

Essex Walker

Editor: Dave Ainsworth

TEAM SUCCESS FOR ILFORD'S WOMEN

Iford AC won both the Southern Area Women's 5 Kilometres Championship and the London Walks Open event, held in conjunction, held in Enfield's King George V Playing Fields on a cold Sunday afternoon with a stiff breeze. For a first time since March, the Iford welcomed back their only double-Olympian, Hainault-based Neringa Aidetyte, after a long injury lay-off. Despite taking it steadily after such absence, Neringa won by over a minute, clocking 25 minutes and 28 seconds with 2nd-placed Belgrave Harrier Maddy Short exactly a minute in arrears. An Iford trio of Janice Bentley-Pearson, Rachael Lawless and Anne Seurfield were respectively timed at 34.40, 37.15 and 37.36 to secure team gold medals for the Cricklefields-based team. All credit to coach Stuart Bennett who'd discovered, motivated and trained these ladies so well, that in only their 2nd competitive appearance had successfully completed an 'A' race - becoming Southern Area team champions as well as winning London Open prizes

In a senior men's 10 Kilometres, their coach Stuart Bennett filled 6th spot in 64.22 and won a prize for being the first Centurion - awarded for the first home who'd previously completed a 100 miles event. Or ... at least thought he had, for in a chaotic presentation, his prize was erroneously awarded to John Borgars, who finished a place behind in 67.21. We must salute 2 true sportsmen, for John realised this and offered Stuart his prize - who in return, as John had received the kudos of a public presentation, thought he should keep it! *What genuine goodwill by both.*

Events were well officiated, including by some who'd been at Lee Valley a day earlier. A Chief Judge and 5 active judges stood all afternoon in the February cold. Organisers specifically praised John Hall and Ron Wallwork for local liaison efforts, and Geraldine Legon - who'd come to race, but helped by standing-in as Judges' runner at short notice. These 2 events (combined) were organised by Peter Cassidy and Pauline Wilson (Loughton AC) who staged the annual London Walks, and Noel Carmody who is Hon Championship Secretary of the RWA Southern Area, whose Championship it was. There were concerns to get around during the build-up, as Sutcliffe Park wasn't taking bookings owing to major on-site work in progress, and Hillingdon Cycle Circuit had a prior booking on the date our the race walking world required. So to keep faith with you readers, who traditionally expect your London Walks to be on the first Sunday of February, it was switched to Donkey Lane. **But** - the upstairs Club Room was already booked for a christening party - so nearby Enfield Ignations Rugby Club was hired to get a suitable place for your presentations and post-race hospitality. Looking at the field, the organisers deserved much more support. For instance only 9 senior men finished their 10K with no teams at 3-to-score. Indeed only 1 team managed to close-in at 2-to-score (2 men in their 70s). Those worthies mentioned above, and all officials/helpers deserve much better support - which we hope will be seen on the first Sunday in February come 2019 - **won't it?**

THOUGHT FOR THE DAY

"How beautiful are the feet of those who bring good news". Romans Ch10 v15 (revised Standard version). So let's have plenty of good news within race walking!

BACK IN TRAINING

Iford Athletic Club's evergreen veteran race walker Ed Shillabeer has resumed training after injury. However this was no ordinary sporting injury, as Shillabeer suffered damaged ribs when kicked in the chest by a horse. He's a vet by profession!

NEW PRESIDENT

Taking over the chain of office from Robin Davis as Ilford AC's new President is popular runner Nicola Hopkinson. Ilford AC presidents serve a 2 years' term.

LOST AND FOUND

Our appeal in a previous issue for Essex County AA missing trophies saw a 50% success. The 10,000m men's trophy was located - alas our 3,000 metres women's trophy hasn't (well not yet). So please keep trying.

IN RECORD TIME

On National TV, Tom Bosworth sped around Glasgow's Indoor track to break a 3,000 metres world record - which had stood at 10 minutes 31.42 seconds for 17 years since 2001, when set by Germany's Andreas Erm. Tom's time was 10 minutes 30.24 seconds. *Erm!* Yes that's fact - a 3,000 metres walk in 10 and half minutes. Many might say, "I can't believe it". One saying that was much elated Tom himself, who was quoted in the freesheet "Metro" newspaper thus: "To go and get the world record - I can't believe it". A number of Essex Walker's readers sent comments, but as most are near libellous (+ 3 positive), we'll not publish them - after all, Essex Walker has never been one for controversy!

IN FOR A PENNY

Our previous edition gave details of 4 friends who had been suffering ill-health. One of them, Mick Barnbrook, has his appreciation in respect of many "Get Well" cards/messages published. While receiving such cards/messages, he also had a chit asking him to attend his local Sorting Office (5 miles' way, hence a 10 miles' round journey) to collect an item which had been underpaid. At the desk he was shown an envelope clearly containing a card - paid for by a 1p stamp. Yes folks 1p. Mick declined to "cough-up" and returned home. So this card was never collected - who was the sender?

IN FOR ANOTHER PENNY

One of those suffering illness was Olympian Barbara Lawton, wife of Carl, who spent time in 2 hospitals. At the same time as Mick Barnbrook's illness, Barbara received a chit from the Royal Mail asking her to attend her local Sorting Office to collect an under-stamped item for a fee. This was paid and a card was opened. The envelope also had a 1p stamp! The signature on this card was near unreadable. Perhaps one of our ex-detectives who read Essex Walker might have a clue as to who this joker is?

TO THE NINES

We've reported that only 9 finished the Men's 10K at the combined London Games/Southern Area Championship (won by the only junior finisher). At Coventry's well-established Molly Barnet Walks, the English National 10K Championship Men's 10K race also saw 9 finishers - again won by a junior (one of 2 among the 9, leaving 7 seniors). "*Mind the Gap*" - that gap between penultimate and last finishers was 66.22-to-80.26. Only Birchfield Harriers managed to close-in a trio, including that final finisher. For many years, and not so long ago at that, Molly Barnet Walks were a "three-line whip" on the race walking programme as race walkers from all over the UK headed for Coventry - and on many occasions your Inter Counties' 10K Championship was held in conjunction. How much longer can hard-working honorary organisers, officials and helpers give up their time - to stage these events **for you!**

Stay-aways are killing race walking. Fortunately the Ladies race attracted a better level of support. By the way, some still enquire who is/was Molly Barnett, in whose name this meeting is staged?

CONDOLENCE EXPRESSED

We express profound condolence to Centurion 557 Ken Roost, a Life Member of Enfield & Harringey AC and frequent marshall at Enfield League events, on the sad loss of his wife, Lyn. All our thoughts are very much with Ken at this sad and trying time.

ESSEX COUNTY AA 3000m CHAMPIONSHIP

As many of you as possible are implored to enter this event, if only to keep it in our main Championship meeting. Your action is at Melbourne Park Stadium (Chelmsford) on 13 May. Entry details on the [Essex County AA website](#).

THE WOODFORD TUESDAY WALKS

This year's series will take place at 8.30 pm at Ashton Playing Fields, Chigwell Road, Woodford Bridge, IG8 8AA on the following dates:

12 June, 10 July, 21 August, 4 September

Entry Fee (to include the RWA Levy) £5.00; no team fees. The normal format will apply, the best three results to count for individuals and all four to count for teams.

For further information, please contact:

Pauline.Wilson@btinternet.com or tel 01277 220687

"AND ONE FOR THE POT"

Our neighbouring County of Middlesex held their annual 2-day Indoor Championship meeting at Lee Valley in March. There was a Senior Men's 1,500 Metres' Walk Championship - which attracted 1 entry, Loughton AC 2nd claimer Sean Pender, *who won it!* It's a pity that, like Essex, Middlesex walkers don't see a logic in trying to showcase race walking before a decent sized crowd - which is what you get at these County Indoor Championships.

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.

APR	2	Tonbridge 5K	Tonbridge	10.45 am
	8	Commonwealth Games 20K (men/women)	Gold Coast	TBC
	14	Cecil Gittins Memorial 5/10/15K (+ Enfield League)	Gravesend Cyclopark	1.00 pm
	17	VAC 5 miles (all welcome)	Battersea Park	7.00 pm
	22	Virgin Money London Marathon	Greenwich	9.00 am
	25	VAC/Surrey/Middx/Herts 10,000m Championships	Battersea Park	6.45 pm
	26	Essex Athletes Reunited Luncheon	Stratford 'The Cow'	12.00 noon
	26	Haywards Heath 1,000m	Crawley K2 Centre	6.30 pm
	28	LICC/Enfield League Track 1/3/5K	Allianz Park	11.30 am
	29	RWA Annual Inter-Area Representative Match	Nuneaton	TBC
MAY	7	Herts Vets 3,000m (all welcome)	Stevenage	12.30 pm
	7	Pednor/Enfield League 5 miles	Chesham	5.00 pm
	13	Essex 3,000m Championship	Chelmsford	TBC
	14	Southern T&F League 2,000m	Lee Valley	TBC
	15	Veterans AC 5 miles (all welcome)	Battersea Park	7.00 pm
	20	RWA/UKA/Inter-Counties 10K Championship	Coventry	12.30 pm
	30	Oxford County + Open 3,000m	Oxford (Ifley Road)	TBC
JUNE	2	Moulton Open/Enfield League 5 miles + support card	Moulton	12.30 pm
	3	BMAF 10,000m Championship	Horspath	TBC
	3	Surrey/Sussex Masters 3,000m Championships	Ewell Court	TBC
	9	Jack Fitzgerald Memorial race 6 miles	Tilgate Park	TBC
	12	Woodford Tuesday Walk 3,000m	Ashtons Track	8.30 pm
	17	BMAF Road 5K Championship	Horwich	TBC
	19	Veterans AC 5 miles Championship	Battersea Park	7.00 pm
	23	Manx Telecom Parish Walk 85 miles	Douglas	8.00 am
	24	Southern 8 Inter-Counties' Match 3,000m	Chelmsford	TBC
	30	Jim Sharlott Open/BMAF 10K Championship	Leicester	TBC

ACROSS THE THAMES

Our friends at Medway & Maidstone AC are mourning the loss of dynamic former Chairman Paul Alcock, who died of cancer aged 64. He was instrumental in getting sponsorship towards track facilities at Sutton Valence School as well as negotiating with Medway Council before the opening of a track at Medway Park. This 8-lanes floodlit all-weather track is one of the South's best. He was a former high profile football referee and although he gave up refereeing after a highly publicised incident (pushed over by Paolo Di Canio in 1998), he remained active in the background. What appeared to be football's loss was athletics gain as he became a qualified field official and volunteered for London 2012 and the Invictus Games. He'll be sorely missed in our athletics community.

ANOTHER QUESTION

One of Ilford's squad of new lady walkers made her 2nd appearance at a combined London Walks/Southern Area Championship and, during that chaotic presentation, asked "Is it always like this?" The good lady was assured it was a proverbial one-off.

DOUBLE GOLD FOR STUART BENNETT

Congratulations to former International **Stuart Bennett**, for a double gold afternoon at the Lee Valley Indoor Arena, before a full-house crowd. Both your Essex County Walking Secretary Ray Pearce and Peter Cassidy tried hard for a good turnout to keep this event in the main meeting. Alas for Essex, only 4 men, 1 woman and a boy appeared. Perhaps some kept their powder dry for a big double-bill (RWA Southern Area Championships & London Walks) at Donkey Lane the following day?

The walk suffered from a lack of a commentator. The meeting had 2 of them, but one (Keith Palmer) was in the walk. The other (June Cork) was delayed in traffic and arrived after the race - but in time to enthusiastically announce our presentation. Before a large crowd our walk went on in silence, apart from the sound of walkers' feet hitting the boards!

The crowd were much enthused by a sprint finish for almost the entire last lap, from bell-to-tape, as 3 competitors gave it their all. With first place easily secured by talented U/17 prospect George Wilkinson, a race was on for 2nd place. For much of the race Stuart was a comfortable 4th, before clawing back ground to level with last year's winner Adam Hills. Always improving Melanie Peddle also got into this group. Stuart led at the bell, before Adam got the better in the back straight. Stuart took control and held off Adam around the bends, then Adam shot in front on the home straight - his bid for glory ending 10 metres' short of the line when Stuart successfully charged ahead, with Adam a split-second in arrears and Melanie just behind. Former Ilford 2nd claimer Gary Smith attended to offer encouragement to all.

Both events, both genders and all age groups raced in conjunction.

Lee Valley Indoor Arena - Saturday 3 February

1	George Wilkinson	Enfield & Harringey	8.24.14	Men U/17	
2	Stuart Bennett	Ilford	9.04.05	Sen Men	Essex
3	Adam Hills	Bedford Harriers AC	9.04.09	Sen Men	
4	Melanie Peddle	Loughton	9.05.54	Sen Women	Essex
5	Keith Palmer	Southend	10.25.38	Sen Men	Essex
6	Pamela Abbott	Enfield & Harringey	11.09.71	Sen Women	
7	John Brock	Southend	11.28.61	Sen Men	Essex
8	Dave Ainsworth	Ilford	11.56.24	Sen Men	Essex
9	Sebastian Alexandru	St Joseph's School	12.29.97	Boys U13	Essex
DQ	Tony Bacon	Saffron Striders RC			

AWARDS

Eastern Counties Sen Men

1. Stuart Bennett
2. Adam Hills
3. Keith Palmer

Essex Sen Men

1. Stuart Bennett
2. Keith Palmer
3. John Brock

Eastern Counties Sen Women

1. Melanie Peddle
2. Pamela Abbott

Essex Sen Women

1. Melanie Peddle

Essex Boys U/13

1. Sebastian Alexandru

Eastern Counties Men U/17

1. George Wilkinson

PHOTOGRAPHS AT EASTERN COUNTIES/ESSEX INDOOR CHAMPIONSHIPS

Sebastian Alexandru, aged 12, at his first walking race, had his gold medal presented by 1966 Commonwealth Games gold medallist Ron Wallwork. All other medals were presented by Essex County President Diane Wooller. The Eastern Counties tried to duck out of giving a silver medal

to Pamela Abbott on account of only 2 being in her category - but they finally saw reason and the good lady was rightly called onto the podium.



Photographer: June Cork

ESSEX BOYS U/13 CHAMPIONSHIP

Sebastian Alexandru, with Ron Wallwork



Photographer: Kim Bennett

ESSEX SENIOR MEN'S CHAMPIONSHIP (left to right): Keith Palmer (Southend 2nd), Stuart Bennett (Ilford 1st) and John Brock (Southend 3rd)



Photographer: Kim Bennett

EASTERN COUNTIES CHAMPIONSHIP (left to right): Adam Hills (Bedford 2nd), Stuart Bennett (Ilford 1st) and Keith Palmer (Southend 3rd)

RETIREMENT OF CENTURION OLLY BROWNE

Popular Olly's announced he's hung up his racing shoes for good. Alas he suffers long term injuries to both a foot and a hip. The latter is serious enough for him to be currently attending Southend General Hospital. In a recent Enfield League publication, issued by Ron Wallwork, Olly appears in the "All-Time List" of Enfield League attenders. Indeed for many years, he often did at least 9 of the 12 races usually on offer. Olly became Centurion 789 in the BT 24 Hours race at the Colchester Garrison Track in 1985 - at the same event as Bob Dobson, Don Cox, Martin Fisher and Alan O'Rawe, and others. In that same race Ed Shillabeer set a UK record at 100K. Olly had his Centurion Number tattooed on an arm! Having completed 24 hours at Colchester at the weekend, he turned up for a Woodford Evening 3,000m (then on Wednesday) and set a **pb!** It was Olly who got us the Camden Irish Centre as a venue for The Centurions' 75th Dinner (an idea proposed by Bob Dobson). It was a popular proposal as exactly 100 sat down for dinner - you couldn't make it up! Olly did a number of 100s, joining a select list of those who've completed this feat both on road and track. His 2 successful 100 miles charity walks for "Help for Heroes" along Leigh-on-Sea seafront were truly great events. Olly was a key figure at Parkside Joggers, before switching to Ilford AC in the early 80s for more serious competition. Olly is currently looking to move house, but intends remaining around Leigh-on-Sea. We all thank him for his meritorious contribution over the decades and wish him well.

RUSSELL VROOBEL RIP

At aged just 59, regular Enfield League competitor Russell has sadly passed on. Formerly of Highgate Harriers, he turned out with regularity for Hillingdon AC in recent years. He wanted to be a Centurion, and having failed a couple of times, had committed himself to doing extra training (to achieve his goal) when his forthcoming retirement from work kicked-in. His funeral was at Chiltern Crematorium. Russell was a likeable and popular competitor. Condolence is expressed.

ADVANCE NOTICE

Alas your 2017 Essex 10,000m Championship, in which no Essex athlete reached 10,000m and was won short of this distance by Melanie peddle and 76 years' old Amos Seddon, didn't convince our Essex County AA that this event should be re-admitted to their main County Championship meeting. So it'll be the same format again this year under 'B' terms, in with the Enfield League 1 Hour at Lee Valley on *Saturday 22 September 12 noon*. So please all roll-up and take part! These races are put on for **you!**

BRITAIN'S OLDEST OLYMPIAN DIED UNHONOURED

South Londoner Bill Lucas DFC joined Belgrave Harriers when the Country's largest athletics Club, and served on its Committee to the time of his death aged 101. He was a 1940 Helsinki Olympics 'cert' at 1,500 metres but "that man Hitler", as he called him, ended his dream. Bill got his own back by joining the RAF Bomber Command and completed 81 missions over Germany - reaching Squadron Leader rank. His Olympic chance came in 1948 (London) at 5,000 metres, but didn't gain a medal. He arrived by bus and tube, and afterwards was soon back at his work. He was by his own admission past his best by then. But he'd got a better medal before that - a DFC (Distinguished Flying Cross) and was mentioned in dispatches. Twice he was proposed for an MBE, but rejected. We've an honours system which rewards clapped-out politicians, spivvy businessmen, tacky pop stars and tax exiles - but there was nothing for Bill, who leaves behind a widow. Those at the famous Belgrave Open 7 Miles (and a bit) will have seen him about, probably without realising who he was - and he'd have been there when Club President. RIP.



2018 COMMONWEALTH GAMES/GOLD COAST

Starts 4 April with 6,600 athletes and officials present from 70 nations/territories. 1.5 million spectators "live" and 1.5 billion TV watchers. Prince Charles opens these Games, which will be a 5th time Australia has hosted them. England topped the 2014 table with 58 golds ahead of Australia on 49 - what will happen in 2018? We wish all British Isles' race walkers well and hope supporters enjoy a great time.

Photo: In the Gold Coast (l-to-r) are Callum Wilkinson, Ron Wallwork, Tom Bosworth and Andi Drake.



Dear Dave ...

MEMORIES

Although I am in regular contact with Bon and Arthur Thomson I often go online and bring up back issues of Essex Walker; the one I read today was a 2016 edition which sadly included several obituaries for people I knew but also brought back memories of the past. Mike Shannon was the winner of the first event I ever competed in. It was a youth race (I think over 3 miles) at Regents Park. I remember turning up for a National 10 one year to hear that Charlie Fogg had stopped off for a fry up on the way; he reminded me of Alf Tupper "the tough of the track", a story in one of the boys' comics. Alf always had a meal of fish and chips before he went on to produce a near world class time for the mile. A letter in a recent issue from Paul Nihill mentioned Bob Clark. I first met Bob in 1957 at the RAF 7 mile champs at Cranwell. I walked into the

billet allocated to the competitors which was almost empty apart from a bed in which someone was buried under a pile of blankets, all you could see was a nose and a pair of eyes a voice asked me if I had come far; it turned out to be Bob who won the event that year despite the presence of several top class Belgrave Harriers including Ray Middleton. Cecil Gittins was someone who represented the backbone of any sport and I always had a lot of admiration for him. Recently we have lost Tom Misson who was always so encouraging and supportive and Bryan Hawkins. I have been living in New Zealand since 2013 and watched the 2016 Olympics and the recent World Champs walks on TV. I would hate to be in a 50 km race of 25 x 2km laps, I always found it difficult to cope with a 20 mile consisting of 4 x 5 miles!

I have made contact with Mike Parker who was a New Zealand race walker, and for some time lived in Brighton, to pass on the news about Bryan Hawkins, just in case no one else had been in touch. He told me he had last seen Bryan about four years ago when he

visited the UK. Although at my time of life it is inevitable that old friends and rivals will die it is always a shock when you actually hear the news. I have only just recently found out about Stan Vickers and Bob Clark who I understand died some time ago.

Mike Pearson
(ex-Metropolitan Walking Club)

OLLY FLYNN's TRIBUTE

May I just add a few words through your newsletter regarding the passing of the late great Bryan Hawkins who graced our sport with such style and elegance. He was wonderful company and travelled across with the GB team for the 1975 Lugano Cup in Rouen where I first got to know him. He was simply one of the funniest people I have ever had the good fortune to meet and kept me in stitches there, during and back and made it one of the most enjoyable and memorable GB events I ever participated in. He was, if I recall correctly, during the day an architect but in the evening transformed himself into a warm-up comedian who had a treasure trove of experiences, some which have still stayed with me today, which I am still chuckling about now. He has gone ahead and all who knew him will know that when we meet him again it most certainly will be fun. Bryan, thank you for the memories. RIP.

Oliver Flynn

HOLDER OF HIGH OFFICE

New Essex County President: Diane Wooller is County Officials' Secretary who does an extremely efficient job rounding up the troops for the various Essex Championship events throughout the year - this includes in her repertoire the task of building a team of County Officials for the Essex Schools T&F Champs in early June. She is a competitive athlete and has a Power of 10 "rap sheet" showing her favourite events tend to be from 5M upwards, although now that she is gracing the V60 category she has, at last, spread her wings and taken on almost anything that appears on the Eastern Masters AC League timetable. Diane belongs to Colchester Harriers, the same hang-out of the fearsome perambulatory King twins. President Elect, Andy Catton (Ilford AC) will be the man at the helm from December 2018. You may know him!!!!

June Cork

ADVANCE NOTIFICATION

As I have been assisting Ian Richards with

BMAF championships for some time, since standing down from the Executive, I propose to give up this role no later than the AGM in August. If you are interested in taking this on, please me or Ian know. I would be pleased to explain the role to anyone who is interested.

John Hall Tel: 020 8292 3627

EMAILS DON COX

John Northcott asked about the Airolo-Lugano Relay. Just like to let him know that a team from Essex won it in 1970. The first leg: Don Cox, then Ken Carter, Amos Seddon, Olly Caviglioli and finished off with a very close exciting battle between Phil Embleton and the Italian team. Amos now has the very large trophy that was used as the Essex League team winner's trophy for many years. It would be good to get the team back together and have a photo with the trophy, we never had one. We beat the Germans, Italians, French, Dutch, Spanish and more, and we were just a county team from Essex. But back then, Essex was the best team in the country. I don't think it had anything to do with the Nijmegen 4 day marches. Nijmegen has military roots, going back over 100 years. The medal you get is allowed to be worn by the military on their uniforms, I have 4. The relay is a sporting race, nothing more. Nijmegen is not a race, it's a challenge to walk 50k a day for 4 days. Even today, military teams come from all around the world to take part. If you ever get the chance to do it, it is the best 4-day party you will ever go to.

Don Cox C787

CENTURIONS' AGM (Leeds)

It was a good meeting although the numbers were less than I had anticipated, but the venue was fine and the refreshments laid on by Judith and Rachel, their daughter, was very generous. We have Martin Fisher as the new Captain as Kathy Crilley's 3 years was up, and Richard Cole has taken on the role of Hon Treasurer. We have a couple of others considering whether to join the committee. There is a move to be more proactive in attracting athletes to take up the challenge of 100 miles by introducing 50 miles, 100 kms, etc races as a pathway to doing a 100 miles event. We had quite a few apologies.

Chris Flint (Hon Secretary)

EMAILS JOHN NORTHCOTT

Thank you for responding to a note in Essex Walker, which was very interesting. I

appreciate/know that Nijmegen was military. My memory is not as good as it should be now. Bill Sutherland mentioned that he and Met Police went - whilst he was on his honeymoon in 1967. I first went after the Europe/World Cup in Eschborn outside of Frankfurt (?1969/?1970) with my then girlfriend and now wife of 45 years. I wonder who else of this age group can remember when and how the contact was made. It was organised by Libotte - IAAF Walking Commission from Lugano. All my early papers were given to the then Birmingham University athletics library - a tea chest of papers/programmes etc from 1958-1970 via Michael Long of Birmingham WC before the gift on death of the photographer - same era as Lord Burghley/Exeter. I am overwhelmed that the University Library do not even have a record of my anonymous tea chest gift. I kept my cine 8mm films now on disk (somewhere). Hope someone may be able to fill in the gaps.

John Northcott

ESSEX INDOOR MILE

It must have been quite pleasant for a change to compete in a walking race without a voice-over!!!

June Cork

RUSSELL VROOBEL RIP

How sad to hear of the passing of Russell Vroobel, who was a Member of Highgate Harriers Walking Section from the late 70's and was part of our outstanding junior team in the era of Jacky Lord, triple RWA National Junior 5 Miles Champion. He was introduced to race walking by Ted Holmquist who now lives in Devon I believe. He was a lovely person and a true Team Champion as shown by his Enfield League victories at Hillingdon AC. May he Rest in Peace and always be remembered fondly.

Bill Sutherland

EMAILS AN ALL-TIME GREAT

Just been looking through the Essex newsletter ... as always, an enjoyable read. That said, saddened to hear of more good folk passing from our ranks. May they all RIP.

Among my various sports activities, I continue to visit and help out at schools, have been doing so since becoming an International in 1978 and starting to appear on TV with hopes of competing at the Moscow Olympics! This year, already been invited and attended 3 primary schools to help with sporty events, and we're still only in January. Love the

enthusiasm of the kids. Aside of that, thought you might be interested to know I'm helping to promote and be a volunteer during the [2018 Hospiscare 7 mile charity walk](#) at Exeter on 17 March.



Last year the organisers were fully subscribed with 650 walkers, raising an impressive £42,000. When interviewed, I mentioned that I once walked 7 miles in 45.26 - winning the 1986 Pewsey Cup at Calne. The marketing lady was fairly sure my UK all-comers record was unlikely to be threatened 😊

Chris Maddocks

QUESTION TIME?

Just wondered if there would be a race walk included in the New Athletics World Cup Meeting in London on 14 and 15 July 2018? Out of 8 Countries competing no less than 7 have World Class race walkers.

Bill Sutherland

NEWS FROM SPAIN

I was in Burjassot at the weekend, a part of Valencia, for the Spanish Masters road walking champs. There was 20K for men, 10K for women, also the Spanish 50K champs, featuring a woman's championship for the first time, and many other supporting races for younger athletes, mainly 5Ks. I would estimate a good 300+ on the tarmac during the morning, a real pedestrian fiesta. There was a 15 minute slot on TDP (Spanish TV sports channel) focusing on the 50K – bizarrely mainly on an athlete who, although Spanish Champion over 20K and other distances, had already said she was only going to be doing 30K. But they did feature all the winners, and I even got a glimpse of myself

waddling along in the background of one shot of the women's 50K winner completing a lap. I looked very slow and ploddy compared with those sprightly younger things skipping around the 2K course, but I still did enough to win the W60 race, although couldn't claim the medal as still an "extranjero". Time was slower than I'd hoped for, but it still rated about 85% on the age grading tables, which I cling to, to keep me feeling optimistic and positive.

I am hearing/reading of significant snow in the UK at the moment. I hope it hasn't impacted on or inconvenienced your life too much – though I see Enfield League this weekend has been cancelled. Stay warm. (We have sunshine and temps in double figures, but a vicious wind a-blowing).

Cath Duhig

THANKS FROM Mrs GILL LEVY

Many thanks for the copy of the Essex Walker. I and my family very much appreciate the tribute paid to David. Because the situation is still very raw I shed a few tears but smiled too. It was nice to hear from you. I keep an eye on the walking world and hope it continues to thrive.

Gill Levy

ANSWER SUPPLIED

Thank you for Essex Walker 380 - always a good read. I have only just finished reading this and saw the letter from Bill Sutherland regarding the "New Year's Day Race Walk at Rickmansworth". To clarify the grapevine, this was a normal Park Run, but also included one competitor who race walked the course, ie me, using this as training and clearing the New Year's Day head! Sadly it was not a separate race, although if more Race Walkers took part, then this could become "a sign of things to come".

Trevor Jones

MY VIEWS

Our problem is quite clear so long as the RWA continue as they have for countless years and operate separate from main stream athletics nothing will change. Whilst attending Park Runs over the last 3 plus years I have spoken to so many people about our sport of the past, Race Walking. Today they only associate with Power Walking, Speed Walking or Health

Walking. Why is that? It is because we no longer live in the pedestrian era that we and our forefathers did. In short, we either join the masses and sell walking to them, as they are not likely to come to us and stay with us, or we are doomed to disaster. Our top stars do not race like we did so they are not regularly on view. Sadly when they do no one believes they are walking so where are the RWA and Area RWA's going? The officials we have presently are cemented 'in the past' and only new blood will make the changes that are so badly needed. When we talk about 'gender neutral' it is rapidly becoming reality in walk as the number of females taking part is starting to match and overtake the males. Race Walking would have collapsed many years ago without both.

Bill Sutherland

SAD NOTIFICATION

It is with great sadness, that I contact you to let you know that Bernie Hercock passed away. In spite of being very ill he made it to the Friendship Walks last August, but was unable to join us again.

Ron Wallwork

Adds Hon Ed:

Bernie was, for many years, "Clerk of the Course" at Enfield League events. We last saw him at our IAAF Friendship Walks in August, when, as Enfield & Harringey AC President, he hosted the Borough's genial Mayor. Every seat was filled at his Enfield Crematorium funeral service, which saw great names from Enfield's past attend plus others from several Clubs. March's "Enfield Walker" published a long list of tributes, and as most of our readers also read that worthy publication, there's little point in publishing the same words here, except to comment that we're fully in agreement with all that's been written!

TRIBUTE TO BERNIE HERCOCK RIP

Sad news, though not unexpected, I guess. As I said to Ron Wallwork, Bernie was always so positive and cheerful, despite all the health troubles he'd had, and often gave up his own chance to join in a race in order that others could compete.

Cath Duhig

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