

Lancashire Cross Country History Part 4

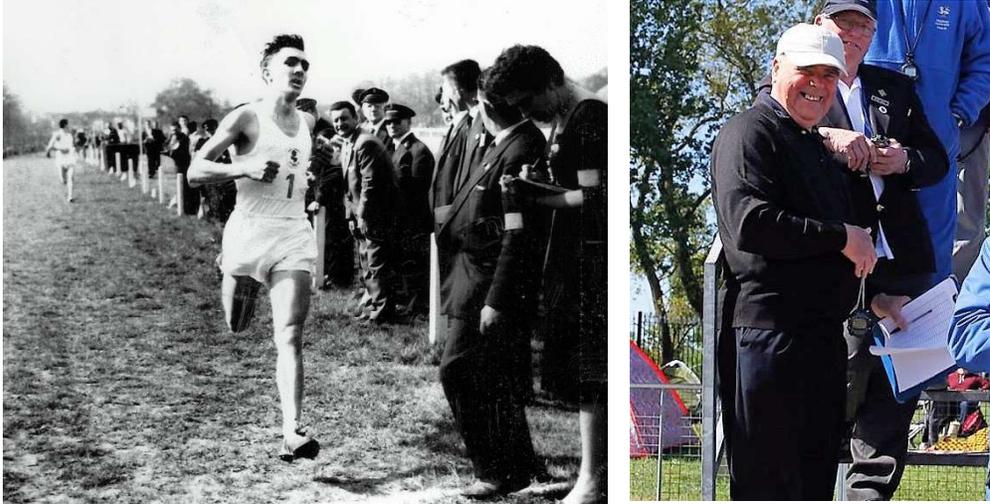
It is very easy to rush through history so for this part we must take time to reflect on the giants of yesteryear and for this year those who dominated the men's scene in the 1960s and early 1970s.

Ron Hill was the most important and inspiring figure in County athletics during that time. Having been born and having grown up in Accrington he was a member of Clayton Le Moors Harriers and later Bolton United Harriers. He first came to national prominence as an Olympian at the 1964 Tokyo and 1968 Mexico Games culminating in the 1972 Olympic marathon at Munich where he started as one of the favourites. During that ten year spell he had become European and Commonwealth marathon champion, won at Boston and set many endurance track records. When he recorded his 2hr 9min clocking he was only the second man ever to do so at the time. He was a multi winner of the Northern and National Cross Country Championship and led the Lancashire team in their dominance in the Inter Counties. Following on from Brian Craig's win in 1960 and Gerry North's success in the next two years Ron won seven consecutive Lancashire Championships from 1963 to 1969 including here at Witton battling with County rivals such as Mike Turner of Liverpool. Below left is Ron wearing his Lancashire vest in his 1968 Inter Counties win and below right is Ron with Mike Freary.



At the beginning of the 1970s Manchester's versatile Ricky Wilde who was a national indoor record holder as well as a brilliant fell champion took the title followed by Ron's constant rival Mike Freary of Bolton United Harriers in 1971.

Colin Robinson won in 1972. Colin still officiates at cross country races with the Red Rose League but moreover in March 1961 he led England to a team victory in France by winning the first International Cross Country Championships for Junior Men. Here below left is Colin crossing the line to win that day.



We should all be grateful that our former star runners have given back to the sport by officiating and helping run our clubs. GB international and sub 4 minute miler Blackpool's Stan Taylor (above right) has done just that and is our chief timekeeper today. We wish him well in this his final and fifth year as our County President.