

Essex Walker



YOUR SHOUT

In this edition you'll find an article (below) about what might be the future of the Essex League as we approach our 500th race. Our County Walking Secretary RAY PEARCE has been doing some number crunching and the Chigwell Row 10K was Race No 486. So we have 14 to go before that momentous 500th event will be staged in 2010. That gives you - the Essex League supporters - almost a year to decide how you want to celebrate it, and whether or not it'll be our final one. Where would you like it to be held, do you want a function arranged to coincide with the occasion (as for our 400th)? Do you want to make it a big reunion? What sort of race do you want on the day (distance, venue etc)? Make sure you let your voice be heard. Essex Walker will publish ideas. Make sure you let our County Walking Secretary know. For the record, 90 finished the 300th race in 1991 and 183 finished the 400th race in 2001. On each of those occasions the numbers were considerably swelled by many former walkers and their families coming back for the reunion aspect of the day. The Essex League started in September 1967 with 35 finishers in Event No.1, and some of those are still on the scene today. Our January issue reminded folk about the Roy Mendham Trophy and what it means - so I am indebted to a couple of readers for reminding me that Roy came 32nd in that inaugural League race.

Anyway ... it's over to you!

500 AND OUT?

In Essex Walker Issue 256 (Jan 2005) PETER RYAN wrote, "The Essex League is almost at an end". True, the Essex League as co-founded in 1967 by PHIL EVERARD and JOHN HEDGETHORNE is hitting rough times. Take Ilford's Christmas 10K which, although at the end of 2008, is the opening event of the 2009 campaign. It pulled in 22 takers - and twice in recent times it pulled in just 14 finishers under 'A' rules. Switching to 'B' conditions saw fields of 30 and 31 on the result sheet. But just 22 for the latest event - and with a high average age! We know of 3 regulars who were indisposed and one on holiday. Some of our younger walkers didn't line up; CHELSEA O'RAWE-HOBBS being under treatment and PHIL BARNARD having not been seen racing since early November. As well as the age profile, the winning time was the slowest since the event commenced in the early 70s. It was 54.36, a time bettered on this course by nearly every Essex Walker reader, including Hon Ed himself. That time used to be recorded by a middle-field Clubman in around 20th position. However, as with 21 hours 100 Miles winning times (as opposed to 17 hours ones), we do NOT criticise winners. They can only beat those

who do toe the start lines, and we warmly congratulate all victors.

Our last issue published a 2008 Essex League final table where most only supported 3/4/5 races. Rarely does anybody compete in the full 12. Bestowing Essex League status on a race no longer ensures bumper turnouts. The 300th Essex League race was held in Colchester on Bank Holiday Monday, 31st August 1992. That memorable 400th event was held at Springfield on 28th January 2001 as The John Hedgethorpe Memorial Race. At Chigwell Row it was being mooted that we should limp on towards Race No 500, have a big fixture/reunion, and then call it a day. Rather like a "Woolies" closing down sale! Or will something turn up and improve our fortunes? Any opinions?

Dave Ainsworth

PROOF READER WANTED

The late Jerry Everett's partner, Michelle, has been in touch with Essex Walker to ask for our help in looking for a proof reader. As you know Jerry had penned 3 volumes of "The History of Athletics Around Colchester" and 1 volume on "The First 25 years of the North Essex Cross County League". It's a proof reader that we need to identify! Shortly before Jerry's untimely death a guy came round to his house in Ipswich and took away one of these volumes to proof read it. It's not been returned and Michelle asks if there's anybody out there who has it, or knows who's got it? If light can be shed on this matter, please let Hon Ed know and details will be passed on. Those who have seen these draft books will know how wonderful they are. This missing one must be returned.

YOU RANG MY LORD

DANIEL and **DOMINIC KING** have been appointed Olympic Sporting Ambassadors for Essex and, in that capacity, were invited to the House of Lords - in the company of Olympians - for a reception on Tuesday January 6th. We appreciate the King twins for giving race walking a high profile on such occasions.

TRAINING DAY

January saw a first "Enfield League Training Day" and DAVE SHARPE phoned up to report that 17 attended a well organised and enjoyable session. 17 is as good as some fields nowadays! STEPHEN CRANE walked from Chadwell Heath before commencing his training.

MISSING TROPHIES

We are issuing a general appeal for 2 missing trophies.

1. The **REG YOULDON TROPHY**. This is in the shape of a rose bowl and goes to the winning team at the WWW (now WTW) series.
2. The **GENEVA TROPHY** for the Essex League's most improved walker.

If anybody knows the whereabouts of these 2 trophies could they please let Hon Ed know and he'll pass on details. 'Tis the same old story: they were not presented last time and when checking the time before - well they don't appear to have been presented then either ... and so on. Perhaps trophies were taken on behalf of folk and unintentionally not passed on? So can you please all search your car boots, attics, sheds, MFI wall units, cupboards and outhouses etc.



NEWS FROM THE PAST

Former Southend walker **FRANK DRAKE** has been in touch. Now aged 76 and living in Bradwell Ash village near Bury St Edmunds, Frank states, "I did 6 London-to-Brightons and also raced the Hastings-to-Brighton. I've given most of my medals away to my grandchildren now. I have popped into Holland and Barrett's Bury St Edmunds store on a few occasions, but I've never seen Peter Marlow in there. My wife and I don't drive, but I still hope to get along to the Captain Barclay weekend at Newmarket Racecourse later on July 11th/12th".

BEWARE OF LAMP POSTS

"As I was driving I hit a stationary lamp post travelling in the opposite direction!"
Quote from an Insurance claim



It's not just motorists who must beware of lamp posts! The Reader's Digest points out that the chances of **walking into a lamp post** are 360 million-to-one. However pavement users do from time-to-time. Three-quarters of casualties are men, with women to blame for distracting them. If you train, watch where you're going.

CHARITY ATHLETES

We've already mentioned **DAVE SHARPE**'s charity collection for the 2009 Flora London Marathon on April 26th (also RWA National 50K day). But he's not the only one from walking who's raising money for good causes. **STEVE ALLEN** and **MICKY SUTTON** are racing for Mount Pleasant's official 2009 charity - the Macmillan Cancer Support. **DENNIS JONES** seeks sponsorship for Children with Leukaemia while **LAURENCE DORDOY** is race walking on behalf of St Francis Hospice. Please dig deep if approached with collection sheets.

CONTRIBUTION FROM MARK WALL

Charlie Fogg makes the comment that the National Coach was not present at the Think Tank - it was set up in competition with the England Athletics Coaching weekend.

Perhaps he is unaware there is NO National Coach. UKA have removed the role and England Athletics are in the process of instituting a comparable position along with an array of sub-ordinate Coaches, creating a PROPER coaching structure to service clubs and athletes. Dr. Drake was charged with co-ordinating the two coaching weekends, he has no official position currently. This weekend was aimed primarily at Coaches and some athletes.

Previously walkers have been notably absent from Coaching development courses despite them being advertised through England athletics (THE GOVERNING BODY) or regional squad opportunities.

Who does Barry propose 'independently audit' coaches? England Athletics do this but a large group of coaches do not undertake the CPD requirements required to maintain their grading.

The RWA is not the governing body of the sport - the UKA and the National bodies are. The RWA is charged with responsibility for the conduct of the event in certain areas. Coaching is an EA responsibility.

Funding bodies deal with only one body. This is simple logic.

Who is to elect the 'National Coach'? The RWA? It has been said in public forums that some coaches are unacceptable to large elements of the RWA despite them holding senior coaching roles.

To suggest that we dictate to academic bodies who they employ is very odd indeed. Does this mean that my employment as a teacher is subject to the whim of individuals outside education because I happen to develop the event in my school or other schools? Who is to do this?

What we need to do is be actively engaged with the governing bodies not working against them, they will help us if we play our part.

Mark Wall, BEd, MACE, Coach, Athlete and Administrator (race promoter despite active opposition)

QUARTER OF A CENTURY

Former Essex County President and current RWA Southern Area Chairman **RAY PEARCE** has completed 25 years as our Essex County Walking Secretary, for which we thank him profoundly for countless hours of honorary service on our behalf. At Chigwell Row Ray dropped a hint that we ought to be looking at a candidate who may wish to succeed him. Any takers?

SIGN OF THE TIMES

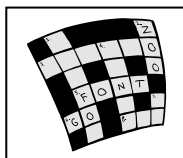
Two of Essex walking's greatest stalwarts have just completed the first calendar year, since beginning their involvement, without appearing in any walking race. For 2008 **BRIAN ARMSTRONG** and **DAVE NEAGLE** failed to toe the line. We hope we'll be able to welcome them both back onto our start lines in 2009.

CAN YOU EVER WIN?

In January's edition Mrs Elizabeth Hedgethorpe drew attention to the large number of persons who had passed-on during the year. This was mentioned at the RWA AGM and a reader gloomily predicted on my phone message service during July that mortality will kill off walking. With so many funerals it presents an uphill task to get everybody notified. In this respect we thank Tony & Christine Perkins for getting out so promptly a special "Jerry Everett Tribute Edition" of this newsletter and for notifying folk via our Essex Walker email info service, this being further reissued on similar distribution networks operated by our good friends at Enfield Walker, Leicester Walker and Redcar Walker. Kathy Crilley announced details on The Centurions website. It really paid off as so many attended Jerry's funeral. We know what can happen when information doesn't get to those wanting to receive it ... our last issue reported one person who was never told about a funeral service of a Club colleague that he'd known for nearly 50 years. Several examples over recent years can easily be quoted. Usually the reason somebody doesn't get notified is because everybody assumes that somebody else has told that person. So we also thank our well known "Information Suppliers" who also take the time and trouble to ring around with such news. It was therefore disappointing to hear that one got "short shrift" when informing somebody of Jerry's death ... as the person being notified already knew. Surely it's better to be told twice that not at all? It can be frustrating telling folk such sad news, as persons being told feel obliged to listen as a rule, before muttering something like, "I'll get there if I can" and then not appearing at the funeral. One Essex funeral service this year had a really low turnout (which was commented on by an ex-International walker in Essex Walker), yet had a load of people promising to get there if they could. But ... miss out on telling them just once, and they'll moan like anything that they weren't told and that they would have been there if only they'd known. You just can't win. If you genuinely don't want to go then please politely tell whoever is informing you early on in the conversation to save their time. So it's a double thank you for Tony & Christine, and Eileen Allen for setting new standards of information dissemination with their email list distribution service. But we'll still rely on "Information Suppliers" as not everybody gets an email service, so please be polite to them when they call you. To be positive, let's hope that 2009 sees nothing like the numbers witnessed during 2008.

5 DOWN

Our December crossword contained the clue, "Eartha's reduced surname is race day essential (3)". Obviously we weren't expecting Eartha Kitt's death in December - 'twas just an unfortunate coincidence.



FESTIVE WALK

Enfield's traditional Boxing Day meeting was staged at Picketts Lock and used a longer "once out-and-back" course than that used for Championship and Open racing at that venue. As custom the 5K walk and run were held as a composite event, with Olympic gold medallist CHRISTINE OHURUOGU again in the running. The walk 1-2 was a repeat of Ilford 5K race 5 days earlier as **STEPHEN CRANE** and **JOHN HALL** battled it out. The Surrey man led for most of the way on a sunny but bitterly cold morning, before the Belgravian edged ahead with 1K to go. Finishing on the track the younger man produced a fast finish from 50 metres out to secure victory, with his rival "2nd by a second" as they clocked 26.03 and 26.04. **HELEN MIDDLETON** emulated her 2007 victory with 28.05. Some wore Santa hats! Let's build on this race in 2009 and more on the road for what is a buckshee meeting. Hardly any traffic was on the roads and it provided a perfect escape from festive season pressures in the home. The run was well supported so let's see if we can up our pedestrianism profile next time.

"GREAT!"

That was the view of 2 former Champion walkers, who came up with the same word of praise in separate emails. They referred to archive material, report and picture of Harold Whitlock coming home 1st at the 1946 Liverpool-to-Manchester walking race, making his way through crowds (yes crowds). We had half-a-page of publicity in The Times which featured an account of Harold's best efforts - including his 1936 Berlin Olympic 50K gold medal despite being ill on race day, and of selection in the same event at the Helsinki Games of 1952, coming 11th and so becoming the UK's oldest athletics Olympian. Great Times! Said OLLY FLYNN, "It's a great article in The Times of Harold Whitlock" with PETER MARLOW commenting, "A great article and picture". Sadly UK race walking's best publicity nowadays seems to come from nostalgia articles. Let's hope that the next big news will be contemporary.

ON THE RECORD

At the recent RWA AGM, by 27 votes to nil with one abstention, Editorship of the Race Walking Record will pass from TIM WATT to JOHN C. Who is this John C? Well, we all really know and, after a few bad attempts at pronouncing his surname during the debate, John stated that he'd be quite happy to be known as just "John C".

THE CREDIT MUNCH

Thanks to the genial ladies behind the counter at the Queen Elizabeth Stadium for proving us with buckshee post race drinks and snacks after 2009's opening Enfield League race. A nice gesture from our hosts.



Dear Dave ... 



LETTERS to the EDITOR's INBOX

WRITES DAVE TURNER

Even though little things in my sensitivities prevent me from reading your Essex Walker I appreciate the hard work and effort that helps to keep Essex walking strong, through your newsletter.

Dave T.

Adds Hon Ed:

Dave stopped taking Essex Walker after publication of a few nostalgia articles as he believes we should be looking forwards, not backwards. He has a point. However nostalgia articles are always popular with readers (a majority of whom no longer race).

FROM BOB RUSSELL MP

Please convey to everyone my condolences at the sad loss of Jerry Everett. I have fond memories of our late night chat (on Kings Meadow) on the occasion of the 24-hour 100-mile walk. He was clearly a remarkable man. His research into sporting records was unequalled. I trust that these will be found a safe home in his lasting memory.

I regret that I cannot attend the funeral as I am in London ... All best wishes.

Bob Russell, MP for Colchester

TRIBUTE FROM PETER MARLOW

Very sorry to hear about Jerry Everett. He was such a nice person.

COMMENT FROM JOHN PERKINS

"I think that Dave Sharpe's views in Essex Walker are most interesting".

EMAILS OLLY FLYNN

(Re GEORGE'S RADIO BROADCAST)

It was a great interview. Well done! You put the case very clearly and with enthusiasm too. Hopefully it will get some positive feedback and find tomorrow's champions for our sport.

Sincerely

Oliver T

WRITES TOM TIDY

I was sorry to hear that Gerry Rhodes had passed on and surprised that only 3 of us who were new Centurions in 1959 remain to tell the tale. I used to see Luie regularly on the Nijmegen Marches, but haven't seen him for about the last 4-5 years. I completed the Marches in 2008 although I only do the 30Km course, but at 81 I don't want to push my luck over the longer distance. Incidentally Tom Richardson's sister Dorothy (Davis) lives in Hanfield!

My best wishes for the coming year to yourself and all Essex walkers who may remember me.

Yours sincerely and fraternally.

Tom (C298)

Hon Ed:

Tom lives in Henfield, West Sussex. For newer readers, Tom Richardson of Woodford Green AC was Centurion No 100 and during a wonderful athletics career became one of our "all-time greats". He served as The Centurions President and did much coaching both before and after hanging up his racing shoes.



TONY PERKINS LOOKS BACK at the Ilford AC XMAS WALKS

I've just come across a list I compiled back in 1979 of all the competitors who had raced the Xmas Walk between 1972-1978, in time order. I thought I would see how this year's results compared with those of 25 years ago. This year's winning time would only rank in the 200's. The slowest winning time during 72-78 was J WEBB in 46.15 (1973). I believe only D SHARPE, who finished 31st place (just one second behind Bill Sutherland), raced in both 1973 and 2008. I noticed that recently departed back to Leicester Mal Blyth also raced in 1973.

Hon Ed: *I think I made my course debut in this event in 1973 racing for the London Vidarians. Geoff Hunwicks approached me and invited me to join Ilford AC after the race.*

FAREWELL TO JERRY

Cold and icy conditions didn't prevent some 150 folk gathering for **JERRY EVERETT's** funeral, including many from walking (among them a good number of ex-Internationals and many Centurions). Needless to say it was standing room only at Colchester Crematorium, where the coffin was afforded a Guard of Honour upon its entry. Those forming the guard were members of Jerry's Colchester Harriers Club, fellow supporters at Colchester United FC and International race walkers. Following an initiative from BOB DOBSON, walkers of international standard were asked to wear their blazers and badges. Some did, others did but could no longer button-up their blazers (we won't name those) and others admitted that such blazers would no longer fit (we won't name those either). A Humanist Celebration was chosen and led by DAVID MITCHELL who opened his contribution with words from Michel de Montaigne (1533-1592) who had stated, "It is not how many years a man lives; it is what he does while he lives that matters". In Jerry's case much had been crammed into his 47 years on earth - and much was written in our Jerry Everett Tribute Edition.

Fellow Club member LANCE WILLIAMS was chosen as the Eulogist. He asked his listeners, "Did we really know Jerry Everett?" Many didn't as we were told of events, tales and occasions from this remarkable man's life. To add to our recent Obituary we can add further information in that Jerry was born in Clacton, brought up on Mersea Island and educated in Tiptree. Jerry's

first love was always football and he fell in love with Colchester United after watching them lose 1-0 at home to Barrow many decades ago. Surprisingly there was no athletics involvement during his teens - that came later ... and how! His marathon count was 153 ... phew! Jerry belonged to Football's "92 Club" open to those who have watched matches at all 92 League grounds. His football programme collection is in the thousands and soccer colleagues at the funeral knew him by the nickname "Docker". As athletics began to take more of his time, he often attended a marathon and a soccer match in the area on the same weekend. Jerry was an enthusiastic member of CAMRA and savoured a decent pint. He was a keen member of The Monster Raving Loony Party and also frequently attended live music concerts - always marking performers out of 12 for some reason, and recording it all in a book. He'd served a printing apprenticeship though was not in his trade at the time of his sad demise. The coffin had entered to the strains of "Chariots of Fire" by Vangelis. At the family's request curtains were left open when the service ended, so all had an opportunity to file past the coffin on leaving - while listening to the stentorian strains of "Keep on Running" by the Spencer Davis Group (a tune which many could remember from hearing it first time around).

Afterwards most assembled in the function room of the Arena Club at Colchester Garrison where on display was a Powerpoint presentation of Jerry life. It was all there: Jerry with a beard, Jerry with blond hair, etc, etc. There was much more to Jerry than we ever imagined. Our thanks to LANCE WILLIAMS for his address and unearthing so much interesting information for us. Thanks to all who attended - one of the largest gatherings of walkers seen on such occasions. Thanks to those who gave generously to the designated good cause - Orwell Panthers (a sports club for those with disabilities, of which he had been Vice Chairman). And finally ... thanks to STEVE & BRIDGET KING and LANCE WILLIAMS, all 3 of whom had been to the fore in organising such a major function and ensuring that everything went to perfection (before, during and after the service).



CENTURIIONS AGM

This is on Saturday 31st January at 1 pm at The Resource Centre, 356 Holloway Road, London, N1 6PA. Many bus routes pass the door. The venue is close to a Waitrose supermarket. Nearest Underground is Holloway

Road (Picadilly Line). This station has various entry/exit restrictions when Arsenal are at home (they are – to West Ham) but as the Centurions kick off 2 hours before they do at the nearby Emirates Stadium, it shouldn't cause concerns. Upper Holloway (London Overground) is on the Barking-to-Gospel Oak Line. On leaving the station, turn right and it's 10 minutes' walk down the hill of 4 bus stops (routes 17, 43 and 271). This may be the best way for Essex-based readers. Also Bus 277 goes from Mile End to Highbury and Islington stations (short walk away).

ALL POWER

DAVE SHARPE feels that we're not seeing many newcomers in walking and that established members (including himself) are getting older. Dave suggests that we look out for power walkers to try and persuade them into stepping up a gear for competitive race walking.

TIPS ON POWER WALKING

- WALK tall. Keep your head up and look forward, not at the ground. Hold your chest up and relax your shoulders.
- Pull in abs and walk as though your legs start at the waist, extending them from the hips. Aim for a heel-to-toe roll action and really use toes to push off.
- Keep elbows at 90 degrees and by your side, bring hands only as far as your chest and move your arms like a pendulum.
- Pick up speed by taking more, shorter steps. Aim to walk at 4.5 to 5 mph.
- Begin by walking a mile as fast as you comfortably can. Use how you feel at the end to decide how fast to progress, adding miles as you feel ready.



Reproduced by courtesy of

ESSEX CHALLENGE

One for our ultra-distance readers ... there's another opportunity to become a member of the Continental Centurions. On May 23rd/24th at Weert in The Netherlands the OLAT Club are staging a joint 50K/100 Miles/24 Hours walking race. Those passing 100 miles in under 24 hours are eligible to be a Continental Centurion. The organiser is Hans de Vries and you can email wedstrijd@olat.nl for details.



NEWS FROM WAY OUT WEST

Bristol-based former Basildon protagonist JOHN WEBB reports that his adopted city has been chosen as a pre-Olympic training venue and will host the Kenyan squads prior to the Games. Part of the deal includes exchange visits between promising sports participants. Among those selected to attend Kenya's Kip Keino Training Camp for a week is son HARRY who is a talented 800 metres runner. Harry now studies at Brunel University in Uxbridge and runs for Bristol. John spotted that Basildon clubmate JOHN SALES had struck riches in the latest RWA 200 Club draw. Still a great athletics enthusiast John spent New Year's Eve supporting the long established Nos Galan races.



BACK BY POPULAR REQUEST

Saturday 3rd January in MIKE BUSHHELL's BBC1 Breakfast Time sports spot (on at 4 different times) viewers were treated to the highlights of his 2008 offerings. With "I Would Walk 500 Miles" by The Proclaimers booming out as background music, the leading feature was his visit to our Battersea Park evening 5 Miles race in June (originally screened in August). On this occasion we saw about 45 seconds action and a repeat of the **CHELSEA O'RAWE** interview (one of 4 interviews featured in the full length presentation). So thanks to Mike for giving us another showing on the telly. Mike has some 40 sports/pursuits lined up for 2009 and welcomes viewers' suggestions of other ideas.

THE RADIO STAR



Listeners of BBC Essex Radio's morning show were able to listen to former International **GEORGE NIBRE** being interviewed about the Think Tank's aims, of which he is one of those 3 big names who've got this initiative going. We heard, loud and clear, **an aim for 9 walkers in GB vests at the**

London Olympics come 2012. George came over very well and in case anybody doubts the enthusiasm of this Think Tank, then be assured that George spoke with the commitment of an evangelist. George's words deserve to find keen listeners.

THE CRAWLEY CRAWL

Last year some Essex Walker readers entered the Crawley 12 hours to which, although a running race, race walkers are welcomed. It's on Saturday 4th April (7am) and is a good build-up for other 2009 distance races. It's on Saturday 4th April commencing at 7 am. The organiser is Pam Storey who can be contacted on pamstorey@tiscali.co.uk or 01342-717222 if seeking an entry form. Entries close March 21st.

APPEAL BY STEVE TAYLOR (International Race Walking Judge, Isle of Man)

Forgive me for using the distribution list previously employed to ensure race walking stayed in the Senior Commonwealth Games but I am sure that you will appreciate the benefit.

The first draft for programme of events for the 2011 Commonwealth Youth Games to be held in the Isle of Man has now been published, see <http://www.cyg2011.com/> and not surprisingly there is no race walking event included. The initial draft is to give competing nations an idea as to what is proposed and ask for suggestions as to how the programme can be improved.

I feel sure that the pedigree of race walking within the nations of the Commonwealth would improve the event so we need to get those nations with race walkers involved and on board. An initial proposal from IAAF race walking committee member Jane Saville is that the distances should be the same as in the World Youth Athletics Championships; that is 5000m for girls and 10000m for boys. The number of entries would be the key to having a walk included, as for entry standards I believe that is down to the individual countries but we would want to encourage a decent standard to ensure that we are accepted and not considered something of a laughing stock.

Of the countries listed on the Pune 2008 site those that jump out at me as having race walkers would be Australia, Canada, England, Guernsey, India, Isle of Man, Jersey, Kenya, Malaysia, Northern Ireland, Scotland, South Africa and Wales. Forgive me again if I have missed any obvious candidates.

The only contact so far available for the organising committee is enquiries@cyg2011.com please so I ask all of you to contact your national representative and get them to contact the organising committee requesting that a race walking event be included in these games.

The Isle of Man has a great tradition in race walking and have had representation at every Commonwealth Games since 1966, many of our athletes have also represented Great Britain. I feel sure that the Isle of Man would be an ideal venue for a race walking event within the Commonwealth Youth Games and would ask all of you to support the effort to have it included.

Steve Taylor

THE PUNTER

Since baby Alexander was born into the O'Rawe family, man-of-the-turf ALAN has twice backed a racehorse named "Alexander the Great", and won money both times.



INVITATION

I wanted to thank you for including me in the recent circulations of the Essex Walker. It's a good read and now that I know some of the individual names that feature, it makes it the more interesting. However, it was sad to read about Jerry Everett, a man who will clearly be missed by many and also Eileen Allen; I hope she is very much on the mend from her nasty fall.

This is also to let you know that the **MPWC Annual Dinner and Re-union** is set for Wednesday 4th March 2009 and tickets will be £27 pp. If there is a possibility this detail might be circulated then that would be helpful. My mailing list is somewhat limited and reliant on previous years or hints from yourself and Chris Flint - letters of invitation are currently being prepared.



As you'll recall this is my last year as organiser, I was hoping to take a step back and let my successor take the helm this year but she is in the Lake District walking! Ah well, thank you and I'll be in touch again in due course.

Karen (Paddy) Bailey PC, Room 1414 New Scotland Yard

Tel: 020 7230 2300 (62300)

Mobile: 07990 774640

email: Karen.Bailey@met.pnn.police.uk

WRITES DAVE SHARPE

Let's look at walking. It's user friendly. The problem at grass roots level is that it's now a veteran's sport, so some youngsters get it very easy to make an impact when winning County, Area and National Championships. When they come up to senior level it is very hard – also University/college/boyfriends/girlfriends and family life needs to be considered. You can be a local runner and be more well-known than a walking international. In races, the front and back have joined so we have smaller fields. The internationals that we do have are at the back of their fields and they really need more top class experience to make it. Maybe the Think Tank ideas could work? We talk about crossing over from other sports. Well, if you're already involved in other sports and then start in walking, 2 sets of rules don't help. This is 'A' and 'B'. you can do the 'B' circuit and pick up bad faults then go to an 'A' race and get the chop. People won't waste their time and effort, so they won't enter 'A' races. We can all remember yesterday's good times. Running clubs tried to hold onto youngsters and senior runners in the jogging boom. How many only ran local fun events and only the London Marathon and Great North Run? Only a handful do any sport after that.

Yours in sport,

DW Sharpe (IAC/Centurion 570/SCVAC)

COMING AND GOING

The 2009 Enfield League got off on the right foot when Club Secretary RAY GIBBONS acted as Mr Starter to send away a good-sized field on a cold and blowy afternoon. A quartet of Essex athletes returned to active service – PHIL BARNARD, DON COX, CHELSEA O'RAWE-HOBBS and PETER RYAN - and all acquitted themselves well as they progressed at a pace. Sadly enthusiastic Essex Walker reader NICK SILVESTER was a non-starter as he's on the injured list. Talented veteran walker Nick is always near the front and often wins races, so we hope his treatment goes well and that he'll soon be challenging for honours again.

WHERE ARE WE GOING?

At the opening Enfield League 5 miles of 2009, 34 men and 9 ladies made the result sheet for the full trip.

Rounding to the nearest quarter, the average age of those 34 men was 57 $\frac{3}{4}$ years. The top 10 men's average age was 52 $\frac{1}{4}$ years. Two finishers in their 20s helped lower the top 10 average - but worryingly these 10 contained **nobody** aged in their teens, 30s or 40s! The average age of the frame was 34 $\frac{1}{2}$ years. Our 9 ladies had an average age of 50 $\frac{1}{2}$. Overall the combined mens/ladies was 56 $\frac{1}{4}$ years. What an image to present ... and this surely reinforces a need to try and encourage more youngsters into our sport.

We keep being told about our youngsters, but where are they? The majority of 2008 Championships and Opens where younger aged groups could win team awards saw **no team** closing in at all! Current youngsters' times in no way compare with those shown by their age group in the 60s/70s. Where are the modern day equivalents of Jacky Lord/Chris Harvey/Mike Dunion/Roger Mills/Olly Flynn/Dave Cotton/Steve Gower/George Nibre ... and umpteen other names of that era?

The Enfield League is striving to spread the word, and will again stage its annual "Promote Walking Day". If more younger entrants don't appear you really have to ask what will be our state in a decade's time? The Enfield League is prolonging our UK walking scene; but to ensure survival for posterity we need to encourage youngsters along and bring down that average age considerably, don't we?



LET'S BE FRANK

Spotted on ebay were two London-to-Brighton 1st Class Standard medals and a 2nd Class one. All 3 were engraved and were once owned by Clacton-based **FRANK BUTLER** (Polytechnic Harriers, London Vidarians and Stock Exchange AC). They went under the hammer for £20.01. This transaction was spotted by eagle-eyed **TONY PERKINS**.

NOTIFICATION from VAC's WALKING SECRETARY

I have the dates for the Summer series of races at Battersea Park hosted by the VAC. All 5 miles on the road starting at 7 pm. Changing Rooms at the track.

Tuesday 14th April
Tuesday 26th May
Tuesday 23rd June (Championships)
Tuesday 28th July
(date may be altered to 20th July as it clashes with BMAF championships in Finland)
Tuesday 11th August

The Inter-County track 10,000 metres is to be held on Wednesday 29th April 2009.

Regards

Chris Flint

DISTANCE OPPORTUNITY

The famous Finchley 20 miles on Sunday 15th March is accepting entries from race walkers. Good preparation for distance races!

RINGFENCE ANOTHER DATE



RWA Championships Secretary PETER MARLOW advises us that the **RWA National 20K at Shrewsbury** is now to be staged on Sunday 12th April 2009.

FIXTURES

February-March 2009

Sun 1 Feb	London Open Walks	Victoria Park	1 pm (main event 2 pm)
Sun 8 Feb	SCVAC Indoor 3,000 m	Picketts Lock	11.30 am
Sat 14 Feb	Cambridge Harriers Winter League 5K	Bexley	2 pm
Sun 15 Feb	Essex/Kent Indoor 1 mile	Picketts Lock	
Sat 21 Feb	RWA 10 miles Championship (+ Enfield League)	Picketts Lock	2 pm
Sat 28 Feb	SWC 10 miles ('B' race)	Monks Hill	2 pm
	Manx Open Races	Douglas IOM	10 am
Wed 3 Mar	Met Police Dinner and Reunion	New Scotland Yard	6.30 pm
Sat 7 Mar	BMAF Indoor 3,000 m	Picketts Lock	
Sat 14 Mar	Pat Furey Trophies Meeting 5 miles (Enfield League double points)	Donkey Lane	2 pm
Sun 15 Mar	Finchley 20 miles Run (Walkers accepted)	Ruislip	9.30 am
Sat 21 Mar	Cambridge Harriers Winter League 5K	Bexley	2 pm



ESSEX LEAGUE

Please note that The London Open Walks from Victoria Park Harriers HQ on Sunday 1st February contains a full programme.

The Senior/Junior 10k race at **2 pm** is also Race No 2 of our 2009 Essex League. Those racing 5k – also at 2 pm – may continue on to complete 10k for Essex League points. The YAG races are from 1 pm onwards, so why not turn up early and give our youngsters some encouragement, as they're our sport's future?

Nearest station is Hackney Wick (London Overground). On leaving the station look for the bridge over the A12 and that'll take you straight into Victoria Park – within sight of the changing rooms. Nearest Underground is Mile End (Central/District/Hammersmith and City Lines) then 20 minutes' walk along Grove Road or 277bus.

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