

Today in History

◀ 15 June ▶



1935 Lovelock wins 'Mile of the century'

In June 1934, a year after Lovelock set his world mile record at Palmer Stadium, Princeton, the college staged another invitational meeting. This time American Glenn Cunningham broke the record, running the mile in 4 minutes 6.7 seconds. The college decided to repeat the event on a grand scale in June 1935. The world's top milers, including Lovelock, were invited to compete in what the media later dubbed the 'Mile of the Century'.

Lovelock accepted his invitation in March 1935. He soon realised that other athletes from outside the US would not be attending. The focus of the race would be on his contest with the Americans. The event inspired great interest in Britain, the US and New Zealand. As Lovelock left England he received a telegram from New Zealand Prime Minister G.W. Forbes wishing him luck 'on behalf of the Government and people of the Dominion'.

The weather on the day was hot; Lovelock wore his favourite floppy panama hat while warming up. The meeting was scheduled to start at 5.15 p.m., after a football match between Princeton and Yale, with the mile at 6 p.m. That morning the papers had speculated that a world record might be set. But the heat and the wind blowing directly up the straight put paid to this possibility.

The field included world-record holder Cunningham, Glen Dawson (who had beaten Cunningham a few weeks earlier), Bill Bonthron (the world record holder for the 1500 m), Gene Venzke and Joe Mangan. When the race began Dawson and Cunningham moved away fast, but within 30 m the field had settled and everyone seemed to be waiting for someone else to take the initiative. Dawson edged ahead, with Cunningham just behind, followed by Venzke, Lovelock and Bonthron. After 180 m Lovelock decided that 'he had to get onto Cunningham's heels'. He caught up to Cunningham and kept pace with him for much of the rest of the race. Lovelock made his move just before the final straight. He finished comfortably ahead of Cunningham, who was also overtaken by Bonthron.

Lovelock's time of 4 minutes 11.5 seconds was his second-fastest mile but well outside the world record. The crowd didn't seem bothered; hundreds were so keen to touch Lovelock that he needed protection. He lost his panama hat in the melee, but it was returned following a public plea - with the suggestion that he might provide his running shorts (autographed) in return.

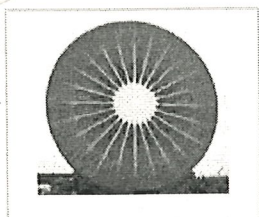
- Image: Jack Lovelock after the 'Mile of the Century'

Internal links

Jack Lovelock

External links

Jack Lovelock: Rhodes Scholar (University of Otago) Speedsters: Come on Jack (NZEdge)
 Jack Lovelock (NZ Sports Hall of Fame) John Edward Lovelock (DNZB) Jack Lovelock 1910-1949 (Timaru Boys' High School)



1959 Chinese gooseberry becomes kiwifruit

The prominent produce company Turners and Growers announced that they would from now on export the Chinese gooseberry under the name 'kiwifruit'. Introduced to this country in 1904, kiwifruit are now grown worldwide, with New Zealand-grown fruit marketed as 'Zespri'.

Despite the name, kiwifruit are not native to New Zealand. Seeds were brought to New Zealand in 1904 by Mary Isabel Fraser, the principal of Wanganui Girls' College, who had been visiting mission schools in China. The seeds were planted in 1906 by a Whanganui nurseryman, Alexander Allison, and the vines first fruited in 1910. People thought it had a gooseberry flavour and began to call it the Chinese gooseberry. It is not related to the Grossulariaceae family to which gooseberries belong.

New Zealand began exporting the fruit to the US in the 1950s. This was the height of the Cold War and the term Chinese gooseberry was a marketing nightmare for Turners and Growers. Their first idea, 'melonettes', was equally unpopular with US importers because melons and berries were subject to high import tariffs. In June 1959, Jack Turner suggested the name kiwifruit during a Turners and Growers management meeting in Auckland. This was adopted and later became the industry-wide name.

The Bay of Plenty town of Te Puke markets itself as the 'Kiwifruit Capital of the World'. It was here that New Zealand's kiwifruit industry began. Italy is now the leading producer of kiwifruit in the world, followed by China, New Zealand, Chile, France, Greece, Japan and the US. Most New Zealand kiwifruit is now marketed under the brand-name Zespri, partly as a way of distinguishing 'Kiwi kiwifruit' from that produced by other countries.

Image information (Te Ara)

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Julius Vogel

Premier Julius Vogel's great plan was to borrow heavily to build infrastructure and to lure migrants. It was controversial, but the money and migrants stimulated the economy and created a viable consumer market for producers.

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THIS WEEK'S
QUIZ

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