

Essex Walker

Editor: Dave Ainsworth

ESSEX WALKER'S ANNUAL HART HOUSE CHRISTMAS CARD APPEAL

We're holding another Christmas Appeal for **Hart House** (The Gambian Home for Children with Learning Disabilities) where readers are invited to donate sums roughly equal to what might be spent on Christmas Cards to fellow walkers. It's been successful for many years, and we'll publish names of those donating ... so others realise why they never got a Christmas card from you! Tony Perkins has again kindly agreed to hold the purse strings, so please make cheques payable to A F Perkins. Please see Tony at the meetings or mail to him at: Deans Farmhouse, Tye Green, Cressing, Essex CM77 8HU. Geoff Hunwicks, who runs Hart House (named after late Grade 1 Essex Judge Albert Hart) with his wife Rohey, advises his new email address is: geoffharthouse@yahoo.com.



"WIN-DOUBLE"

The annual BMAF Track Championships at Birmingham's Alexander Stadium saw double success for Ilford's walking protagonist Francisco Reis. On Saturday 14 September he won the 3,000 Metres National Title in 13.57 and the following day triumphed over 5,000 Metres in 24.17. Well done! Full result in Record and AW and www.racewalkuk.com

WHO WROTE THIS?

"I suggest that the Association seriously considers a future in which it will no longer be relevant and programmes a strategy for its gradual and dignified demise".

It wasn't anybody from the Race Walking Association, but penned in the current edition of "Air Mail" the magazine of the Royal Air Force Association. They've an ageing membership as so few, nowadays, have served in the RAF as opposed to former years ... and many ex-National servicemen are dying or becoming indisposed. Branches are closing for good as numbers drop-off (or fall-out to use a military terms). It could easily apply to the RWA. Area Championships are folding and others continue with minimal support. National Championships are at rock bottom, with only around 20-or-so men contesting even short distance Nationals such as over 10 Kilometres and 10 Miles. Longer distance Championships now lack credibility as single figures compete, few enter and losses are made. The Olympic Legacy saw enquiries from many areas of the Country from where there's no established walking. Potential recruits would have really long journeys just to get a race or coaching. Youngsters find that, often, few race (or even none) from their own age group as our average age is now sky-high. In the South, over the past decade, you could count on one-hand the number of former Youth's/Juniors who've progressed into making regular appearances at senior races. We've great difficulty finding walkers to achieve Major Games qualification times (our shop window). The continued rate at which officials/helpers leave our sport, for whatever reason, is concerning. Some years the RWA Southern Area AGM doesn't attract any attenders (outside of Officers/Committee) - 4 years ago, when nobody turned-up and only 1 person bothered apologising for their absence, Honorary Secretary CHRIS FLINT asked "Does anybody care about what we do in this room?". (Answers on a postcard). There are optimists in our sport who genuinely believe something will turn up and that there's nothing wrong with UK race walking. We salute their enthusiasm, but every year more dire situations occur as more races fold for good, and more walkers pass-on or become indisposed ... and aren't replaced seeing RWA levy income dropping accordingly! A "tipping point" has been passed. Perhaps it's time for all those who stay away from races, such as our Essex County Championship events, to tell us why they don't support them ... and tell us what needs to be done in order to attract them back?

FIXTURES

3 Nov	Addington Vase 7 Miles	Addiscombe	2.00 pm
9 Nov	Enfield Open 7 Miles/LBH Champs	Lee Valley	1.00 pm
11 Nov	RWA Southern Area AGM	C S Club SW1	7.15 pm
16 Nov	Steyning AC Open 10K	Steyning	2.00 pm
30 Nov	BMAF 20K Champs/Hillingdon Open 10K	Hillingdon Circuit	1.00 pm
7 Dec	Cambridge H Winter League 5K/VAC Champs	Bexley	2.00 pm
14 Dec	Alf Palmer Memorial Walks	Broadbridge Heath	11.00 am
15 Dec	Race Walking Association AGM	Alexander Stadium	1.00 pm
21 Dec	Surrey Walking Club Christmas Cup 5K	Tonbridge Track	1.00 pm
26 Dec	Enfield Boxing Day 5K	Lee Valley	10.45 am
26 Dec	Brighton & Hove Boxing Day Walks	Preston Park	10.30 am

HAPPY OCCASION

We congratulate VICKY BROWN on her marriage, in Bristol, to Guy. Vicky, daughter of Centurions Captain Sandra, has herself appeared in walking races including the Centenary Year 100 Miles at Lingfield Park Racecourse. We wish the couple many happy and successful years ahead.

SAD NEWS

We're sorry to report that Official/helper and great administrative stalwart of race walking Committees CECIL GITTINGS (Queen's Park Harriers) has suffered a bad turn and has been admitted into a care home. We all have octogenarian Cecil in our thoughts

DOWN IN DORSET

Centurion PETE RYAN race walked October's Bournemouth Half-Marathon in 2hrs 2 min 56 seconds. It was part of a Festival Weekend and took its competitors out-and-back along the boards of both this town's piers. Pete reports the event was well-supported and also considerable numbers spectated along the route. Most enjoyable in Pete's opinion. On the same day was the Bournemouth Marathon, which saw 2 Essex Centurions participating: OLLY BROWN and KIM HOWARD who recorded 5-and-half hours and 6 hours respectively, and who also were able to enjoy the big occasion - as well as showcasing race walking and hopefully enthusing those watching along the course. More established readers may well remember those now-defunct Bournemouth Piers walking races?

IN SHOT

CHRIS "The Scribe" FOSTER is a former member of the Borough of Enfield Harriers (as was), Metropolitan Police Race Walking Club (before dropping the word "Race") and an ex-Loughton 2nd Claimer (there's a good few of them about). He's now employed by the Scout Association in their Media Department being oft-quoted as "A Spokesman". The Scouts had a media opportunity when presenting a gift to the Duchess of Cambridge on the occasion of her first-born at St Mary's Hospital in Paddington. While there, Chris made polite conversation with an attractive looking lady PC at the main door as a BBC News journalist gave her report from outside this hospital ... with Chris clearly in view throughout, so gaining himself National TV coverage!



THE CENTURIONS' ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

To be held Saturday 25 January with the Chairperson bringing down the gavel at 1 pm to commence business in the Trophy Room of the West Midlands Police Sports and Social Club at Tally Ho! Centre, Pershore Road, Edgbaston, BIRMINGHAM. B5 7RN. Honorary Secretary CHRIS FLINT hopes this venue will attract more Midland and Northern members. One hopes Birmingham's GEORGE MITCHELL will show ... he's aged 99 years! This venue is about 2 miles from the City Centre, easily reached from M5/M6/M42 Motorways, 20 minutes from the Airport and Pershore Road is served by high-frequency bus routes 45 and 47 from Birmingham Centre. More details could well be available of the 2014 100 Miles ... there's talk of it being in Scotland - watch this space!



Wheel deal

THE race is on to find the coolest car number plate in athletics. Last week we showed you a photo of Olympic champion Greg Rutherford's number plate.

Since then, former race walker Bob Dobson has sent us a shot of his equally impressive registration number.

Dobson is a former Commonwealth record-holder for 50km race walk – he clocked 4:11:22 in Paris back in 1974.



Acknowledgement:
Athletics Weekly

WANTED - NEWSLETTER EDITOR

Hard working JEREMY HEMMING is to stand down after many years as Honorary Editor of the informative and interesting Veterans AC Newsletter. As well as athletics Jeremy was once a name on the turf, as he rode a few racehorses in earlier times! Those interested in taking on this important role should contact our Vets AC Hon Walks Secretary DAVE HOBEN so he can pass on all the names for consideration.

OLYMPIC OPPORTUNITY

If you're frustrated at not making our GB 2012 squad then here's a tip from the Readers Digest - switch to an unpopular sport. They quote Handball as a sport offering great chances of becoming Olympians, as there are fewer than 1,000 League Players in the UK. With male and female squads of 14 needed for tournaments, your odds are roughly 1-in-35 of making the team. Go for it! Another way to achieve Olympian status is to switch Nationality ... for instance Nauru has only ever fielded 7 in Olympics' history - all weightlifters. In Beijing the Iraq team numbered 4 and the Dominican Republic's team was only 2-strong. Chances there! Mind you, our 2013 UK National 50 Kilometres' Walk had only 4 male finishers ... and there are 3 places up for grabs in the Olympic event of that same distance. An early aim of race walking's "Think Tank" in late 2008 was to encourage sports persons to switch into race walking as odds of International selection were excellent. Perhaps this idea is worth re-igniting?

THE VEST OF BRITISH

After 49 years it's emerged that **an Ilford AC member's T-shirt crossed an Olympic Games finishing line** in a silver-medal position. PAUL NIHILL MBE HAS revealed he wore Ilford AC member FERGUS MURRAY's T-shirt when coming 2nd in the 1964 Olympic Games 50 Km Walk. Paul said that as he warmed-up it turned very cold and rain started teeming down. He realised his error in turning-up wearing just a GB representative singlet. Ilford AC's 2nd ever Olympian - 10,000 M runner FERGUS MURRAY - was at the start to cheer UK walkers. Paul saw Fergus and asked for his white t-shirt, which he quickly put under his singlet seconds before the "off". Just under 4-and-quarter hours later the vest of Fergus sped over the finish line, in pouring rain, for a silver medal. The finish line was on a cinder track - Toyko 1964 was the last Olympics held on cinders ... and in 1964 a "traditional tape" was across the finish line, so winners knew they'd reached the end (unlike the 2013 World Championship Women's walk).

Result:

1	Abdon Pamich	Italy	4.11.12.4
2	Paul Nihill	GB	4.11.31.2
3	Invar Pettersson	Sweden	4.14.17.4

Essex-born Paul has a connection with Ilford AC as he was guest speaker at the Club's Annual Dinner and Dance when the late PAM PHILLIPS was President. Paul enjoyed his evening so much, he bought 2 tickets for the following year's D&D!



GRAND OPENING

Surrey Walking Club did all the right things when launching a "new era" as Addiscombe Hockey and Cricket Club replaced doomed Monks Hill Sports Centre as their main race walking venue. We'd a celebrity VIP "Mr Starter" in Paul Nihill MBE, who recalled he used to deliver newspapers in the road as a teenager.

Afterwards in a hall was a free buffet with complimentary drinks to celebrate their first meeting. This venue has a large car park and is well-served by public transport. A one-mile course passes expensive houses. Indeed some residents showed genuine interest, and others were seen clearing leaves from pavements and roads outside their houses - a sign of pride in their neighbourhood. Traffic was almost non-existent. The one-mile course is like Blackheath Park with a steepish hill around back-end of it. The Club has reasonable changing rooms and a small bar on the premises for post-race chit-chat. It was nice to see a return to racing by SWC President, Centurion NOLAN SIMMONS, after a long spell of enforced inaction.

PETER CASSIDY (Chief), MICHAEL CROFT and PAULINE WILSON formed an all-Essex judges' panel - the standard was good as their board stayed blank! Recorders RON WALLWORK and PAM FICKEN came from Newmarket and Royston respectively. There was a good field as numbers held up well. There were early arrivals, as going anywhere for a first time sees folk set out earlier than usual ... and being so easy to find, they arrived early! Hockey takes centre stage on Saturdays, leaving the Clubhouse free for race walking on Sundays. And like Blackheath Park, there's tennis as well ... indeed Michael Croft commented on how much like Blackheath Park it all was. A jolly good show!

BOB BELMORE RIP

Readers will be sorry to hear that Bob, a talented 3,000 metres and 5,000 metres runner in his heyday, has passed-on in a Haselmere Nursing Home just a month short of his 86th birthday. Bob was a near ever-present Official at Veterans AC meetings, including their well-established series of Battersea Park 5 Miles evening races. Bob was on duty the night BBC Breakfast Time filmed our evening VAC walk at Battersea, and was seen on the small screen performing his tasks. His funeral service at Guildford Crematorium was attended by members from the athletics world. May he rest in peace.

MIKE HINTON's TRIBUTE TO BOB BELMORE

Very sorry to learn that Bob Belmore had died. He was a lovely chap, a real character and will be sorely missed by Vets AC. In my time with Ilford AC I did a good number of the Battersea Park 5 milers over the years, and it'll be hard to imagine them without Bob signing you in.

Mike Hinton

HAPPY ANNIVERSARY

We congratulate Dereham-based DAVE BROWNING (ex-Trowbridge AC and RAF Representative race walker) and his wife FELICITY who, on 12 December, celebrate their Diamond Jubilee Wedding Anniversary

BIG DAY

We congratulate LOUISE BENNETT and STEVE COLLIER on their marriage. After a service in Brentwood the happy couple journeyed on a memorable honeymoon to Australia and New Zealand. Louise was part of Ilford's team in February's London Walks at Victoria Park, and has completed the last 2 London Marathons for charity. We all wish them many years of happiness ahead.

"MORE, MORE!"

So popular and much appreciated were the JACK FITZGERALD MEMORIAL WALKS at Crawley that organiser DAVE HOBEN states they'll be on again in 2014.

PERSONAL BEST

NERINGA AIDIETYTE has recently been "on tour" with races in Poland and Slovakia, which saw a wonderful 46.02 10 Kilometres PB. Well done!

JOHN PLATT RIP

Former Ilford AC President JOHN PLATT has died just one week after his 60th birthday suffering a heart attack while swimming on holiday. He managed to drag himself onto the seashore where a lifeguard gave first aid. A supporter of walking, he'd attended races during his Presidential year and was at our 500th Essex League event. John had taught at Redbridge College, was a Coach and also treated injuries in a qualified capacity.



Dear Dave ...

CHRIS FLINT REMEMBERS EARLY MET POLICE DINNERS

Even when they were held in a tatty pub in Stockwell, the White Horse I believe, food was awful, but stories legion.

Chris Flint

EMAILS AN ESSEX ALL-TIME FAVOURITE

Sorry about my DNS (Did Not Show) for the Garons Mile race ... I was out already on a 40 mile bike session preparing for a 100 mile jaunt across the South Downs. I'm a half-centurion!!!! ... don't think I could become a REAL Centurion!!! ... that's for the REAL men and ladies!! Hopefully will see you at a race meeting one day ... might have to pick a low-key race to avoid embarrassing myself.

Andy O'Rawe

EMAILS POPULAR CENTURION STEVE KING FROM CANADA

I actually turn 65 next month and it feels rather weird. However, I like my job and need to continue to work but it is hard to believe I've arrived at the point of potential retirement. We presently have three race-walkers from British Columbia in the 82-85 mins range for 20kms and considering we have so few events in the whole country, that is quite amazing. Please give my best wishes to all and many thanks for the Essex Walkers newsletter - I love reading it and keeping up to date.

Steve King

A GREAT BLOKE by CATH DUHIG

Ron Wallwork contacted me to say that, at short notice, he was unable to attend the final EVAC match at Peterborough to oversee the walks. As Pete and I were (are) still in Spain we were unable to help out so, as a long shot, I contacted Jamie O'Rawe, who now resides in the Peterborough area, though his active connections with race walking are largely severed. To the relief and delight of the meeting organiser (who would have been pulling his hair out, had he any left to pull) Jamie turned up at the track and did his bit to ensure fair play and good competition for all, while clearly emphasising that he is not a qualified judge and making no pretensions to be operating in any such capacity. After the match I received a message from the match organiser declaring Jamie "a great bloke". He'll probably be a bit embarrassed by the accolade but I think his contribution to the match and the reputation of the sport should be noted.

Cath Duhig

GLAD TIDINGS from PETER MARLOW

I am pleased to inform you that the 2014 Commonwealth Games walks will be held in Hobart, Australia on 2 February: 20kms for men and 10kms women. The 2018 Commonwealth Games walks are confirmed for 2018: 20kms for both men and women.

Peter Marlow

OLYMPIAN HOWARD TIMMS WRITES

I plan to revise and re-title Accidental Olympian and the show there (Edinburgh Festival) next year. And I'll need at least an audio version for publicity, so I hope to complete that this year. I'll supply it free of charge to you and RWA members. I have happy memories of the Olympic lunch last year - they helped Marilyn and me through a very difficult winter. Thanks again for your great part in it.

Howard Timms

ROUBAIX PRESENTATION TO EX-LOUGHTON 2nd CLAIMER BOB WATTS

Returned from Roubaix 28 Hours event where we had 13 UK participants, including Steve Allen (Barnet). Bob Watts completed his 25th consecutive 28 hours event and was given a special plaque. Ken was missed, so Peter came along to 'support' Bob. It was a good group and we all worked hard, Sandra, me and Bob in the 28 hours, and 9 in the relays (3 teams) and a supporter/attendant.

Chris Flint

JIM SHARLOTT WALKS

Leicester Walking Club would like to thank all those people who generously gave their time in many ways to help us stage this year's event. Your help is greatly appreciated, without it we would not be able to keep this event going.

Colin Vesty

RESULT 50KMS HOLLAND

DOM DNF 25kms. DAN 4 hrs 5 mins 36 secs. Great effort ... 1st place and World Cup qualifier. Half a result.

George Nibre

WRITES PAUL NIHILL MBE

It appears our bit on BBC1 met everyone's approval. When I watch old films of race walking I always comment on the fact that we of yesteryear were all race walking! As you know I am not a fan of today's race walkers. They give the likes of me and Ken and the rest a bad name. No wonder all my records have been beaten; often by people I have never heard of. Women leaving Ken three minutes behind - I don't believe it. Ten seconds behind my former World record of 1h 24m 50s is a dainty little Russian girl. This is an old geezer talking. Whilst on the subject of old geezers - I'll be a very old geezer if ever I get nominated for "The Hall Of Fame" all because I rarely turn out for one

or two races a year which automatically disqualifies me! Crazy!

It's a pity we only get the "Essex Walker" every other month now. This excellent mag is our VOICE - it must never fold up. I've been Secretary of Kent Ex-Boxers' Association for 25 years now. We are down to a few but I make sure I always produce a newsletter EVERY month. I post it up-and-down the County to fellow EBA's. Kent EBA have been in existence 46 years, we may make the half-century - may.

Thank you for spotlighting "ADDISCOMBE". This is where I spent the war years with my Mum. ADDISCOMBE has so many memories for me.

Paul Nihill

Adds Hon Ed: Well, one good result ... we had so much material, we couldn't wait 2 months for the next Essex Walker!

SO JUST HOW GOOD WAS THE LATE GREAT Phil EMBLETON?

With nearly 40 years approaching since the passing of one of Essex's Greatest Ever Race Walkers I would like to pay my tribute to him as one who spent many a long hour training with him under the Late Aberdonian Ironman Fred DUFF, BEM. He was so dedicated and determined to break through the superiority of the East Germans and Russians and regularly used to walk 20 kms twice out from his home in Walthamstow to Abridge and return. He often told me he would look at the pictures of their top walkers and that would motivate to do it again. His strength in mind and body was out of the top draw as the night before he defeated the Great Paul Nihill in the RWA National 10 Miles he did 3 sets of 16 exercises on weights at Bow. Remember he clocked 69 minutes on a hilly circuit in very windy conditions. Those of you who were there will never forget when he won the Essex Track 10 Kms at Newham double lapping every other walker! His outstanding 89.30 clocking the European Athletics Championships also takes 'pride of place' as he beat two of the Russian Trio on route. Following his Everest achievement of becoming an Olympian in the 20 Kms Walk in Munich his career was so sadly brought to a conclusion through illness. For those of us close to him he will always be remembered from his early Junior days to one of the very best to represent Great Britain at Race Walking. **Bill Sutherland**

Adds Hon Ed: That evening in Newham was even more special: over 50 raced the Essex 10,000 metres forcing winner Phil to spend much of his time in lanes 2 and 3.

STEVE UTTLEY'S VIEWPOINT

I note your comment that the BBC presenter asked

you whether today's race walking was a sort of halfway house between running and walking? The reality is I fear that, despite efforts to explain matters by various 'spokespeople' for our event, race walking is not particularly well regarded by the public now, even compared with the past. There might have been some ridicule, but most accepted that race walking did what it said on the tin, ie it involved fast but recognizable walking. Now there is widespread scepticism about the validity whole thing. The panglossian explanation from supporters of the status quo is that the public are too unsophisticated to realise what is going on and that race walkers are better athletes than they have ever been. That last point I would accept, but as for the one before it; I suspect that the public knows only too well what is going on and the public is right. High speed video evidence produced by various sports scientists demonstrates beyond all doubt that the majority of international walkers demonstrate 'flight time' during their stride. In layman's terms they are lifting. Of course this is all perfectly legal, because the human eye can only detect flight time beyond a certain limit and the definition requires specifically that detection of contact loss be by the human eye and not by artificial means. Thus contact has been de facto abolished in modern race walking. Most people in walking (at least those connected with the international branch of the event) are perfectly content with this situation, even if a lot of club walkers may not be. Unfortunately that leaves us with a very elite and sophisticated event which is something of a PR disaster and whose very existence is now under threat in at least one major international event.

However, I'm not sure there is a viable solution on the table at the moment. To return to walking as it was carried out in 1964 (the subject of the piece involving you and Paul) is probably impossible. If the contact rule were to be rigidly enforced (eg by some technological fix) race walking would slow to the point that the majority of the field would arrive at the finish more or less at the same time, since most walkers would be operating so far within their aerobic capacity that endurance would no longer be the factor that it is in a race conducted 'flat out'.

After all the qualifying time for entry to the World and Olympic walks is now quicker than all the medal winning times from Tokyo and even Robert Heffernan's 50km winning performance from Moscow was a great deal faster per km than Ken Matthews was when he won the 20kms gold.

However, that said, it was great to see a piece positively honouring Paul's achievements in 1964, and to get some coverage on prime time TV, so well done Dave for organising it. **Steve Uttley**

LARRY MILES RIP

Thank you for letting me know that Larry Miles has died. It is quite unsettling to learn that your Centurion attendant is no longer around to look after you - even if the event was 40 years ago. It is also a reminder of the hard work done by an attendant, especially when the race is a "here-to-there" one rather than multi-lap as the poor fellow is forever finding somewhere to stop the car/asking

what you want/driving on again to park safely/hand over the refreshments/do it all again and again - and then drive you home!

Once again, thank you for recording so many of Larry's achievements. May I add that although Larry and I were nearly always in the same team, he was very hard to pass!

Mike Perkins C490



2014 Race Walking National Championships

Mar 9	UKA/RWA 10 mile Championship, Victoria Park
April 5	UKA/RWA 20km (inc IAAF permit) and YAG Championships, Forge Valley Cycle Track, Sheffield
May 17	Inter Area Championships, Enfield (judging using the Pit Lane rule)
June 8	EAA permit meeting including European Championship trials, York
June 21/22	England Athletics u/20/23 Track and Field Championships, Bedford
June 22	Small Nations Match, Belgium
June 28/29	UKA Track and Field Championship. 5km Race Pit Lane rule
July 19	UKA/RWA 10km Championship, Hillingdon Cycle Track
Aug 30/31	England Athletics u15/17 Championships, Bedford
Oct 5	UKA/RWA 50km Championship inc IAAF permit, Hillingdon Cycle Track New 1km flat course

Further details on all events can be obtained from the Championship Secretary:
Peter Marlow email: pmarlow@btinternet.com Tel: 01284 754177



SAD NEWS FROM DAVE LEVY

Now Thrapston-based DAVE LEVY (ex-Bristol RWC and RAF Representative walker) notifies us that former Garnet winner BRIAN SWALLOW has passed on. Brian was Trowbridge and RAF and is remembered well by both Dave and our own COLIN YOUNG. Dave recalls Brian winning the Southern Area Garnet Cup 10 Miles after Dave himself had been disqualified ... while in the lead! Dare we mention it, but Dave was disqualified from 3 Garnets in succession - on each occasion while leading. After that 3rd call of his number Dave gave the Garnet "the elbow". In later years as a "Civvy", Dave tried hard to establish race walking in Northamptonshire, particularly around Thrapston and Corby. Now an octogenarian, Dave enjoys keeping fit with his daily walk.

CORRECTION

Our last edition had SANDRA BROWN, Captain of The Centurions, erroneously billed as their President. Oops! That position's held by ANN SAYER. Sorry ladies ... either gremlins got into my keyboard or perhaps because it was Hon Ed's first Newsletter written as a real OAP!

NO MORE

The GEORGE WOODS MEMORIAL TROPHY, which was donated by the O'Rawe family, has been so badly supported in recent years that this event is an insult to the memory of such a wonderful man. It's been going for nearly 20 years, and for its first decade this event was really well supported. But this can't continue and the trophy is to be returned to its donor, so a decision can be made as to its future ... if it has one? A possible new event to try and stage a **George Woods Trophy** race could be Southend's August Bank Holiday Mile, which has "caught-on" in the race walking world? Views to **Alan O'Rawe** please.

"WE'RE ALL DOOMED"

From his position of retirement, once ubiquitous "character" and man-of-many-Clubs DAVE SHARPE has sent comments as to what's going wrong. Said Dave "We're not getting youngsters coming through. Youngsters would prefer to come last in the shop putt or get tailed-off in a steeplechase, rather than do a walking race - where their mates will just laugh at them. Those very few youngsters who turn up find there's hardly anybody of the own age competing, just veterans, so they don't want to return. They win medals and awards only because there's hardly anybody else, sometimes nobody, competing against them." Dave concluded by emphatically stating he'd never come back to walking. Few would disagree with Dave's views; indeed over the past decade you wouldn't need one-hand to count the number of Youths/Juniors in the South who've progressed to become **regular** entrants in senior races!

CENTURION No 454 LARRY MILES RIP

Aptly-named Larry Miles commenced race walking when encouraged by 1960s big-name DAVE LEVY (now Thrapston-based) when at RAF Seletar (Singapore). Then 16 stones, he sought a pursuit to lose weight and in early days found that taking up a minority sports event saw awards and prizes come quickly! Larry epitomised service life as during 38 years "the-call-of-the-drum" took him on 29 postings. Retired Warrant Officer Larry's duties were in Mechanical Transport. Fellow Centurion Ken Roost C557 recalls a 1960 Sergeants Mess New Year's Eve "bash" at RAF Upavon (Wiltshire) when the stroke of midnight saw Larry appear as a baby clad only in a towel around his torso! Larry was an RAF Race Walking Team regular, under the direction of legendary Manager Dicky Bird C225, appearing in Representative matches and gaining Combined Services selections. In 1970 he completed the Leicester-to-Skegness 100 Miles in 21.51.30 becoming Centurion No.454. He'd have had badge No 453, but this number was left blank/unallocated. Larry sported a traditional RAF handlebar moustache ... as did his attendant at that event - fellow Trowbridge AC/RAF Representative walker Squadron Leader Mike Perkins C490 (now Suffolk-based). Two years' later they reversed roles on the same course as Mike walked/Larry attended. Larry never got as much weight off as planned and, at times, didn't look like an athlete ... but it was deceptive as he'd really move himself and, with no trouble, easily beat 7 miles in-an-hour in Opens. Fellow Trowbridge/RAF walker and now Dereham resident DAVE BROWNING remembers a Representative match between RAF UK-based walkers and those in Germany. Said Dave "I was selected, Larry wasn't. But he was asked to travel as an official. He was appointed a Judge on-the-day ... and pulled me out of the race!"

Many of West Countryman Larry's postings were in that part of the world ... which in the 60s/70s was a hotbed of race walking activity. A Marlborough resident, he suffered a heart condition and died aged 78 years, with widow Grace assuring us his passing was peaceful.

NOSTALGIA - 1970 NATIONAL 50K CHAMPIONSHIP

"Who was the chap who won it?" was a question asked by DON THOMPSON (5th in 4.30.18) as he showered at East Ewell Sports Complex on 15 August. It was the then 27 year-old BOB DOBSON, who in Basildon's yellow vest, had won in 4.20.22. Just 1 week earlier versatile Bob was 4th in the AAA 3,000 metres at White City in 12.40 behind PAUL NIHILL, ROGER MILLS and PHIL EMBLETON who'd clocked 12.13, 12.35 and 12.35 respectively - BILL SUTHERLAND was 5th in 12.55. Commenting on the 50K, "Race Walking Record" wrote that (a) Bob won despite lacking big-time experience and (b) it was the best 1970 National performance, better than 3 victories by WILF WESCH (20K, 10 and 20 Miles).

On a hot day 107 (13 teams) started of whom 72 (8 teams) would finish. The Bels were convincing winners (RAY MIDDLETON 2nd/JOHN MOULLIN 10TH/PAT DUNCAN 15th) from SWC and Lancashire - led by 3rd placed RON WALLWORK in 4.25.16. Locals SWC were 1st closing-in a declared team of 8 for the Milan Trophy and, in the main race, finished a 'B' team to boot! Bob broke clear at 20K opening a large gap which RAY MIDDLETON, 2nd in 4.21.22, had dramatically cut into on the last 2 of 8 circuits. A circuit was a mix of paths inside a large sports complex with a longer "around the houses" section. Future 1972 Munich 50K Olympians JAKE WARHURST 4th and HOWARD TIMMS 22nd clocked 4.25.16 and 5.03.17. The "Record" predicted that 7th man BRIAN ARMSTRONG (4.36.42) was capable of making just a big breakthrough as Bob had! After Brian was COLIN YOUNG in 4.37.06. Others with a current or future Essex connection were: 12.Ian Brooks 4.48.05, 36.Ken Tuson 5.12.30, 38.Jimmy Venn 5.15.00, 49.George Beecham 5.34.43, 65.Dave Ainsworth 5.49.05 and 72.Hew Neilson 6.15.28. No Essex teams closed in. Note how close Southenders Ken and Jimmy were - 1 year later they were even closer when finishing 1st/2nd respectively in the Stock Exchange London-to-Brighton (9.04.32 and 9.06.03).

Fast-forward 43 years and Bob is still gaining individual National 50K medals. No 50K ladies participated in 1970. In 2013 4 UK men finished, with our National 50K title claimed in 5.40.16, silver 5.55.18 and bronze 6.04.18. Those 4 UK male finishers were in their 50s, 60s with 2 septuagenarians. No teams finished (even ridiculously 2-scoring) and the event made a loss! Thanks to MARTIN OLIVER for providing this material from his wonderful collection of past results and news items.

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