

## JIM BELL REMEMBERED

JIMMY BELL, one of the country's leading veteran athletes, died on 15<sup>th</sup> March aged 62. He lost the long battle against cancer, which he fought with all the determination he showed when proudly wearing his Elswick Harriers, HASSRA and CSAA vests.

Jim had been an active member of the Newcastle club since 1989, having joined them after moving across the city from Claremont Running Club. He was also a stalwart member of the National HASSRA Athletics Team over the same period, having competed as recently as the 2009 CSSC Games in an epic 5,000m track race just a week before undergoing massive invasive surgery to remove an eye, but unfortunately this was to be his final contest as an athlete.

He had a great hunger for racing as demonstrated by his marathon exploits and won the CSAA title on three occasions and finished highly placed in CSAA 10k and Cross Country Championships, often being an A Team scorer for HASSRA well in to his late 50s.

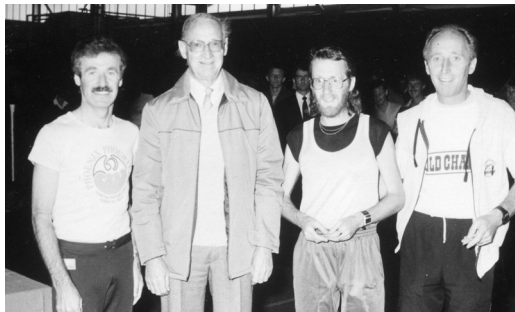
Jim won many international vests as a veteran, winning numerous team awards before picking up his first individual cross country medal in the Masters International in Northern Ireland three years ago. Whilst most of his representative honours were for cross-country, he was at his best on the roads and twice won a silver medal in his age group at the London Marathon, producing a remarkable time in 2007 of 2 hours 47 minutes at the age of 59 to rank 4<sup>th</sup> V55 in the country.

Elswick Harriers club secretary Frank Watson, who has watched Jim's progress over the years, said he had lost a good friend. "Jimmy was a thoroughly nice man, always cheerful despite what he has endured in recent years. He will be a great loss to the club and he will be sorely missed by all his friends at Elswick and by all his fellow athletes in the North East."

As Team Manager for HASSRA and Secretary of the CSAA I would like to echo Frank's comments and reiterate just what an inspiration Jim has been to many athletes within the Civil Service and how much respect and admiration he was held in by those who had the privilege to know and run with him.

Who can forget the first CSSC Games at Millfield when Jim never stopped running here, there and everywhere as the XC Relay was far too short for him and he needed to log up those all important miles!

The Power of 10 website does not do Jim full justice as he was 2<sup>nd</sup> in the 1998 Civil Service Marathon in 2.34.32 and of his 4 CSSC marathons his slowest time was 2.39.52!



*(1987 CS marathon championships, Jim (l))*

Finally those who were at Loughborough in September 2009 were privileged to have a chance to show their feelings for a truly great athlete and remarkable character. I know how

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much he appreciated the friendship and companionship that was shown to him in those few hours, as he had been unsure of whether to attend with the advancement of his cancer. The reception, support and love he received from you all lifted his spirits and provided the strength to start the last race of his life and the one which he could not ultimately win, but he certainly gave it all he had.

Nick Hume March 2010

**JIM BELL 2<sup>nd</sup> September 1947 – 15<sup>th</sup> March 2010**

**Our thoughts are with his wife Anne and their family**



CSSC Games Loughborough Sept 2009





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Northern Cross Country Championships Jan 2009 St Helens

