



They Called Him Boy

Peter Fenton

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Andrew 'Boy' Charlton is one of our all-time greatest swimming champions.

With a Foreword by Grant Hackett.

Andrew 'Boy' Charlton set his first world record as a school boy. He became an Olympic and World Champion in the 1500m swim, and like Grant Hackett, in a number of shorter distances. He medalled in the 1500m in 1924, 1928 and 1932. In between each Olympics he retired and stopped competing to either complete his studies (he was only 16 at his first Olympics), or work as a jackeroo. Only taking up training, if at all, in the months prior to a competition.

He loved the ocean more than the pool and was an Australian Surf Champion in 1931/2 and 1934/5. He was, and remains, admired by swimmers and lovers of sport past and present.

The son of a bank manager Boy had expected to inherit a farm from his beloved Grandfather. When this dream faded Boy smoothly moved on from the expectation of an inheritance to a life of working for others until he could purchase his own farm near Goulburn. He lived a simple and humble life - interrupted by visits to Paris, London, Amsterdam and Hollywood where he was feted and had a grand old time!

There is much to learn from the story of this young man who prepared for his second Olympics - after two and a half years break - by swimming against the current in the Namoi River in northern New South Wales. When Grant Hackett won the fifteen hundred metres freestyle at Athens in 2004 his was the eighth Australian victory in this distance in the past nineteen Olympics. This remarkable tradition began with Andrew 'Boy' Charlton.

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