

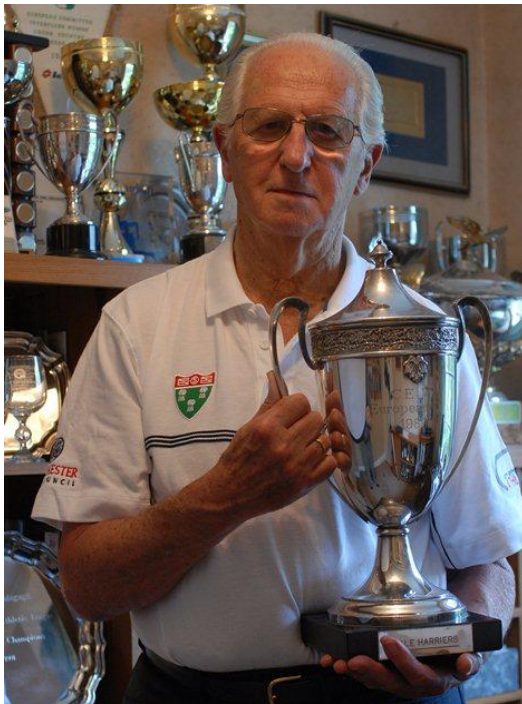
Eric Hughes Obituary 19 March 2013

It's with great sadness Sale Harriers announce the news that Eric Hughes, Club President and Britain's most successful women's team manager, died peacefully in his sleep on 14th March 2013 with his family by his side. Eric was in declining health over several months .

We extend our deepest condolences to his wife Doris, children Lisa and Stephen and to his extended family and to all who worked with him professionally and in sport. The family have asked that members do not contact for a little while as they come to terms with their loss.

Funeral Details

The service will be on Friday 22nd March from 12.30pm at St John's church on Brooklands Road, Sale. Followed by a private committal service at the Crematorium. The family would like to invite those attending the church service to The Connell Suite at Manchester City Football Club , Etihad Complex (M11 3 FF) for light refreshments. This suite is upstairs above the main entrance.



A very sad and massive loss to the club and all who knew him. on 16th March at Sportcity he was to be awarded the Frank Starkie Memorial Cup by BATFL for his outstanding services to club and leagues and his name was to be submitted for a Queens Award. Below is the citation written for both

Outstanding Contribution to Sport in Manchester

- Eric Hughes' commitment to Sale Harriers began in 1969 when his daughter Lisa and later his son Stephen joined the club. Thus began almost half a century of such club loyalty and commitment that's put Sale Harriers on the map of British and European athletics.
- At the time Eric joined, Sale was more famous as a men's and boy's middle distance club so Eric set about building a women's team by contacting local South Manchester schools and arranging training sessions for them at Crossford Bridge. So successful was he that between 1972 -1980, the club's younger women had won so many national and other titles, that Sale were being recognised as a dominant national force in middle distance and the senior women claimed their first titles in 1977/78.
- Eric then entered girls into local Young Athlete Open Meetings and teams into the Women's Cheshire League with such success that in 1973, Sale were elected to the second Division of the Motorway League and won promotion to Division 1 in its inaugural year and came a respectable third in the first Division the following year. When the Northern League was then formed in 1973 (now known as the North of England T & F League), Eric was

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made its chairman, a post he held for many years and his teams won seventeen Championship titles and remained unbeaten when the league introduced seniors in 1994.

- When the UK Women's League was formed in 1975, Eric's renowned achievements resulted in Sale Harriers being immediately elected to the Premier Division where they've remained for the past thirty eight years and are the only British club to have done so. When the UK League changed its formation to seniors in 1994, Eric went on to win a hat-trick of senior titles in the following three years. Then, from 2000-4, his teams collected an unprecedented five successive UK Division 1 titles and smashed the leagues points record on two occasions.
- In the 38 years until 2012, Eric's teams won no less than twenty three UK Premier League titles; were runners-up on nine occasions; third on three occasions and fourth twice.and, until 2012 when he became ill, he had not missed one UK league meeting since its inception, a record of well over one hundred matches that's never likely to be broken.
- When the National Young Athlete's League was formed in 1990, again Eric was at the helm and Sale Harriers won a hat-trick of YAL Cups in its first three years and again in 1999 and was runner-s up on five other occasions. Since the inception of the league, Sale Harriers have appeared in every final thanks to Eric's tireless work as team manager.
- Then there were the National Jubilee Cups and in 1998 when the club eventually won it, it took Eric into managing Sale in European Club's competition. He led Sale Harriers into no fewer than thirty-five European contests over twenty-two years and was so admired by the European Clubs Cross-Country Federation, he was elected their vice-President. After the European Junior T & F Cup began in 1986, again Eric led Sale's youngsters to represent GB & NI and they finished runners-up in its inaugural year and Eric was elected Vice-President. Three years later, with a team whose average age was just 17 ½ years, under Eric's dynamic leadership, Sale Harriers became the first British Club to win the European T & F Championships and went on to win it again in 1991 and 1994 to complete a hat-trick of European Junior Cup victories.
- The pinnacle of Eric's career may well have been in 2002 when Sale won all top domestic honours – the UK Women's League, the National U20 Cup, the National Senior XC Championships and the National Senior Road Relay title and by winning the senior trophy in the European Clubs competition that year also, Sale became the first club to contest three European Championships in the same year – Senior T & F, U20 T & F and Senior Cross-Country.
- In 2006 Eric, who'd been a member of the club's Executive committee for nearly forty years, was elected its President. As an executive committee member and as President, he was at the forefront of the unique partnership between Manchester City Council and the club that put Sale Harriers at the centre of developing an innovative athletic programme for Manchester. He went on to play a central role in the emergence of Sportcity and the Regional Athletics Arena as a leading venue for Athletics; his contribution was significant in Sale's Premier Division teams competing as City of Manchester Athletics; after the 2002 Manchester Commonwealth Games, he was closely involved in the development of a city wide athletics program; he has been central to the expansion of Sale Harriers to the Wythenshawe Park site; he's been central in supporting the club's inner-city community

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projects often attending events late into the evening and he's been the club's main negotiator in its sponsorship deals to meet the demands of being a major national club.

Fechin McCormick March 2013

Above photo of Eric holding the European Cup

Related Documents and Downloads

-  **19/03/2013** [Eric Hughes Tribute Sale Harriers Magazine 2013](#) [1 MB]
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Comments

- Added: 19/03/2013 19:50:35

Eric was a true gentleman. He was such a kind and caring person and always on hand to help. We will miss him very much.

By **Holt Family**

- Added: 27/03/2013 23:27:38

I remember attending a Northern League match in the mid-1970s where my club, Sutton Harriers, was bidding to win the League title. During the Intermediate 200m Hurdles my athlete misjudged her stride pattern, ran round the hurdle and completed the race. Eric was coming towards me at the time and saw the incident clearly. He said with a smile 'that's a matter for the track judges, I'm not going to tell them'. He rose in my estimation that day as being more fair-minded than people realised or were willing to admit. My club won the League that year. Thank you Eric, gentlemen are born not made.

By **Dr Phil Thomas**