



# History of the St George District Athletic Club

Compiled by Michael Gentle

## 1921

### Formation of the Club

The St George District Amateur Athletic Club was formed at a meeting held in Colvin's Hall at Hurstville on Monday 7<sup>th</sup> March 1921. The meeting was chaired by Mr G.P.S. Parke, the Honorable Secretary of the South Sydney Amateur Athletic Club.

The attendees of this initial meeting were:

W.B. Alexander, N.S.W.A.A.A.;  
G.P.S. Parke, South Sydney Club;  
W.H. Sweeting, South Sydney;  
E.E. Austen, Redfern Club;  
T.H. Ferguson, South Sydney;  
J.J. Walsh, Botany Harriers;  
C. Bray;  
A. Gainsford;  
B. H. Vaughan;  
C. E.F. Groves;  
D. W. Dalton;  
E. J. Martin;  
F. J. Batger, Snr; and  
G. J. Batger, Jnr.

Following an opening address by the chairman, it was proposed and accepted that an athletic club be formed in the district to be known as the "Hurstville Harriers". The motion was carried.

Following subsequent addresses to the meeting by Mr T.H. Ferguson (Honorable Secretary of the Amateur Athletic Association of New South Wales), Mr J.J. Walsh (Honorable Secretary of the Botany Harriers) and Mr Paice (Honorable Secretary of the South Sydney Junior Amateur Athletic Club) a motion was raised to rescind the former motion in respect of the name of the club.

A new motion was raised, seconded and carried unanimously to name the new club the St George District Amateur Athletic Club. The club uniform was proposed and seconded to be "a white singlet mounted with a red Maltese Cross inside a red shield, white knickers."

The initial Committee of the club comprised the following members:

Patron	Mr T.J. Ley, MLA
President	Mr E.A. Field
Hon. Secretary	Mr C. Bray
Treasurer	Mr S. Taylor
Captain	Mr J. Dalton

## The First Races

The first race conducted by the newly formed club was held on a very wet day at Hurstville on Saturday 2<sup>nd</sup> April 1921. The course was a 2½ mile scratch road course from Hurstville Post Office along Forest Road to Willison Road at Carlton, and return by the same route.

Alleyn Gainsford, who had been involved in the formation of the club, and who would later become the longest serving official in the history of the club, ran strongly to claim victory in the inaugural race.

The result of the race was:

**ATHLETICS.**

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**HURSTVILLE ROAD RACE.**

The recently formed St. George District A.A.C. arranged a road race from Hurstville on Saturday to mark the opening of the long-distance season. Clubs affiliated to the N.S.W. A.A.A. were invited to participate, but the unsettled weather conditions were responsible for a small attendance of visitors. The race was over a 2½ miles course, starting and finishing at the club's headquarters in Forest-road. Results:—

A. Gainsford (St. George District A.A.C.)	1
P. Quinn (Botany Harriers)	2
C. J. Bray (St. George District A.A.C.)	3
W. Tilt (St. George), 4; W. Dalton (St. George), 5;	
W. O'Reilly (Botany), 6. Winner's time, 15m.	

*Sydney Morning Herald, 4 April 1921, p.5*

The first track race was held at Hurstville Oval on Friday 13<sup>th</sup> May 1921. The event was a 1 Mile Handicap, and was won by Ernie Austen from the Redfern club. The result of the race was:

**ST. GEORGE A.A.C.**

**E. E. Austin, of the Redfern Club, won the St. George Club's one mile handicap at Hurstville.**

**Results:—**

**E. E. Austin, 40yds, 1. C. J. Bray, 65yds, 2; A. Gainsford, 50yds, 3. Time, 5m 10s.**

*Sydney Morning Herald, 16 May 1921, p.11*

The club's first open road race handicap event was conducted on 9<sup>th</sup> July 1921, attracting 59 entries of which 45 started. The course ran from Hurstville Hotel along Forest Road towards Carlton to the first turnaround after half a mile; then ran back along Forest Road to Penshurst Street before turning again to finish at the Hurstville Hotel. The results of the race were:

<u>Place</u>	<u>Name</u>	<u>Club</u>	<u>Allowance</u>	<u>Actual Time</u>
1	F.J. Phelps	East Sydney	2:00	18:02
2	J.H. Dillon	Botany Harriers	0:50	16:56
3	J. Martin	St George	1:15	17:27
4	S. Morton	St George	1:15	17:32
5	H.W. Sweeting	South Sydney	0:45	17:05
6	W. Porter	East Sydney	0:10	16:35
7	J.B. Linnane	East Sydney	1:15	17:41
8	A. Gainsford	St George	1:15	17:43
9	T. Watters	Botany Harriers	1:25	17:55
10	A.R. Goodsir	South Sydney	1:40	18:10
11	R. Taylor	South Sydney	1:25	18:02
12	H. Vaughan	St George	1:25	18:12
13	H.L. Sheaves	South Sydney	Scratch	16:47
14	F. Burchett	Botany Harriers	1:25	18:20
15	E. Bennett	Botany Harriers	1:15	18:10

### **Open Handicaps**

St George athletes participated in other open handicap events throughout the first year with promising results.

East Sydney 2¾ Mile Open Road Race - Alleyn Gainsford 3<sup>rd</sup>;  
 Robert Tuck Memorial Cup 5 Miles Open Road Race - Jim Martin 7<sup>th</sup>, Stan Morton 8<sup>th</sup>;  
 Eight-Hour Day 1 Mile Handicap - Charlie Weekes 2<sup>nd</sup>;  
 South Sydney Carnival 1 Mile Handicap - Charlie Weekes 3<sup>rd</sup>;  
 NSW Walkers Club 1 Mile Walk Handicap - E.G. Batger 5<sup>th</sup>, Jack Batger 6<sup>th</sup>.

### **Early Championship Successes**

The club's first entry into a State Championship event was the 1921 NSW Novice Cross Country Championship, held over a 5 Mile course at Rose Bay. Quite a stir was created when the new club placed second behind the East Sydney club, 27 points to 32 points, having defeated the redoubtable Botany Harriers club. Our team was A. Gainsford (5<sup>th</sup>), J. Martin (7<sup>th</sup>), S. Morton (9<sup>th</sup>), H. Vaughan (15<sup>th</sup>) – team total 32 points.

The club's athletes competed in the NSW 10 Miles Track Championship at Kensington Racecourse, with Stan Morton the best finisher in 14<sup>th</sup> position. In December 1921 Ernie Austen, who had competed for Redfern during the winter season, competed in St George colours at the Dunn Shield where he finished 2<sup>nd</sup> in both the 1 Mile Walk and 3 Miles Walk events.

### **ST. GEORGE A.A.C.**

Prizes won in events promoted by the St. George A.A.C. during the winter months were presented at the club's social evening at Hurstville on Thursday. Mr. T. H. Gilson occupied the chair, and the visitors included Messrs. T. H. Ferguson (hon. secretary of the N.S.W. Amateur Athletic Association), J. J. Walshe (Botany Harriers), and G. P. S. Parke (South Sydney). The St. George Club has had a successful season, and elaborate preparations are being made for summer fixtures. A number of well-known athletes residing in the district have transferred to the St. George A.A.C., and it is intended to arrange challenge matches with other clubs during the ensuing season.

*Sydney Morning Herald - 8 October 1921 - p15*

#### **Further Reading**

The club website has many documents pertaining to the history of the club available for download in pdf format: <http://www.sgdac.org/documents.php>

The club website has detailed results of club events, open handicap events, track & field events, and State, National and International Championship events featuring club athletes from 1921 onwards: <http://www.sgdac.org/results.php>

Please contact the author via [webmaster@sgdac.org](mailto:webmaster@sgdac.org) with feedback, suggestions, additional information, results or resources to help expand and improve these history documents.