

Malcolm Dalrymple

Malcolm competed in the javelin throw for Great Britain in the 1948 Olympic Games, held in Wembley Stadium, London. His father, James, had competed in the 1924 Olympics in Paris in the same event, making them the first father and son to achieve this feat. They both worked at Allens', then Malcolm joined the police and became a PE instructor. On top of his many athletics medals, Malcolm was awarded the British Empire medal. A long-time Queen's Park resident, Malcolm now lives in an apartment in Kempston Park.



James and Malcolm in training



To prepare myself during the winter for the 1948 Olympics (which were held in London), it was impossible to train in the daytime owing to being at work at WH Allens. So I had to do all my training in the dark. This made training with the javelin very difficult, but I was able to go through the movements owing to the street lights. But when the time came to use a javelin, I had some very good friends and school pals in Gratton Road who stood at each end of the street warning people that I was about to throw the javelin!

I was working in the pattern shop at Allens' at this time and was training through the winter months. One day, I was walking down the main yard, near the pattern shop, when someone called me, 'Dalrymple!' 'Yes sir', I replied as I knew the voice - it was Kenneth Allen. 'I understand you're throwing the javelin in the street...' I replied, 'Yes'. He then said, 'Not any more - you will have an extra hour at lunchtime and your father as well. You can go to Allen Park and do your training there. You will then make the time up after work.' I then started training in my two hour lunch period and worked overtime to make up for the lunchtime break. We never had snacks, not when I was training; my father would not allow that. My father and I used to ride on our bikes up to Allen Park with a couple of javelins under our arms. Everybody knew about us around Queen's Park, so didn't think anything of it. Later on, we were able to store about ten javelins in a shed at Allen Park, in a snooker cue rack; we also stored a couple of hammers as we were also hammer throwers.

When I was in training, I did not have any special food to eat or drink. My mother's cooking was good enough. Owing to the restrictions on food in this country at that time, the Canadian Olympic Association sent food parcels to the British athletes who would most probably compete in the Olympics. They were very welcome. I was very surprised when a knock came on the door and the postman said, 'We have this parcel for you'. The box was about two feet long and contained tins of fruit, ordinary fruit, butter and everything. We even got pots of Canadian jam. We were on rations and had no tins of fruit during the war or even after it - the food that came in was much better than the food we got here. This was a jump ahead of the basics we were used to at that time. It was sent from Canada, and then the boxes were distributed by the British Olympic Association. My mother and father made sure that I took the extra food and they had some of it themselves.



*William Hyde, milkman with Biddenham Dairies cart c.1930
Courtesy of Mrs Florence Mallabar*

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We also obtained some milk from the Biddenham Dairies from their roundsman Joe Barker, who was the Junior Bandmaster at the Salvation Army. I used to help him out quite often, pushing the milk cart around Queen's Park (I was a member of the Senior Band at the time). The Biddenham Dairies' depot was in Bromham Road, Bedford.



*Salvation Army Junior Band, 1934.
Malcolm is in the back row, third from right. Joe Barker is seated holding his baton.*

John and Elsie Adamson remember:

'We got our milk from Biddenham Dairies and the milkman was Joe Barker who'd push his three-wheeled cart with a churn on the front. People would leave a jug outside the front door, either a half pint, pint or quart, with a saucer on top to stop the birds getting at it. Once, in really icy weather his cart went head over heels down Bromham Road near the bridge and he broke all his bottles.'