My memories of carrying the Olympic Torch.

The Gympie boys carried the torch as far as Pomona – 26 miles – 26 runners – each required to cover one mile in 7 minutes. We had been training for some weeks, individually and with some group events. On one occasion we had a dummy run to Pomona on a hot saturday afternoon. On another occasion there was a night time function in Mary Street and the Memorial Park and we left the Railway Station at intervals, each running down Mellor Street, through Mary Street and around to the park.

On the morning the torch arrived I got to the Town Hall at about 2 am I think and I was amazed at the large crowd of people there. There was to be a civic reception. The torch duly arrived on time. A friend of mine who was working on the telephone exchange that night told me that it was ahead of time and was held near the golf links for a while. The Mayor, Ald. Witham, ran with the torch bearer over the final couple of hundred yards, both holding the torch.

I don't remember much about the reception. We posed for a group photograph. It was easy to ascertain if we were all present by just numbering off 1 to 26 according to the mile we had to run. A bus took us to our various starting points and mine was at mile number six. It was a glorious summer morning and it must have been moonlight because I had good surrounding vision and there I was all alone.

After a while a truck came and I was handed a torch then I was all alone again. A while later I saw a light coming down the hill and it was the ambulance following torch bearer Matt Hamilton. The ambulance must have followed the runners all the way.

The torch was quite heavy and contained inflammable gas, a stream of which was released when pressure was put on a nozzle. Matt ran up to me and pressed the nozzle of his torch against the nozzle of my torch and as soon as it started to splutter he said "go for your life mate" and I set off. I was surprised at the heat which came off the torch and I had to hold it well away from my face. A couple of cars passed me with people taking photos and I handed over to Noel Cummings.

I think another truck came along and collected the torches and the bus collected the runners on completion of their runs. I didn't want to go all the way to Pomona so my Father picked me up. When I got home it was just breaking day and I remember experiencing an acute feeling of anti-climax. I went back to bed for a while then got up, had breakfast and went to work as usual.

Garnet Gant.

Garnet Gant