

## AUSTRALIAN RACEWALKING CHAMPIONSHPS MEN: 1967 - 1970

This follows on from my previous articles which detail the early Australasian and Australian Racewalking Championships (along with other particularly significant races), up to and including 1966.

- [Australasian Championships Men 1892-1920.pdf](#)
- [Australasian Championships Men 1921-1939.pdf](#)
- [Australian Championships Men 1946-1956.pdf](#)
- [Australian Championships Men 1957-1960.pdf](#)
- [Australian Championships Men 1961-1966.pdf](#)

Our story continues from 1967. I started racewalking in late 1966, joining Ivanhoe Harriers and the VAWC in quick succession, so I was witness to many of the wonderful performances that occurred in the 4 year period from 1967 to 1970. It was one of the most exciting times in our Australian racewalking history and saw four of our all time greats – Noel Freeman, Bob Gardiner, Frank Clark and Ted Allsopp – at the top of their game.

### Australian Track & Field Championships - 1966-67

#### Olympic Sports Field, Adelaide, South Australia, 25-26 February 1967

With the 1966 Commonwealth Games behind them and with another year before the 1968 Olympic Games trials, the 1967 racing year loomed as an unknown factor. Most of the big guns were racing – Bob Gardiner, Ted Allsopp and Frank Clark – but Noel Freeman was still on his extended break. And there were always new walkers coming up through the ranks.

One of these was 18 year old **Graeme Nicholls**, from Ballarat in country Victoria. At this stage, he was blitzing his way through the junior ranks, setting records (Australian, Victorian and Victorian Country) and amassing medals at an amazing rate. His Australian Junior 5000m track Walk Record of 22:40.4 was particularly impressive.

Graeme's first big medal in the Open ranks came in the 1967 Australian T&F Championships 3000m walk in Adelaide, with silver behind **Bob Gardiner**. He had actually been third to cross the finish line but, with the last disqualification of **Frank Clark**, was moved up from third to second.

3,000m Track Walk - Men - Sunday 26 February 1967			
1	Bob Gardiner	VIC	12.57.6
2	Graeme Nicholls	VIC	13.47.6
3	Frank Leonard	SA	13.50.8
4	Robin Wood	VIC	14.19.0
5	Harry Summers	VIC	14.20.0
6	Peter Whitham	SA	14.25.0
-	Frank Clark	NSW	DQ (13:14.0)
-	Varel Newmark	VIC	DQ (13:50.6)

There was general consternation within the walks community at this time, with regard to a move to delete the 3000m track walk from the National T&F titles, and replace it with a 20km roadwalk. The thought of training for and racing in a 20km national championship in the heat of summer was not well received. Luckily, the idea did not proceed.

### Glover Shield 10km Roadwalk

#### Brisbane, Saturday 16<sup>th</sup> May 1967

The biennial Glover Shield meet had by now grown into a major carnival, with Open and U20 Men 10km, Open Women 2 Miles and U17 Men 2 Miles events contested. The 1967 edition was staged in Brisbane, with the Heel & Toe commenting

*Times throughout the day were slow, caused by the hot humid conditions. The track was perfect, a good surfaced road following the river along its tree lined route. The "highest" point was adjacent to a sewer outlet which most competitors were noticed to sprint past.*

The Glover Shield (Open Men 10km) and the Robinson Shield (U20Men 10km) were contested together as the final event, with a large field of 42 walkers in evidence. None of the big guns were racing, so interest was centred around the newly created ACT team who were having their first start in the race and looked the team to beat. **Peter McCullagh**, who had returned from 2 years studying at Cambridge in England, took control from the start and was never caught. An

improved **Robin Whyte** went with Peter for a good part of the distance, dropping back to third briefly but finishing strongly to take second. Victorian junior **Robin Wood** walked well to take an easy win in the Robinson Shield, one minute clear of second placegetter **Graeme Nicholls**, who was unable to recreate his outstanding walk in the T&F Championships 3 months earlier. Victoria was successful in winning both shields.

**Glover and Robinson Shield 10km Men, Brisbane, 16 May 1967**

1.	Peter McCullagh	ACT	49:00
2.	Robin Whyte	ACT	49:52
3.	Harry Summers	VIC	50:12
4.	Eddie Dawkins	NSW	51:07
5.	Robin Wood	VIC	51:23
6.	Varel Newmark	VIC	51:33
7.	Ken Green	ACT	51:36
8.	Peter Waddell	NSW	52:10
9.	Graeme Nicholls	VIC	52:59
10.	Noel Norris	QLD	53:14
11.	Andrew Crombie	NSW	53:36
12.	Alan Lucas	VIC	54:27
13.	Frank Overton	NSW	54:27
14.	Justin Coxhead	VIC	54:51
15.	R. Williams	VIC	55:03
16.	M. Smith	NSW	55:25
17.	Bruce Conboy	VIC	55:43
18.	T. Jones	NSW	57:04
19.	J. Connelly	NSW	57:14
20.	J. Roberts	QLD	57:25
21.	Lyle Smith	QLD	57:29
22.	P. Pashen	QLD	57:45
23.	S. Housefield	NSW	58:06
24.	John Tormey	ACT	58:14
25.	J. Forrest	QLD	58:17
26.	H. Kirkham	QLD	59:06
27.	Sid Bray	QLD	59:42
28.	D. Callaghan	NSW	59:56
29.	L. Landow	NSW	61:38
30.	Geoff Francis	ACT	62:38
31.	V. Orloff	QLD	62:28
32.	D. Cossart	VIC	62:38
33.	Greg Carter	VIC	64:10
34.	Dave Grenfell	VIC	64:15
35.	L. McPherson	QLD	66:15
36.	D. Thorpe	VIC	66:40
37.	R. Cheetham	NSW	68:01
38.	T. Maldane	NSW	68:01
39.	K.Daintry	QLD	74:28

**Teams – Glover Shield**

1.	VIC	23	H. Summers, R Wood, V Newmark, G Nicholls
2.	ACT	26	P McCullagh, R Whyte, K Green, J Tormey
3.	NSW	35	E Dawkins, P Waddell, A Crombie, F Overton
4.	QLD	52	

**Teams – Robinson Shield**

1.	VIC	8	2.	NSW	13	3.	QLD	24
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**1<sup>st</sup> Lake Burley Griffin Carnival**

**Lake, Burley Griffin, Canberra, Sunday 11<sup>th</sup> June 1967**

1967 saw a new national event, held in Canberra in early June, featuring a 20 Miles walk around Lake Burley Griffin. The carnival also included two additional walks: 7 Miles for Men and 2 Miles for women. Invitations were issued to all the Federation clubs, with walkers from NSW, Victoria, Queensland and ACT attending.

Walkers from all 4 States contested the inaugural 20 Miler, which began in heavy rain and had to negotiate a dug up road and a section of wet tar in the first three miles. Walkers covered the remaining distance with a liberal coating of tar on their legs and with black shoes. **Frank Clark** and **Peter McCullagh** began fast and opened up a break over **Bob Gardiner, Robin Whyte** and **Harry Summers**. At the half way mark, McCullagh gained an advantage over Clark but incurred the displeasure of the judges, leaving Frank about six minutes in front of Robin who was walking strongly, with a further 2 minute break on Bob and Harry. Over the last 3 miles, Bob and Harry make up a lot of ground to pass Robin and get closer to Frank, but he had plenty in hand and went on to a good win.

**LBG Carnival 20 Miles Walk, Canberra, Sunday 11 June 1967**

1.	Frank Clark	NSW	2:54:57
2.	Harry Summers	VIC	2:57:11
3.	Bob Gardiner	VIC	2:57:12
4.	Robin Whyte	NSW	2:59:03
5.	Bob Steadman	VIC	3:07:59
6.	Murray Brown	VIC	3:10:36
7.	Les Wade	NSW	3:11:19
8.	Vic Townsend	NSW	3:12:12
9.	Geoff Laycock	VIC	3:14:10
10.	John Busst	VIC	3:34:13
11.	Gus Theobald	VIC	3:34:23
12.	J Connelly	NSW	3:35:03
13.	J Roberts	QLD	3:36:39
14.	Nigel Crew	ACT	3:50:25
-	Peter McCullagh	ACT	DQ

Little did anyone guess that this race would grow to become the biggest walking carnival on the Australian calendar.

**U.S.A. vs British Commonwealth T&F Meet  
Coliseum, Los Angeles, 8-9 July 1967**

**Bob Gardiner** was selected to represent the British Commonwealth in a U.S.A. vs British Commonwealth T&F Meet, held in the Coliseum in Los Angeles on 8-9 July 1967. A 20km walk was on offer, with a small and select field of 3 USA walkers and 3 Commonwealth walkers.

The day of the walking race was very hot (mid summer in California), with the course starting and finishing on the track, along with road laps of slightly less than 2 miles. Ron Laird led from the start and was a comfortable winner with 1:36:29, seemingly the only walker unaffected by the conditions. Bob finished in 4<sup>th</sup> place, with 1:46:04.0

**U.S.A. vs British Commonwealth 20km Walk, USA, 8-9 July**

1.	Ron Laird	USA	1:36:29.2
2.	Larry Young	USA	1:40:47.0
3.	Ron Wallwork	ENG	1:44:46.8
4.	Bob Gardiner	AUS	1:46:04.0
5.	Trevor Mayhew	NZL	1:53:38.0
-	Tom Dooley	USA	DNF

**Australian 20km Roadwalk Championship  
Albert Park, Melbourne, Saturday 15<sup>th</sup> July 1967**

**Frank Clark** went into the 1967 Australian 20km Championship at Albert Park as a clear favourite, on the strength of his time of 1:32:59, done 2 weeks before. **Ted Allsopp, Ross Haywood** and **Peter McCullagh** were expected to provide stiff competition, along with **Bob Gardiner**, depending on how he was feeling after his race in America the week before.

Conditions were tough, with a strong and cold wind blowing across the lake, but it did not worry Frank Clark, who strode to the front and led throughout the race. Peter McCullagh was walking strongly in second place soon after the halfway mark and looked to to have a good chance of catching Frank, when he was disqualified. Bob Gardiner and Ted Allsopp made up ground in the final stages of the race, but no one was going to catch Frank who went on to win with 1:35:13, 12 secs clear of Bob, with Ted a further 9 secs in arrears.

<b>Australian 20km Championship, Melbourne, Sat 15 July 1967</b>			
1.	Frank Clark	NSW	1:35:13.6
2.	Bob Gardiner	VIC	1:35:25
3.	Ted Allsopp	VIC	1:35:34
4.	Ross Haywood	VIC	1:37:50
5.	Harry Summers	VIC	1:40:37
6.	Robin Whyte	NSW	1:40:39
7.	Robin Wood	VIC	1:42:50
8.	Noel Norris	QLD	1:43:43
9.	Logan Irwin	NSW	1:44:01
10.	Lloyd Davies	WA	1:44:27
11.	Bob Steadman	VIC	1:44:52
12.	Rod Bambury	VIC	1:45:23
13.	Graeme Nicholls	VIC	1:46:09
14.	Brian Carmen	SA	1:46:42
15.	Frank Leonard	SA	1:46:42
16.	Eddie Folland	SA	1:47:25
17.	Don Keane	WA	1:49:44
18.	Leslie Wade	NSW	1:50:21
19.	John Sheard	VIC	1:51:43
20.	Andrew Crombie	NSW	1:53:50
21.	Sidney Bray	QLD	1:53:51
22.	Varel Newmark	VIC	1:55:04
23.	Frank Overton	NSW	1:55:26
24.	Peter Whitham	SA	1:55:51
25.	John Smyth	SA	1:58:47
26.	Lyle Smith	QLD	1:59:48
27.	M Wall	SA	2:00:12
28.	Donald Bennett	QLD	2:07:14
-	Peter McCullagh	NSW	DQ
-	Eddie Dawkins	NSW	DQ
-	Dennis Mee	SA	DQ
-	A. Palmer	WA	DNF
-	Geoff Laycock	VIC	DNF
Teams: 1. VIC 14 2. NSW 28 3. SA 42 4. QLD 52			

This completed the major races for 1967. Frank Clark had dominated on the NSW front, winning the 1967 NSW 50km in a State record of 4:22:50 and the 1967 NSW 20km in 1:32:59. Add in Bob Gardiner and Ted Allsopp who were equally dominant on the Victorian front, and you had a top three Australians who were world class walkers. Add in Ross Haywood and Harry Summers who were not far behind, Peter McCullagh who was walking well in the ACT and Noel Freeman who was starting to train once again after his long break. 1968 looked like a vibrant Olympic year.

### **Australian Track & Field Championships 1967-68 E.S. Marks Field, Sydney, NSW, 23-26 March 1968**

The 1968 Australian T&F Championships 3000m Walk was an exciting race, with **Noel Freeman** and **Frank Clark** expected to fight it out on front. Freeman had whipped himself into racing shape quickly and had bettered Don Keane's Australian 2 Mile Track Walk record with a time of 13:24.4 in Melbourne interclub competition in January. He had been even faster on the road at Albert Park in February, recording 13:17. Clark had set a NSW record of 44:37.6 in winning the NSW 10,000m Track Walk Championship in February and was also recording very fast times over the shorter distances.

The 3000m walk championship lived up to expectations, quickly developing into the expected 2 man dual. **Ross Haywood** was with Noel and Frank for 3 laps before being disqualified. Noel eventually won out with a new NSW record of 12:39.6, 2 seconds clear of Frank.

<b>3,000m Track Walk Men - Sunday 24 March 1968</b>		
1	Noel Freeman	VIC 12.39.6
2	Frank Clark	NSW 12.41.6

3	Peter McCullagh	NSW	13.31.4
4	Robin Whyte	NSW	13.41.0
5	Graeme Nicholls	VIC	14.00.2
6	John Croft	NSW	14.01.0
7	W. Melville	VIC	14.02.0
8	Peter Waddell	NSW	14.05.0
9	Ron Crawford	NSW	14.08.0
10	Robert Steadman	VIC	14.19.0
11	Logan Irwin	QLD	14.52.0
	Varel Newmark	VIC	DQ (14.50.0)
	Brian Carman	QLD	DQ (15.10.0)
	Ross Haywood	VIC	DQ

Four days later (28 March 1968), Noel Freeman and Ross Haywood staged an interesting battle in fighting out an Australia vs New Zealand meet 3000m walk. Noel took the honours with 12:37 to Ross's 12:39, with Bob Gardiner next to finish with 12:41.

The intensity continued to ramp up as the walkers approached the Olympic trials. Firstly Bob Gardiner stormed through a VAWC 20 Miles walk around Albert Park Lake on 31<sup>st</sup> March, setting a new Australian best time with 2:33:18. Then a week later, Noel Freeman became the first Australian walker to beat the 90 minute mark, winning a VRWC 20km walk at Albert Park with a superb 1:29:12, some 6 minutes ahead of Bob in second place. Noel had walked with blistered heels from the 2 mile mark and was under 7 minute mile pace for the first 6 miles before slowing. It was the fastest 20km time in the world for 1967-1968 and was superior to the winning times in both the 1960 and 1964 Olympics.

But the win came at a cost – his blistered feet were slow to recover and it was only four weeks until the Olympic trial on May 4<sup>th</sup> at Centennial Park in Sydney. He could not race at all until April 29 when he got through a painful 5 mile VAWC club championship, winning with 35:05.

### 1968 Australian 20km Roadwalk Trial Centennial Park, Sydney, Saturday 4<sup>th</sup> May 1968

The unthinkable happened in the Olympic 20km trial a week later – **Noel Freeman** was disqualified after only 3 laps by the all NSW panel of judges – he had received reports for loss of contact from 5 of the 8 judges. He refused to leave the track and finished about 1 minute ahead of **Frank Clark** whose winning time was a course record 1:31:44. With second placed **Peter McCullagh** some 5 minutes behind and with third placed Harry Summers a further 3 minutes back, the only realistic Olympic selections could be Clark and Freeman.

#### 1968 Australian 20km Trial, Sydney, Saturday 4 May

1.	Frank Clark	NSW	1:31:44
2.	Peter McCullagh	VIC	1:36:59
3.	Harry Summers	VIC	1:40:10
4.	Ross Haywood	VIC	1:42:18
5.	Robin Whyte	NSW	1:43:30
6.	Bob Steadman	VIC	1:43:40
7.	Ron Crawford	NSW	1:46:18
8.	Logan Irwin	NSW	1:46:24
9.	Peter Waddell	NSW	1:47:29
10.	Ray Smith	VIC	1:49:22
11.	Leslie Wade	NSW	1:50:59
12.	Frak Overton	NSW	1:52:19
13.	Victor Townsend	NSW	1:55:42
14.	John Tormey	NSW	1:57:43
15.	Geoff Francis	ACT	2:11:26
-	Noel Freeman	VIC	DQ
-	Andrew Layland	ACT	DQ
-	Dudley Crews	ACT	DNF
-	Terence Lansdowne	ACT	DNF

Noel's finish was a token on his part but one which came to nothing. Olympic selection was awarded to Frank Clark only. There ensued one of the ugliest media frenzies ever seen in Australia. Noel was adamant he had been 'robbed' and

highly placed people like Herb Elliot backed him. Even the A.A.U. of Australia backed him, appealing his exclusion from the team.

He had one last chance for selection – a verbal assurance that if he won the Victorian Title at Albert Park on Saturday 30<sup>th</sup> June, wasn't disqualified for 'lifting' and recorded a world class time, he would be considered for inclusion in the team.

Four weeks later he was ready for his 20km 'trial'. He led the field from the start and, in icy winds and bitter conditions, recorded a world class time of 1:31:34, 5 seconds faster than Frank Clark had recorded in his Sydney trial win. He received only one caution and chief judge Jack Larkin confirmed that his style was up to international standard and would not cause disqualification at international contests. The race was watched by a surprise spectator, the secretary of the Australian Olympic Federation, Sir Edgar Tanner. One of the first to congratulate Noel after the race, Sir Edgar pointed to the 1964 Tokyo Olympic tracksuit he was holding and said: "*It looks as though you'll be getting another one of those.*"

Yet amazingly, at a closed AOF meeting later in July, Noel's case was dismissed. He was left at home while the great Golubnichy won the Olympic 20km gold – we can never know if Noel would have finally won his 'Gold' but a review of his form indicates he would have been in there with a good show.

It must be said at this stage that Frank Clark was a worthy Australian representative and it is unfortunate that his justifiable selection was perhaps undervalued a little in the aftermath of this unfortunate affair.

#### **Australian 50km Championship, Alexander Cup and Olympic Trial Toowoomba, Queensland, Saturday 25<sup>th</sup> May 1968**

Attention now turned to the 50km trial, to be held in Toowoomba, Queensland, 3 weeks later. Ted Allsopp and Bob Gardiner had made their intentions clear in a 40km trial race, held at Albert Park on Saturday 11<sup>th</sup> May. Ted had stormed home in what was probably his greatest ever walk, finishing first with 3:19:50, 6 minutes ahead of Bob whose time was 3:25:43.

The 50km trial was held in conjunction with the Australian Championship and was the first such held outside of a capital city. Unfortunately, the event was contested in bleak challenging conditions, with a blustery westerly wind, and on a tough undulating course. **Bob Gardiner** and **Ted Allsopp** took the lead as expected, with the only real challenge coming from **Peter McCullagh** who was eventually disqualified while attempting to catch the leaders mid race. Bob broke clear at the 30km mark, going on to win by 5 minutes with 4:22:23.6. Ted held on well for second, while **Frank Clark** took third. The top three 50kmwalkers had taken the top three places.

#### **Australian 50km Championship, Toowoomba, Sat 25 May**

1.	Bob Gardiner	VIC	4:22:23.6
2.	Ted Allsopp	VIC	4:27:40.4
3.	Frank Clark	NSW	4:30:34
4.	Harry Summers	VIC	4:43:43
5.	Jim Gleeson	VIC	4:50:04
6.	Robert Steadman	VIC	4:54:09
7.	Peter Waddell	NSW	4:57:12
8.	Ron Crawford	NSW	5:07:53
9.	Robin Whyte	NSW	5:08:04
10.	Sidney Bray	QLD	5:12:51
11.	Lyle Smith	QLD	5:25:34
12.	Peter Whitham	SA	5:32:14
13.	Leonard Hart	SA	5:34:33
14.	Noel Barron	QLD	5:38:33
15.	Brian Horton	SA	5:47:50
	Leslie Wade	NSW	DNF
	Noel Norris	QLD	DNF
	John Corrie	SA	DNF
	Peter McCullagh	NSW	DQ
	Gavan Breen	VIC	DQ
	Andrew Layland	NSW	DQ

Teams Results			
1.	VIC	7 Pts	(1,2,4)
2.	NSW	14 Pts	(3,5,6)
3.	QLD	26 Pts	(7,8,11)
4.	SA	31 Pts	(9,10,12)

In yet another controversial selection decision, Bob Gardiner and Frank Clark were selected for the Mexico Olympic but Ted Allsopp was overlooked once again. Ted had made 2 Olympic teams but it could just as easily been 5 teams. In 1952, 1960 and 1968, he went into the trials as one of the firm favourites but on each occasion he was the unlucky one who missed out even though his performances always seemed sufficient for selection

### Lake Burley Griffin Carnival

#### Lake Burley Griffin, Canberra, Sunday 19<sup>th</sup> June 1968

The second staging, the LBG Carnival was extended to include a number of subsidiary events, including Sub Junior & Senior Men 6 Miles, Sub Junior, Junior and Senior Women 2 Miles and an Under 14 ¾ Mile.

Unfortunately, the Olympic 20km Trail in early May and the Australian 50km Championship only a fortnight beforehand meant that the 20 Mile field was reduced in both quality and quantity. **Jim Gleeson** of Victoria scored a convincing win, ahead of fellow Victorian **Bob Steadman**, with **Peter Waddell** of Sydney taking out the third placing.

LBG 20 Miles Walk, Canberra, Sunday 19 June 1968			
1.	Jim Gleeson	VIC	3:01:22
2.	Bob Steadman	VIC	3:03:39
3.	Peter Waddell	NSW	3:03:52
4.	Robin Whyte	ACT	3:06:46
5.	Les Wade	NSW	3:10:07
6.	Vic Townsend	NSW	3:11:38
7.	Murray Brown	VIC	3:17:55
8.	Justin Coxhead	VIC	3:20:40
9.	Dave Du Bondi	VIC	3:31:45
10.	Gus Theobald	VIC	3:39:23
11.	? Parsons	VIC	3:46:05
-	John Tormey	ACT	DNF
-	Ray Smith	VIC	DNF
-	Alan Lucas	VIC	DNF
-	Geoff Francis	ACT	DNF

As the Olympics drew near, Bob Gardiner intensified his training and racing and his final hitouts were impressive. In particular, on August 24<sup>th</sup> in a VAWC Track 50km event at Melbourne University, Bob won in 4:14:17, setting new Commonwealth, Australian and Victorian records and showing that he was a dangerous dark horse for the upcoming Olympic 50km event. I was fortunate enough to witness that walk and I still remember the constant pace with which he ate up the 125 laps.

Bob and Frank Clark left for Mexico with high expectations but, like most of us, they had little idea of the toll that the high altitude and heat would exact from their bodies. In the Olympic 50km, after a good start, Bob gradually lost ground and faded back through the field. His last 10km was walked in the semi darkness with people wandering across the course. His 19<sup>th</sup> place in 4:52:29 was a disappointment but still a gutsy effort. Frank held together a little better, finishing 12<sup>th</sup> with 4:40:14.

Both walkers had been selected for the 20km / 50km double. Bob chose not to start in the 20km, deciding to put all his efforts into the 50km. Frank did the double, coming 16<sup>th</sup> in the 20km with 1:40:06.

Frank Clark	20 km Walk	16 <sup>th</sup>	1:40:06
	50 km Walk	12 <sup>th</sup>	4:40:14
Bob Gardiner	20km Walk	DNS	
	50km Walk	19 <sup>th</sup>	4:52:59



*Bob Gardiner and Frank Clark training in the Olympic Village in Mexico City*

### **Australian Track & Field Championships - 1968-69 Olympic Park, Melbourne, Victoria, 28-30 March 1969**

Frank Clark had won the NSW T&F Championships 3000m in a very fast 12:53.8 and looked the in-form walker coming into the 1969 National T&F Championships. Noel Freeman had disappeared from the racing scene after missing out on the 1968 Olympics, and Bob Gardiner and Ted Allsopp seemed unlikely to match Frank's speed.

It had been a wet weekend in Melbourne and, after raining almost all of the Saturday night, the Olympic Park track was almost completely underwater for the Men's Open 3000m walk. A large field of 21 splashed and slid around the 7½ laps. **Frank Clark** survived an early challenge from **Graeme Nicholls**, winning his first Australian track title in fine form, with 12:54.4. Possibly the biggest surprise was the form of **Noel Freeman** who crossed the line 10m behind Frank, only to be disqualified. Third placed Graeme Nicholls was also disqualified, meaning that the silver ended up with **Bob Gardiner**.

A new name appeared in the lists, with 16 year old NSW prodigy **Steven Hausfeld** taking 6<sup>th</sup> place with 13:58.0. Steve would feature in the medals in future years and would go on to represent Australia in the 1987 IAAF Race Walking World Cup.

#### **3,000m Track Walk - Men - Sunday 30 March 1969**

1	Frank Clark	NSW	12:54.4
2	Bob Gardiner	VIC	13:24.6
3	Wayne Melville	TAS	13:37.6
4	Ted Allsopp	VIC	13:40.4
5	Varel Newmark	VIC	13:57.0
6	Steve Hausfeld	NSW	13:58.0
7	David Black	VIC	14:04.0
8	John Sheard	VIC	14:09.0
9	Robin Wood	VIC	14:14.0
10	Bill Kirby	NSW	14:19.0
11	Robert Sargeant	TAS	14:21.0
12	Peter Waddell	NSW	14:23.0
13	Logan Irwin	NSW	14:32.0
14	Peter Witham	SA	14:38.0
15	Justin Coxhead	VIC	15:12.0
16	Sidney Bray	QLD	15:22.0



17	L. McPherson	QLD	15:25.0	
-	Noel Freeman	VIC	DQ	(12.57.0)
-	Graeme Nicholls	VIC	DQ	(13.03.0)
-	Aubrey Strydom	SA	DQ	
-	Graham Evans	SA	DQ	



*Frank Clark splashes his way to victory in the 1969 Australian T&F Championships 3000m walk in Melbourne*

#### **Australian 20km Championship and Alexander Cup 20km Centennial Park Sydney, Saturday 17 May 1969**

The 1969 Australian 20km Championship, which was run in conjunction with the Alexander Cup in Centennial Park, Sydney, saw Mexico Olympian **Frank Clark** successfully defend his road title in cool windy conditions. His time of 1:31:56 was amongst his best efforts over the distance. **Noel Freeman** overcame a leg injury to finish about 150m behind Frank with 1:32:57, taking the silver medal. **Bob Gardiner** moved into third place when **Graeme Nicholls** was disqualified, taking the bronze with 1:38:07. NSW junior **Stephen Hausfeld**, now just turned 17, showed superb potential with his time of 1:39:37. Overall, NSW won the teams event on a countback from the favoured Victorians.

<b>Australian 20km Championship, Sydney, Sat 17 May 1969</b>			
1	Frank Clark	NSW	1:31:56.6
2	Noel Freeman	Vic	1:32:37.6
3	Bob Gardiner	Vic	1:38:07.2
4	Stephen Hausfeld	NSW	1:39:37
5	Varel Newmark	Vic	1:42:08
6	Robin Whyte	NSW	1:42:17
7	Peter Waddell	NSW	1:43:35
8	Justin Coxhead	Vic	1:43:37
9	Robin Wood	Vic	1:44:30
10	Ray Smith	Vic	1:47:12
11	Bill Kirby	Vic	1:47:48
12	Geoff Laycock	Vic	1:49:12
13	Len Hart	SA	1:49:22
14	Jim Henderson	Vic	1:49:45
15	Gavan Balharry	SA	1:50:31
16	Peter Whitham	SA	1:51:12
17	Vic Townsend	NSW	1:51:26
18	Martin Davey	WA	1:54:47
19	Syd Bray	Qld	1:57:37
20	John Corrie	SA	2:00:10
	Graeme Nicholls	Vic	DQ

Thomas Gladwin	SA	DQ	
Frank Overton	NSW	DNF	
Les Wade	NSW	DNF or DNS ?	
Graham Evans	SA	DNF or DNS ?	
Teams	1. NSW 18	2. VIC 18	3. SA 42

### Lake Burley Griffin Carnival

#### Lake Burley Griffin, Canberra, Sunday 15<sup>th</sup> June 1969

The third edition of the LBG 20 Mile walk was easily won by **Frank Clark** in a course record time of 2:41:23. **Graeme Nicholls** looked set for second place until he took off on a cross country trip, well off course. That left **Geoff Laycock** and Peter **Waddell** to take the minor medals, a long long way further back. A special mention for 1956 Olympian **Ray Smith** who finished 6<sup>th</sup> in 3:10:08. Ray's big moment was when he roared past Robin Wood over the final 3 miles. At the finish, Ray was heard to remark to Laycock and Coxhead "*You young blokes might be able to walk faster than me but you can't walk any b... harder*".

LBG 20 Miles Walk, Canberra, Sunday 15 June 1969			
1.	Frank Clark	NSW	2:41:03
2.	Geoff Laycock	VIC	2:57:28
3.	Peter Waddell	NSW	2:57:42
4.	Justin Coxhead	VIC	3:02:08
5.	Ian Henderson	VIC	3:05:48
6.	Ray Smith	VIC	3:10:08
7.	Robin Wood	VIC	3:12:03
8.	Clarrie Jack	VIC	3:13:51
9.	Gus Theobald	VIC	3:39:45

### U.S.A. vs USSR vs British Commonwealth T&F Meet Coliseum, Los Angeles, 19-20 July 1969

Just as Bob Gardiner had been selected in 1967 to represent the British Commonwealth in a U.S.A. vs British Commonwealth T&F Meet in Los Angeles in 1967, it was **Frank Clark's** turn in 1969, when a three way meet between USA, USSR and the British Commonwealth was scheduled. Frank walked well to come 5<sup>th</sup>, only 23 secs behind 1968 Olympic 20km bronze medalist Nikolai Smaga. It was a tonic for him and went some way to recompensing for Mexico where the altitude put paid to his chances. As an aside, Paul Nihill regarded this win as his greatest ever non-championship performance, in beating 1968 Olympic Gold medallist Golubnichy.

USA v Commonwealth v USSR, LA, USA, 19 <sup>th</sup> July 1969			
1.	Paul Nihill	GBR	1:31:49.8
2.	Vladimir Golubnichy	USSR	1:32:11.0
3.	Ron Laird	USA	1:32:27.0
4.	Nikolai Smaga	USA	1:32:51.4
5.	Frank Clark	AUS	1:33:14.6
6.	Robert Kitchen	USA	1:38:02.4

### 1970 Commonwealth Games 20 Miles Walk Trial Albert Park, Melbourne, Saturday 30<sup>th</sup> August 1969

The Australian Commonwealth Games 20 mile trial was held at Albert Park on Sunday 30<sup>th</sup> August 1969, nearly a year in advance of the 1970 Commonwealth Games. A large field of 33 starters faced the gun but all eyes were focused on **Noel Freeman**, **Frank Clark** and **Bob Gardiner**, Noel being expected to fight out the honours with Frank.

Noel, with a recent 2:33:54, started a slight favourite from Frank who had a 2:36 on the board. Bob had the fastest time in the field with 2:33:18, done in 1968, but he was under-rated for this trial. The field was given an international flavour with the inclusion of **Arthur Jones** who had competed for England in the Mexican Olympics 20km and who was now living in Sydney. In all, there were 6 Olympic athletes in the field. The course was over a 2 mile lap which meant 30 sharp "U" turns had to be negotiated during the race.

In what was later described as one of the greatest races ever held in Australia (outside the 1956 Olympics), Bob, Noel and Frank powered through the first 10 miles locked together in 1:16:43 with **Graeme Nicholls** a further 1 minute back in fourth place. At the 12 mile mark, the group started to crack, with first Frank and then Noel dropping off, as Bob put the hammer down and increased his tempo. From there, Bob stormed home with a second 10 mile split of 1:14:53. His final time of 2:31:36.6 was only 3.6 seconds outside the World Track Record held by Russian walker Vedjakov. Noel took second in 2:34:17, just outside his own Empire Track Record while Frank was third in a distant 2:39:24.

<b>1970 Commonwealth Games 20 Miles Walk Trial, 30 Aug 1969</b>			
1.	Bob Gardiner	VIC	2:31:36.6
2.	Noel Freeman	VIC	2:34:19
3.	Frank Clarke	NSW	2:39:24
4.	Graeme Nicholls	VIC	2:45:18
5.	Justin Coxhead	VIC	2:47:35
6.	Robin Whyte	NSW	2:49:46
7.	Ted Allsopp	VIC	2:52:01
8.	Peter Waddell	NSW	2:57:09
9.	Norm Marr	VIC	2:57:52
10.	Peter Whitham	SA	2:59:52
11.	Eddie Dawkins	NSW	3:19:02
-	Robin Wood	VIC	DNF
-	Keith Heness	NSW	DNF
-	Frank Overton	NSW	DNF
-	Les Wade	NSW	DNF

Bob and Noel were subsequently selected in the Australian Commonwealth Games team but Frank missed out. He was in the best form of his life – in 1969 he had won 4 NSW walk titles and 2 Australian walk titles, as well taking second place in the NSW 10km Track Run Title (30:02) and winning the NSW Marathon (2:30:02). He subsequently moved to England and lived in Ilford for 6 months, sharing house with Roger Mills. While there contested the British 20 Miles walk trial in an attempt to sway the selectors' decision, but he finished only 8<sup>th</sup>. His last opportunity had passed.

The battles between Bob Gardiner and Noel Freeman during 1969 and 1970 are the stuff of legend. Racing week by week on the Victorian front, they pushed each other to PB after PB. To gain a feel for what was going on, check out <http://www.vrwc.org.au/tim-archive/articles/wv-bob-gardiner.pdf>.

### **Australian Track & Field Championships - 1969-70 Olympic Sports Field, Adelaide, South Australia, 20-23 March 1970**

With Frank Clark training in England and with Bob Gardiner a notable absentee, it was left to **Noel Freeman** to fight out the Australian T&F Championship 3000m with young Victorian speedster **Graeme Nicholls**. On this occasion, it was Graeme to win out by just over 1 second, 12:56.6 to 12:57.8. SA's **Frank Leonard** took bronze with 13:10.6 while 17 year old **Steve Hausfeld** improved to 4<sup>th</sup> place with 13:35.0.

Conditions were dismal, with intermittent rain, along with a cold breeze. The only consolation was that the track, being rubber-bitumen, was solid under foot, so that the quagmire of 1969 was avoided.

<b>3,000m Track Walk - Men - Sunday 22 March 1970</b>			
1	Graeme Nicholls	VIC	12:56.6
2	Noel Freeman	VIC	12:57.8
3	Frank Leonard	SA	13:10.6
4	Steve Hausfeld	NSW	13:35.2
5	Bob Foster	TAS	13:39.3
6	Barry Whittaker	SA	13:47.0
7	Robin Whyte	NSW	13:50.0
8	Peter Waddell	NSW	13:52.0
9	Robin Wood	VIC	14:04.0
10	Varel Newmark	VIC	14:45.0
-	David Black	VIC	DQ
-	Graham Evans	SA	DQ

**1970 Glover Shield Carnival**  
**Adelaide, Saturday 16<sup>th</sup> May 1970**

Alas, comprehensive results for this meet seem to have been lost in time. **Graeme Nicholls** was the only big gun to attend, winning the 10km walk easily. With fellow Victorians **Justin Coxhead** and **Varel Newmark** finishing 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup>, Victoria was an easy winner in the Teams event. The Robinson Shield (junior 10km) also went to Victoria, compliments of **Neil Croker**, **Neil Larchin** and **Barry Larchin**. Further places and times are unknown.

**Glover Shield 10km Walk, Adelaide, Saturday 16<sup>th</sup> May 1970**

Teams:	VIC	10	Nicholls, Coxhead, Newmark
	SA	16	Leonard, Whittaker, Whitham
	NSW	26	Heness, Overton, Johnstone

**Lake Burley Griffin Carnival**  
**Lake Burley Griffin, Canberra, Sunday 14<sup>th</sup> June 1970**

The 4<sup>th</sup> edition of the LBG carnival included, for the first time, a teams race for competitors in the 20 Miles walk. The teams race was badged as the H. C. Campbell Shield, in honour of Harry Campbell of NSW who had served the sport of racewalking both as a competitor and later as an administrator from 1924 till his death in December 1963.

Young Victorian walker **Graeme Nicholls** continued his wonderful year, following on from his victory in the T&F 3000m track walk in March. With this win in the much longer 20 Miles distance, he showed that he was going to be a very versatile walker. The inaugural H. C. Campbell Shield Teams Event was won by Victoria with its team of Graeme Nicholls, Justin Coxhead and Geoff Laycock. This was never in doubt, with Victoria taking 6 of the first 7 places.

**LBG 20 Miles Walk, Canberra, Sunday 14 June 1970**

1.	Graeme Nicholls	VIC	2:46:40
2.	Justin Coxhead	VIC	2:51:36
3.	Arthur Jones	NSW	2:57:29
4.	Geoff Laycock	VIC	3:00:22
5.	Dave Black	VIC	3:02:11
6.	Gavan Breen	VIC	3:06:21
7.	Clarrie Jack	VIC	3:08:45
8.	Robin Whyte	ACT	3:09:08
9.	Alistair Johnson	NSW	3:10:31
10.	Jim Henderson	VIC	3:10:35
11.	John Tormey	ACT	3:11:15
12.	Keith Heness	NSW	3:12:36
13.	Vic Townsend	NSW	3:12:57
14.	Stuart Cooper	VIC	3:13:13
15.	Brendan Hyde	NSW	3:22:07
16.	Terry Jones	ACT	3:25:34
17.	Jack Webber	SA	3:27:17
18.	Chris Moynham	NSW	3:35:32
19.	Ted Edwards	NSW	3:39:55
20.	Graham Anderson	VIC	3:44:29
	Robin Wood	VIC	DNF
	Frank Overton	NSW	DNF
	Ray Smith	VIC	DNF
	Alan Lucas	VIC	DNF
	Murray Brown	VIC	DNF
	Nigel Crew	ACT	DNF
	Paul Dorsett		DNF

While national attention might have been focused on Canberra in June, Victorian eyes were glued locally, watching the unfolding of a superb season on the local front. Perhaps the best result of the lot was recorded on 20<sup>th</sup> June when, in a 20 mile trial race at Albert Park, Noel Freeman, with 5 mile splits of 37:04. 36:28, 36:28 and 38:02, clocked 2:28:02, a time more than 3 minutes under the existing track world record and beating Bob Gardiner's 1969 world best time of 2:31:36. Bob was blown away and finished a long way back in 2:38:23

These times were so far ahead of the rest of the Commonwealth walkers that Noel and Bob were unbackable favourites for the 1970 Commonwealth Games the following month.

### **1970 Commonwealth Games 20 Miles Walk Edinburgh, Scotland, Saturday 18<sup>th</sup> July 1970**

As expected, the two Victorians were in a class of their own in the cool conditions of Edinburgh, easily outwalking the opposition. **Noel Freeman** won in 2:33:33 and **Bob Gardiner** was second in 2:35:55. Local Scottish walker **Bill Sutherland** was a surprise third in 2:37:24, walking the race of his life.

There was one little mystery. Somewhere on the outward journey, a “competitor” was seen bowling along wearing No. 100. There was no official competitor wearing that particular number in the field. But he was not there for long; after a mile or two, he disappeared just as quietly and mysteriously as he had appeared.

#### **1970 Commonwealth Games 20 Miles Walk, Scotland, 18 July**

1.	Noel Freeman	Australia	2:33:33
2.	Robert Gardiner	Australia	2:35:55
3.	Bill Sutherland	Scotland	2:37:24



*Noel Freeman and Bob Gardiner in action in the 1970 Commonwealth Games in Edinburgh*

A week later, Ted Allsopp won his 10<sup>th</sup> Victorian 50km title at Albert Park, with a time of 4:27:28.

### **Australian 20km Championship Adelaide, Saturday 29<sup>th</sup> August 1970**

**Noel Freeman** was on a high after his Commonwealth Games win, comfortably winning the 1970 Australian 20km Championship in Adelaide 6 weeks later. His eyes were now firmly set on the Munich Olympics and he was ticking the boxes, one by one. **Graeme Nicholls** continued his good form, taking second place with 1:35:20, ahead of former British Olympian **Arthur Jones**, now competing for NSW, who took third with 1:35:50. 18 year old **Steven Hausfeld** continued his rise up the rankings, taking fourth place with 1:37:42.

#### **Australian 20km Championship, Adelaide, 29 August 1970**

1.	Noel Freeman	VIC	1:30:57
2.	Graeme Nicholls	VIC	1:35:20
3.	Arthur Jones	NSW	1:35:50
4.	Steven Hausfeld	NSW	1:37:42
5.	Varel Newmark	VIC	1:38:50
6.	Robin Wood	VIC	1:38:54
7.	Justin Coxhead	VIC	1:39:23
8.	Frank Leonard	SA	1:40:19
9.	Alistaire Johnstone	NSW	1:43:03

10.	Barry Whittaker	SA	1:43:55
11.	Robin Whyte	NSW	1:44:04
12.	Martin Davey	WA	1:45:05
13.	Rod Bambery	VIC	1:45:59
14.	Clarrie Jack	VIC	1:47:20
15.	Don Keane	WA	1:49:21
16.	Graham Evans	SA	1:50:43
17.	Keith Heness	NSW	1:51:25
18.	Lloyd Davies	WA	1:51:59
19.	Peter Whitham	SA	1:53:17
20.	Len Hart	SA	1:53:21
21.	Vincent Sutherland	WA	1:54:32
22.	Jack Webber	SA	1:55:03
23.	Sidney Bray	QLD	1:57:58
24.	Phil Hollis	SA	1:58:43
25.	Jeff Kennett	SA	1:59:28
26.	Kevin Finn	SA	2:00:35
27.	David Tapp	SA	2:03:57
28.	Bill Starr	SA	2:04:44
Teams: 1. VIC 14 2. NSW 25 3. SA 44 4. WA 53			

Things turned sour almost immediately when Noel was reported for misbehaviour at the awards ceremony after the 20km championship (by memory, he threw a glass of beer or wine into the face of someone). His case was quickly reviewed and he was handed a 13 month suspension by the V.A.A.A. board. The 13 months suspension meant that he would miss the selection trials for the 1972 Olympics (set for 18<sup>th</sup> September 1971). It was obvious that the additional one month suspension was for no other reason than that. He appealed to A.A.U of A. but they dismissed his appeal. He had no further recourse for redress. It was a case of pure vindictiveness by the authorities.

Thus ended the career of our greatest male walker ever – in controversy.

Noel must be rated alongside Nathan Deakes and Jared Tallent as one of our best ever racewalkers. His Olympic Silver medal, his Commonwealth Games Gold medal, his numerous Commonwealth and Australian records, his world best road time for 20 miles, his dominance on both track and road and his 8 National Title wins are an extraordinary tribute to his talent and fighting spirit. He had a never die attitude that would not admit defeat or give in to adversity.

### **Australian 50km Championship Albert Park, Melbourne, Saturday 26<sup>th</sup> September 1970**

The 1970 Australian 50km Championship was held on 26<sup>th</sup> September in Melbourne, with Bob Gardiner and Ted Allsopp in attendance but with Noel Freeman and Frank Clark notable absentees. A full field of 24 walkers started in conditions which were described as “fine, sunny, cool and calm early, with a slight breeze during the second half”. The course was a 5km lap on the bitumen roads surrounding Albert Park Lake.

**Ted Allsopp** won by over 8 minutes, and may well have won anyway, even if Freeman and Clark had been in attendance. His time of 4:21:05 only 1 minute outside his PB. He was aged 44 but, on his day, he was still unbeatable. Second place went to former British international **Peter Fullager** who had arrived in Australia only a month previously. Peter came with great credentials, having raced with distinction in England and Europe, with a string of victories and top performances. Third place went to the irrepressible **Bob Gardiner**, a slow 4:36:53 but a team performance by the ultimate team man.

Allsopp, Gardiner and Steve Hausfeld had led through 20km with 1:44:58, 7 seconds in front of Fullager. Fullager had caught the group by the halfway mark and was the only one to go with Allsopp as he applied the pace in the second half. Even so, he dropped off at the 35km mark, leaving Allsopp to power home on his own.

<b>1970 Australian 50km Championship, Melbourne, Sat 26 Sept</b>			
1.	Ted Allsopp	VIC	4:21:05
2.	Peter Fullager	SA	4:29:15
3.	Bob Gardiner	VIC	4:36:53
4.	Steven Hausfeld	NSW	4:41:05
5.	Robin Whyte	NSW	4:41:55

6.	Graeme Nicholls	VIC	4:55:55
7.	Robin Wood	VIC IND	5:04:58
8.	Victor Townsend	NSW	5:08:36
9.	Andrew Jamieson	VIC	5:15:10
10.	Brendan Hyde	NSW	5:24:46
11.	Peter Whitham	SA	5:27:25
12.	John Webber	SA	5:32:25
13.	Graeme Anderson	VIC IND	5:21:53
-	Sydney Bray	QLD	DNF
-	Brian Carman	NSW IND	DNF
-	David Black	VIC IND	DNF
-	Paul Cronin	VIC IND	DNF
-	Geoff Laycock	VIC iND	DNF
-	Claude Martin	VIC IND	DNF
-	Gordon Mills	VIC IND	DNF
-	Varel Newmark	VIC IND	DNF
-	Norm Marr	VIC	DNF
-	Justin Coxhead	VIC	DNF
-	Clarrie Jack	VIC IND	DQ
<b>Teams</b>			
1.	VIC	10 Pts	(1,3,6 – Allsopp, Gardiner, Nicholls)
2.	NSW	16 Pts	(4,5,7 – Hausfeld, Whyte, Townsend)
3.	SA	19 Pts	(2,8,9 – Fullager, Whitham, Webber)