**JOHN MELVIN**

GAA Administrator, HJ Coach, Masseur, Technical Official – Field, Mentor

It is with a great deal of sadness that I find myself putting pen to paper with memories of John Melvin. He was a lovely guy and very passionate about his sport. His concern for his own athletes as well as every youngster who showed an interest in athletics was enormous.

John made a fantastic contribution to athletics amongst other things as a Coach, Field Official, Administrator, Team Manager and Mentor.

His main passion was with High Jump. He had been a HJ coach for very many years. His athletes included . . . . daughter Hazel, Ray Bobrownicki, and many other Scottish athletes.

John was known for ruffling a few feathers now and again but he was a very good Technical Field Judge. His preference was always to judge at HJ events, however, he was a good judge and willingly worked at every other field event. He would never see anyone stuck and was happy to help out wherever needed, including working as Clerk of Course in a Technical Team.

John was also well known in the athletic community for his great sense of humour and willingness to offer advice on technical issues wherever and whenever this was necessary, especially with the Pole Vault at the Emirates Indoor Arena. The use of bungees during training causes the vertical uprights to be pulled toward the centre and John came up with some great resources to assist with pulling these back into place, at least temporarily until the staff moved the equipment!

I worked closely with John over a number of years at the GAA Indoor events as Field Referee where his passion shone through when trying to come up with the best possible Timetable for the U12s. He consistently looked for an alternative way to make it better and was more than happy to devote a huge amount of his time trying to obtain this.

He regularly assisted the Scottish Schools on the technical side for all Indoor and Outdoor Championships.

For many years John, along with his wife Evelyn, ***was*** Team Glasgow - organising the team, travel arrangements and accommodation as well as many other tasks. I thoroughly enjoyed the times I was lucky enough to travel as a Field Judge with the Team.

I have had many thoughts and comments from others more than willing to contribute to memories of John and some of these are included in the following pages.

***Brian Donaldson (Glasgow PV and GAA) wrote . . .***

The key thing for me is that over the last fifteen years John has been a key player in the development of athletics in Glasgow. Without a doubt he was all of the following;

* a successful intelligent coach - coaching Ray Bobrownicki to Glasgow 2014 along with Umpteen Scottish International high jumpers
* a successful official - always ensuring that competition was for athletes
* a team manager for Team Glasgow - created a fantastic team rapport
* a key member of the Glasgow Athletics Association
* a competition organiser - delivering the key GAA Indoor Meets for the last five years

John always put athletes first in everything he did and he was supported in all of this by his partner Evelyn and his children.

His passion was high jump and he impacted on hundreds of peoples’ lives.

John was a great friend to Glasgow Pole Vault School and without his influence we would not have the Jumps Centre at Tollcross Swimming Pool. His ability to get things done was instrumental in delivering the facility for us to use and without John, the facility would not be in the shape it is now. For that we will forever be in his debt.

As one of life's doers John took every opportunity to get things done, sometimes making use of his knowledge and experience to bamboozle those who may have been obstructing progress. I found myself in that situation regularly.

The one thing we know for certain is that he would move heaven and earth to ensure the athletes he coached and managed were given every opportunity and then more.

For that, it is with regret that I for one will mourn the passing of a friend and mentor.

Rest in Peace, John.

***Isabel Baird wrote . . .***

John will be sadly missed by all, he was a great guy. His second love after Evelyn and family was his boat at Loch Lomond. He loved going there and sailing with his brother.

John was a great laugh at weekends away with Team Glasgow. He was respected by all the
athletes and they would have jumped through hoops for him. He had a great sense of humour and was a good laugh with the officials. Two incidents that come to my mind, during Team Glasgow outings

(1) One night we were asked to check out a bit of noise in one of the corridors, so
some of the team management went upstairs with John - he went straight up to the door and banged on it - if there had been a 50m dash for officials Mark Stringer and I would have
been joint first as John was banging on the wrong door! The guest must have thought a mad man was loose, however, all ended well.

(2) The other was when we arranged for the Team bus to stop at Gretna Outlet without him knowing . . . but he was happy in the end as he bought himself a pair of shoes which he thought were a great buy. However, we had to revisit on the next trip to change them as he had got two different sizes!! He never lived it down and every time thereafter when we passed Gretna he would not let us stop.

Great guy to have worked with.

***Ronnie Stevenson wrote . . .***

John played a vital role in establishing the GAA as an organisation aimed at developing athletics in Glasgow in cooperation with the Clubs, Coaches and Athletes, Glasgow Sport and Scottish Athletics. He was to the fore along with others in organising our open graded events and the Glasgow 12s, working with others to develop our event specific camps, running his come and try High Jump sessions, fighting with others for better access to the Emirates for athletics training and competition.

There are so many things he was involved in but I’ll finish by highlighting two –

Team Manager of Team Glasgow initially in the National Junior League and then in the National Youth Development League for U20s and U17s which alone would be a worthy legacy inspiring as it did many young athletes to stay in the sport when athlete retention was difficult.

His encouraging attitude to making competition an enjoyable experience for all athletes from U11s to Vets was an inspiration. His fight for athletes led to the second legacy he left and that was the fight for access and equipment for vertical jumps along with others from the GAA. Eventually we obtained use of the space at Tollcross for Pole Vault and High Jump and John obtained and laid the Mondo there saving the Council thousands. Even in the last few weeks the efforts he led for the GAA to obtain new High Jump mats for Tollcross came to fruition and during lockdown John came up from Troon to make sure they were delivered and stored properly.

That Troon to the Emirates journey was something his car almost did automatically he has travelled it so often with only one thought in mind - this will improve life for athletes.

Finally the GAA would record that the role of Evelyn, his wife, as treasurer for the GAA and soul mate for John in his lifelong service to athletics is an inspiration to us all. John will never be forgotten by so many and I will miss him terribly.

***Joyce Rammell wrote . . .***

I first met John as a coach about 20 years ago and at that time he was coaching his daughter Hazel - she was one of the foremost Scottish female high jumpers at her best. John was always available for help and we used to channel our best athlete jumpers to him for extra coaching back in the day.

I also know the Team Glasgow athletes were always willing to do whatever they could for the team - and John. He built his team really well, offering competition to many youngsters who would not otherwise have the opportunity through his involvement with Team Glasgow.

***Other comments . . .***

Beyond saddened to share news of the passing of my coach and dear friend John Melvin. Many in Scotland will have been impacted by or have benefited from John’s efforts, skills, and experience over the years. I will miss him greatly and probably won’t have dry eyes for a while.

***(Ray Bobrownicki)***

John’s sense of humour and calmness was very much appreciated, he was always someone you could rely on. ***(Marc Ritchie)***

***. . . and so many other thoughts on John from across the Athletic Community.***

There is no doubt John Melvin will be sadly missed and an athletic meeting in the future will not be the same without him.