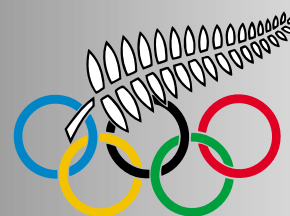


BILL HUNT



OLYMPIC MUSEUM
New Zealand Olympic Committee



"I was born on the farm just three miles south of Te Kuiti and my family had a sheep and cattle farm. I went to Primary School in Te Kuiti and I used to study science and maths.

It was wartime (World War II), and at school, we played primarily rugby in the winter and cricket, with some tennis and swimming in the summer time. The other sports, like rowing and yachting, weren't available due to the war.

In 1948 and 1949 I went to Massey Agricultural College and undertook a sheep and beef farming course that took about six months through all the winter months. I would then work in the summer to make enough money to pay for the next fee. When I was at Massey, I got interested in the tramping club, and some of the people in the club suggested that we go and try skiing. So I went and tried skiing, and I thought it was quite good.

The Early Years on Mount Ruapehu

We used to go and stay in quite a primitive hut which was made of corrugated iron, that was the Ruapehu Ski Club hut. Because we had to walk everywhere, we had one or two of the older members of the club, particularly a guy called Austi Hayward, who used to get us skiing on the slalom racing. He would put some poles into the snow, and you'd walk up and then ski down through the poles and take turns at doing that, which is a bit more interesting than walking for a long way up and only taking three or four turns and then coming down. So that got us started.

Some of the people that I was skiing with encouraged me to start entering championships. They felt that my skiing skills were really improving.

I was pretty fit and I did a bit of running up the hills on the farm. There were a lot of bumps down there and I would practice jumping off these bumps pretending that I was on my skis."

OLYMPIC WINTER GAMES TEAM SELECTION 1952

"I was fortunate enough to be selected as a member of the 1952 New Zealand Olympic Winter Games Team. (This was the very first time New Zealand ever participated at the Olympic Winter Games).

We used to plant crops every summer, so I worked extra long hours and planted all the crops, I then flew over to Rome on my way to Oslo (Norway).

One of the main benefits that we saw to Olympic competition was to improve ourselves and we hoped that the experience of the international competition would be very good for us, and it would rub off back in New Zealand on the other people.

VI OLYMPIC WINTER GAMES OSLO, NORWAY, 1952

Respect for One Another

Our team was treated with respect and regard.

We stayed in the lodge at Norefjell and all the other race teams were staying there as well, it was very informal and at night and they had a few social gatherings. All the people put on their national dance, so we put on the Haka. The Spaniards, in particular, thought it was the greatest thing they'd ever seen. We practiced a little while in our room, but we only knew the old rugby Haka. It was very special, everyone thought that was marvellous.

THE OLYMPIC GAMES BRINGS PEOPLES OF MANY NATIONS TOGETHER

When we competed in the Oslo Olympic Winter Games there were a number of very skilled nations, namely, the Swiss, Austrians, Germans and the French. There were a number of other nations like the British and Canadians who, surprisingly, weren't very much better than us. The Greeks and the Turks were there as well.

In the Spirit of Friendship, Unity and Fair Play

The attaché, a Norwegian man, was very good to us all the time we were there. He couldn't get a ticket to the ski jump event, the men's jump, which for the Norwegians is the most important event at the whole Games, and so I gave him my ticket and he thought that was the greatest thing I could ever do.

I thought it was great to be competing there and how much we were learning about improving our knowledge of skiing and our ski technique and we just needed to get more of it.

VIII OLYMPIC WINTER GAMES SQUAW VALLEY, USA, 1960

These Olympic Winter Games were fantastically different. They were very well organised. I got to meet Walt Disney who was an organiser of the Opening Ceremony, because I was the New Zealand team Flagbearer at this ceremony.

The Opening Ceremony at Squaw Valley was really quite exciting. We all marched as a Team. I had a very strong sense of national pride to be there and carrying the flag. We were all very proud to be in the New Zealand Team.

The Joy Found in Effort

The Olympic Games give you something to aim at, you know that when you compete in a big competition like that, you're trying to do as well as you can, and then you realise there's lots more to strive for - that would be the lesson that I learnt.

The Balanced Development of Body, Will and Mind

You have to be prepared to be quite determined, especially in some of the disciplines like downhill, or Super G where you're going to travel at very high speeds. Being mentally prepared is just as important as being balanced. You've got to be on top of it.

I don't really think there was very much more I could have done to the knowledge and technique that I had at that time to improve my results. I came away feeling that I had a lot more to learn and the opportunity was there for a lot of improvement in my physical and mental ability.

A MESSAGE TO YOUNG PEOPLE - WORDS OF ENCOURAGEMENT EXCEL IN THE OLYMPIC SPIRIT

Identify some thing you want to do. If you want to go skiing, play golf or play rugby, then you must study the sport thoroughly and apply yourself.

I've never worried too much about winning. It's very important to try and win, but I've always thought it's very, very important to compete with distinction. If you can try and do your best, it's very hard to do better. Not everyone's got the same physical or mental ability."

Bill Hunt - Olympian



Bill Hunt, approximately 5 years old, 1937
Photo: Private Collection

1952 New Zealand Olympic Winter Games Team and supporters (at Pre Olympics training in St. Johann im Pongau, Austria)
(L-R) Roy McKenzie, Bill Hunt, Philippa Todd, Jean Adams, Annette Johnson, Herbie Farnilton, Austin Hayward, Herbert Modelhart (Instructor)
Photo: Private Collection



VIII Olympic Winter Games, Squaw Valley, USA, 1960
New Zealand Olympic Winter Games Team
Top (L-R): Bill Hunt, Walter Haensli, Sam Chaffey, Yves Latreille (Coach), Peter Lawlor (Attache), Dick Duncan
Bottom (L-R): Cecilia Womersley, Patricia Prain
Photo: Private Collection



VIII Olympic Winter Games, Squaw Valley, USA, 1960
New Zealand Olympic Winter Games Team
(L-R) Bill Hunt, Cecilia Womersley, Patricia Prain, Sam Chaffey
Photo: Private Collection



Bill Hunt competing in the U.S. Ski Association Masters Giant Slalom, 65-69 Year Age Group (4th) ca. 1999
Photo: Private Collection



Swiss Train Pass, 1952
Source: Private Collection

VI Olympic Winter Games, Oslo, Norway 14 - 25 February 1952
Alpine Skiing; Slalom, 75 / 85; Giant Slalom, 81 / 86; Downhill, 65 / 77

VIII Olympic Winter Games, Squaw Valley, USA 18 - 28 February 1960
Alpine Skiing; Downhill, 54 / 63; Giant Slalom, 51 / 65; Slalom, disqualified