

# JOHN (JACK) SALT, 1928 – 2011

*Elective Vice-President of Southport Waterloo AC  
Life Member of Southport Waterloo AC  
Much sought-after coach in Combined Events, Hurdles and High Jump in  
Southport Waterloo AC and numerous local schools*



After a long illness, Jack Salt passed away on Wednesday 28<sup>th</sup> September 2011. He would have been 84 next New Year's Day.

Jack was a very special person, whose love of athletics and infectious enthusiasm for the sport has touched countless numbers in this soccer-mad area, introducing them to the joy of athletics and making them friends of the sport for life.

Jack has been a member of Southport Waterloo since 1978. A true ambassador for his club, as an active competitor he completed some 31 marathons, throughout Great Britain but also including some in Greece, Paris and Amsterdam. He even managed 2 marathons in 8 days and clocked up an impressive personal best time of 2 hours 45 minutes as an over 50s veteran.

Running his own garage business, he managed over the years to keep the club minibus – alas no longer with us - on the road, while maintaining a six days per week training schedule of 5 hard 10 milers and one hill dominated 19 miler. A testimony to the benefit of a life of

athletics, he had overcome three heart attacks, one during our own Southport half marathon some years ago where he still completed the course before driving himself to hospital!

Although his running career was impressive, it was another aspect of his athletics where his achievement has been particularly outstanding; as a coach and mentor to many athletes both old and young. He must have touched the lives, motivating and encouraging literally hundreds of athletes both within the club and in local schools with his warm, kindly yet unassuming style of coaching. His commitment to each individual athlete was total. A truly sympathetic listener, his concern for each individual's welfare made him a lifelong friend to many. In fact, his continued interest and support as a friend has led to a steady trickle of former athletes re-joining the club to re-ignite that joy of athletics.

His style and wealth of knowledge of coaching has also led to him being in demand by schools in Crosby, Waterloo, Seaforth, Litherland, Formby, Southport and even Kirkby. Both Sefton & Knowsley councils have benefitted from his coaching skills with both regularly involving him in their teams for the Merseyside Youth Games. His services to Sefton were recognised with a lifetime achievement award.

He had until recently kept himself fit with running and gym workouts, using his bike when accompanying middle distance runners on their road running sessions. As infirmity took hold, he still managed to get the best from his athletes by passing on his enthusiasm and his joy of the sport. He was until very recently, still coaching hurdles at Litherland on a Tuesday evening.

Jack was also an active committee member for most of his years of membership, and a regular helper at road races and other events hosted by the club. In Track & Field he was an active Field Judge for many years.

In 2004, Jack was given a Distinguished Services Award by Southport Waterloo AC, the only person to have been so honoured by the club.

This true gentleman of athletics will be sorely missed but very many will be glad to have known him and will have their own memories and stories to tell.

Mike Wilkinson

*Add your comments, tributes, recollections etc here (by email to [RonCoScott@aol.com](mailto:RonCoScott@aol.com)) :*

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It was a great pleasure and honour to not only know Jack as a friend, but also to have spent so many happy hours with him, coaching and learning from him. He didn't need coaching manuals. He was a mine of knowledge and information across the whole spectrum of athletics events. He was a true gentleman, and will never be forgotten.

Tony Hughes

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I will always remember Jack as a committed coach who was always willing to go the extra mile, particularly for young athletes. The club too has greatly benefitted from his work in schools with many of our hurdlers and high jumpers being recruited by Jack and brought along to compete for us in the Young Athletes League.

I didn't know Jack as a runner but as a coach he was such a genuine gentleman of our sport and will be remembered with much affection.

Ron Scott

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Jack, as his surname suggested, was the salt of the earth. Always ready to help, not one to criticise people who were doing their best and, above all, a good listener. I came across him at meetings over many years and he was one of the very few people with whom I never had an argument. That's a tribute to the civilised way in which he always conducted himself.

Southport Waterloo were blessed with one of the sport's real gentlemen. SWAC's sadness is shared throughout the Merseyside area.

Phil Thomas, St Helens Sutton AC

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We are all sorry to hear about Jack, even if it was expected. One of the first memories go back to the S/port Half Marathon. He was taken to hospital with a heart attack. He recovered well from that to last another 30 years.

When we went to a Athens for the marathon [Jack wasn't running] Jack walked into a unopened glass door, but he is best remembered for his work with SWAC. Even at 83 yrs. he still went into schools. Merchant Taylors was one of them, so it's not age; it's what you know. Sad day.

Norman and Sheila Marshall

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So sorry to hear of the passing of Jack. He seems to have been around for ever and will be sadly missed by his many friends.

He did a lot for athletics and many local athletes are richer for their association with Jack.

Robbie Wood, Liverpool Pembroke & Sefton H & AC

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Jack Salt was my introduction to athletics and he offered his full support from day one. His passion for track and field showed in genuine excitement for each of his athletes who experienced success and he had all the time in the world for every individual. I can't imagine meeting another man who at his age would be running alongside his athletes down the hurdles or literally holding their hands over the high jump bar.

He was completely selfless and like so many have already said will never be forgotten because his kindness reached so many. As athletes we may not always be able to hurdle, but there is a small group in Southport Waterloo who will always be able to wolf whistle thanks to yet more patience and teaching from this wonderful man!

Katie McHale

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Jack was simply one of the nicest people I ever met in athletics. With us having five children to kit out, he was always helping us find spikes at bargain prices and often used to drive to places such as Bolton or beyond to get the best deals. I'm sure he must have been out of pocket after taking his petrol into account.

He was always so supportive and encouraging. Looking back, I used to tell him about my marathon times and he always managed to look impressed. Only this week have I realised his own times were better – but he never mentioned this, it just wasn't in his nature.

It must have been when Jack was in his late fifties that we spoke about life and getting older. I remember he said: 'I don't feel any different on the inside – just as young as ever.....it's just the outside that let's you down!'

Athletics has lost 'Mr Reliable' and he will be greatly missed.

Dennis and Ann Gill, and family

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I have known Jack since I joined SWAC in the early eighties. He was always around and, although I didn't train with Jack much, he was always there for advice.

When I was 17, I went to Greece with some of the club athletes to compete in the Athens Marathon. Unfortunately, Jack walked into a glass door and ended up in hospital with some very bad cuts to his legs. I think my dad has got it wrong when he says he didn't compete the marathan that year because I think he did and he must have been in a lot of pain, showing the courage and determination that he has shown all of his life and passed on to so many athletes.

He was a true gentleman and will be sorely missed. Yet another one of the old guard no longer with us but Jack will be remembered in the same light as George Bebbington (my first coach at Southport) who like Jack was always there whatever the weather, rain or shine, even when not feeling well. It's this dedication that you find less and less now and Jack will be so sadly missed but never forgotten. RIP Jack.

Stephen Marshall

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Jack was a true gentleman with a great sense of humour. At the track I always enjoyed having a chat to Jack before my coaching session. I always came away feeling really positive. Maria also has fond memories of his attitude towards coaching. He was patient, caring and a true inspiration to athletes. We will miss you Jack. There will never be a coach like you.

Liz and Maria Stanfield

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It was an honour to be one of the many athletes who was coached by Jack. He introduced me to hurdles and gave up countless hours, often three times a week, to help me improve. Jack was not only a great coach but a very interesting man, with lots of entertaining stories. I echo the sentiments of so many, what a true gentleman. I will miss him so much.

Eleanor Newton

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I have known Jack for over 25 years, watched how he has had some connection with at least 5 athletes to get to English Schools, has over my time knowing him helped get athletes to venues, championships, cross country, track and field, sports hall. Known as the man who gets the training shoes and spikes right across Merseyside, nothing too much trouble, any club, just to help. A gentleman, a friend, a fellow coach, will be deeply missed.

Ann Dignan

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My father was so blessed to have all of you in his life. He always spoke so fondly of everyone. He enjoyed sharing your victories and milestones with me. Southport Waterloo kept him young, healthy and vibrant.

Years ago (a long time ago) I was a member of Southport Waterloo AC. I loved to run, but my passion was always horses.

My father always encouraged me to do my best and I think back to running at Todmorden. It was a freezing cold day. I didn't really want to get up that early and get in the minivan (the mobile washing machine as I fondly called it) but I did anyway. My Dad knew I wasn't thrilled but tried to keep it upbeat for the other members. It felt like hours before we got there. It was so cold you could see your breath and the thought of stripping off my suit to run in shorts was well...not my idea of fun that day. I looked up at those hills, sleet coming down, mud on the ground and thought, "Well, I'm here, let's get this over with." The crowd of cross country runners took off. Me included. It was a hard, brutal run, and especially hard on the legs because of the mud. My legs were burning, and my shoe was sucked off by the mud. Urgh!!!! Do I keep going, or throw in the towel?

Just at that time, I saw my father. He was standing there so proud of me. I looked at him and he at me and he mouthed "You can do it". I kept going. I didn't finish first or last, but I finished. After I finished, he put his arm around me, told me he loved me and asked me how did I feel?

I told him riding horses was easier. He laughed, passed me a blanket and then walked the hills with me looking for my shoe. Not because he cared about the loss of the shoe, but because he knew this was probably going to be one of the last times I ran. We drove home and as we got to the door he said.. "Love, if your passion is the horses, do it. Life is too short. Live it to the fullest and be the best you can be. You don't have to be a millionaire, first or last, as long as to do your best."

I know it broke his heart that I chose the horses, but this was the kind of man he was. Selfless.

My Dad was a very wise man.

Thank you all, for being friends with my Dad. He was a great man, and I will miss him. Who knows... perhaps before I ride my horses tomorrow, I'll go for a quick jog on the beach. Just for old times' sake. Then, I'm going to ride one for my Dad. It's easier than Todmorden :)

He loved you all and was so proud of all the members and athletes he met along the way.

Katy Hunt (nee Salt), California

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Jack Salt was a true gentleman. He was so enthusiastic and passionate for Athletics. Jack inspired me and many other athletes with all his knowledge and commitment!

I will always remember Jack, not only was he a great coach & friend but we had many, many laughs. He was a funny guy ☺ He encouraged me to do my level 1 coaching badge, now I'm also working in the sports industry and I can honestly say Jack has had a big part in me choosing what to do in life! I'll always remember going to hurdles at Edge Hill on a Wednesday evening and then after all that hard training (and enjoyable of course) we used to get a hot chocolate and share a chocolate bar on the way home. yum! Not forgetting those Sunday mornings running up and down the sand hills!

Thank you for all your hard work and making many athletes believe in themselves. You'll never be forgotten Jack. xxx

Lauren Wilson

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It was an honour to know Jack Salt.

A wonderful and kind man who always had time to talk, even though it made us both late to wherever we were going.

The first time I met Jack was in 1985 at his home, a New Year's Eve party. (I didn't know till recently that this was his birthday).

Jack invited me to travel down to do The Wolverhampton Marathon with a group of runners from S.W.A.C. in that blue van with a yellow stripe down the side which he drove for the club. The rest was history and started training with J.S, J.P. & Co. and later joined the club.

I remember the Athens Trip and going to Wolverhampton to run in The Turkey Trot in December time for a prize turkey.

On arriving back, the car was locked with our clothes inside and the keys in the ignition! We had to break into the car with a wire coat hanger which took over an hour.

Even though it was nippy holding on to those frozen turkeys, they were happy moments.

I am sure we all have had wonderful times in Jack's company. A stalwart to his family and athletic club.

Nick Sinclair

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To uncle Jack, thank you for all the great times we had over the years, what parties with my mum and dad at the house. I remember the New Year's Eve and all the docks came alive with the horns blowing at midnight. I have been reading all the tributes from the Waterloo AC club. It brought tears to my eyes reading all the great things that Jack has done over many years of his wonderful life. Running is in our family with Jack and Joe his brother, my cousins Michael and his brother now living in Holland and me. We as a family have covered many thousands of miles and yes wore out many hundreds of trainers on that road. Until we meet again uncle Jack you are now at peace. Thanks to all the support you guys have given to my auntie Wendy.

Paul Salt B.E.M

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On behalf of the 'Salt' family, I would like to take this opportunity of thanking all contributors from the athletic clubs and schools etc, most sincerely, for their wonderful tributes.

We are very proud to read the confirmations of Jack's exceptional skills and dedication to his chosen sport and to the young athletes who have benefited for life.

'Palmarum qui meruit ferat' ( Honour goes to whoever deserves it). Motto of Rochdale Harriers & Athletic Club

Thank you.

Joe Salt, Brother

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