

ATTEMPT ON WORLD RECORD FOR FOUR-MILE RELAY

(Continued from page 38)

Otago Again

Another miler was coming up on Otago's long list of fine mile runners while all this was going on. T. Allen was making the grade. He went close to record times but had not then learnt to time his laps effectively.

Pullar was still climbing. With the Olympic nominations still in the argumentative air he cracked 4 mins. 20 secs. for the mile with a flashing race on Dunedin's Calceonian Ground in 1936. With A. R. Geddes 50 yards in front at the start, he ticked round the course to win in the wonderfully regular lap times of 1 min. 3 secs., 1 min. 6 secs., 1 min. 6 secs., and 1 min. 3 secs. Now, at last, he was in the class of Rose and McLachlan. McLachlan had previously been the only New Zealand runner (excluding Lovelock) to share with Rose the honour of getting down below those last important 20 seconds.

At a club meeting Allen beat Pullar in the half-mile with 1 min. 57½ secs.

Rose Record Rocks

When Pullar cut his time for the mile to 4 mins. 14½ secs. in 1937, Allen was third, and second was A. R. Wilson, another miler who was joining New Zealand's small army of distance runners. On a dead track in Auckland Wilson and Pullar fought out one of the races of the century. Rose's record was blowing in the breeze. For international events, Wilson was out. He was a re-instated professional.

That was the year of the visit from K. Murakoso, Japanese Olympic representative. It was also the year when we looked for a successor to Lovelock. Pullar was named. Boot was named. Boot was also bracketed with Theo. Allen in the half-mile field. But Allen was still interested in the mile and beat Pullar by 10 yards in a meeting used by the Otago Centre to display their selections for the Empire Games trials in Wellington. Another indication of the amount of talent available over distances from the half-mile upwards was the fact that A. R. Geddes came back at that meeting to lower Pullar's best time for the three miles. Not long afterwards, Pullar reversed the places when he met Allen in another mile.

It was hard to hold a lead against the athlete whose performance at Auckland with Wilson had included the third fastest second half a mile run from the time when W. G. George held the world record in 1886. Lovelock and Glenn Cunningham were the only two runners to cover the last two laps in better time.

It Was Boot

But precedence was still anybody's. Both Pullar and Allen went to Australia for the Empire Games, but it was Boot who turned in the New Zealanders' record of 4 mins. 12 3/10 secs. for Rose's distance, and Boot who set an Empire record for the half-mile. And it was Boot again who outpaced Backhouse when the Australian visited New Zealand last year.

But . . . it was Pullar who won the National Championships mile from Boot at Napier, with 4 mins. 20 secs.

This Season

This season all four have obviously been working for the events of this month. They've lost some races, and won some. Their times have not been remarkable (this is written before the Centennial Championships).

If they are in form that record should go. Allen and Matthews are fast. Boot and Pullar should be considerably faster. They may not have to, but they should be able to leave the other two with sufficient leeway in time to bring the average below 4 mins. 19 secs.

HOW MUCH DID YOU KNOW?

Here are the answers to the questions on page 19.

SUNDAY: Wilhelm Backhaus, pianist (1YA at 3.30 p.m.)

MONDAY: Golliwog's Cake Walk (Debussy) (3YA at 8.18 p.m.)

TUESDAY: Dicky Bird Hop (Gourley) (4YA's dinner music)

WEDNESDAY: William Wilkie Collins, author of "The Moonstone" (2YA at 10.1 p.m.)

THURSDAY: Feodor Chaliapin, bass (4YA at 9.28 p.m.)

FRIDAY: Arthur Rubinstein, pianist (4YA at 9.25 p.m.)

SATURDAY: Elsie and Doris Waters, comedienne (2YA at 8.24 p.m.)

Recorded Personalities in Caricature (6): Charlie Kunz, pianist

Pullar, at the end of January, was in need of at least one hard race to sharpen him up. Boot believed he was in trim. But he was also in camp. Allen and Matthews, in the South Island, had been running into form.

There are some "ifs" and "buts." Not many.

The quartet is about the best that could be selected for the purpose, in spite of arguments to the contrary. There are several others approaching the same class; but these four have the credit of initiating the idea and deserve to be left alone to work it out.

To the home of Oakley and Rose they will go on February 17 to race on the fastest track in New Zealand.

Tree shaded, tree sheltered, slightly banked, firm, but springy enough after recent rains, the Masterton track will be the ideal course for the attempt.

It was put down years ago, and no one in Masterton now seems to know just what cunning went into its making to give it that extra speed. But speed it certainly has. This month it may see something it has not seen before.

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"Where the Devil's Australia?"

Currently doing the rounds in London musical circles is a story about Sir Thomas Beecham and his visit to Australia in June. The peppery old musician is reported saying: "Australia? Australia? Where the devil's Australia?"

To those who have heard some of the choice stories about Beecham (and many of them are far too choice to print!), his query is possible. Recently he startled the world by telling a Covent Garden audience which chattered through the overture to one of his operatic performances, to "shut up!"

Inheriting wealth from his father, who won money and a baronetcy from a popular patent medicine, Sir Thomas has thrown his whole energy and resources into keeping opera, and music generally, alive in England. More than most he has brought recognition to London as a musical centre. And although his wit is sometimes caustic and crushing, he has served as inspiration for many a struggling artist.

Sir Thomas is to conduct five concerts in Sydney, and you should find it well worth while tuning in when these are broadcast.

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