



# Horizons

**Year 7  
2006**

# Competitive Walking



The sport of competitive or race walking is believed to have started in the last part of the 19th century. The first ever championships of the Amateur Athletic Club of England in 1866 included an 11 km walking event. Professional indoor walking races were held in New York City in the 1870s and 1880s, where competitors raced around the clock – although they were permitted to eat and rest during the course of the race. The winning prize went to the competitor who had walked the greatest distance in six full days.

Competitive walking is also known as ‘heel-and-toe’ racing. This is because walkers must make sure their leading foot touches the walking surface before the trailing foot leaves it. In most walking events around the world (except for England and wherever the Olympic Games are held), the leading foot must be straightened briefly while it touches the ground.

Walking races were introduced into Olympic competition in London in 1908. They were held over distances of 3.5 km and 16 km and were for men only. At the Melbourne Olympics in 1956 these distances were increased to 20 km and 50 km, as they remain to the present time. A walking event for women was introduced at the 1992 Barcelona Olympics, and covered a distance of 10 km. At the Sydney Olympics in 2000, the women’s event was increased to 20 km.

# The Shopping Trolley

The development of the shopping trolley in the 1930s was important in the history of retail sales. An American supermarket owner, Sylvan Goldman, invented the trolley. His motive was not just to help customers carry their shopping, but also to encourage them to buy more.

To create the first trolleys, Goldman used folding chairs. He put one or two baskets on the seats, which he had raised by putting wheels under the legs.

He was disappointed to find that business did not improve. Shoppers hesitated to use the trolleys, because they were afraid they might not be able to control them. Goldman persisted with his idea because he knew that people could be easily influenced. He tried again, and this time his idea seemed to work. Crowds of people were seen coming from his supermarket with trolleys fully laden. Others, seeing them, were then convinced that the trolleys were safe after all. What they did not know was that they were the victims of a stunt: the people they saw had been paid by Goldman to impersonate customers happily pushing loaded trolleys.



# The New Teacher

Ellen had never lived so far out in the country. She'd been brought up near Melbourne, where her parents owned a small grocery store. It had been a wrench to leave her family and her friends to come here – but it was an adventure, too!

Well, she'd been in Jinderoo for more than a year, and the country way of life, at first so strange, was now familiar and comfortable. She had learned to wear stout boots, to save her washing water for the garden flowers, to rise earlier and go to bed sooner. She boarded with a widow who had a spare room in her house, and who did her best to give Ellen the plumpness she associated with good health.

“My, you're skinny,” she would remark sorrowfully, glancing at Ellen's trim waist; and Ellen would laugh, and eat another drop-scone thickly spread with butter, just to please her.

Ellen's predecessor in the schoolhouse had been a Mr Greg. The children, so used to saying “Please, sir”, “Yes, sir”, “No, sir”, had found it difficult to get used to the idea of saying “miss” instead. Hands were clapped to mouths in consternation each time the mistake occurred, and an infectious giggle would ripple round the room.



# The Flute

Mr Riggs says, 'I want you to explain this, Paul.'

He's holding a length of bamboo — the confiscated, unfinished flute.

I look up. There is kindness in his face. It transforms his terrible (blind) eye. I feel confused.

'Sir, I was making a flute, sir.'

He nods. 'I can see that.' He offers it to me. 'You'd better take it home and finish it.'

I take it from him. For a while, neither of us speaks. I gather myself and look at his eye and say, 'Sir, I made another one.'

An expression of regret passes over his face. 'Did you? I would have given this one back to you, but I thought it was just a stick. When I was burning the rubbish yesterday, I realised what it was.'

'That's all right, sir.'

We stand there, feeling awkward.

He looks at me curiously. 'Can you play?'

'Yes, sir.'

'Then you must show me on Monday.'

Another one of those long pauses. 'Sir,' I say, 'I can show you now. I've got the other one in my kitbag.'

He folds his arms and leans against the edge of his desk and says, 'All right then, let's hear you.'

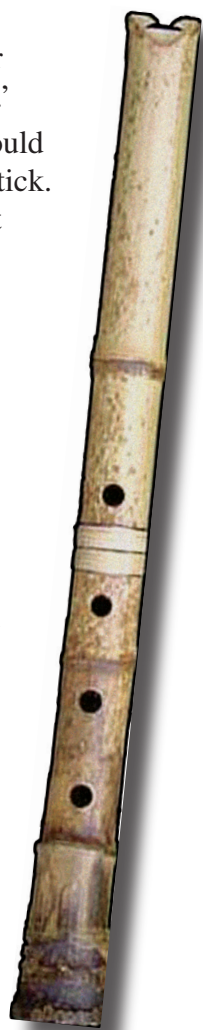
I take out the flute, my fingers flutter in the gaze of his shiny eye. Then I position myself and begin to play, and the magic takes over.

He's smiling.

Mr Riggs is listening and smiling.

I finish, feeling hot-faced and shy.

Mr Riggs says, 'That's made my day.'





# Have your say on sports funding

**A newspaper asked its readers:**

**“Are top sports stars paid too much?”**

**These writers offered their opinions.**

I spent fifteen years transporting my kids to various venues, providing uniforms and paying for equipment. I was happy just to give them an opportunity for success. Did they have any public support during their early years? No way!

At the end of the day, there was no real chance the kids would receive any rewards for their dedication. Only a few at the very top achieve their dreams, and even if they do, they'll only have a few years at the top. They will need every cent they earn to support themselves for the rest of their lives.

*Alison – Moorabbin*

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It is a disgrace that sports stars, who offer little of real value to the community, earn huge amounts from advertising sponsors when more deserving workers earn low wages.

I have no problem with the government encouraging excellence in all fields – sporting, educational or artistic. An important issue of fairness, however, arises when government funding is provided to young athletes who go on to earn huge amounts of money from advertising sponsors and later from highly paid careers as commentators or coaches.

*Jeff – North Melbourne*

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Outstanding athletes provide valuable role models for young people in the community and deserve financial rewards. In a world of bad news, the success of our sporting heroes gives pleasure to millions. Although athletes compete for the love of their game, the stars become community property. Their lives are no longer their own so it is reasonable for them to expect high financial rewards.

*Kerry – Geelong*

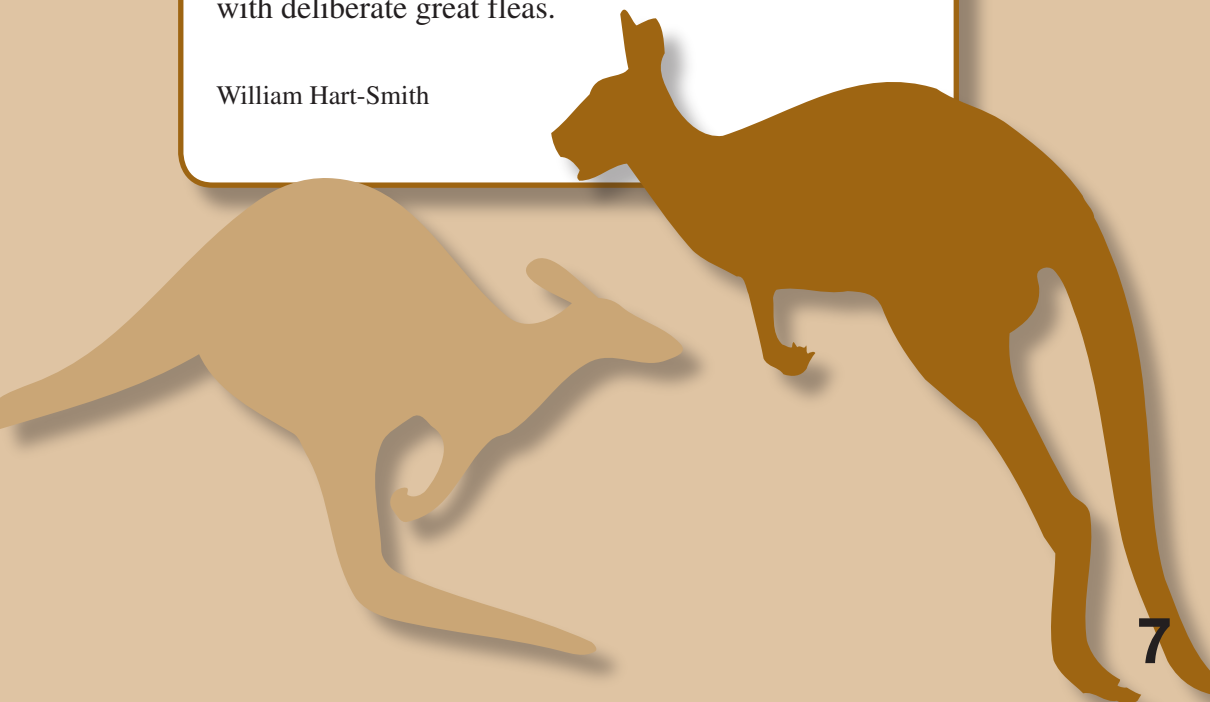
# KANGAROOS

Brown out of the brown tussock a darker brown  
head rises as if thrust up cautiously on a pole.

A green bird on a feathering grass-stem,  
that bends under its weight, flutters  
and sinks out of sight. It is the only disturbance  
except for the reiterated clicking of castanets  
and the fife-notes of insects.

One notices the head gone,  
pulled down out of sight, like the vanished bird,  
but all over the unfurled  
map of the landscape minute brown  
figures, dots, jump, all diminishing, yet  
each pursuing  
lines that intersect, making a maze  
of crazy map-lines, meaningless angles.  
The skin of the land is a deep fur  
maddeningly come alive  
with deliberate great fleas.

William Hart-Smith



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