

Pembroke History Part 3

1960-1980

(The continuing Pembroke story remains constrained by a paucity of records. Hopefully, at a future date, as further information emerges, we can elaborate on this account which is based to a large degree here on personal `stories')

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The Swinging Sixties

We continue the Pembroke history at the dawn of the 60`s. This was the time of the `Swinging Sixties`. Given the performances of the previous decade it was hardly likely that success would be sustained indefinitely, there was bound to be a `dip` sometime.

We continue to tell the ongoing story in terms of individual recollections as it is more evocative and illustrative of the times. We start with the John Bradshaw account.

The John Bradshaw story

`I was a war-time baby born in 1940 to working class parents on a pre-war housing estate in Maghull, seven miles out of Liverpool city centre. My father was away in the army most of the time until 1946. Neither parent had any sporting ability.

I did not get involved in athletics until my 5th year at St Mary`s College, Crosby. I was an 11-plus scholarship boy. I had fractured my knee cap in a gym accident and was told by my PE teacher to do some cross country to strengthen my knee. That PE teacher was the legendary Jim Highton, elder brother of Pembroke stalwart Jack Highton.

That was it! I was hooked and Joined Pembroke in January 1957. My membership application was not seconded and so, technically, I have not been a member for over 60 years! (actually John has been a Life Member for over 30 years).

I joined a group that included Terry Dwyer, Peter Toal and Brian Mills and together we won the Liverpool and District Cross Country (U18) title in 1958. Shortly afterwards I went to Liverpool University to study German and following a post-graduate course I became a teacher.

By this time the break up of the all-conquering 50s Senior team was underway. Ken Gates had retired and Arthur Prescott had been tragically killed in a car crash that had severely injured the talented Ron Williams who was never able to attain the same high performance levels again. John Robinson had contracted a serious illness and Eddie Williams had work commitment that severely restricted his training. That left, broadly speaking, Sam McIvor, Terry Dwyer, Jack Highton, Geoff Warriner and myself. Recruitment was at an all-time low.

The nadir of club fortunes came in 1963. I remember taking over on Leg 4 in last place in the Manchester-Blackpool Road Relay. The runner in front of me remained out of sight for the 4.5 miles. We were so far behind the field that the police had stopped patrolling the A6 and I just escaped being run over! At the AGM of that year club secretary, Eddie McCartney did not produce a written report saying he had nothing to report except last place in the Manchester-Blackpool Relay!

I had been teaching in Nottingham for four years and came back home for a post at West Park Grammar School in St Helens in 1966. The famous Ken Gates was by now coaching at the new Kirkby Stadium and I joined newcomers Richie Brown and Kenny O`Toole for sessions on the black cinder track in darkness following the white track edging.

For a decade Ken Gates was in charge of coached endurance runners and he was inspirational. We gradually improved and started to attract talented athletes such as John Balmer and Mick Flynn from other clubs. About the same time we were joined by a police cadet, Clive Rigby. Things began to hum!

A year in the life of John Bradshaw

The following is a list of John Bradshaw`s races and results from June 1967 through an entire 12 months plus. It illustrates the racing commitments of the time.

27.06.67	Wavertree	3 miles	2 nd	14.54.6
01.07.67	Eccles	10 miles	17 th	53.48
09.07.67	Blackpool	6.5 miles	7 th	35.43
03.09.67	Kirkby	6 miles	1 st	31.16.6
09.09.67	Hollingsworth Relay	4.25 miles	10 th team	22.20
16.09.67	Darwen	7 miles	32 nd	38.00
30.09.67	Chris Vose	7+ miles	31 st	37.21
03.10.67	Bootle	3+ miles	3 rd	15.24
07.10.67	L & D Relays	3+ miles	2 nd team	16.31
14.10.67	Lancs Relay	3.5 miles	6 th team	17.49
21.10.67	Woolton CC	6 miles	6 th	32.13
04.11.67	Derwentwater	10 miles	16 th	53.03
11.11.67	Waterloo	8 miles	41 st	40.38
15.11.67	Waterloo Relay	2 miles	8 th team	9.11
25.11.67	Sherdley Park CC	6+ miles	18 th	35.26
02.12.67	H Finney Relays	3 miles	7 th team	15.38
09.12.67	Woolton CC	7 miles	7 th team	41.16
23.12.67	Bootle Handicap	4+ miles	11 th	21.48
01.01.68	Morpeth/Newcastle	13.5 miles	32 nd	72.02
06.01.68	Sherdley Park CC	7.5 miles	7 th	43.23
13.01.68	Sherdley L&D CCC	7.5 miles	25 th	45.49

20.01.68	Lancs CCC Blackburn	7 miles	dnf	
27.01.68	West Lancs CCC StH	9 miles	14 th	51.11
03.02.68	Sherdley Park	7.5 miles	4 th	42.01
17.02.68	Northerns Sheffield	9 miles	78 th	50.20
24.02.68	Club Handicap	5.5 miles	4 th	29.15
02.03.68	National Sutton Cold.	9 miles	237	?
09.03.68	Club Cham/Court Hey	8.5 miles	dnf	
16.03.68	Sutton	7 miles	51 st	38.13
23.03.68	Club Trial Court Hey	3.25 miles	2 nd	16.28
30.03.68	Northern 12 Derby	6 miles	16 th team	31.01
06.04.68	Egerton Relay	3.5 miles	18 th team	18.59
13.04.68	Burtonwood Relay	3.5 miles	8 th team	18.27
20.04.68	Blackpool Relay	4.6 miles	13 th team	24.21
04.05.68	Royton `10'	10 miles	49	58.22
04.05.68	New Brighton Relay	1.75 miles	2 nd team	8.10
24.07.68	Club Champs Kirkby	3 miles	7 th	15.37

Total 37 races

Racing weekly was deemed normal in the 60s. It should be recorded that John Bradshaw did not complete all the available races! It should also be noted that major senior cross-country championships were held over a more gruelling 9 miles.

The Clive Rigby Story

`My father was in the RAF and we moved about a bit. I started running in Cyprus in 1960. I had struggled to get into football teams but realised, after winning my first race, that I might actually be quite good at running. Returning to England in 1962 I joined Hereford and County AC and trained with John and Vic Tarrant. John was, of course, the legendary `Ghost Runner' (mention of this later).

Eventually I became a Police cadet with the Liverpool force and was based at Mather Avenue. Whilst working at Police HQ in Hardman Street a colleague of Charlie Bourne in the Printing Department gave me an application form for Pembroke and so, with some trepidation, I joined. I was quickly to discover that winning Herefordshire Schools county cross country and mile championships counted for very little in the hot-house atmosphere of Liverpool!

Initially I ran for Pembroke at Heaton Park in the relays and the following week in the Youths National Cross-Country Championship. It was difficult for me in those days. The hostel in Mather Avenue closed mid-day on Saturday and I had to find somewhere to stay on Saturday and Sunday night as my family were now based in Anglesey, a long journey home. While still

a Police Cadet in 1967 I won the National Police Track Championship over 5000m in 14.24.00.

Prominent in those days were still Jack Highton and Geoff Warriner so my delight was unimaginable when I happened to beat them in a road race. Later the tough character Kenny O`Toole sought me out and declared he was `after me` as he wanted to be the club`s No 1!

In those days we trained on Sunday at the old Bootle Stadium track. Again, this was difficult for me as I lived on the other side of the city. By now Richie Brown had arrived and the competitive edge was going up. I recall an inter-club match at CF Mott College which planted in my head the idea of becoming a teacher. I started at the College in September 1967.

During the week I trained with the growing hard-training group at Kirkby under Ken Gates. I didn`t compete much from 1967-70 whilst teacher training. My best times and positions were to come later.

By 1970 I was teaching in Liverpool and running the 8 miles to work. As a PE teacher I was active all day and then ran home! I was 23 and very fit. I ran the Salford Metropolitan 10 miler (1979) in 49.21 and later the Pembroke 20 (1981) in 1. 47.23. At one point I was Club Cross Country Champion, the winner for the previous three years had been Marty McLoughlin! I also ran in the regular Liverpool and District, West Lancashire, Northern and National Cross-Country Championships.

Later I took on administrative role as Club Treasurer and later still as a qualified Track Judge`.

Liverpool and District Cross Country Championships

As we have seen previously the L & D CC Champs were a bell-weather of athletic fortunes. That being so the sixties provided a game of two halves. In seasons 1959-60, 1960-61. 1961-62 Pembroke continued their local dominance buoyed by Geoff Warriner`s individual wins in the latter two years. But the team was ageing as previously indicated and 1962-63 saw the club unplaced. A minor revival in 1964-65 finishing third was followed by three further unplaced years.

The revival was largely down to the arrival and tenacity of club coach, Ken Gates, as acknowledged by John Bradshaw, Clive Rigby and others. By 1967-68 we were back to second, a further blank in 1969-70 but a significant second and third in following years. By 1972-73 Pembroke were back again on top of local rivals. The storm had been weathered and the seventies looked more promising.

Club matters

Club administration continued predictably through this decade although the death of long serving official Harry Kelly marred the years. Committee meetings were largely held in Colquitt Street and AGM`s were at the YMCA in Mount Pleasant. Charlie Bourne as Chair and

subsequently President with, of course, the ever-dependable services of Secretary, Eddie McCartney were rocks of stability in the face of fluctuating fortunes.

Remarkably the social life from a previous decade held up. There were club dances and other fund raisers and although funds were satisfactory there was always something of a sigh of relief when the Treasurer presented annual accounts in the black. The club's Diamond Jubilee (75 years) was celebrated in 1965 following the usual pattern of a formal dinner and presentation of awards.

Training HQ varied in the early sixties from a Huyton base in Longview, Sundays at Bootle Stadium and a gradual shift to the new stadium at Kirkby, considered state-of-the-art at that time. Membership was still mainly drawn from the North end of the city with arch rivals Liverpool Harriers firmly entrenched in the south centred for winter purposes on a wooden pavilion in Woolton Woods.

During this time the club briefly had the services of two unusual characters. The first was **Jack Foster** a big mate of Kenny O`Toole. Initially a cyclist Jack had emigrated to New Zealand for job opportunities. He returned in his early 30s and joined Pembroke as a runner. Later he felt the call of New Zealand and migrated again to start a remarkable late career that culminated in 1974 in a silver medal competing for the kiwis in the Commonwealth Games Marathon held in Christchurch, New Zealand. He ran a remarkable 2.11.07 at the age of 41, the best in the world at that age. He had in 1972, as barely a 40-year old, run in the Olympic Games in Munich finishing 8th in 2.16.51. This truly remarkable story is told in his autobiography *Tale of the Ancient Marathoner* (1974). Although a world away by now he was made a Life-member of Pembroke which delighted him.

On a more mundane note the club was briefly home to **Alexei Sayle**, celebrated comedian, actor, raconteur, writer and, no doubt, a whole host of other things. He writes about this in *Stalin Ate my Homework* (2010) Windsor Press. He remembers joining a club near to his home in Liverpool 4 as a 13 year old. He mistakenly refers to us as Walton Harriers but we still have his membership form and, presumably, the one shilling and six pence subscription he paid us. He recalls, for dramatic effect no doubt, training once or twice a week, at a sports ground directly opposite the 'long brick wall and towering blocks of Walton Prison'. He can only mean Bootle Stadium, one supposes. He seems to have wrongly imagined himself as the club's only Junior slogging around the track, 'alone and in the dark'. Apparently, he refused to shower 'alongside all the big hairy men' and went home on the bus 'smelling like a Victorian urchin'. The best memory he has is of buying crisps and Ribena from 'a little wooden shed' No one seems to remember him, unsurprisingly.

Pembroke promotions

The indefatigable Charlie Bourne was a great lover of distance running and there was for many years a clutch of like-minded individuals in the club 'The Marathon Section'. Charlie

took his enthusiasm further, helped found the still extant Road Runners Club. He promoted, the Pembroke 20 and the Liverpool-Blackpool Road Race (48.5 miles).

Pembroke 20

The Pembroke 20 lasted from 1954 to 1984. Although declining in status in later years after having to shift the course from the fast 4 laps of Huyton it remained a memorable event for three decades. Some of the victors were of outstanding ability.

1954	EL Smith	Leeds Harehills	110.55
1955	E Kirkup	Rotherham Harriers	105.30
1956	F Norris	Bolton	107.19
1957	AP Keilly	Derby	107.52
1958	JT Keilly	Derby	109.31
1959	F Norris	Bolton	103.11
1960	F Norris	Bolton	102.50
1961	G North	Blackpool	105.36
1962	R Hill	Bolton	102.23
1963	R Hill	Bolton	105.36
1964	R Hill	Bolton	100.55
1965	R Hill	Bolton	105.21
1966	R Hill	Bolton	103.31
1967	R Hill	Bolton	105.38
1968	R Hill	Bolton	96.28(World record)
1969	R Hill	Bolton	104.52
1970	R Hill	Bolton	105.25
1971	C Hunt	Wolverhampton	106.48
1972	D Hopkinson	Bolton	104.11
1973	R Brown	Pembroke	104.46
1974	T Birks	Stoke	103.24

1975	E Austin	Worcester	102.51
1976	S Hope	Crewe & Nantwich	107.27
1977	GM Taylor	Small Heath	105.42
1978	R Morris	Altrincham	104.38
1979	A Keith	Edinburgh	105.26
1980	DV Austin	Manchester H	107.46
1981	DV Austin	Manchester H	103.44
1982	G Helm	St Helens	100.04
1983	P Morris	Wigan	102.53
1984	G Birkett	St Helens	108.23

Some famous names here but not one as great as **Ron Hill**. Nine straight wins but none as memorable as 1968 when he broke the world record. He writes...

'I warmed up one mile....there was a bit of a wind but apart from that the conditions were ideal. 'Big Mike Freary' was in the field and it was reported that he was interested in the Olympic Marathon trials in July so it would be quite a battle over four laps.

At the gun I set off pretty fast and took the lead. By the time we had taken the first turn left after 200 yards the splash-splash of following feet had disappeared, I was on my own, so I pressed on at what I felt was a comfortable pace.

Round the now familiar lap I approached the group of waiting spectators, officials and timekeepers listening for the lap time...23.16. I thought to myself they are well out and I shouted 'Christ Almighty, can't you read the bloody watch?' I was annoyed, I wanted to do a fast time but I needed information that was accurate.

I pressed on still at a comfortable pace, fingers slightly clenched with my thumbs resting on fore-fingers pushing from my toes. The thin-soled shoes gave me a sensitive feel of the road...Up the slight incline to the markers at two laps I was keen to hear the proper time....46.51...Christ they were right. This was really moving. The choice was slow down in case I blew up later or keep going.

The decision was instantaneous. I felt good. I would keep going. Three laps came at 70.55 and I was still motoring. I relaxed around the first half of the last lap...I even managed to push harder up the path to the athletic track and the finish. I had run 1.36.28 and even I was surprised.

The corrected 5 mile splits were...23.29, 23.59, 24.17, 24.53. Mike Freary was second in 1.42.01 and Laurie Austin 3rd in 1.44.17. God, the selectors had to notice that. Roll on Mexico!

The Liverpool-Blackpool 48.5 Mile Road Race

The Liverpool-Blackpool Race started at St George`s Hall following the A59 through Maghull, Ormskirk, Rufford to Preston(30 miles) and then the final stretch on the A583 through Kirkham and finishing on Blackpool`s Middle Walk, North Promenade. Naturally not as popular as the Pembroke 20 it attracted many of the `ultra` stars of the day.

1961	JC Smith	Epsom & Ewell	4.57.34
1962	AH Mail	Derby	5.28.54
1963	DW Turner	Epsom and Ewell	5.23.50
1964	B Gomersall	Leeds Harehills	5.18.08
1965	JE Tarrant	Salford	5.04.57
1966	G Eadie	Cambuslang	5.02.22
1967	JE Tarrant	Salford	4.55.40(course record)
1968	JE Tarrant	Salford	5.14.53

Of note is the name of **John Tarrant** who started life as a boxer earning a few pounds at his local town. Later he discovered a talent for running and turned his sights on training for the marathon in the summer Olympics of 1960 in Rome. In 1952 he joined Salford Harriers. On being asked whether he had ever played sport for money he honestly answered that he had in a brief career as a prize fighter. Given the strict and absurd rules at the time he was banned from competition for life.

Irrespective of this he continued to train and with the help of his brother, Victor, to gate-crash races where he had been officially refused regularly outperforming most other athletes. This earned him the name of the `**Ghost Runner**`. His popularity eventually persuaded officialdom in 1958 to relent but he was still banned from ever representing his country. By 1960 he had turned to ultra-marathons with success. In 1967 he won the grand slam of races...London-Brighton, Isle of Man, Exeter to Plymouth and Liverpool-Blackpool.

He was based mainly in Hereford and Clive Rigby remembers training with him and his brother in his early years.

Missing Ladies?

While it is comparatively easy to check out the performances of males during the Sixties it is much harder to identify how the Ladies were getting on. Clearly it was a troublesome time.

Numbers were down and the training was separate, principally at the Huyton Longview facility. An internal dispute that was to last several years did not help but sterling efforts were being made by coach Pat Green.

In July 1964 the club was in particularly dire straits and down to only four paying members. But Mrs Green worked a miracle and in a few short spring months the numbers leapt to 36 mainly due to the regular weekly training sessions at Longview.

In 1967 in the Lancashire Women`s Cross Country Championships at Bolton we learn that Frances Hogan finished second in the Intermediate race with Doreen Styles on 15th. In the Junior Race Joyce Morris, a sprinter mainly, finished sixth. She was back though to her event in a Winter Track Meet though winning a 100 yard race in 12.8.

In July of that year more was to come. Linda Smith was to finish 6th in the Northern Championships 80m Hurdles with 12.3. However, the star of the show from a Pembroke point of view was undoubtedly Mary Seyfang who managed two bronze medals in the 100m Hurdles (15.9) and High Jump 5 ft 3 inches. Her versatility earned her selection to represent the North in an Inter-Area Pentathlon match.

A noteworthy performer about this time was **Alison Firman**. In 1969 she was second in a Lancashire County Championships Hurdles race and repeated that feat in the following Northern. By 1972 the talented all-rounder achieved silver medal spot in the Northern Pentathlon Championships and a respectable fourth in the AAA Inter Pentathlon competition.

There was certainly activity among the club`s females but it was largely low key until the mid to late 1970s.

The remarkable Geoff Hignett

From the mid-sixties onwards the club had the services of coach **Les Williams** an arrival from Victoria Park Harriers. Les coached a number of outstanding athletes to the highest level. An early success story was an Ormskirk lad, Geoff Hignett. Geoff was an enormously talented long jumper who sprang to national prominence in 1968.

At the Northern Junior Counties Championships at Blackburn he set a new championship record of 23 feet 3 inches, translated into metric terms as 7.08m. The All-England Schools Championships were at Portsmouth and this time he claimed victory with 7.21m. On to winning the AAA Junior Championships in Wolverhampton and all six jumps were over 7 metres, the best being 24 feet ie 7.32m. In 1969 he was to repeat this victory with a 7.33m leap.

In the minutes of the Club AGM of 1970 the Secretary reported that ...Geoff had been selected for Britain on a number of occasions including the Commonwealth Games and World Student Games where he gained a bronze medal with a leap of 25 ft 5 and a half

inches, a personal best. He was now established as Britain's No 3 Long Jumper behind the great Lynn Davies and Alan Lerwill'.

At an international match in Turin he leapt to 7.76m and a year later at Leicester he achieved his best club performance ever of 7.79m. Both Junior and Senior club records are still his 50 years or so later.

Such performances deserved the highest honours and Geoff went agonisingly close in 1972 in the trials for the Olympic Games where he failed to qualify, finishing an agonising fourth.

In 1973 he took the Senior AAA title with 7.37m. A truly remarkable athlete.

Summary of the decade

In the 'swinging sixties' the fortunes of the club had certainly 'swung'. As the excitement of the Fifties burnt out there was an inevitable dip in fortunes but even in the beleaguered years significant events took place. Two coaches, Ken Gates and Les Williams were building foundations for the future. This we saw, as in the Les Williams case, the singular success of Geoff Hignett but Ken was having an even wider effect on a range of young distance hopefuls. The Seventies looked distinctly more promising.

The Seventies: A transient decade

As the sixties shuffled to its conclusion we had an inkling of things to come. The Minutes of October 1968 recorded that P Gore, S Deegan, B Lyonette, J Tyrell and K Carroll had been prominent in the Northern Schools. Let Kevin Carroll take up the story.

The Kevin Carroll Story

'I have always been a runner and I would run to and from school, not 10 miles each way like the Kenyans, but a two-mile round trip. One of the attractions of senior school, Cardinal Allen, was I could try for the cross-country team. The trial was over two laps of the playing field but the PE teacher stopped me after one lap. I was gutted. Over two laps I would surely have made the team! Some two years later we were sent on a cross country run because the swimming pool was closed. Most of the cross-country team were in my class and this time I stayed with them. I was invited to join the team. Over the next year I went from last counter to first. This did not go unnoticed and a certain John Bradshaw and Ken Gates, approached me to join Pembroke. I had just finished 14th in a Liverpool Schools League race...it was October 1967.

Thereafter Kirkby Stadium became my second home. I began training with Steve Deegan and Jimmy Carroll who were super-fast and miles better than me. But I was by now first counter in my school and won my first race in an inter-school cross country match against St Francis Xavier at Woolton Woods.

As we headed into 1968 I was training twice a week at Kirkby plus a long Sunday morning run. I had no luck with the summer races, the distances seemed too short for me, so I was really looking forward to the winter season. I made my big breakthrough in the Bromsgrove 4 x 2 mile road relay. Some of the country's best were present and I am pleased to recall that I ran faster than a certain David Moorcroft of Coventry Godiva! Steve Deegan was the only Pembrokian faster than me by some six seconds. The greater joy is that we took second team place.

My confidence by now knew no bounds and I led the subsequent Northern Schools Champs until with only a few hundred yards to go with only Martin Dell (Leeds) able to subdue me. The Sangster Cup race attended by schools from all over the North West followed. I was an Intermediate but for some reason we ran with Seniors. For the first (and only time) I knew I could win the race which I did by 14 seconds.

The winter of 1968 saw the Pembroke contingent dominate the local scene and a little further afield at Leeds for the Aaron Cup we were convincing winners. We went from strength to strength including third place in the Northern Champs. Later at the three-man Sale Relays we led from start to finish.

By the autumn of 1969 we were winning the Bolton Relay by over two minutes and second at the Aaron Cup by the narrowest of margins. The team was usually Jimmy Carroll, Steve Deegan, Barry Lyonette plus myself.

At the turn of the decade I was 4th in the Lancs and although not all of us were that fit we were runners-up to Gateshead in the Northern at Graves Park Sheffield. Now for the big one... the National. Small Heath took that, followed by Gateshead and then Pembroke. We also helped Lancashire to third place in the Inter-Counties. One of the most exciting races I ever recall was the Warrington Cross Country Relays, Steve, Barry, myself and Jimmy had head to head battles with great rivals Gateshead only scraping home by a mere three seconds.

Come the autumn and we were successful again at Bromsgrove against Midland giants Coventry (with Dave Moorcroft again) and Tipton Harriers. The Halifax Road Race is dear to my heart as it was my first big individual win and with Jimmy (4) and Steve (5) we were clear winners. We could do no wrong and victories at the Bolton and Coventry Relays were to follow as also did at Gateshead and the Aaron Cup once again. We had also reached the stage when we could be considered for Pembroke Senior teams who were doing nicely as well.

1971 opened as usual with the Lancs at Rochdale where I was second. The two biggest races were to follow, the Northern at Blackburn and the National. Myself (8), Barry (24), Steve (35) were below par at Witton Park but were still good enough for second team, just losing out to Saltwell. We would all have to improve for the National at Norwich.

So the day we had all been working towards, the National Cross Country Championships. We took the coach changing *en route* into our kit. After finishing our warm up I realised I'd left my spikes back home so the only option was to use the studs Steve had warmed up in. Fortunately, all this was forgotten as the gun went and we surged away. The team was back in action! I finished 16th followed by Steve Deegan (23), Jimmy Carroll (25) and Barry Lyonette (48) with Dave Gaynor and Keith Parker in support. The usual tense moment before the result was announced...**National Youths CC Champions!** This was the first time in the history of the club that a national cross-country team title had been won! History had been made`.

Subsequently the team was honoured with a reception at the town hall. Additionally, the club had six plaques made to commemorate the achievement.

Other cross-country success stories in the lower age groups

The afore-mentioned Youth stars were not alone in the 70s. In the West Lancashire Championships in 1971 Roger Walker (Boys) and Tommy Quinn (Colts) were individual winners and as the youngsters developed it was no surprise that Pembroke Youths were top of the tree in 1974 and 1975. As for the Northern Championships the club were Youth champions in 1972 with Laurie Reilly taking the individual race and Rob Williams (11), Dave Maher (28) and Harry Knowles (40) combining for team success.

A gap followed but heralding an impending joyous 80s for the club John Evans was individual Boys Champion in the West Lancashire Champs and leading another winning team squad in 1981. Even more encouraging Bernie Murphy sprang to prominence winning the following Northern Boys race ahead of John Evans (10) and with Tim Larcombe (12) and Paul Riley (13) in attendance the team title was theirs as well.

Kevin Carroll`s summer 1972

Kevin Carroll fortuitously kept records. Kevin did not really see himself as anything but a distance runner and regrets not stretching himself sufficiently over 800/1500m. Times over 3K do suggest he could have gone much quicker at the shorter distances. We thought the reader might like his racing schedule July-September 1972 aged 19. Pretty astonishing consistency.

22 July	Invitation 5000m	Bolton	8 th	14.37.2
	3000m	Bolton	?	8.47

29 July	West Pennines League Div 2 800mB		3 rd	2.06.6
		5000m	1 st	14.44
2 August	Blackburn 3000m		1 st	8.19.6
6 August	Club Champs 5000m	Kirkby	1 st	14.48
12 August	Stretford League 5000m	Stretford	1 st	14.22
13 August	Club Champs 1500m	Kirkby	3 rd	4.04
19 August	BMC Invitation 5000m		2 nd	14.57
20 August	Club Champs 800m	Kirkby	3 rd	2.05
26 August	Relay Meet 3 miles	Preston	4 th	13.59
27 August	Inter-League Match 5000m		2 nd	14.37
28 August	Invitation 3000m (grass Track)	Leeds	4 th	8.26.6
6 September	Linotype 5 Miles		5 th	23.33
9 September	Illuminations Meeting 1 mile	Blackpool	5 th	4.28
		5000m	2 nd	15.07
19 September	Inter-area Match 5000m (representing NCAA)		6 th	14.51

Jimmy Carroll

Amazing though Kevin Carroll's story may have been arguably Jimmy Carroll (no relation) has an even more fantastic record. We have seen how much he was a part of our fabulous cross-country squad but his forte was the track.

The 1971 Track Season was memorable. At the Northerns Jimmy won the Junior 800m title in 1.57, for him a modest time. He also took the All England Schools title with 1.54. On to Wolverhampton for the AAA Championships and he easily won his heat in 1.54. Steve Deegan had narrowly failed to qualify for the Final with 1.56.3.

In the Final Barry Smith made the first move with 200m to go and was followed by McMeakin. It looked like Jimmy would have to settle for third at least but he unleashed a fierce sprint for the tape that saw him take the title from Smith by a whisker in 1.53.5.

In 1972 Jimmy again won an English Schools title in 1.57 and later was picked for an England Junior team in Sweden. Here he finished third in a sparkling 1.52.08 He was the club's first

Junior international since Jim Railton. Later at a Stretford Meet he was to go even faster with 1.50.6.

Jimmy had a sparkling two or three years but subsequently was never quite able to reproduce this form.

The Brian Renshall Senior Men Story

It's possible I had an inkling I might have a talent for running just after World War 2. My mum sent me over to a neighbour who sold eggs just to get one for my Dad's tea. I was nearly back home when a lad I was with accidentally knocked it out of my hand. My Mum was furious and was about to bring a scrubbing board over her head with deadly intentions when, like a rat up a spout, I raced off up the street. Only later did I realise that the money Mum gave me was probably all she had.

It was at Grange Park Secondary School, St Helens that my running ability developed. My first competition was a one-miler through the footpaths of Taylor Park. I was the last 'pick' for my 'house' but I not only won the race but broke the record. I had to stand up next day at assembly and tell the story of this to the entire school. I was never so embarrassed.

It was by chance I was getting a lift past the Sutton Harriers HQ in Chester Lane when I asked that they stop and let me go in and join. I spent ten years with Sutton who dominated things in the mid to late sixties. The club was in decline though and failing to put teams out. After a disastrous relay race in Waterloo when I had run the third fastest time after Frank Davies (Liverpool H) and Andy Holden (Preston) but Sutton had failed to complete a team I spoke with Kenny O'Toole about joining Pembroke who dragged me over to club secretary, John Bradshaw. Not an easy decision but shortly afterwards I became a proud Pembrokian.

My first race was the Christmas Handicap that I won in a course record. The delay entailed in club transfer in those days meant I had to wait nine months to seriously compete for my new club. I soon settled into life with Pembroke thanks to people like Peter Malcolmson, John Balmer and John Bradshaw who offered lifts to far flung places. There were many others like Dave Gaynor, Derek Clague, Dave Williams, Kenny O'Toole, Terry Dwyer, Kevin Carroll, Stan Towndrow and Peter Toal. A formidable squad especially when the likes of Peter Roberts followed me from Sutton and Mick Flynn joined from Waterloo.

Like most of my contemporaries I never had a coach, listening to what others did and looking up training schedules of well-known runners. I trained largely from home but started to run to and from work. I did interval/fartlek sessions in Sherdley Park, at least one hard run a week and a long run on Sunday usually with a group.

There were races practically every week mostly local but occasionally further afield. I remember being part of a relay squad that was placed on a couple of occasions in the Tipton to Bridgnorth Road Relay. Living in St Helens I was asked to run for the town in a triangular

match with Strasbourg and Stuttgart (St Helens was twinned with the latter) in Stuttgart itself. I'm pleased to say I won the 5000m. Jimmy Carroll who also lived in St Helens won the 800m.

The Liverpool and District Cross Country League races and Championship were, of course, the bread and butter of the season as were the road relays. An indication of our strength in 1973 came in the Egerton Road Relays which was won by the classy Bolton squad of Ron Hill, Mike Freary, Steve Kenyon and Tony Byrne. Pembroke finished second with Kevin Carroll, Terry Dwyer, Laurie Reilly and Richie Brown while the B team of John Balmer, myself, Dave Gaynor and Jimmy Carroll were third.

In the same year we were fourth in the Northern 6-man relay at Bolton (Terry Dwyer, Steve Deegan, Richie Brown, myself, John Balmer and Kenny O'Toole). Marathons became popular in the 1970s, Peter Malcolmson and Richie Brown were particular exponents'.

Richie Brown recalls the Harlow Marathon

'The Harlow Marathon took place in late October, 1973. Pete drove us down. The race started from one of the athletic stadiums. The weather was mild. My recollection was that there were hundreds running. There were two laps of 8 miles followed by a longer lap to complete the distance. It was a fast start and I did not go with the leaders, in fact I don't recall seeing them. Steve Kenyon joined me and we stayed together for the rest of the race. However, he raced away from me at the finish. Fortunately, there were showers at the end in a local school and I just let the water cascade down my body. I could have stayed there much longer but we had to get home. Pete drove again and all I could manage at a succession of service stations was tea and soup. Pete on the other hand ate at least two sizeable meals. His toughness was probably down to his hard labour as a plasterer'.

The race in Harlow was won by Ian Thompson (Luton) in 2.12.40 from Ron Hill (Bolton) 2.13.22 and Colin Kirkham (Coventry) 2.15.25. Richie was 11th in 2.18.39 and Peter Malcolmson was 54th in 2.31.55.

Richie breaks world record...or did he?

Richie Brown entertains us with another story...

'It was a warm Saturday afternoon in early 1978 at Aintree road racing course. I had entered the NSPCC one-hour race and subsequently broke the world record. Oh, yes I did! The organisers of the race told me that the Guinness Book of Records was brought out to prove it. How did this come about?

I turned up with my wife Glenys and our first child, Richard who remained asleep for most of the run. I had no real intentions of anything other than see who turned up and how far I could actually run in the hour.

I was soon on my own and as I was used to solitary training I did not mind. I was enjoying myself when on 50 minutes some officials and a scattering of spectators became animated, there was even sporadic applause. A minute or so later I was aware of a cyclist on my back urging me on. Suddenly a klaxon or something like it sounded. It was the end of the race. The cyclist stopped at that point.

I jogged a further lap and found myself surrounded by a babel of voices and shouting. Apparently I had broken the world record having run 12.19 miles. No one was listening to my protestations. On the following Monday evening the Liverpool Echo declared that Richie Brown of Pembroke had broken the world one hour running record.

I never told anybody at Pembroke. If truth be told I was a little embarrassed. I did wonder later what ancient year of the Guinness Book of Records they had consulted. So there, I have at last owned up'.

In 1978 the world record for one hour was held by Jos Hermans (Belgium) with 13 miles 24 yards. There is, however, no reason for Richie to feel 'embarrassed' at having run 12 consecutive 5-minute miles in an hour!

Track and Field progress

The history of the club had been dominated overwhelmingly by cross-country and road running with the occasional outstanding individual track and field star. Ken Anderson, Charlie Kelly, Len Barton, Doreen Ashun, Geoff Hignett latterly Jimmy Carroll and some relay glory had peppered the results but things were shifting elsewhere as well.

In October 1971 the Club gained admission to the burgeoning track and field leagues, in this case the Northern West of the Pennines Division 2 League for 1972. It was a definitive moment for the men. The Women were to have separate leagues and Pembroke was not yet strong enough for that.

So, on 13th May 1972 Pembroke entered into a full-scale match with local clubs. Covering all events could have been problematic but what was later described as 'excellent spirit' prevailed. The club had several first places, L Laycock (100m in 11.2), Jimmy Carroll (400m in 51.72), Laurie Reilly (1500m in 4.07.5) but it was industrious effort across the board that got the club to third spot behind Liverpool Harriers, Sale Harriers and with Preston, Rossendale and Bolton occupying 4-6 slots. The club was now having to cover jumps and throws which clearly posed a problem or two with distance runners frequently drafted to cover gaps in events they barely had the most fundamental knowledge.

Still survive they did for another season. There was then a dip into a lower division but the club was back in Division 2 in 1975 even leading the way. The demands of leagues had initially a beneficial effect as it forced clubs to extend their coaching base to cover all

disciplines and Pembroke was responding. Gradually we were becoming a respected all-round club.

Back to the country: Continued success

As the talented Youth squad that attained the highest cross-country honour eased into the Junior ranks they were able to merge with the club's Seniors for competition. For example, Kevin Carroll helped Pembroke to 5th in the 1971 Northern 6 Stage Relay at Leeds.

Still together in 1972 they were once again pitted against the formidable Gateshead team at Gateshead and Kevin (9), Jimmy Carroll (12), Steve Deegan (13) and Dave Gaynor (27) and had to settle for second. They were unplaced in the National of that year but by the autumn Kevin, Dave, and Jimmy were pivotal in Pembroke finishing a very respectable 4th in the Northern 6 stage, 3rd in the Lancashire 8 stage and arguably better seventh in the National 6 Stage at Sutton Park.

In 1973 the club's Juniors all in their last year, eventually took the Northern Cross-country title Kevin (2), Laurie (4), Jimmy (16) and Dave Gayner (22). The aim was, of course, the National at Parliament Hill Fields. This was also selection for the European Cross-Country Championships. Given the overlapping nature of the then age groups Kevin was definitely in with a chance of an England vest but fate was unkind as he finished 10th fractionally out of the reckoning but with Laurie (12), Steve(59) and Dave Gaynor(66) they were team bronze medallists. Frustratingly the two teams ahead Loughborough and Borough Road were composite college teams and so Pembroke could claim, at least, to be the first club team home. This anomaly eventually led to a rule change which would have given them the title but too late for the club.

Back to the track

Although initially somewhat overshadowed by Geoff Hignett **Paul McEwan** was to emerge in the 70s as another outstanding long jumper. He was in 1970 Lancashire, Northern and AAA Youth winner(6.47m) and second in the All England Schools. He was also a formidable sprinter recording 51.2 for 400m in taking the Lancashire title. His best leap that year was 6.86m at Solihull which still ranks as a club record. A consistently high standard saw him placed second in the 1973 AAA Junior Championships, not quite able to emulate Geoff Hignett's 1968 and 1969 success. His best jump of 6.97m came in 1976.

As we have seen the demands of the **Northern Track and Field League** meant the club had to dig deep into its resources not just rely on runners. Sprinters emerged such as Brian Jones to support jumpers like Paul McEwan. There were even indications that some specialist throwers were finding their way to the Kirkby based club. Pembroke was broadening its base and becoming an increasingly more attractive multi-disciplinary club. The dawning 80s was looking distinctly promising.

Resurgent Ladies

We have noted **Alison Firman`**s pioneering performances in the late 60s but she continued into the following decade recording a best Pentathlon scores of 3473pts (U15 in 1970) and 3329pts (U20 in 1973), club records to this date. In recognition of her leadership qualities she was elected Club Captain at an early age.

Club records tumbled in the latter part of the 1970s, many of which still survive. **Linda Wong** contributed significantly to this revival of fortunes. Another talented all-rounder who even at U13 set a pentathlon score of 2761 pts in 1978. At U15 she was still outstanding recording 8.1 for 60m and Long Jumping 5.41m. She maintained her pre-eminence through to the next decade.

But she was far from alone. **Wendy Brown** entered the picture at U13 in 1971 recording 13.1 for 100m, a U15 200m of 25.7 in 1976 through to a Junior 200m Hurdles of 30.7 in 1978. The throwers too were doing well, **Theresa Gale** was Shot Putting 10.92m as a 15 year old in 1976 and **Anne Hanson** had a similar result at U 17 in 1979 with 11.82m. Sprinkled around there were **Sarah McKenzie** (U15 80m Hurdles in 1977) and U20 **Diane Brooks** (600m in 1.39.8 in 1976) and a whole string of **relay records** eg **U15** 4 x 100m 50.4(1976) and another sprint relay success at **U17** of 50.4 in 1978. Other records at more unusual distance ie 4 x 200m and 3 x 800m were also collected.

Altogether the club was not simply continuing its male trajectory but a resurgence among the women had also taken place. Many of these records survive some 40 plus years on.

Summary of the decade

Although the club`s senior men enjoyed some modest distance success they were somewhat in the shadow of their local neighbours, Liverpool Harriers. This was not so for the junior squads. Youths, Boys and Colts prospered right up to Northern and National titles. There was even a subsequent Junior follow through. After nearly 15 years the women were also surging, demolishing club records right left and centre. The big shift this decade was towards Track and Field ambition, fuelled by the then excellent facilities at Kirkby Stadium and an influx of quality coaches. The club was experiencing something of a bounce. The 80s could not come quick enough.

Many thanks to John Bradshaw, Clive Rigby, Kevin Carroll, Brian Renshall, Richie Brown and Peter Malcolmson for their contributions to the above.

Charles Gains , November 2018

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Photo Gallery

1960-1980

(We have relatively few images of this period and are anxious to add to this collection...please contact Charles Gains...charles.gains@btinternet.com)

