

HISTORY OF THE PAKURANGA ATHLETIC CLUB 1967-2017

In 1967, the suburb of Pakuranga was developing around the Pakuranga Town Centre. Howick Jaycees were given a learning project, that of establishing an athletic club in the area. Kerry Franklin (later to become a club President) held a meeting at his home to discuss how to go about the task. Another service club, Round Table, was asked to join in this meeting and it was decided to do a letterbox drop of the area calling a public meeting. 36 members of the public and 4 invited guests attended the meeting which was held at the Riverina School Hall on 19th October. Jack Yeo was appointed Chairman and at this meeting, the Pakuranga Amateur Athletic and Harrier club was formed. A committee of 10 was elected and the first committee meeting was held at the Panmure Young Citizens Centre on 25th October. On Thursday 23rd November, the first Track & Field meeting was held at Ti Rakau Park. Subscriptions were 50c per child and 75c per family.

Mr Ray Morrissey became the President, Mr Ryan the Secretary and Mrs Yvette Corlett the Treasurer. Also taking a very active role on the committee for many years was Sandy Beach. Three other members of the original committee served terms as President during the next ten years. They were Geof Roberts 1969-70, George Ewan 1970-71, and Kerry Franklin 1971-74. The uniform of white shorts with a red singlet for the boys, and a red satin blouse for the girls, was adopted. A logo depicting the Town Centre Koru was sewn on the front of the singlet. The mothers had to dye the boys' red singlets and sew the girls red satin blouses.

The first headquarters of the club were at Ti Rakau Park where the Childrens' Track & Field operated without clubrooms for 13 years. Facilities were shared with other clubs and equipment was stored in the toilet/utility block during the summer and in Lloyd Elsmore's basement over the winter months.

Right: The Ti Rakau Park toilet/utility block as it was in the early club days.



Membership numbers increased rapidly during these years and by the late 1970s, volunteer officials were putting over 600 children through their events on Wednesday club nights.

In 1980 (the then) Manukau City Council developed a 10 lane grass athletic track in the new Lloyd Elsmore Park situated further up the Pakuranga Highway. Council provided the club with a metal shed for storage of equipment and this became the new headquarters for Track & Field.

Right: The storage shed in Lloyd Elsmore Park that was the first headquarters for the club's Track & Field members.



In 1979 a fundraising committee was formed with the plan to build permanent clubrooms on Lloyd Elsmore Park. Funds were raised by club members through various raffles and projects but the bulk came from the "Buy a Brick" campaign, selling commemorative bricks to members and the local community, raising \$20,000. In 1980 a building committee was formed to plan the clubrooms and in 1983, Manukau Council matched the club's funding dollar for dollar, under the (then) Shared Responsibility Scheme and as well, granted an interest free loan of \$120,000. Work began on the clubrooms in November 1983 with the grand opening in May 1984.

A Harrier section of the club was formed ten years after the Children's Track & Field section when, in 1977, a small group of runners met opposite the old Pakuranga Community Hall for a run around the fields. Children, (Midgets and Harriettes) soon had races provided for them also.

The Pakuranga Community Hall became their headquarters on a Saturday afternoon for the next 7 years until the 1984 opening of the



The Pakuranga Community Hall as members knew it back in the early 80's. The hall was opened in 1921 and is still in use.



Left: The field sets out up Pakuranga Road, starting from the Pakuranga Community Hall, for the mens' Road Race Championship in 1980. Tom Shaw, second from left, is one of the front runners.

Two hundred and thirty runners took part in races ranging from Midgets to Veterans (as they were called then). The following Saturday, members of the club started their door knocking "Buy a Brick" campaign.

In 1982 the Lady Joggers Group came into being from an idea at a Harrier Committee meeting. Jogging was in its hey-day; many mothers had not re-joined the workforce and had time on their hands when the children were at school. As the group did not have any clubrooms of its own, it hired the newly built cricket clubrooms in Lloyd Elsmore Park and with a little publicity, membership rapidly skyrocketed.

Advertisements went in the local papers urging women to come along and learn to run. Beginners' courses of "walk one lamppost, run one lamppost" really took off.

This group later became more politically correct with a name change to Joggers and the inclusion of men. Today it is called Joggers & Walkers and boasts over a hundred members.

Right: The 1984 ladies' Joggers group go on a run to prepare for that year's Round The Bays fun run.

