won the 1946 Victorian 1 mile and 3 mile titles and upped his distance to win the Victorian 10 mile title. Then in 1947, he won the Australian 1 mile (**6:31.4**) and 10,000m (**49:08**) titles to stake his claim as the top Australian sprint walker.

However, it was in 1948 that he really set the crowds talking with wins in the inaugural Australian 2 mile walk (**13:37.2**) and the Victorian 1 mile walk (**6:23.2**) and Victorian 10,000m walk (**42.51.6**). His 1 mile time was less than one second outside Bill Murray's Australasian record and his 10,000m time was a staggering world best. It was nominated for world record status but was not accepted due to technical deficiencies in the running of the event.

These outstanding performances gained him selection for the 1948 Olympics in London. There he finished 6th in his heat in the 10,000m walk and just missed out on qualifying for the final (only the first 5 in each heat made it through).

This effectively marked the end of George's career as a top walker. He had other things to do with his life. However, he continued to race A grade at Interclub for many years, and would step in when the team was short of a walker, and he

continued in the lower grades until the 1970s. In veteran competition George and Bill Tunaley would line up for field games, jumps, steeplechases and walks, as they had done in their youth, and George raced with the VRWC up till his late eighties. There wasn't a trick that George didn't know, and he taught the other Collingwood walkers how to use them to the club's advantage. To confuse the opposition, he would take the front row and just before the gun he would give his mate an almighty shove in the back so that he would find himself way out in front with George hot on his heels.

George was a member of VAWC from the 1930s onwards and was one of the stalwarts over many years. His life membership was awarded in 1964 but he remained an active member of the club for many years after that. But his activities were not restricted to VAWC. He was also awarded life memberships of Athletics Victoria and Collingwood Harriers and was awarded an Australian Sports Medal in 2000.

George died in early 2001 at the age of 90, leaving a legacy of 70 years of involvement in athletics as both a fierce competitor and as an official.

Athletics Victoria now recognises George's enormous contribution to Victorian athletics by awarding the George Knott Trophy annually to the winner of the AV 5000m Track Walk for men. Duane Cousins was the inaugural winner in March 2002.