



The Origin of the UWA Athletics Club Fatman Tee Shirt

The Fatman... Wind Bag on Two Wine Bags

Lyn Barry, widow of Kevin (Sam) Barry, was responsible for the initial production of the tee shirts and has given an account of the origin of the design :

I remember discussions about the possible design for a tee shirt - it had to be Greek because of Marathon, and that is what athletics is all about! There was a strong faction of field events athletes who wanted a Discus Thrower motif but they were easily out voted.

I don't know why Boreas was chosen except that there are not a lot of figures running in Greek art, and, being a caricature, reproduction was easier. The Fatman name comes of course from Boreas' shape, one which in those days none of our members ever imagined could be them.

The first few batches of tee shirts and wind cheaters were printed at our home helped(?) by an eager band of workers who were probably only there for the liquid refreshments afterwards. The whole floor space of the house was a carpet of fatmen tee shirts.

The UWAAAC Year Book of 1967-1968 printed two explanations, by Sam Barry and Graham Young, of the origin and derivation of the tee shirt, in an article entitled:

The Two Tails of One "T" Shirt

(1) SAM'S STORY:

The design of the Tee shirt is based on an ancient Greek burlesque vase on display at the Ashmolean Museum, Oxford. It distorts a scene from "The Odyssey" in which Boreas, the God of the North Wind, pursues across the Aegean Sea a homeward bound hero of the Trojan War, Odysseus, a great athlete who was extremely cunning, resolute, industrious and courageous. In the caricature he is holding a "trident" which the heroes allegedly used to ward off monstrous fish. The artist pokes fun at the early Greeks' love of wine by showing Odysseus running over the sea on his wine skins. The Greek word *Trekor* means, " I run ".

KEVIN BARRY

(2) YOUNG'S YARN:

Part I

Perhaps you are wondering Friend: who is this character, who is making very good time despite the strange track he runs on? The story is told to me by one Homer, who "ghosts" the memoirs of the man Odysseus who is a general.

Our boy's army left home to look for a fight of which they find a large number. Zeus, who is the big operator around the district makes book on the match and is laying 5's against our boy. But Odysseus being in strict

training takes the Trojans apart, and Zeus takes a beating. This pleases him, less than somewhat; and very soon our boy finds himself marooned on an island which is quite a few miles from no where in particular.

Things are not made happier, as the owner of the island, half mortal, half goddess and a luscious dish indeed, finds she is very partial to our boy, and keeps him in her cave until he comes around to her way of thinking. This our boy will not do, since he is already married to a nice toll back home. We are also not told which half of the lady is the mortal part, which may explain some things.

As I say, things do not look good, and for seven years nothing happens, and our boy begins to wonder if he will ever see his wife again. Back on Olympus, one of the goddesses, who has good reason indeed to wish to do Zeus one on the eye, figures that one way is to help our boy. However, if Zeus finds out she plans this, it is very big trouble indeed for all parties.

At this stage we wait for the next issue in which some very remarkable things indeed, happen.

Part II

When last seen, Odysseus, otherwise known as the little fat bloke on the Tee shirt, was about to be succoured by a goddess.

Now read on:

As I am saying, when the editor knocks off my copy, one goddess whose handle is Athene is out to help our hero, Odysseus. However, she first visits his son Telemachus and spends some time with him, and as a result, she sends her brother to the rescue. Do not ask me why, I am not there at the time.

Her brother, one Hermes, goes to the island and lays it on the line to the owner, who, after these seven years decides that perhaps the game is not worth the candle and, O.K., Odysseus may leave -- tomorrow. He does so but with a change of form that might puzzle the stewards.

When he leaves she presents him with a number of gifts which include two skinfulls of wine -- goat skins fulls.

Our boy leaves the island with a boat he builds in between times, and things are looking cosy. However, Zeus -- a bad loser who should have been here for Douglas Memorial Day -- is not finished yet and whips up a storm and five-eighths and, faster than Great Boulder shares change price in the ring, our hero has no ship, but still has his two goar skins.

Odysseus, being an athlete, it does not surprise many people when it is discovered that the wine has disappeared and the skins are full of hot air -- things do not change very much between 10th century B.C and the Wembley, obviously!

Athene at this time shows that she does not forget our boy completely, and says some words to the north wind, who everybody calls Boreas since nobody can remember. Boreas owes her some favours, and so he blows our hero towards shore, and yet another doll -- which is a different story. And so we find our hero with two skinfulls and between dolls, and running -- but at least he runs.

GRAHAME YOUNG

So there you have it, Sam's Story is the most likely to be the correct version but the Damon Runyonesque version penned by Grahame Young is an entertaining one.

Researched by Don Young April 2001 with assistance by Lyn Barry.