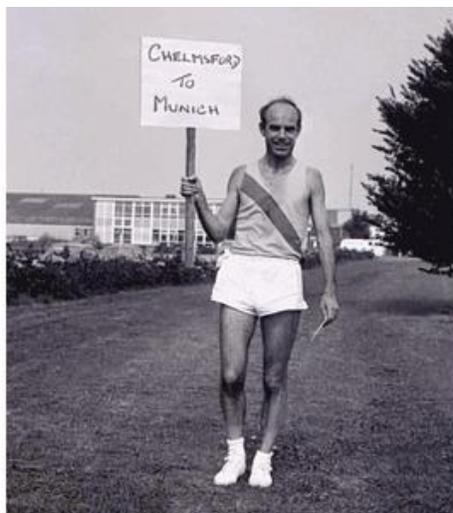




Brian Hill-Cottingham

Date of Birth	5 th June 1938
Place of Birth	Park Avenue, Chelmsford
Main athletics discipline(s)	Middle Distance Running



How and why did you first become involved in athletics?
In about 1950/51, the Grammar School soccer pitches were too wet to play on (not that I was any good at Soccer) and we were sent out on a 3.5 mile road run. Another lad and I were first back but hated it! However, we were “noticed” and I subsequently won the school junior house Cross-Country – still hating it. Getting into the fourth year, I was appointed house cross-country captain. Training etc was then up to me and running took on a whole new and good feeling. In those days at school, track and country were different animals but I was then put into the mid-Essex schools half mile, having had no training since the end of the country season and ran away with the race setting a new age record.
Did you compete in any other sports?
Enjoyed Cricket but not especially good at it.

Chelmsford AC

When did you join Chelmsford AC – and for how long were you a member?
1953 and still a life Vice President
Why did you join Chelmsford AC?
Urged to by fellow KEGS pupils – Peter and John Candler and the Courtman twins.



What honours did you win, and records did you set whilst with Chelmsford AC?

- County Youth and Junior Cross Country
- North of Thames Junior Cross Country Champion 1959
- North of Thames Senior Cross Country Champion 1962
- Member of Victorious Leyton to Southend Road Relay in record time.
- Second to Gordon Pirie in Southern Counties and AAA 3 mile Championships 1961
- 3000 metres invitation at White City. 2nd in 8min 3.8secs to Derek Ibbotson
- Member of Essex team for Inter Counties Cross Country Championships several years including in winning team 1959
- Essex 1 mile Champion 1962- County Record 4m 10sec.
- Essex 1 mile Champion 1964
- 1st in International Cross Country across sand dunes at Dunkirk (1962) beating French Marathon Champion Alain Mimoun
- 1970 Took Part in 8 man relay from Chelmsford to Edinburgh (400 miles) on occasion of Commonwealth Games
- 1972 Took Part in 12 man relay from Brentwood via Chelmsford and Southend to Munich (602 miles) on occasion of Olympic Games

What were the highlights of your time with Chelmsford AC – as a Junior and as a Senior?

- Being Selected to run for England.
- Winning County Mile Championship at Chelmsford in record time.
- Being part of a strong Chelmsford middle distance team for a few years which reflected in Road Relay performances including the winning of the 'Leyton to Southend' when five of the eight members of the team set fastest leg records and the team set a new record overall.
- Being involved with seeing the new Club House finally built at Melbourne Park.
- Helping with youth and boys teams and seeing new talent develop.

What do you remember about the coaches and facilities at Chelmsford AC?

Training from the Waterhouse Lane wooden hut, either on the roads, cross country (through floods and snow), the Marconi Sports Ground by the railway and use of Chelmsford City Cinder Path round the Football Pitch on a Sunday Morning (almost square corners but the first taste of cinders). Initial coaching was with Ernie Daley and much encouragement from Jack Bowen. In later years, Tony Elder became my coach.

Who do you most remember as team mates at Chelmsford AC?

Jack Bowen, Roy Meadowcroft, The Courtman twins, Ken Burgess, Bill Cornell, Pop Bailey, Bob Squirell, Colin Christian, Ken Rogers, Phil Blowers and so many more



Your Athletics Career

What were the highlights of your athletics career?
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Second to Gordon Pirie in AAA 3 miles at White City• Essex Mile Champion twice
What was/were your PB's in your event(s), and where were they set?
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 1500m – Warsaw – 3m 50.5sec – 1961• 3000m – White City – 8m 3.8sec - 22/7/1961 - having run 3m 50.7sec in a 1500m at White City the day before• 1 Mile – 4m 10sec – Chelmsford 1962• 5000m – 14min 9.2sec – 1961• 3 mile – 13m 40sec – July 1961
Do you have a favourite memory of your athletics career?
Helping barefooted Irish International Jim Hogan to his feet after slipping over with a mile to go in the North of The Thames Senior Championship then running away from him to the finish. I had spikes on!
Who were your main rivals during your career?
George Knight (Essex Beagles), Gordon Pirie, Bruce Tulloh, Martin Hyman, Bill Cornell - and later Mel Batty and Buddy Edelen.
When did you retire from competitive athletics, and why?
Ran odds and ends and some training until I was about 50. However, my Business and family started to eat into time in late 60's and through Business became involved in Rotary from 1969 from which the Munich Relay idea grew.
Did you remain involved in athletics after you had retired as an athlete – and if so, how?
Looked after Juniors in mid to late 60's as team manager and some coaching.

General

What differences stand out about athletics today, compared to when you were competing?
Facilities – WOW! Huge Technical apparent advances in coaching, diet, psychology and financial support. And what about that track! Also the Media can more easily but unjustly crucify athletes.
Who were your favourite athletes during your career – and who stands out for you today?
Roger Bannister, Ron Clarke (Australia), Gordon Pirie. Today – Mo!



What advice would you give to a young athlete today?

It has changed so much but I still believe that initially, one should run for enjoyment, almost play at it as we used to use the woods at Melbourne Park all those years ago. When the bug ten bites, all the coaching, fancy facilities and other support will do nothing without hard and dedicated work.

Do you have any other information or stories about your athletics career that you would like to share?

Perhaps newcomers might be fascinated by those frosty smoggy nights and ice bound winter nights in the late 50's and early 60's when we used the Wooden Hut in Waterhouse lane, all the chairs in the middle and trained up and down the 25 yard length of the hut! And then when we used the showers, as the steam came out of the shower area, it crystallized into snowflakes!!!!
Now, that was dedication.

Ps. And we put the chairs back afterwards!

Web Links:

www.essexchronicle.co.uk/Athletic-challenge-crossed-Continent/story-16596736-detail/story.html