

Essex Walker

Editor: Dave Ainsworth

RWA AGM



As in 2015 we've a report from "Our Special Correspondent": Nineteen chairs were occupied at our 2016 AGM in Birmingham's Alexander Stadium. It was good to see RWA President Fred Pearce present, as he'd recently been a hospital patient. During his term of office Fred attended nearly all major events plus many others. He handed over the coveted chain to Midlands leading light Ann Perry, whom we warmly congratulate on taking office. Noel Carmody is the new Vice-President. Mike Fox stood down as our Coaching protagonist, being replaced by Midlander Steve Arnold, to whom we wish well in this position. All other RWA Officers remained in post - however an addition to an uncontested line-up sees Noel Carmody now assisting Hon Championships Secretary Peter Marlow.

A Midlands resolution was discussed and carried: this called for more officials and helpers at our meetings. It was resolved to set up a "Working Party" to decide what needs to be done to attract such persons. Next year's AGM is to be at the same venue on Sunday 10 December - so you can put that in your new 2017 diaries now! Another correspondent stated, "It was the kind of AGM, where the caretaker has to come round and wake everyone so that he can lock up."

HART HOUSE CHRISTMAS APPEAL

Essex Walker readers once again supported the 2016 Hart House Christmas appeal, electing to donate to the charity, instead of sending Christmas cards to the walking fraternity. A total of £190 was raised for the charity run by ex-Essex walker, Geoff Hunwicks. With sincere thanks to the following contributors: Dave Ainsworth, Ken Livermore, Hilda Nyman, Alan O'Rawe, Tony Perkins, Ron Wallwork and Bill Wright.



MY VIEW ON HOW TO PROGRESS GREAT BRITISH RACE WALKING – *Stuart Bennett*

Currently Great British Race walking is not looking good. Our top athletes are not able to compete at the very top level internationally. Whilst we have one or two athletes that are of an international standard, the next level down is virtually non-existent. This is not healthy as the stronger the second level is, the stronger the top level. My wish is that walking progresses at all levels, motivating our top walkers to become international stars in future years.

There are many factors and barriers that make this a hard task and lead me to believe it will take some considerable time to achieve this aim. The **barriers** I see are that

- *Walking is not accepted by many as a bona fide sport*
- *Our National races are not supported adequately*
- *There are very few male or female athletes in their 20s*
- *Athletes within walking are pessimistic about the future of the sport*

On the **positive** side we have

- *A number of young athletes coming through*
- *A club system*
- *Established races*
- *Some leagues set up*
- *A strong veterans team*

➤ *We could carry on in the same way and hope for improvement. We may get lucky and find a change of views or get an athlete to the top internationally thus getting the support of the media etc. On the other side, our sport could decline and we will look back at the opportunity lost at this time.*

- We could look at further training for coaches on special coaching days. On the positive by doing this coaches would share views and learn. On the down side if the races are substandard the coaches and athletes will become disillusioned.
- We could find ways of promoting walking within the sporting world and beyond. I think this would be great but with the standard currently I feel this would be destined for failure.

I feel we need immediate change in racing, coaching and promoting across the board. This will still take time but there are some foundations we can lay down now.

Reduce races ...

- All National championships to be in Kilometres as A races.
- B race to be run in conjunction with the national championships.

All athletes to be entered into the 'A' race initially. If they are judged to have three red cards for bent knee they are automatically moved to the 'B' race. Therefore the Judges will place in cards as normal for an 'A' race. The athletes will be only disqualified on the contact rule. Two boards will be used, one for contact the other for bent knee. The outcome of this is that we will get more finishers and more competition. This will also give athletes that have problems with the bent knee rule the chance to walk for the entire race, under race conditions to improve fitness. This may help on the next occasion they race.

There will be trophies and prizes for the first three finishers of each event. For example the winner of the 10k 'A' race will get the 10k trophy whilst the winner of the 'B' race will get the 5 mile trophy. The team events could be made of a minimum of One 'A' racer and Two 'B' racers or add something like add 10 penalty points to each 'B' racers score. This gives the incentive to the athletes to keep a straight leg.

Set up a league similar to the Enfield League based purely around the National championships where there are team and individual titles. In the Enfield League there are say 10 events and it is your best 8 to score. In a national event it may be 3 out of 4. The team event is the team's best scorers over the 4 events.

This combination of 'A' and 'B' standards in National races should be replicated in regional championships. I also feel that we should continue to promote IAAF permit meetings and understand they cannot run under these proposed guidelines. To accommodate this we should hold a local race to either follow or precede the permit race. This would encourage participation and support for each race. Where possible try to incorporate the Permit race on an existing race day.

We should be contacting the organisers of a number of marathons and half marathons to see if we can compete as a group. If we started at the back of the event or 15 to 30 minutes later we would have minimal impact on their event. We could judge some of the walking but not to a great standard and would have to rely upon the honesty of the athletes. Our faster walkers would almost certainly catch some of the slower runners, showing them there is an alternative. This I could see as good publicity towards walking and could assist many running events that lack participants therefore could help both the event and us.

Coaching days should be organised where New, Club and Elite walkers are coached using different methods to share the knowledge of coaches. Even look at adopting other coaching methods from other sports. Look at groups from schools, weight-loss groups, running groups and other sports to encourage people to try out the sport.

These sessions should be set out maybe twice a year in different regions or areas. By having these different levels within the groups you can use different coaches to assist and allow the beginners to do what they need to achieve and not interfere with the top level.

I have written my thoughts to see if they may be considered at meetings you may be involved in.

Stuart Bennett

FIXTURES

These event details are published for your information, and to the best of knowledge are accurate at the time of writing – you are advised, however, to check the status of any event directly with the organisers.

FEB	4	Essex/Eastern Counties AA Indoor 1 Mile Champs	Lee Valley	1:30 pm
	5	London Walks/RWA Southern Area 10K Champs + YAG	Hillingdon CC	12 noon
	18	Enfield League 5 Miles + YAG	Donkey Lane/QE2	1.00 pm
	19	SCVAC/VAC Indoor 3,000m Championship	Lee Valley	TBA
	24	Essex Athletes Reunited Luncheon	'The Cow', Stratford	12 noon
	25	Lewes 5K (+ support races)	Lewes Track	12.30 pm
	26	Inter-Area Indoor 2,000m Challenge	Lee Valley	TBA

MAR	1	Metropolitan Police Walking Annual Dinner & Reunion	C S Club SW1	6.15 pm
	5	Molly Barnett Meeting (full card)	Coventry	12.45 pm
	9	Amateur Athletic Association AGM	Alexander Stadium	12 noon
	11	Enfield League 5 Miles + YAG	Donkey Lane/QE2	1.00 pm
	12	BMAF Indoor 3,000m Championship	Lee Valley	TBA
APR	1	Cecil Gittins Memorial Walk/Enfield League (5/10/15K)	Gravesend Cyclopark	1.00 pm
	12	VAC/Middx/Herts/Surrey 10,000m Championship	Tooting Bec Track	6.45 pm
	18	Veterans AC 5 Miles (all welcome)	Battersea Park	7.00 pm
	22	RWA Inter-Area Representative Match	Lee Valley Track	12 noon
	22	Slater Brice/Sussex Championships 10K	Broadbridge Heath	11.00 am
	23	Virgin Money London Marathon	Greenwich	10.00 am
	27	Haywards Heath 1K	Crawley K2 Centre	TBA
	29	RWA National & Inter-Counties 10K Champs + YAG	Coventry	1.00 pm
	30	Centurions' Social Walk (Historic Cambridge)	Cambridge Station	10.30 am
MAY	1	Hertfordshire Vets 3,000 Metres	Stevenage Track	12.20 pm
	1	Pednor Open/Enfield League 5 Miles	Chesham	5.00 pm
	2	Woodford Tuesday Walk 3,000m (+ YAG)	Ashtons Track	8.30 pm
	9	Veterans AC 5 Miles (all welcome)	Battersea Park	7.00 pm

ALL CHANGE

Former race walker June Cork (Southend-on-Sea AC) has completed a most active and busy year as our Essex County AA President. At the County AGM (held in Melbourne Park Stadium/Chelmsford) the President's chain of office was handed on to Chelmsford AC's inspirational Club Chairman John Weir. Vice-Chair is to be Colchester Harrier Dianne Wooller, a still very much active participant in Vets Leagues.

HAPPY RETIREMENT

One of our keenest supporters in past decades was Jeanette Street (nee Gower) - sister of GB International the late Steve Gower, and widow of truly top talented sports photographer Mike. Jeanne recently retired from Redbridge Council - so we wish her a long, happy, successful and enjoyable retirement. One of her new found interests is campanology as Jeanette's learning the ropes at St Andrew's Church in Hornchurch.

FRANK DRAKE RIP

In hospital (after 2-and-a-half weeks' as a patient) and with family beside him, Frank peacefully passed-on at the age of 83 - a week short of his 84th birthday. He'd suffered dementia in his life's later stages. Frank resided with his wife Marie at Badwell Ash near Bury St Edmunds since moving from Essex in 2002. As a race walker Frank was part of a truly talented and strong **Southend-on-Sea** squad in the '70s & '80s. In shorter distance races, like many Clubmen, his aim was to obtain a Race Walking Association 7-miles-in-an-hour star. It wasn't to be as Frank managed to get into the 61 minutes' time bracket. It was at longer distances Frank excelled. His liked the Open London-to-Brighton, for he relished the challenge of a walk to the coast on the first Saturday of September. In Essex he enjoyed our now defunct Essex 20 Miles' Championship from Chelmsford-to-Southend (who didn't) and also had a good record in finishing the arduous Essex 50K Championship around a near deserted Industrial Estate on a Saturday (nowadays that Estate is mostly a busy open-all-hours retail park). Frank formed part of a trio of stalwarts who were often be seen between the lower middle order-and-rear of field, the others being John Skeggs and legendary Centurion George Woods. He was a character who many recall enjoying his start-line fag until seconds before racing commenced!

Athletics was in the family as daughter Nicola was a part of Southend's successful track and field team. Frank worked as an analyst at Ford's Basildon Tractor Plant, which was sped past on that testing never-to-be-forgotten 50K. He also appeared regularly for Ford Sports & Social Club in London Business Houses athletics' events. As well as widow Marie and daughter Nicola, Frank had another daughter Hayley. We extend our condolences to them.

FRANK DRAKE TRIBUTE

"Frank was a walker who enjoyed turning out in races for Southend AC. In general, he basically was not fast enough for the short distance races, so enjoyed more the distance races, ie 20 miles and above where he more of an impact, and enjoyment."

Ray Pearce - Essex County AA Hon Walking Secretary

FROM OUR SOCIAL CORRESPONDENT

Just a bit of information on Bert Stevenson who was unable to attend December's Metropolitan Police AA life members' luncheon. It was a wonderful function at the new venue (Union Jack Club) with a full house and bags of camaraderie. Attendees from the race walking fraternity were Peter HODKINSON, Paul and Lynn BLAGG, Chris FLINT and Nigel HILL (formerly Met Police race walker and member of London Vidarians), Andy BIGNOLD and Bill and Kath SUTHERLAND. Apologies from Terry SIGGS,CBE, former Chairman of the Metropolitan Police Race Walking Club, who was unable to attend due to the Southern Railway Strike. Pride of place went to Lord and Lady Peter IMBERT, so well-known and respected by all, who is a truly exceptional speaker. It is hoped that this venue with its excellent facilities and catering will now be the chosen venue for future functions.

CENTURIONS' SOCIAL WALK London's Parks - *Three Parks and a Garden* Sunday 4 December 2016

A report by Kathy Crilley, Captain



"This was an easy paced walk of around 6 miles led by Ken Livermore C386 providing Centurions with the opportunity to visit 3 London parks and a rose garden.

We started from a very busy Green Park Tube Station just after 11.00 am but as we ducked into an alley we soon emerged into the peace and quiet of St James's Place. This rather exclusive part of London was once home to many illustrious people ... Sir Francis Chichester, Sir Winston Churchill, Chopin to name but a few. From here we headed down to the mall passing St James's Palace and as the Mall is closed to traffic on Sundays, it was a pleasant stroll around the area admiring the many buildings along the way. A quick

detour up to Carlton House Terrace to do a bit of statue spotting - the Queen, King George, Charles de Gaulle, Florence Nightingale ... The next stop (well a very brief glance really) was Trafalgar Square and from here, we cut through back on to the Mall close to Admiralty Arch and then down Horse Guards Road to enter St James's Park. Here we ambled around the park to emerge back onto the Mall just in front of Buckingham Palace. Crossing Constitution Hill – we all reencountered memories of the 2012 London Olympics and the race walks which took place here. And so we stopped for a group photo – ably helped by some poor passing tourist who nobly agreed to take our photo. He spoke very good English and he had a brilliant sense of humour as he organised the group to stand correctly!

Back into Green Park and we stopped by the Canada Memorial and then walked up towards Piccadilly to view the latest memorial erected – the SWW2 Bomber Command Memorial. A stunning piece of sculpture. From Green Park we then crossed to the relative calm of the "traffic island" and Wellington Arch. This building used to house what must have been the smallest police station in London – so Chris Flint informed us. Again, another pause to look at the Australian Memorial. Then we braved the crowds to cross into Hyde Park by Apsley House (home to the "Iron Duke" – the Duke of Wellington). At this time of the year, this end of Hyde Park is given over to "Winter Wonderland" – now in its 10th year and somewhere to avoid if you can. Quickly turning left, we headed for the peace of the Rose Garden. At last ... time to reach for our packed lunches!

Lunch over, we then headed over to the Serpentine and passed the famous Serpentine Swimming Club – well known for its early morning dip on Christmas Day. Well, we all resisted the temptation to jump in ...

Another pause by the Princess Diana Memorial Fountain and then we crossed the road into Kensington Gardens. Here, we admired the splendid iron gates, the Albert Memorial standing proudly opposite the Royal Albert Hall. And this is where our group split – three of us to head for home and the rest of the party to go on to Marble Arch via Kensington Palace and the Italian Gardens.

Many of our walks are not just merely walks. They are a journey through history – and this walk was no exception. Ken came well prepared in the history of our route along with print outs of maps, photos, plans etc. Thank you Ken. And thank you to our Strolls Secretary, Steve Kemp who organised us all. And not least to everyone who made the journey to be there: Chris Flint, Norman Smith, Wendy Watson and husband Ray, George Beecham, Sean Pender and me! A brilliant day out with perfect winter sun to boot!

Kathy Crilley

IN THE MONEY

A well-attended Essex County AA AGM heard that our County are sitting on £75,000 in the bank. Makes you wonder why entering under-supported County Championships costs so much? Over the water, Surrey County sit on an even bigger pot - £130,000!

POSTHUMOUS AWARD

Our previous edition mentioned the death of Reg Ruffell, stalwart official of both Havering AC and the Essex County AA. At our Essex County AGM a posthumous award was made to Reg in respect of his decades of meritorious service to athletics, which was collected by his widow.

AN HONOUR

On Friday 16 December at Mid-Kent College (Gillingham) Essex-born Paul Nihill MBE added yet another honour to his very long list as he was inducted into the Medway Sports Hall of Fame, being the only race walker thus far so honoured. The evening saw double Olympic gold medallist gymnast Max Whitlock as guest-of-honour and was hosted by BBC Sports presenter Eleanor Oldroyd. The Medway Sports Hall of Fame opened in 2014 - it's first 3 inductees being Football Manager Andy Hessenthaler, Olympic rower Liz McVeigh and late football commentator Brian Moore (who passed away in 2001). Paul was presented with a scroll to mark the honour.

WHERE ARE THEY NOW?

We've heard from Kevin Carley, a prominent Anglia Striders member in their heyday. He still resides in South Woodham Ferrers, where we used to hold annual Essex League half marathon walks. After quitting race walking he returned to "heel-and-toe" when supporting Essex League anniversary occasions. Kevin switched to the Triathlon, where he's 5 times represented his country in Age Group competition. He gets about a bit and has completed a triathlon in Honolulu. Kevin's an office holder at the Maldon-based Blackwater Triathlon Club. He talks of a possible Moulton appearance and also considers the 100 miles, perhaps not this year, but the year after.

MARGARET VALE RIP

Carl Lawton reports that he had "received notice from Wendy Tyler (Nee Vale) that her mother Margaret, widow of SWC's Denis Vale, died on the 17 December in a hospice on the Isle of Man." Wendy's address is 4 Yardley Road Cosgrove, Northants MK19 7JF. Tel: 07801441196. Denis was Centurion 549 (1975 Ewhurst 100 Miles/19.43.30) and was prominent in London Postal Region walking events, both as organiser and competitor.

TRIBUTES

- "Very sad to hear of the passing of Margaret Vale. We remember her well at all Surrey Walking Club meetings when they were amongst the strongest race walking Clubs in the country. The Vales always a massive part in their Surrey WC youth and junior races over 3 and three quarter Miles as they were in the 60's. May she Rest in Peace. With our condolences." **Bill and Kath Sutherland**
- "Christmas condolences." **Edmund Shillabeer**
- "About Margaret Vale, she and her husband Denis were both friends of mine. Denis was a gentleman, and Margaret also attended to him on London-to-Brighton races. The last time I saw them was in the Isle of Man, where they had retired to, when I visited their house for high tea." **Dave Sharpe**

ATHLETES' REUNITED (ESSEX BRANCH)

The moment you have all been waiting for - the details of this year's winter gathering of this group of illustrious athletes, the like of which the world has never seen, nor likely to again! **Friday 24 February at The Cow**, on Westfield, opposite the Olympic Park from noon. Tony Maxwell tells us "there will be a quiz which hopefully last time's winners, Walthamstow AC, will not be allowed to win again. The cost is £17pp - £16 for the buffet and a pound tip. In all the years we have been using this venue we have never tipped the staff and I think it is time we did so. They put on a splendid buffet for us. If you would like to join us please let me have your £17 as soon as possible, certainly no later than the 12 February. Looking forward to seeing you all again. If you know anyone else who would welcome an invitation please let me know."

Tony Maxwell 27 Forest Edge, Buckhurst Hill, Essex IG9 5AD

tonymaxwell27@hotmail.com

BERNARD BALDWIN MBE - RIP

Not a walker but the founder of a most famous event, which attracted so many truly big names onto its start line. Bernard, aged 91, left a great history for us to marvel at. He founded the Nos Galan race on December 31st 1958, in memory of Welsh representative runner Nyth Bran. Bernard himself represented Wales at senior level.

RUNNING JOKE

According to a survey for England Athletics, a third of women joggers say they get shouted at and beeped by passing motorists. It must be even worse for female race walkers, especially the younger ones.

DOWN THEY GO

At January's Enfield League opening race, a numerically good field assembled considering it was 3 degrees' C. The course, inside King George V playing fields "has form" as a number have fallen over the years (some ending up in Casualty). This time one fell and there were 2 reported cases of bad trips (both on surface cracks) which almost ended with someone on the tarmacadam. We also had conkers in places, which in past races have seen walkers turn ankles (not this time). But there's good news, as local resident and enthusiastic competitor **John Hall** is Chairman of "The Friends of King George Playing Fields" and therefore has clout with his local Council. He writes: "I was told one trip (the faller) was on a speed hump (we had no warning when those were put in and we've never understood why they were put in!!). Anyway, I had a meeting with a council chap a few weeks' ago about improving the surface. He has a pot of money to improve cycle routes and is very keen to even out the bad bits in the playing fields. Hopefully that will happen this century rather than next!"

AWARD FOR CARL LAWTON

Former National Champion Carl Lawton is one of our sport's greats, having earned selection for the European Games, Commonwealth Games and an IAAF World Championship. He was one of an unlucky trio who would have gained Olympic status at 50K had 1976's Montreal Games featured this event (the only Games since this event's 1932 introduction that no such race was held - the other 2 missing out being Bob Dobson and Roy Thorpe). All 3 are members of The Centurions, with Carl being an esteemed and very active Past President. When Carl qualified (Ewhurst 1983) his excellent 17.51.51 time earned him a place on that revered all-time fastest qualifiers' list. Carl hasn't raced of late, but has certainly put much back into our sport as an official, supporter and helper. These aspects of his athletics involvement were recognised by his latest award - **Enfield League Official-of-the-Year**. Well done Carl, and thanks from one-and-all.

ALAN LOVETT RIP

Alan Lovett has passed-on at the age of 80 after a lengthy period of declining health. Alan, Ilford AC Club President in 1989/90, initially joined in a bid to get in some additional fitness prior to enlisting in the Army. He's seen an advert for a novices' cross-country run at Hainault Forest, turned up, ran and was "hooked" to both running and the friendly promoting club. He went on to become an accomplished runner and a true Club stalwart. He's served long honorary spells as Membership Secretary, Trophies Steward and track layer - as well as his duties behind the counter at the Club's tea counter. Alan was well known in his community, for after retiring he was a popular school "lollipop man" - indeed often wearing his yellow coat when marshalling - though didn't bring his pole on such occasions! Alan, a resident of Dunspring Lane in Clayhall, was truly a lovely man. When a most active Club President he took part in some Essex League walking races to show support for the Walking Section. Walkers who took part in Ilford's many Chigwell Row events (before risk assessment rightly ended them) will have often followed Alan in his role as a cycle pilot, and then seen him after racing when returning to the Club's tea room.

TRIBUTES

- "When I joined Ilford in 1962, Alan was one of the people who made me feel welcome. Always changing in the same corner at Cricklefields, he was very much part of the furniture in everything he did to make Ilford AC great. Many times he gave me a lift home after training, a real gentleman in every way. God bless you Alan." **Brian Armstrong**
- "Alan was another of Ilford's kindly gentlemen and I have fond memories of him when I competed regularly for Ilford." **Len Ruddock**
- "Yet another Ilford legend lost to us. Alan was a great club man and he will be greatly missed." **Ernie Forsyth**

SPEXIT - Cath Duhig pens a few lines about leaving the shores of Blighty ...

"We have had a house in Spain for over 12 years now. It was bought on a serendipitous whim (and a favourable mortgage) after we'd got lost on a cycle ride while staying with some friends in a villa they'd rented for their family holiday. Over the years we have spent increasing amounts of time there, especially recently, since Pete was no longer running his own business and had joined me in the blissful realms of retirement from gainful employment.



As we have passed longer periods of time over there we have begun to get to know people and to be asked to join in with things, but haven't really been able to do so as we have always also had other commitments back here, being heavily involved with things athletic (Ryston Runners AC and Eastern Masters) and also the local drama society.

Re the former, Pete was a founder member of Ryston and has been variously Chairman, Treasurer, Secretary, and Membership Secretary, and also Chairman of Eastern Masters (formerly Eastern Veterans) for about 23 of the 27 years he has been eligible to belong to that body. I have been Chair, Vice Chair, Secretary, Membership Secretary, and newsletter editor of Ryston Runners over a 30 year period, and also a committee member of EMAC and Editor of the club newsletter. As regards the latter, we have both performed in and directed productions for DADS (Downham Am Dram Soc) and helped both backstage and with set building, and Front of House.

Pete has been trying to pass on the EMAC mantle for a few years now, but no one has come forward. He feels that unless we actually leave the building, no one ever will. We know the life here works and now want to explore the possibilities of becoming part of a different culture and lifestyle while we still can. We want to join in a few more things in the Spanish village, and also make fuller contact with an athletics club out there. One of the top race walking clubs in Spain is based about 2 hours' drive away. We've never had a car, except the occasional rental, out there so I've never been able to get along to a session and see if there's a place for me there to try to get a bit more coaching and racing experience in a different set up.

I won't pretend the whole Brexit referendum and fall out hasn't played a part in our decision, but it was a catalyst, a focuser of the mind, rather than a reason. Pete will be 70 in a couple of years, by which time whatever will be, as a result of that decision by the people of our home country, will be clearer and we will know whether to make our personal exit permanent.

I shall miss lots of people here at home, not least some very good friends I have made through race walking. On the plus side, there are very good training facilities very close to where we live in Spain, and plenty of room for us to welcome visitors in search of some warm weather training and a relaxing break. The internet has made keeping in touch, and communication in general, so much easier. And I can fly back to Stansted from the airport which is just 8 miles away from our house, for less than it costs me to go to London and back from here on the train. So, ***hasta la vista, hasta pronto***, and ***suerte*** to one and all."

Cath Duhig

WALKING CZAR

Mayor Sadiq Khan has chosen a Nike Director to become our Capital's first walking and cycling commissioner. Will Norman (currently Nike's Global Partnerships Director) is tasked with getting London stretching its legs, for which it's reported he'll walk away with a £98,000 pa salary. His full-time role also involves encouraging cycling.

GEORGE WILLIAMS RIP

John Northcott reports: "I was told that Belgrave's international 20 kms race walker George Williams died on Christmas Day. I thought the race walking world would like to know." Adds Hon Ed: Widower George was a big name at the Bels, Surrey County and the Post Office. His high water mark came at the 1961 Lugano Cup Final 20K when 3rd in 1:34.02, behind winner Ken Matthews 1:30.55 and Swede Lennart Back in 1:32.12. In 1985 when based in Bournemouth he promoted the 20K Datapost Dash - one of the UK's most heavily sponsored races ever. In later years he resided on a narrowboat moored at a Burton-on-Trent marina. In retirement he found time to pen and publish a book about his life and times, which explained (in his opinion) why he never became an Olympian.

AN OLYMPIAN's TRIBUTE

"I read that sadly George Williams died on Christmas Day. My abiding memory of him was when he organised a 20km road race in Bournemouth in 1985. Like the efforts of my old club at the time Dawlish & South Devon, he tried to raise the profile of British race walking by staging a well-advertised promotion with sponsorship (by the Royal Mail), good quality prizes plus top racing from the leading walkers of the day. For my part, he persuaded me to leave Lanzarote early which proved to be one of the few warm weather training camps I ever went on, and commit to his 'baby'. George organised an expenses paid pre-race B&B for me. Come breakfast, the hosts mistakenly brought out a massive full English fry-up. Call me weak, but my feeble protest at saying "Thanks, but no thanks" resulted in me doing the honourable thing and eating the lot. Less than 3 hours later we were under starters orders. In no time at all, guts ache set in. Roger Mills nearly had me, but pride and a fair wind saw me pull away winning with a time of 87 minutes. I had to win. George, bless him, put a mug shot of me on his race programme! RIP GW." **Chris Maddocks**

MAYBE COMING OUR WAY?

Paul Nihill reports that 83 year old all-time Italian great **Abdon Pamich** hopes to visit England later in 2017. In the Tokyo Olympic 50K Walk achieved gold (4:11.12.4) with Paul just behind in 4:11.31.2, ahead of Swede Ingvar Patterson in 4:14.17.4. It was Abdon's 2nd Olympic medal (bronze 4 years' earlier in Rome). Abdon raced in 5 Olympics (1956-to-1972). In that 1964 race an Ilford AC member's vest crossed the finishing line in a silver medal position. At a cold and rainy start Paul wore his GB vest (that traditional easy recognisable one with 2 horizontal bands) and because of low temperatures, wished he'd donned a vest underneath. Shortly before the "off", Paul spotted 10,000 metres' runner Fergus Murray (Ilford AC's 2nd Olympian after 1960 800 metres' runner Phyllis Perkins). He asked if Fergus could lend his three-quarter sleeved top, which was slipped under Paul's GB vest seconds before action commenced. In such times it was customary for athletes not involved in such a race to come along and give their support to those who were racing - sadly a tradition not followed so much nowadays!



Dear Dave ...

NOW's THE TIME FOR STROLLING

I would like to recommend to other race walkers the art of Strolling and developing a good acceptable style within the rules of judging. I was taught by the likes of two of Great Britain's greatest race walkers, Olympic bronze medallist the late Tebbs Lloyd Johnson and the Late European bronze medallist Charlie Megnin, the benefit to be gained particularly over the Winter months. Not only is it invigorating and challenging but relaxing after a hard season of racing. Another to greatly benefit was, I believe, our greatest ever distance race walker the late Don Thompson. There's no time like the present!

Bill Sutherland

EMAILS DON COX

I'm a bit late getting the news, so, many congratulations to Len and Anita, I wish you all the very best. Alec Tiffin, great man. Well done Mr King, fantastic time. From one man and his dog.



Don Cox

BILL SUTHERLAND's APPRECIATION

It is always a real joy to receive such a brilliant Essex Walker. In these days when life moves so quickly and races and sporting reunions are not so frequent as they used to be in former years race walking publications are so necessary to draw in new enthusiasts. The Essex Walker, Enfield Walker and new look Race Walking Record do this admirably and long may this continue. A big "Thank You" to all those concerned!

Bill Sutherland

AT SECONDARY SCHOOL TOGETHER

You mentioned Anthony Andrews in your last Essex Walker. He was a pupil with me in Connaught House of the Royal Masonic Secondary School for Boys at Bushey in Hertfordshire in

around 1956. Another famous face I remember was Neil Wilson, one of the Chief Sports Reporters at the Daily Mail. Those were the days!

Bill Sutherland

ALEC TIFFIN RIP

It was good to read some of the tributes to Alec - what a fine man. I remember racing him in the 3km club championship in 1974 at Cricklefields where Roger posted the fastest time that year, just 3 days after breaking the world best mile time at Crystal Palace. I was impressed with Alec's style and I didn't realise fully his RW credentials until now. Alec was my first coach at Ilford when I was referred to the club by my sports master at school, as I fancied myself as a mile runner. 6 months' later, I made my RW debut in the 1969 Highgate Hour, 'D' Section. I always have good memories of Alec.

Len Ruddock

EMAIL JOHN BORGARS

Thanks for your continued achievements with the newsletter, which both fills an information gap and encourages the rest of us. I think that one of the problems with entries to the Southern RWA 50k championship was that nobody knew about it – the first I heard of it was when Noel Carmody gave me a medal! Not the first time I've got a medal without consciously entering – some years ago an Essex League 50k was stated to be a qualifier for the Commonwealth Games and I asked if I could enter the Essex League race but not the Commonwealth Games qualifier because I didn't want to keep the twins and others shivering for an hour or so until I finished, to which the organisers agreed, and then got a BMAF medal for a championship that I didn't know existed (because Chris Berwick, who lapped me, did know it existed and found a way to not enter).

One bright spot that is visible to me is the pick-up in the (relatively) younger ladies; not just Sophie Hales: team Loughton had two, both – unlike our men – under 70, in recent Enfield League races and Melanie Peddle not only made a habit of beating me but was first lady in the latest race.

John Borgars

G'DAY DAVE

Essex Walker - Full of good stuff as usual! Congratulations to Dom for his 50k qualifier, however I think George Nibre has had a memory lapse in his associated comments. Chris Maddocks won the Romanian 50k championships in 3:53:14 to qualify for Atlanta and his 3:51:37 is the acknowledged ratified GB record. Les Morton won a National 50k on the same course in 3:57:48 (1989) and a couple of years later Ukrainian Bondarenko won in 4:02 and some seconds. You could argue that the only aspersions cast upon the course came from the fact that the drug testers descended on it the year I was national champion, sampling me and the fourth placer! Rocky Stone did a 4:10 and Daz Thorn 4:12, with top officials like the Markhams, Beryl Randle, Mary Payne, Wally Emery, and SW grade one timekeepers all involved in the races, which were certified by SAAA graded course measurers to get RWA permits. Happy days! Good training to Dom next year, we look forward to seeing him perform well in London.

Ed Shillabeer

DOM KING RECORD

For information: The UK fastest time record by Dom KING is on a 1 km course IAAF sanctioned/measured course with sufficient international judges. New rules and guidelines brought in over the past couple of years.

George Nibre

A READER IS DELIGHTED

Always delighted to receive news from the Race Walking world. Delighted that the 90th anniversary of Enfield Open went so well on a horrid wet day. Sorry my message of apology in response to Ron Wallwork's invitation was not relayed or noted. Delighted that the RWA seems to have found a new race walker and he did well in Rio. Wishing all Race walkers well.

John F S Northcott

HAS INTERNATIONAL RACE WALKING EVER BEEN IN A WORSE PLACE THAN NOW?

No doubt you will have read many revelations in the McLaren Report on Russian Doping. Sadly this must put your wonderful efforts as a commentator in London 2012 in the Mall at an all-time low! After all, so many Russians appeared in the Medal Table and I was led to believe by many in the RWA who were there and witnessed it, that I was making a fuss about nothing when often mentioning the mess that Russia have created in International Race Walking. Hopefully they will eat their words now! They have raised the bar so high with their drug assisted performances that the only way to stand on the podium now is by regularly maintaining 'air flight time' or 'lifting' or by taking drugs like so many others in the past. What a sad day it is as we look to the future of Sport. Of course in our amateur days one had to plead for

sponsorship; a far cry from nowadays where Sport is a massive Business and are we not doing exactly what the Eastern Block were doing in the past - taking everything to the limits of morals and not in the true Spirit of Sport? Perhaps we in the UK ought to be grateful that we have not moved far forward from what our forefathers taught us.

Bill Sutherland

APPRECIATION

Many thanks to all who helped to organise the 90th Enfield 7 and Reunion. It was a memorable occasion and as Mark's photos will show some of us enjoyed it more than others. We might not have been the fastest but we were the happiest.



Here's to the 91st.

Bob Dobson

From photographer,
Mark Easton:

"Not a bad effort for simultaneous waving but room for improvement!"

ANOTHER VENUE?

A fine new All-Weather Track is nearing completion at the home of London Heathside Running Club, formerly North London Harriers I believe. It would be a good venue for race walking on the track or round the park with reasonable parking charges and great Tube access at Manor House and Finsbury Park too.

Bill Sutherland

ED SHILLABEER'S PLANS

Due to logistical problems my target race 2017 (also my main charity appeal event, on behalf of Veterans with Dogs) will be the Bury St Edmunds' 100 which means sacrificing the European Championships in Aarhus. Yesterday I forged a link with a professor of sport at Marjons University in Plymouth and her husband who coaches athletes, so I am excited about the introduction of an element of professionalism into my preparations for next season.

Ed Shillabeer

Adds Hon Ed Already the oldest ever IOM Parish Walk finisher, Ed (who'll be 78 when lining up at Bury St Edmunds) could be our most senior 100 miles finisher to boot!

GOOD NEWS FROM CAMBRIDGE

Just before Christmas I started weekly coaching sessions at Cambridge and Coleridge. 12 people initially expressed interest but, although only 4 have been attending, I am hopeful more will come. The club is very keen to get this off the ground and so am I.

Sue Clements

WORDS OF HOPE

It's wonderful to see that our top performers really putting a marker down and challenging the very best in the world and achieving real success. Hopefully this will continue into 2017 and beyond.

Oliver Flynn

MESSAGE FROM THE TOP

The second National Title England Athletics Championship of the year will be at the Coventry Godiva Harriers Molly Barnett Meeting on Sunday 5 March (previously circulated as 4 March). 2016 was something special – let's back it up with more in 2017. To everyone who supports and believes in us, thanks.



Andi Drake

MESSAGE FROM CANADA

Saddened to hear about Alec Tiffin as he was a great supporter of the sport. Good to see the latest Race Walking Record and review the highlights for GB walking. We don't have any plans to return to the UK in 2017 as I am still working and doing lots of commentary, so I have little in the way of true vacation time. Truly hope all is well in your life and that you and the walkers enjoy a terrific year ahead. TRI to keep FIT.

Steve King

ALEC TIFFIN - OLYMPIAN's TRIBUTE

Ilford AC has lost a true gentleman. For those too young to have had the benefit and pleasure of knowing Alec, he was a rare breed who epitomised human kindness and selflessness - totally loyal to the needs of the club and its members, with little comprehension as to the high regard we had for him.

Roger Mills

APPEAL

Promoting ultra-distance events such as 100 miles-in-24 hours is becoming more and more difficult. Very few clubs are in a position to organise such projects on their own. Finding suitable safe venue and ever increasing costs are the main issues to be overcome. With this in mind I launched a President's Appeal to help fund our promotions. To date we have raised over £1,000 from a relatively small number of donors. If you have not already made a contribution please consider making a donation - however small- so that we can continue to give more walkers the opportunity to

qualify. We look forward to our 100 miles scheduled to take place at Bury St Edmunds on 5-6 August 2017, organised by Kevin Marshall C1001 with assistance from local Centurion Sue Clements C950. Please do your best to support this excellent project. I learnt recently that there is likely to be a good group of athletes from the Continent taking part.

Eric Horwill C390, President, The Centurions

Pevensie, 79 Envile Road, Wall Heath, Kingswinford. West Midlands DY6 0JX

Adds Hon Ed Whether or not a Centurion, all should be keen to keep these epic 100 miles races going. If not a Centurion and wish to be, you'll need such races to be staged in order to qualify. We're rapidly reaching our 100th 100 miles' event to be staged in the UK since the first in 1877 - a 100 miles' challenge track race at Lillie Bridge, London SW6, won by Centurion No 1 J E Fowler-Dixon, whose grave is in Highgate Cemetery.

A QUERY FROM CHINA

Hope you are keeping well. I am 60 years' old now - and still keeping fit. But I find now when I exercise - I am turning again to doing more speed walking than jogging. Or some days I jog and other days I like to walk fast along the river front. And who knows - I may collect some Chinese fans and persons interested in joining me along the way when out walking again.

I have looked on the internet - but can't find any real, high quality, durable and lightweight race walking shoe for doing 5 km to 20km distances. Do you know of any race walking shoe shops in the UK that have a website to order from and ship to China? I am interested to buy one or two pairs of race walking shoes. I want to start going back to do more race walking now again and walk fast. Any advice?

Mike Sweeney

Adds Hon Ed Can any readers assist Mick? Please respond to michaelsween@aol.com

RACE WALKING RECORD and ATHLETICS WEEKLY

I've got a collection from the 70s mainly sitting in my loft which I would like to pass on. Would you like to advertise on my behalf for anybody to collect.

Len Ruddock lenrdk@gmail.com

ESSEX WALKER's EDITORIAL ADDRESS

Dave Ainsworth
18 Angmering House
Barnstaple Road
Romford, Essex RM3 7SX

Telephone:



01708-377382



dave_ainsworth@yahoo.co.uk
essexwalker@btinternet.com