

Papers of Melvyn (Mel) Watman

**Reference:
ATH/MW**

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1980-1993

Statistics and year lists collected by the athletics journalist and statistician Mel Watman. Papers are ordered chronologically and provide comprehensive worldwide statistics for 1980 to 1993 inclusive.

Administrative history: Melvyn (Mel) Watman was born in 1938, his birth registered in Hackney during the June quarter of that year. He is perhaps best known as the editor of Athletics Weekly and a well-respected athletics writer, historian and statistician. His interest in athletics was sparked in 1950 during a Hackney Downs School trip to the AAA Championships at White City where he saw Arthur Wint, McDonald Bailey and Roger Bannister. As a Scottish international, Mel was close to Olympic marathon selection for Great Britain in 1968 although injuries hindered further progression. He later became a prodigious fell runner.

He began submitting articles to Athletics Weekly whilst still at school. These submissions continued whilst he trained as a journalist at the Hatfield and Potters Bar Gazette. As a teenager he co-founded the National Union of Track Statisticians (NUTS) with Alf Wilkins and Stan Greenberg. He was largely responsible for its first yearbook. In 1959 he gained a diploma in journalism and in September 1959 reported for The Times on the World Student Games held in Turin. A period of national service in the RAF followed. During these years he continued to write for Athletics Weekly at weekends and edit its monthly offshoot World Athletics.

In 1960 Mel attended the Rome Olympic Games as its youngest accredited reporter. He was demobbed in 1961 and then appointed to Athletics Weekly full-time, becoming its editor in 1968. He remained as editor until 1988, one year after it was bought out by EMAP. He then joined a new magazine, Athletics Today, as co-editor. This magazine folded in 1994 and after this, Mel co-produced the newsletter Athletics International with fellow journalist Peter Matthews.

Mel has written several books on the history of athletics including five editions of the Encyclopaedia of Athletics, All-Time Greats of British Athletics and The Official History of the Amateur Athletic Association. He has worked as athletics statistician for Eurosport and Sky Sports and has deputised for Stan Greenberg at the BBC. He was elected as Honorary President of the British Athletics Writers' Association, inducted into the England Athletics Hall of Fame in 2013 and awarded an MBE for services to athletics and to the Myeloma Foundation.

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Sources: papers of Melvyn Watman; article accessed 10 October 2014 from: http://www.briansacks.com/html/jewish_athletics_2012.html; article accessed 10 October 2014 from: <http://roger-robinson.com/news/british-awards-for-mel-watman-and-mel-edwards.shtml>

Arrangement: Material arranged chronologically.

3 standard boxes (comprising 14 files)

Access: Open

Access conditions: Access to all registered researchers.

Notes: Old reference: MW

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Language: English

Creator name: Watman, Melvyn Francis (b 1938), athletics journalist and statistician

Custodial history: This collection was previously in the custody of the National Centre for Athletics Literature (NCAL).

Acquisition: Deposited with the NCAL by Mel Watman, January 1996.

Archival notes: Papers arranged and described by Mark Eccleston, October 2014, in compliance with General International Standard Archival Description (ISAD(G), second edition, 2000; and in-house cataloguing guidelines.

Related material: Other archive collections, formerly held as part of the National Centre for Athletics Literature (NCAL), are catalogued as collections distinct from this collection. They comprise both institutional archives and collections of personal papers of athletes, athletics administrators, journalists and others associated with the athletics world.

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Catalogues of the institutional archives available on the online archive catalogue are as follows:

Amateur Athletic Association: papers, 1880-1992. Finding No: AAA;

Midland Counties Amateur Athletics Association: papers, 1900-1982. Finding No: MCAAA;

Midland Counties Cross Country Association: papers, 1898-1985. Finding No: ATH/MCCCA;

Southern Counties Amateur Athletic Association: papers, 1958-1983. Finding No: SCAAA.

Catalogues, or collection descriptions, of personal papers available on the online archive catalogue are as follows:

Abrahams, Harold Maurice (1899-1978), athlete, administrator, commentator and journalist: papers, 1902-1989. Finding No: ATH/HA;

Adam, George Mair (1898-1989), athlete, coach and athletics administrator: papers, 1909-1989. Finding No: ATH/GA;

Binks, Joseph (Joe) (1874-1966), athlete and athletics commentator: papers, [1920s-1950s]. Finding No: ATH/JB;

Cardew, Martin H. (b 1927), athlete: papers, 1964-1988. Finding No: ATH/MHC;

Cullum, Dennis Noel Johnson (1913-1985), athlete and coach: papers, [1930s]-1985. Finding No: ATH/DC;

Ives, Bert (1890-1975), athlete and athletics administrator: papers, [1920s-1970s]. Finding No: ATH/BI;

Jewell, John Christopher (1912-2001), athlete and athletics commentator: papers, 1897-2002. Finding No: ATH/JJ;

Lloyd-Edgley, Ralph: scrapbook, [c 1924]-[c 1931]. Finding No: ATH/RLE;

MacLean, Duncan (1884-1980), athlete and coach: papers, 1948-1977. Finding No: ATH/DM;

Monk, Walter Harry (Wal) (1896-after 1965), athlete: papers, 1918-1961. Finding No: ATH/WHM;

Morgan, Wilf (b 1935), athlete and athletics historian: papers, 1937-2012. Finding No: ATH/WM;

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Newton, Arthur Francis Hamilton (1883-1959), athlete: papers, [c 1904]-[1990s]. Finding No: ATH/AN;

Payne, Howard (1931-1992), athlete: papers, 1899-[c 1975]. Finding No: ATH/HP;

Percy, Joe W. (1912-2001), athlete and athletics administrator: papers, 1910-1997. Finding No: ATH/JWP;

Powell, Edgar Robert Leslie (Peter), (fl 1920s-70s), athlete: papers, 1813-1988. Finding No: ATH/ERLP;

Richards, Wilf (b 1906), athlete and journalist: papers, 1924-[mid 20th century]. Finding No: ATH/WR;

Roberts, Dave (fl 1930s-1990s), athlete and statistician: papers, [1930s]-1991. Finding No: ATH/DR;

Simpson, Colin J. (1929-2011), athlete and athletics administrator: papers, 1945-1990. Finding No: ATH/CS;

Tatham, Wilfrid George (Gus) (1898-1978), athlete: papers, 1908-1960. Finding No: ATH/WGT;

Thomas, Dr Philip, athletics administrator and coach: papers, [c 1900]-[late 20th century]. Finding No: ATH/PT;

Vargas, Charles Climaco (1905-1975), athlete: papers, 1921-31. Finding No: ATH/CCV;

Ward, Leonard H., athletics coach: papers, [mid-20th century]. Finding No: ATH/LW;

Wight, Robert M., athletics administrator: papers, [mid-20th century]. Finding No: ATH/RW;

Winter, Arthur E. H. (d 1990), athlete and athletics commentator: papers, [early 20th century]-1983. Finding No: ATH/AW;

Yarrow, Squire Stevens (1905-1984), athlete and athletics administrator: papers, 1938-1984. Finding No: ATH/SY.

The department also holds copies of Mel Watman's books 'Official history of the Amateur Athletic Association, 2011 (reference: r GV 605.W38); Official history of the women's Amateur Athletic Association, 2012 (reference: r GV 709.W38); The Ibbotson story, 1958 (reference: r p GV 1061.15.I23W38); Daley Thompson, 1984 (reference: r GV 697.T44B37); The Athletics Weekly file on Sebastian Coe and Steve Ovett, 1982 (reference: r GV 1061.14.A84).

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Statistics

1980-1993

Published statistics and year lists, primarily relating to track and field, from across the world. Material relates to European, American and Asian athletes and includes newspaper cuttings, booklets and magazine articles. Comprises:

/1: 1980

/2: 1981

/3: 1982

/4: 1983

/5: 1984

/6: 1985

/7: 1986

/8: 1987

/9: 1988

/10: 1989

/11: 1990

/12: 1991

/13: 1992

/14: 1993

14 files

Access: Open