

Nomination for Life Membership to Athletics Canterbury.  
presented by John Ingles, member of ChCh Avon Club  
Anne Kennedy

The following person is very well known in athletic circles in Canterbury but in researching this support for the nomination it became evident that not a lot is truly known about this person as she tends to hide her light under a bushel.

Born in 1942 and living in Christchurch all her life, she has been a competitor, administrator and official since her late teenage years.

In the earlier years of last century and well before this person was born I hasten to add, women's running took second place to that of the men and it wasn't until the Ladies Pioneer Harrier Club was started in 1933 by Kathy and Mavis Lee and Betty McNeigh that women could join other likeminded women athletes and run in races against each other, usually competing in short skirts and sandshoes. With her mother declaring that her daughter was not going to hang around the house and hating netball she took up running and joined the Ladies Pioneer Club despite her father thinking women's running was just a bit of a lark. He rapidly changed his mind when his daughter took up the sport.

Women's running developed throughout the 1950s but only Auckland and Canterbury held cross country championships. In 1961 Marlborough and Wellington joined the former regions for a national championship and this was won by my nominee.

She continued to run with the Ladies Pioneer Club throughout the sixties winning four Canterbury titles and four Jane Patterson titles. She eschewed any Lydiard like long slow training and considered two X two mile sessions per week perfectly adequate and was shocked when talking to Auckland women athletes to learn they trained twice a day. Running shoes as we know today were very uncommon in the early sixties and she trained in sandshoes and continued to do so for many years. For races she went down to Bill Richards, a bootmaker in Beckenham who represented New Zealand in the marathon at the 1956 Melbourne Olympics and he glued studs onto the bottoms of her sandshoes... no fancy spikes for her!

In 1965 she started a long association with the Takahe to Akaroa road relay, helping her father who was the Chief time keeper for many years, with time keeping. It wasn't until 1982 that she started running an in the Takahe to Akaroa road relay herself usually running an early lap so she could fulfill her timekeeping obligations on one of the later laps. One year later in 1983 she set a veteran women's record on lap two and in 1988 set another on lap one.

Thirty-seven years after winning the first women's cross country championship she won a women's local A grade medal in 1997 with the Garden City team having been called in at the last moment to run lap seven, the downhill lap, as no one in the senior team wished to run it. She continued to compete at a club and regional level up until a few years ago finally ceasing competition when she declared that race organisers would be standing around in the dark waiting for her to cross the finish line and she wouldn't wish that upon them.

Along with competing she has always taken on administration roles saying this was a way of being part of something bigger than yourself. Roles she has undertaken, usually for extended periods of time include time-keeping in the Takahe to Akaroa and other relays. Race handicapper for Athletics Canterbury and she still holds this office. Trophy Convenor, a difficult and at times frustrating position as anyone who has done this role can attest. Race secretary for the Cross Country and Road Committee and finally master of the anemometer at every track and field meeting that I can remember, certainly from the early 1990s usually cycling to the track and back from her home on her beloved Port Hills.

Away from athletics she was an instigator and competitor in that arcane pursuit of rogaining winning world championships six times, usually with her brother as a member of the team and I also note she won the Coast to Coast women's team event in 1984.

This person has made a constant and unselfish contribution to athletics in Canterbury for well over fifty years be it in competition or administration. Frequently her efforts have, I'm sure, almost passed unnoticed as she is modest in the extreme and the above brief summary in no way does credit to her efforts. I'm sure many of you seated here could add to these. I feel it is now a fitting time to acknowledge her wide ranging contribution to the sport of athletics in Canterbury hence it is with pleasure that I nominate Anne Kennedy for life membership to Athletics Canterbury.