**BOB WALKER:** We are sad to report the death of Wakefield Harriers oldest international athlete. Bob was first mentioned in the club’s history in 1953 as an athlete of note in the track season. A year later he was Youth Captain. He came in as a late reserve for the Leeds Athletic Union in a triangular match with Leeds University and Bradford and District Athletic Union, and surprised everyone by finishing 2nd in the Discus, the Hammer and the Triple Jump. Bob was also 2nd in the Yorkshire Junior Championships in the Triple Jump.

In 1955 he again was chosen for the Leeds Athletic Union in the Triangular Match finishing 3rd in the Discus. Bob was one of those athletes willing to try anything and in the 1955-6 season he actually finished 4th in the Bradford and District Junior Cross-Country Championships, helping the club to win the team race. Yet, when it came to the track season, he was 3rd in the Yorkshire High Jump Championships. He was already a promising decathlete and finished 3rd in the Northern Counties Decathlon Championships.

In 1959 he won the Yorkshire Senior High Jump title and was elected club captain, and the following year won the Northern Counties Decathlon Championship. Very few decathletes would be able to do what he achieved later in the year, finishing 12th in the Yorkshire 20 mile Championships and helping the team into 2nd place.

That was Bob! He would try his hand at anything. In the 1960-1 season he was back doing cross-country, finishing 21st in the first Leeds and District Cross-Country League meeting. At the second meeting, while lying 15th he was knocked down by a motor cyclist and he had to be taken to Leeds Infirmary. The club was beginning to develop a race walking team. Guess what? Bob finished 10th in the Northern Race Walking 10 mile Championship, helping Wakefield win the 1st team award. Quite exceptional for someone who, that year, finished 2nd at the Yorkshire Athletic Championships in both the High Jump and the 120 yards Hurdles, 2nd in the Northern Counties Decathlon and 10th in the AAA National Decathlon, setting a new club record.

However his greatest season was probably 1962-3. Even though he still took part in an Inter-Club Race Walk, he finished 2nd in the Northern Counties Decathlon with a new club record of 6399 points that also placed him 2nd in the UK Rankings for 1963. On that showing he was selected to represent Great Britain in an international decathlon in Holland, becoming the second Wakefield athlete to gain international honours after cross-country runner Rolly Walker (no relative).

In 1964 he won the Postal Services Decathlon but that is the last mention of him in the club’s history. However, when the club entered the Northern league he came out of retirement to help the club in events like the High Jump, the Pole Vault, the throws and the high hurdles, competing beside his son, Gary, and enjoying every minute of it, especially the looks on the faces of young men with their fibre glass poles who saw this older man with white hair and a steel pole beating them in the pole vault competition.

The club will probably not see again an international decathlete who also won medals for cross-country, road running and race walking.