

# Essex Walker

Editor: Dave Ainsworth

## MESSAGE FROM YOUR HON ESSEX COUNTY WALKING SECRETARY

Ray Pearce informs that "our Essex 10,000 metres track Championship is again with the Enfield Hour on 29 September at Lea Valley. Also this will be my last year as Hon Essex County Walking Sec, so hope somebody will take it on. Essex AGM is on the first Monday in December for elections."

Adds Hon Ed: Both items mentioned are of the utmost importance. Our long-established County 10,000 metres was slung out of the main meeting when only 2 entered. On Ray's initiative (along with Hon Suffolk County Walking Secretary Ron Wallwork), a deal was hatched to keep it going in another form - and as a 'B' race. We really need all Essex qualified race walkers to support this - to try and put up a case to be re-admitted into the main meeting. Please all enter Sunday 29 September in your diaries and make arrangements to be there. No excuses - be there! After decades in this role, it's Ray's last Championship as your County Honorary Walking Secretary. Also - we'll need a worthy to take over that role which Ray vacate after long and meritorious service on your behalf. Can you step forward to take on this role? Do you know somebody who'll do it, if you can't? If so, are you prepared to propose that person? Ray's had a difficult time as so many of readers have chosen to stay away from your County Championships; and time-and-time again he's gone into Committee rooms to argue our case for retention in these major County meetings. He's managed to keep our 3,000m and Indoor Mile Championships included - so thanks Ray, but you need to back up whoever takes on this role, by supporting what's put on for you! Your 3,000 Metres Championship was re-admitted after it was thrown out some years' ago. This can't happen again - can it? Could all those interested please let Ray know your names, so as they can be put on the Essex County AGM agenda for voting on. And whoever comes top - please give that person your full support!

## A CENTURION STORY

The sun shone proudly from cloudless skies  
Hats, sweat and sunglasses protect our eyes  
We check our watches as the time nears one  
For we know we walk and dare not run.  
One hundred miles or more or less  
My legs will venture with some distress  
Remember the training, remember the pain  
Each strike of the foot again and again.  
The hours pass and my legs are strong  
Lonely thoughts, lonely time are helped by song  
My back held straight, tired arms are swinging  
To the gentle song my head is singing.  
Great shock as I peer at my swollen hands  
Blood congealed and congested like swollen glands

**Author: Ray Platt C939**

The torture and pain one suffers for glory  
Will open the pages of life's full story.  
The sun has gone, the moon appears  
Long hours have passed since starting cheers  
My thoughts travel briefly of forthcoming night  
Long shadows, dark trees cast a daunting sight.  
Dawn, sunrise appears once again  
My body sways with onslaught of pain  
My lips are dry, I search for water  
Without such fluid my body will falter  
My legs recover my body strong  
The speed increases, I march along  
I search for reasons of knowing why  
One hundred miles do or die.

Adds Hon Ed: Ray qualified as a Centurion at the 1995 Surrey Walking Club 100 Miles in Battersea Park, clocking 23:33.41.

## DEATH OF OLYMPIC HERO KEN MATTHEWS

The death has occurred, in Wrexham at the age of 84, of Ken Matthews, the 1964 Olympic 20k walk champion. No British walker matched his successes. He won four of his five major international tests at 20k: the European title in 1962, the first two finals of the Lugano Trophy in

1961 and 1963 where he led Britain to victory in what was in effect the world team championship each time, and the coveted Olympic gold medal in Tokyo in 1964. The only blot on his record came at the 1960 Rome Olympics. There he fell victim to a combination of the after effects of 'flu, his own ruthless pace and the searing heat, the result being that he collapsed and was taken to hospital.

Born in Birmingham on 21 June 1934, he began his walking career at 18, following in the footsteps of his father Joe, a founder member of Royal Sutton Coldfield Walking Club and himself a long distance walking participant. It was Joe who coached his son, later on with help from 1936 Olympic 50k walk champion Harold Whitlock.

Not only did he capture the first of 17 national titles in 1959 but that year he set an unofficial world record of 34:26.6 for 5 miles, a time he reduced to 34:21.2 the following season. Apart from his Olympic misadventure 1960 was a notable year for him as he also produced British records at 10,000m (42:35.6), 7 miles (48:53.0), one hour (13,805m) and 20k (1:28:15). Such was his versatility that between 1964 and 1971 he held every British record from 5 miles to two hours, including a world best of 69:40.6 for 10 miles in 1964.

The glorious peak of his career came in Tokyo where he decimated the best the world could offer to win the Olympic title by a huge margin in the Olympic record time of 1:29:34. His judgement was flawless. He took the lead just before the 5k mark, was 24 sec clear at halfway, and had built up an advantage of no less than 1 min and 40 sec by the finish. The 5k splits were 22:19, 22:04, 22:29 and 22:42 ... marvellously controlled speed walking. That walkers were still unfairly regarded as second class citizens in the world of athletics became apparent when Britain's other three gold medallists from Tokyo – Lynn Davies, Mary Rand and Ann Packer – very quickly featured in the Queen's Honours List and it wasn't until 13 years later that, following a campaign organised by the Race Walking Association, Matthews at last received his richly deserved MBE. In 2011 he was inducted into the England Athletics Hall of Fame. **[Mel Watman]**

### **KEN MATTHEWS – contributed by Alastair Aitken**

Kenneth Joseph Matthews MBE of the Royal Sutton Walking Club , 27 June 1934 to 2 June 2019  
In the 1960's Great Britain had some of the best race walkers in the World.

- Surrey walker, **Paul Nihill**, who was the European 20k Champion in 1969 and came 2<sup>nd</sup> in the Olympic 50k in Tokyo in 1964;
- **Stan Vickers** was 3<sup>rd</sup> in the 20k in the Rome Olympics of 1960 and previously in 1958 won the European;
- **Don Thompson** won the 1960 Olympic 50k race walk in very hot conditions, and
- **Ken Matthews** who, besides winning the European 20k in 1962, won the 1964 gold medal for 20k in Tokyo (*The first 4 in the 20k in Tokyo at the Olympics were 1 Ken Matthews in a Championship record of 1:29:34; 2 Dieter Lidner (Germany GDR) 1:31.13.2; 3 Volodymyr Golubnichy (UKR)1:31:59.4;4 Noel Freeman (Australia)1:32:36.8*). Electrician Ken, started race walking at 18, having been persuaded by his father ...

**When I talked to him in Tokyo, in the Olympic Stadium in 1964**, he said “It certainly seems I picked the right sport”. He added “It feels great to have won the gold medal and, it has made up for everything that happened to me in Rome and, lots more besides. Rome was a terrific disappointment to me, and more especially as I had clocked the fastest time in the World until then. On that occasion I had suffered a bout of influenza a few weeks before the Games and thought I would be well recovered by the time my race came round, but unfortunately it was not to be. My European Gold medal in Belgrade 2 years later taught me a great deal, and certainly proved that I had the stamina necessary to combat the extremely undulating course there.”

### **1964 TOKYO 20k Final, 15 October 1964**

Ken continued “Still, the Tokyo came which suited me best of all being reasonably flat. After the half way mark, when I learned I was drawing away from the field all the time, I knew I was going to

win the gold medal - I settled down to the race, very relaxed, as I was in the lead by about 100 yards then."

**What did he think was the reason for GB's good showing in Tokyo?**

"Depth of performers at home, plus the fact that everyone was trying really hard on this occasion. It was a tussle for third place in the British team. It could have been George Chaplin from John Edgington's club (*John was 8<sup>th</sup> in Tokyo 20k*) but in fact it was John Paddick who came through in the final trial for selection.

**Did Ken think it way a wise move to move up to the front as they were about to go out of the stadium, so early in the race?**

"I moved out so that I would not get myself boxed in at a crucial point, just before leaving the stadium, and, so that also, should anyone make a break for it I would be in a position that would enable me to chase after them. That was why I moved up to Ron Zinn's shoulder in the stadium."

**What was his candid opinion on when one hears laughing and jeering at walkers, even at the White City meetings in London?**

"I think that is purely ignorance on their part, and that they do not understand just what is going on, and why we do it. They should certainly try and find out the reasons behind athletes doing the different events – and especially walking. Anyone can walk and at almost any age. It is more an extended walk rather than a gait as most people imagine. With Race Walking it is 100% effort, and anything less than that would be too slow to enable him or her to compete in anything. When people laugh I ignore them, and think of all the good times I have had since I began walking. All the trips around the World - and all the friends I have made, and I mean real friends. Through having to train so hard and so long, and get that oh so necessary sleep, a walker loses a great deal of his social life, the sort of social life that non-athletes non-walkers enjoy – but then think of the tremendous amount gained from such experience as I have enjoyed over the years from walking".

*Further tributes to Ken Matthews appear in the 'Dear Dave' summary of readers' contributions.*

---

**TWO ANNIVERSARIES**

We salute Ilford AC's **Ed Shillabeer** on attaining octogenarian status on 2 August. On 4 August he'll celebrate completing 55 years as a veterinary surgeon. Being 80 is no bar to an active life, as he still races - even entering 100 miles' races. On the business side of his life he still runs 2 vets' surgeries in Plymouth (Lew Mockett's sister used to be a client). Ed started as a runner before concentrating on our race walking mode of progression. As well as Ilford, he's appeared for other Clubs including London Vidarians, Dawlish & South Devon, Plymouth City Walkers etc. The 1976 Leicester-to-Skegness 100 Miles saw him become Centurion 590 in 21:45.19 and he's appeared many such events since - his best a victory in the 1989 Arthur Eddlestone BEM Memorial Walk at rainy Hendon Police Training School clocking 18:11.08. He was prominent in organising (and winning) the famous Plymouth-to-Dawlish point-to-point classic (famous for its end-of-race traditional Devon cream tea). Ed and his late father were prominent in organising many top races in Devon including National Championships and many well-supported distance races at Burrator. He's a Guernsey legend with four 19.4 Miles' Church-to-Church victories (1988/89 and 2004/05), his best being 3:50.40 in '89. Ed's won British Championships, held British records and excelled in both Triathlons and Quadrathons. On the Isle of Man he's won acclaim and much back-slapping for being the famous 85 Miles Parish Walk's most senior finisher! Despite residing at an "outpost" in race walking terms, he travels all over the country supporting our events, setting an example to others. So often Ed's been part of the scene at major World and European Veterans/Masters Championships. He's written many informative reports of such occasions for publications on his return! He supports all our major social functions and "has form" as a prolific fund-raiser for a variety of charities. He celebrated 50 years as a vet by walking from the West Country-to-central London in support of International Cat Care. His walk finished at the Royal College of Veterinary Surgeons in Horseferry Road, where a number of race walkers turned-up to greet him before

entering the Boardroom to celebrate. More recently saw a 30 miles' cross-Dartmoor "Chara Challenge" carrying 32lbs of kit to benefit Royal Marines Charities. Many more such examples could be quoted, including giving it his all dressed as St George when the London Marathon was on our Patron Saint's Day. Ed's active in his community being involved in local politics and also as a leading supporter of Plymouth Argyle, attending most home fixtures and several "away" (some feat considering how far most away games are for Pilgrims' followers). He was involved in a fans'-based movement to save his beloved Club when in the financial mire!

At the RWA Centenary Luncheon (RAF Club, Piccadilly) guest speaker Peter Matthews (National Union of Track Statisticians) specifically mentioned Ed in his after-dinner speech for holding our UK record for the oldest senior athletics debut! This was on 20/21 April at Bazencourt when selected for a Great Britain v France 200 Kilometres representative match. It wasn't good for athletics due to a bitterly cold overnight -7 degrees centigrade temperature. Ed, then aged 51, came 13th clocking 23:50.51. This appearance saw him make the famous Guinness Book of Records. Essex saw the best of Ed, as on 15 September 1985 at Colchester Garrison track he set a UK record 100 Kilometres time of 9:41.54. Ed came to support our wonderful 90th Enfield Open 7 Miles' reunion occasion. Much more could be written - 80 yes - but who'd bet against more achievements coming his way?

This recent picture shows Ed receiving a Continuous Service Award from fellow members of the veterinary profession.



#### **APPLAUSE FOR ED from PETER MATTHEWS (NUTS)**

"A lovely and detailed tribute to a very fine man, who I have been privileged to meet a few times."

#### **IMPORTANT NOTICE RE ERWL ONE HOUR MEETING**

Due to track availability it has been necessary to change the date of the **ERWL One Hour Meeting. IT IS NOW SUNDAY 29 SEPTEMBER.**

It is proposed to stage two races to embrace both categories and entries must be made in advance. Numbers will be limited and it would be of great assistance if persons thinking of doing the event could contact [ronc893moulton@gmail.com](mailto:ronc893moulton@gmail.com) to register an interest.

## 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. Times marked \* are provisional times.

<b>AUG</b>	6	Veterans AC 5 Miles (all welcome)	Battersea Park	7.00 pm
	9	Death March 100K	Bornem	TBC
	10	British Masters Athletics 3,000m Championship	Alexander Palace	*1.10 pm
	11	British Masters Athletics 5,000m Championship	Alexander Palace	*1.10 pm
	13	Woodford Tuesday Walk 3,000m + YAG	Ashtons Track	8.30 pm
	14	Open Track Walk	Tonbridge	6.30 pm
	17	Tower Insurance 100 Miles (+ RWA 100 Miles Champ)	Castletown	2.00 pm
	18	IOM 20 Miles/BMAF Long Distance Championship	Castletown	8.00 am
	18	SEAA 5,000m Championships (+ 3,000m for U17/U15)	Ashford	TBC
	25	British Athletics 5,000m Championship (Men/Women)	Alexander Palace	TBC
	26	Southend-on-Sea AC 1 Mile (+ George Woods Trophy)	Garon Park	10.30 am
	27	Veterans AC 5 Miles (all welcome)	Battersea Park	7.00 pm
	30	Sarnia Road 3K	Vale	6.30 pm
	31	LICC/Enfield League 5,000m	Allianz Park	11.40 am
<b>SEP</b>	1	SCVAC Track & Field League Final 2,000m Walk	Ashford	TBC
	1	Guernsey Church-to-Church 19.4 Miles	St Peter Port	9.00 am
	3	Woodford Tuesday Walk 3,000m + Series Presentation	Ashtons Track	8.30 pm
	14	Roubaix 28 Hours	Roubaix	TBC
	21	English Schools Championships	Exeter	TBC
	25	Ryan Cup Match + Civil Service & British Police 10K Championships	Birmingham	1.30 pm
	29	Enfield League 1 Hour + Essex County 10,000m Championship	Lee Valley	12 noon
<b>OCT</b>	5/6	RWA U17 Training Weekend	Aldershot	TBC
	12	Enfield League 5 Miles	Lee Valley	1.00 pm

## NEW MANAGER

Ryan O'Rawe, from the famous sporting family, has just been appointed Player-Manager of Brentwood Town FC, where he was once a player (over 200 appearances) and also Captain. Andy, a true star race walker of times' past said "He has taken the role of Player-Manager. He has always wanted to manage, so this is his foot on the first rung!" Club Chairman Jez Dickinson said, "Ryan is a new young manager who is smart, hungry and a winner. I know he will be successful". Brentwood Town are a Ryman Division 1 North side who play home games at The Brentwood Centre in the town's Doddinghurst Road.

## CONDOLENCE EXPRESSED

We express sorrow on the sad news that Malcolm Wishart's wife, Pat, has passed on. Stock Exchange AC stalwart Malcolm is a long-established Surrey Walking member, having joined them in 1963.

## ROOM AT THE TOP

UK Athletics have appointed Chris Clark as their Chair - this follows Richard Bowker's departure from the role. Our new man is a former head of Global Marketing for HSBC and earlier in his career spent 7 years at Saatchi & Saatchi. He currently holds 2 non-executive positions at Arriva UK Digital and on the board of Royal Marsden NHS Trust. His interest in athletics is that of a keen spectator in his youth and as a parent of a high standard middle-distance participant. Among races he's completed are 4 London Marathons. An advert is now out for a new permanent Chief Executive Officer.

## READERS IN THE MONEY

Among 6 recent lucky winners of the RAF's 200 Club were Peter Cassidy, Chris Flint and Pauline Wilson - congratulations to this fortunate trio. Why don't you get involved, so helping race walking? Organiser is Honorary RWA Treasurer Mark Easton. You'll see him at our meetings - he's the one with camera equipment.

## WHERE ARE THE READERS?

Essex Walker used to have over 250 readers. Then to comply with new Data Protection Regulations all recipients had to "opt-in" to be part of the mailing list. A simple "return" operation on the keyboard would have done it! Many didn't, although numbers gradually crept up as more readers began asking

why they no longer received email editions? Those wanting paper editions nosedived to 9, hence it was no longer worthwhile or economic to produce such a low print run. Our Honorary Distributer, Tony Perkins, reports that on email we're only just over the 100 – if you know of ex-readers who are no longer on the mailing list, or potential new readers, perhaps you could encourage them to subscribe by emailing either [dave\\_ainsworth@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:dave_ainsworth@yahoo.co.uk) or [essexwalker@btinternet.com](mailto:essexwalker@btinternet.com).

### STILL GOING STRONG

I thank Centurion Tony Perkins for forwarding details of 74-year old Halstead-resident Andrew Wilmot (Halstead Road Runners) who qualified as Centurion 997 at Newmarket's Rowley Mile racecourse in 2003 clocking 23:33.19. If "Googling" Halstead Road Runners + Andrew Wilmot you'll get wonderful accounts of a truly remarkable athlete. His Club have a most informative website. Here's details of yet another series of meritorious performances:

Barrow 10-in-10 Challenge: Andy Wilmot completed 7 days of this challenge and on Day 5 he became the first person to complete 100 marathons in the Barrow challenge, being his 778<sup>th</sup> marathon overall. He earned himself lifetime entry to the Barrow challenge races.

Day 1: 5:15.38 Day 2: 5:33.29 Day 3: 5:05.00 Day 4: 5:08.00 Day 5: 5:18.00  
Day 6: 5:23.00 Day 7: 5:27.00

**Sue Clements** comments on Andrew Wilmot's achievements: "They make interesting reading and provide a fascinating insight."

### ROLL-UP, ROLL-UP

We've true success, as entries for your long-established 3,000m 'A' race walks in the opening two Woodford Green 2019 series at Ashtons Track have soared in popularity - despite clashes with other events. Let's continue this trend as the tide has turned in our favour. See our Fixtures' Column for dates/times.

While perusing this column please note another Essex success - your Southend-on-Sea 1 Mile on August Bank Holiday Monday (10.30 am start) at Garon Park Track, Eastern Avenue, Southend-on-Sea. SS2 4FA. Garon Park, with a large free car park, is located on a turning off Eastern Avenue opposite McDonald's Drive Thru' (on the site of a now demolished public house - "The Invisible Man" - once owned by former Essex County AA President, the late Mel Batty). 'B' race/on-the-day entries. Come early as this meeting gets 400+ takers, with our walk being its "curtain raiser", so there's queueing at entries tables. We've become used to seeing in excess of 20 turnout for a now well-established fixture, so let's keep it going. In conjunction is the George Woods Trophy, in memory of a great and popular Southend and Centurion stalwart. This trophy was donated by the talented O'Rawe family and goes to the first Essex-resident Centurion (holder is Prittlewell-based Steve Allen). Racing is over in time for you to enjoy visits to Southend-on-Sea's attractions, including the world's longest pier if seeking additional pedestrianism.

### AND IT'S GOODNIGHT FROM HIM!

Romford-born and now Ramsgate-based, Mick Barnbrook, at the age of 76, has announced a retirement from athletics after 49 continuous years' involvement in our sport - his first race walking appearance being in 1970. He has belonged to Metropolitan Police Walking Club, The Centurions, Cambridge Harriers, Sarnia WC & Ilford AC, as well as being "unattached" for 6 years. He's been a most active competitor as past result sheets will confirm, and a regular supporter of race walking functions.



### ON HIS BIKE!

Former International race walker and 1967 RWA National 20 Miles Champion (in days when that title was hard to attain), the Reverend Doctor Roy Lodge MBE has completed another charity bicycle ride. This time from Stratford-on-Avon (where he was once Mayor) to Bristol in support of Shakespeare Hospice. Among great charity feats in the saddle has been John O'Groats-to-Land's End (2011) and also Land's End-to-John O'Groats (2013), plus in 2012 Olympic year he rode from Stratford-to-Stratford. Just a month before his 81st birthday, and despite suffering deep vein thrombosis which came after falling off his bike earlier in the year, he lined-up for the challenge on Sunday 28 July, being chosen to lead the cyclists out of Walton Hall, near Stratford-on-Avon. His wife Gina drove the route providing back-up with refreshments, maintenance and motivation. Roy keeps fit with regular gym visits and - of course - cycling!

Mick states one of his most cherished awards was a clock presented by Steve Wynn when becoming one of 6 (incidentally all Centurions) to complete 100 Blackheath 9K Handicap races. He's had some poor health in recent times, but a serious back injury brought about this decision - which came when run over by a car while trying to stop a getaway driver, who was subsequently arrested by colleagues and imprisoned. Mick carried this injury for decades, without complaint. Like so many, Mick entered race walking via his employer - when a Sergeant at Peckham, being recruited to make up a Barking-to-Southend team by colleague, then Sergeant Peter Hodgkinson at the same Station.

Mick became Centurion 661 at the famous 1979 Ewhurst 100 Miles, clocking 21:59.05. His 2 completed 100 miles races show how UK race walking fortunes have nosedived. At Ewhurst 107 started, 78 finished of whom 37 became new Centurions. After Mick's efforts, a decade passed before the next Metropolitan Police athlete joined The Centurions - when Cambridge Harriers clubmate Peter Hodgkinson passed the recorders in 19:48.00, in the Arthur Eddleston BEM Memorial Event at Hendon Police Training School - for good measure Peter was followed home by 7 more Met Police colleagues! In 2001 Mick finished the "Hedgethorpe 100" at Colchester's Lower Castle Park, where 47 started, 15 finished (2 d/q'd) with just 3 new Centurions - only one belonging to a UK Club - Nigerian Charles Arosanyan. Mick's time was 23:40.32, just behind popular and frequent Essex visitor Hans Van der Knapp. That race had an Ilford AC "escort" as first and last finishers belonged to that Club - Bob Dobson and Mick (both incidentally then aged 58). The previous time one Club had provided an "escort" was at the 1969 Bristol 100 Miles when Essex Police members John Hedgethorpe and Paul Cox were first and last. Colchester saw awards for all competitors reaching a minimum of 20 miles, which was all Mick planned to do. He hadn't trained for 100 miles but thought about it being John Hedgethorpe's Memorial race, so decided to press on to honour the great man's name by going further. He did go further - and further - and even further with Sharon as his hard-working attendant. After each park circuit he put his feet in a bucket of cool water to refresh them and ploughed on to complete a sub-24 hours' 100 miles for a second time. With completions in 1979-and-2001 (22 years' apart) Mick thought he might have got a record for the longest gap between successful UK sub-24 hours' finishes. A long span - yes - but not the longest. That record is held by Past President of both The Centurions and the Race Walking Association, former International Eric Horwill (1966-and-1997/31 years' apart). Mick's initial aim at Colchester was to race a competitive 20 miles' walk in preparation for the Guernsey's annual Church-to-Church classic, but as reported above, he then kept on going! Bob Dobson's win came in one of the greatest 100 miles' races in UK history as he clocked 19.46.11 with Richard Brown (SWC) 2nd in 19:50.39. Bob became eldest winner of a senior RWA Championship!

As for Guernsey, Mick had a spell as a Sarnia Walking Club member - once famously travelling all the way from his then Sidcup home to St Peter Port just for an AGM! That shows his commitment for the cause. Mick was a legend during his time on Sarnia's books - as when appointed "The Minister for Mainland Development" he spent much time and effort promoting their annual September Church-to-Church 19.4 miles classic event - with much success, as numbers of mainland competitors impressively increased. Mick's fit as proved by a hectic 6 weeks' spell when finishing 4 marathon runs, a 50K and a 20 Miles' walk. He's twice run London Marathons, with a 3 hours 25 minutes pb. Essex-born Mick also has an individual place medal (3rd) in a 3,000 Metres Essex County Championship, so he can sprint as well as tackle long distances. In 49 years he's only twice been disqualified - on a penultimate lap at Cricklefields Stadium in an Essex League 10,000 metres event, and more spectacularly 20 yards into an Open 7 Miles, having travelled to Leicester for it! He's dropped out once - taken so seriously ill when ascending that steep opening climb of his beloved Church-to-Church walk, he ended that week as a hospital in-patient suffering a stomach ulcer. On that occasion the bystander coming to his aid was Chris Flint's wife who was commended for doing all the right things! Mind you Mick thought about dropping out again - half way up that steep climb in the Chiltern Hills on the Pednor 5 Miles - but soldiered on!

Like so many Clubmen at the time, Mick aimed for a coveted RWA 7 Miles-in-an-Hour badge, and so nearly achieved one, with a number of finishes just seconds outside his target. However he bettered this standard on 2 occasions, but in 10 miles events. He twice represented the British Police in 10 miles' representative matches, both times getting under 85 minutes! Needless to say he was awarded British Police Representative colours, of which he's most proud.

Mick's been at nearly all our classic events, such as appearing successfully in 8 Hastings-to-Brightons (38 miles) and 2 London-to-Brightons (53 miles), In 1975 he was 47th of 73 finishers clocking 9:55.17 just pipping London Vidarian Mike Glead by 4 seconds in a tight seafront finish. In 1981, 10:29.22 secured him 28th spot - a second behind late Belgravian John Keown - when 36 finishers made the result sheet. Mick has a sad memory of that event, for he wasn't far behind Belgrave Harrier Dave King at Pyecombe, before a road accident so tragically ended his life. Like so many Police officers, Mick has wonderful memories of the Barking-to-Southend Walk (34 Miles), having completed 16 of them (best an impressive 5 hours 31 minutes). Mick's aim was to secure a top-10 finish and, on one occasion, seemingly had it in the proverbial bag when 10th on entering Southend United's Roots Hall Stadium for a lap of the pitch. He blamed his attendant for not tipping him off that a fast-closing Chris Flint was gaining ground, and Chris - nowadays a near Kent neighbour of Mick - pipped him on the line so relegating Mick to 11th spot!

Apart from athletics, Mick's always been involved in community life. Most notably as Chairman of a Royal Naval Association action committee (based in Greenwich) which sought to find sailors of all-ranks who'd been awarded Victoria Crosses, but rested in unmarked graves, paupers graves and graves lacking headstones. His Group found 10 worthy recipients and grafted hard to obtain sponsorship to buy headstones and arrange proper dedication ceremonies. Their efforts rightly attracted National press attention. One such recipient was Greenwich-born Rear Admiral Eric Gascoigne Robinson VC, OBE and Mentioned in Despatches (1882-1965), who when a Lieutenant Commander in the Dardanelles, stormed ashore and single-handedly destroyed a Turkish gun battery. He ended World War 1 after being badly injured later in the Gallipoli Peninsula Campaign. He was buried at St John's Church in Langish (near Petersfield) but for unknown reasons without a headstone. This omission was rectified in 1998 as a proper dedication ceremony was arranged to put matters right!

Mick can be relied on to volunteer for long and time-consuming duties when needed - as 3 times he's been on support teams (driving/feeding/motivating) when ultra-distance race walkers have tackled really long ones on the Continent. When then Cambridge Harriers, Metropolitan Police & Centurions' colleague Arthur Eddlestone BEM, who so sadly lost his life in a 1984 mountaineering mishap, tackled a John O'Groats-to-Land's End Walk Mick took control of a charity package initiative which raised over £25,000 for Bexley's Multiple Sclerosis branch. At that organisation, Mick helped out with both entertainment and transport and was highly thought of. Mick gave up his time to be an athletics mentor for fellow Cambridge Harrier Stephen Lawrence, who tragically lost his life in a high-profile 1993 murder.

Mick was promising at more than athletics, as when living in Plaistow he excelled on table tennis tables, once competing against Chester Barnes in a local league match.

Thanks to Mick for all he's done to keep our British race walking going. If all race walkers had made as many appearances as Mick, and been as enthusiastic as him, this sport would have been much, much stronger.

### **MICK BARNBROOK TRIBUTES**

- “Well done Mick for your longevity. There have been times when you have been my inspiration! Especially your enthusiasm for Guernsey which a couple of times swayed my decision to do a Church walk I might have passed over!” **Ed Shillabeer**
- “I've enjoyed reading DA's account of your sporting history. Very reminiscent of Eamon Andrews and "This is your Life". It's good to hear all these facts, rather than as is sadly getting increasing regular - at someone's funeral. So I am giving you a big pat on the back now and saying WELL DONE. You will have many memories and stories to tell - ideal for an after-dinner speech - Met Police Annual Dinner and Reunion? Clearly you were a great "club" man and a reliable back-up man. None more so than when you raced an extra 80 miles so that we were placed in the Hedgethorpe Hundred Team race. You are a man of many talents and interests so I hope we will see you again to share your joviality. Congratulations on your 49 years, but don't stop. Carry on enjoying life to the full and hope to see you again sometime.” **Bob Dobson**
- “What a wonderful biography Dave has given you and rightly so. It shows the length and breadth of your commitment to race walking and all the more noteworthy because of the injury

you have carried for a very long time indeed which I knew nothing of. Wishing you every good health and fortune in your retirement from our sport which will be a lot quieter for the absence of your ebullience (what a word LOL) and great personality. Thanks for the memories.”

### **Olly Flynn**

- “What a tremendous resume, well done and thanks.” **Alex Ross**
- “Just wanted to say what a brilliant job you have done in writing about Mick's exploits. We are so lucky that you are connected to the sport. Sincere thanks to you for taking the time and energy to gather all this info and data on such a deserving club member and providing him with a worthy recognition and departure from the sport of race-walking. Keep up the great work - please!” **Steve King**
- “He has certainly done a huge amount for the race walking world. He is always ready with a quip and has helped many people less fortunate than himself to lead a better life.” **Chris Flint**

### **STILL IN THE RUNNING**

Much respected former Welsh Commonwealth Games representative race walker and one-time South Woodham Ferrers resident **Dave Rosser** returned to our Essex athletics scene in July. In his heyday he was a regular scorer for a star-studded Southend-on-Sea AC team which won National and County honours as well as many awards in Open events. Now Spanish-based, Dave appeared in a Great Notley parkrun. Here's his performance taken from the official result sheet: 169 David ROSSER 31:14 VM75-79 60.67% M 125 First Timer! While there he had a chat with well-established parkrun official Tony Perkins, who was as usual on pointsman duty that morning.

Comments Olly Flynn: “It seems Dave may be fit enough to put the great Arthur Thompson under pressure too.”

### **FAREWELL DENNIS**

Dennis Jones, an enthusiastic competitor over many decades, has retired from athletics. A member of Pitsea Running Club, he was a regular at all Post Office race walking events - no matter where! He appeared in our now defunct Essex League, scoring points for Loughton AC. Over a long period he turned out in marathons across the globe and raised considerable sums for good causes. We wish Dennis well.

### **HIM IN THE BACK**

Latest celeb hailing cabbie Steve Allen's black taxi was Ben Fogle - TV presenter, successful Mount Everest climber and Atlantic rower. Steve himself "has form" as he's a Centurion, super-fast marathon runner and channel swimmer! Who next?

### **SAD NEWS**

It's reported that the widow of the late and much-admired former Essex County President Mel Batty has passed on. We express our condolences to the family. Mel, a World 10 Miles' record holder, took his leave of us in 2011.

### **ANOTHER STRING TO HIS BOW**

Former Chairman of Metropolitan Police Walking Club Andrew Bignold who has helped by lap-recording at our 100 miles/24 hours' events, is nowadays a retired Police Officer. He's in constant demand as a Member of the London Guild of Toastmasters. In that capacity Andy has officiated at a number of walking functions, including our memorable 2011 Centurions' Centenary Dinner in the House of Commons. He's now a celebrant and takes bookings for those wanting funeral services properly and professionally conducted. We hope our readers don't require such a service for many, many years to come - but it could be a personal touch to have somebody at the lectern with a race walking connection. Bookings can be made on 07950-022400.

### **HE'LL BE THERE**

Nowadays Olympian Peter Marlow doesn't judge International race walks - but he'll be at the 2020 Tokyo Olympics anyway - as a most interested and knowledgeable spectator. Peter, Race Walks Director at our London 2012 Games, has had the good fortune to win an Olympic Association competition offering a trip to Tokyo, where the walking course will pass so many great iconic sights. What an experience. Let's hope we have a few GB entrants in these races for Peter to cheer on!

## AT ALEXANDRA PALACE

Amos SEDDON (Harwich Runners) turned out at Ally Pally Parkrun on Saturday 20 July clocking a commendable 29.15 for 144th place. It was his 154th run overall with an age grade of 68.66% for 75/79 age group. In his heyday he achieved 25 GB International Vests. Ally Pally has paths which are narrow and very stony for walking on plus of course it's quite hilly! "Loud" betting pundit John McCririck, who had a "direct funeral" (ie no attenders), had his ashes scattered there - by the furlong post on the old horse racing course which closed in 1970.

## NO SIGN OF ITS DEATH

The Death March (100K) on the Continent has always enjoyed good Essex support. A coffin is paraded along the start line before the "off". On many occasions, when walking was stronger here in Blighty, coaches were organised for this event. Death March regular **Dave Hoben** reports "The entries, some 13,000 of them, sold out in 2 hours! That must be a record for a long distance event? My mate says an Eminem concert would sell out faster than that!" Quite!



## Dear Dave ...

### APPRECIATION

Many thanks and congratulations for an outstanding June/July edition of EW. Lots of authoritative and interesting information; not least your own CV, well done. **Alex Ross**

### FRED PEARCE RIP

is with enormous regret that we mark the passing of Fred.



A unique and irreplaceable figure who gave a lifetime of dedication to race walking and his beloved club. Only in the last couple of years had he been understandably forced to relinquish a wide range of duties. His love of the sport, experience and cheery smile will be enormously missed. Our thoughts are with Chris, family, and all friends at Lancashire Walking Club at such a sad time.

**Trevor McDermot**  
Secretary, Yorkshire Race Walking Club

### NEWS FROM DAVE GULLIVER

I can assure you that this elderly retired RAF Warrant Officer has registered for next year's London Marathon. I have at my age made the decision to run-walk for the Royal British

Legion, which is close to my heart. Already training but have to wait until the end of October to see whether I have been accepted. If accepted then I have to raise £2k for the Legion before I start, not a problem as the support is already there, just have to perform though. **Dave Gulliver**

Adds Hon Ed: Swaffham-based Dave was a former member of the London Vidarians and Anglia Striders, and also represented the Royal Air Force, Kent and Norfolk Counties.

### LYNN CARMODY RIP

- "Sad to hear of the passing of Lynn Carmody who will be greatly missed by the race walking fraternity." **Bill and Kath Sutherland**
- "Sad news, Lynn RIP you will be sadly missed." **Dave Gulliver**
- "Desperately sad news especially as the indications were beginning to look promising that the post-operation treatment was having a positive effect. Lynn was one of the great band of officials who helped at every opportunity and will be sorely missed by all the race walking community. In sadness." **Chris Flint** President & Hon Secretary RWA (South)

### NIGEL STONE ARTICLE

I have known Nigel since our days in in the English Schools back in the 70s. Still bump into him on officiating duties quite regularly.

**Ian Statter**

### REPORTS PETER MARLOW

Luckily the proposal from the IAAF Walking Committee was defeated and the international distances are unchanged. The new IAAF Council will discuss distances after the World Championship in Oregon in 2022. Sadly the Olympic programme will not include the

women's 50k Race. Confirm walks are in the Birmingham Commonwealth Games.

*Peter Marlow*

### **BOWZA**

Hi all, just an update on my dog Bowza. he is in the news again. He has a new friend he rescued from the road, a jackdaw, now named Bondi.

<https://www.eadt.co.uk/news/hero-dog-makes-friends-with-jackdaw-whose-life-he-saved-1-6125419>

Also as a lot of sports are now videoed; if international race walking was judged by video, not many would be finishers. You only have to film the first 10 or so, and they'd get d/q'd, then film the next leaders. The last race I watched, everyone in the leading bunch was breaking the rules. 10.38 for 3k, come on!

*Don Cox*

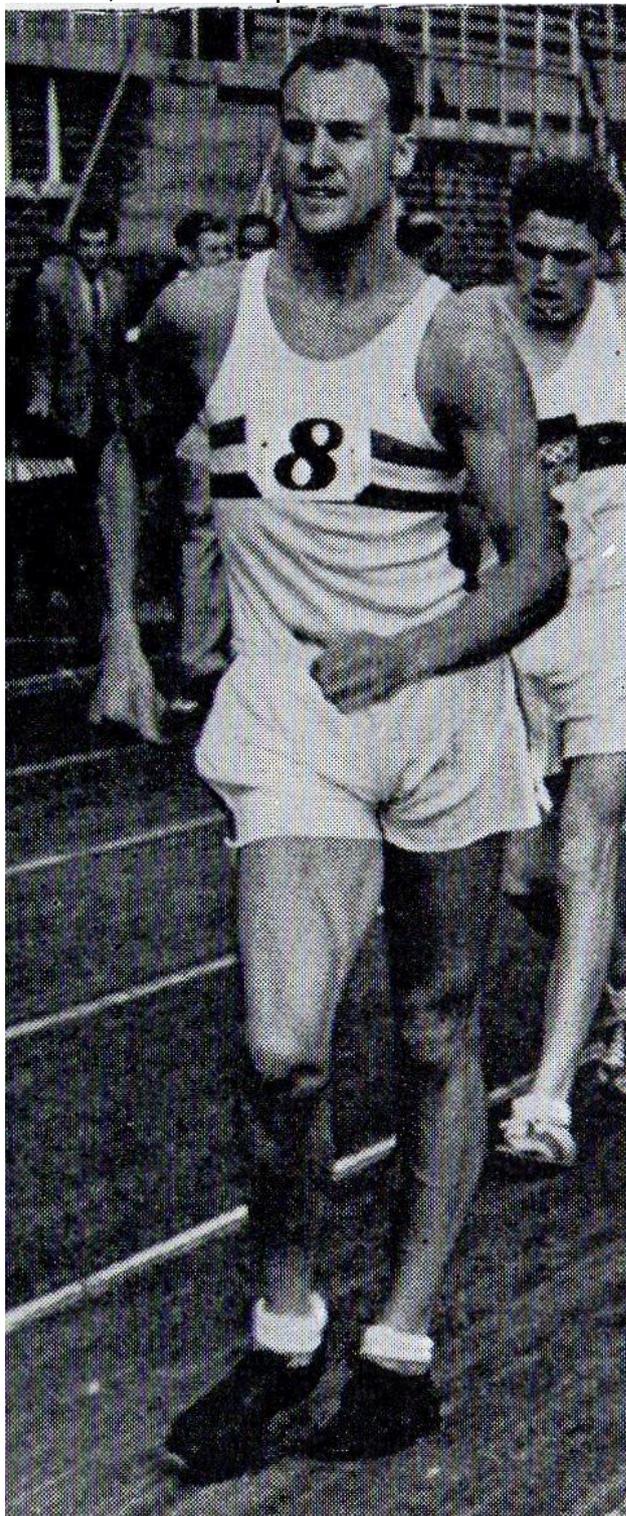
### **KEN MATTHEWS MBE, RIP**

On 2 June Ken Matthews MBE died at the age of 84. Ken won the Enfield Open 7 three times, 1958, 1960 and 1961. An article in Athletics Weekly in October 1964 entitled "A Walker Ahead of his Time" outlined his wonderful career which included Olympic, European and Lugano Cup victories and a host of national titles and records. As teenager I entered the sport in the late 50's, early 60's and he quickly became my idol and I consider myself to be privileged to have competed against him, with him in GB colours and be a friend of his. We kept in touch over the years and he unhesitatingly entrusted me with his Tokyo gold medal and autographed photographs to use in presentations I made to local school children. He wasn't well enough to attend the 90th Enfield Open 7 but sent a note with best wishes.

He once told me that on the Monday mornings after his early visits to races in the capital, he got fed up of telling his workmates that a he'd finished 2nd to a bloke called Stan Vickers and determined to train harder. I saw both these great exponents on several occasions, but the one I remember most was the trial for the 1960 Rome Olympics which was staged at Victoria Park, London on the evening of 23 July. I had been competing in the AAA junior mile at Hurlingham that afternoon and was taken along to the trial race by "walking

*Essex Walker issue No 389 (August/September 2019)*

encyclopaedia" and NUTS man Colin Young. I was so impressed with what I saw, that after just a couple of years in the event I was truly hooked on the discipline. Ken won that day but it was Stan who won a medal in Rome and it was during the 4 years that followed that Ken won everything there was to win. Incidentally 3rd in the trial race was yet another 'great' of the era, Don Thompson.



A modest, unassuming man and a wonderful athlete - RIP Ken.

*Ron Wallwork*

## TRIBUTE FROM OUR 1967 RWA NATIONAL 20 MILES' CHAMPION

It was with great sadness that I read of the news of Ken Matthews death. Ken's death immediately brought back memories of when we first met and when I joined the Royal Sutton Coldfield Walking Club after seeing Ken compete in a track race in Salford stadium Birmingham just prior to the Tokyo games and I turned to my wife Gina and said "I believe I can do that.". I subsequently joined the Royal Sutton Coldfield Club with such names as John Paddick, Ken Harding, Karl Abolins and Ken. On a later occasion again at Salford stadium Ken was watching a track race in which I narrowly beat Bob Hughes in a sprint finish to the line. Ken's advice following that event was invaluable to both Bob and I.

Following Tokyo Ken retired so I didn't get to compete with him but modelled my style of race walking on Ken's. Perhaps my fondest memory of Ken was seeing him enter the stadium in Tokyo and David Coleman describing him as the man with "iron legs" and then to see his wife break the security cordons and rush on to the track and embrace her husband. Iron legs was a fair description of Ken's style, never walking with a bent leg, always upright and with an unmistakable heel/toe stride pattern. Such fond memories both of Ken and his father Joe who was always in attendance at race meetings even after Ken's retirement giving us advice and coaching.

Throughout the course of his 84 years ran fundamental strains of principle, courage, determination, dedication and a strong and reassuring presence. Ken would have known that mastery in a sport, won by toil and pain, does bring you for the moment, to the top of one of the peaks of human living, in which Ken was able to taste something of the buoyancy, and the keen-edged zest of human living. We can remember Ken as a complete being, formed by his relationships, and by all that happened to him and what he made of it. Such a delightful man whose cheerful disposition and gentle manner made him a pleasure to be with. Ken's life was characterised by a kind of passionate intensity, stretching out eager hands to grasp life, enjoying life to the utmost, living life to the full.

*Essex Walker issue No 389 (August/September 2019)*

Many of us in the Race Walking fraternity could say of Ken, as Mark Antony said of Julius Caesar, "he was my friend, faithful and just to me." Ken found joy in this world in all its parts and for us to know him was to share in that vision and to experience that joy.

Where much is expected of an individual he may rise to the level of events and make the dream come true. We give thanks that for all the members of his family, his personal friends, his professional colleagues, his race walking fraternity, he made the dream come true. May he rest in peace and rise in glory.

***Dr Rev Roy Lodge MBE***

### **KEN MATTHEWS MBE, RIP**

- "Sadly, I never knew Ken but it sounds that he was truly legend." ***Kathy Crilley***
- "You will recall that some years ago he was one of our guests of honour at our BASC annual dinner. He was a big favourite and very proud of his 1964 Olympic gold medal which he brought with him." ***Bob Dobson***
- "Ken also won two Lugano Cup 20kms (1961/63) leading GB to victory on both occasions. It was a privilege to race against him and know him as a friend."  
***Ron Wallwork***
- "I remember the film of the '64 Olympics, with Ken striding across the finish line. One of my athletic highlights was being able to shake Ken's hand after I won the Belgrave "7", in what was probably a record - for slowest time! Ken was our guest of honour that day." ***John Hall***
- "I knew he was ailing, but always sad to hear when one of the old guard leaves us."  
***Cath Duhig***
- "Very sorry to hear this sad news of the passing of one of Britain's great walking legends. Our condolences and kind regards." ***Sandra Brown, Surrey Walking Club and Centurions***
- "A wonderful eulogy of a great champion, well done. You are your team's efforts to get him also rightfully awarded his MBE must have left him eternally grateful that his Race Walking family never forgot one of its true heroes. Thankfully I did take the time out to write to him recently." ***Oilly Flynn***
- "Appreciate the brief obituary. I do remember that scene where Ken's wife met

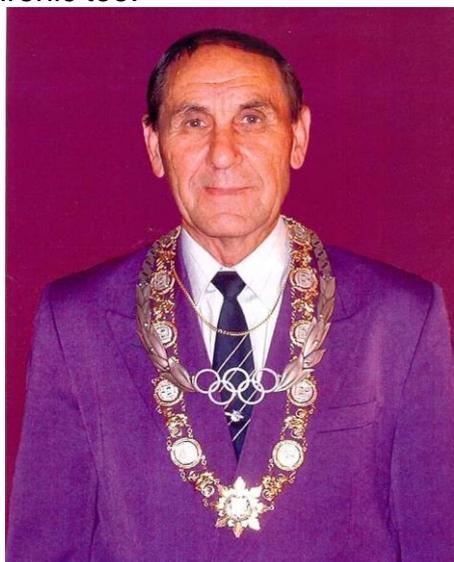
him at the end of the Tokyo 20km.  
Inspiring for a young sports fan.”

**Len Ruddock**

- “Not unexpected, but very sad news. A one off, great at one sport, not afraid to try another! Rest in peace.” **Roger Mills**
- “What can I say other than it is a very sad day for Race Walking in the Golden era. Ken was always my hero along with the late Don Thompson and Paul Nihil, MBE. I remember in my younger days sitting glued to the television in the Royal Northern Hospital, when I should have been walking the beat, to ensure I didn't miss the Walks in Tokyo and Mexico Olympics and what I saw motivated me and so many others around that great era to attempt to follow in their British footsteps. Ken once wrote to me congratulating me on my Bronze Medal in the Commonwealth Games achieved against difficulties of shift work, which he mastered so admirably. In those days the National Press covered Athletics in a big way and I still have the double page spread of him with photographs achieving the National 1 hour Record at Hurlingham Track in the Daily Express feature by Desmond Hackett. May he rest in peace and thank you Dave for a brilliant obituary and your campaign to gain him a richly deserved MBE.” **Bill Sutherland**

**KEN MATTHEWS MBE, RIP**

He died on Vladimir Golubnichy's birthday too, who by the way, considers his Tokyo '64 Bronze his greatest achievement. How sad, deeply ironic too.



**Trevor McDermot**

**BIT OF NEWS**

Here is a bit of news. During the past 5 years, the chairman of the Camden Tour Guides Association has unsuccessfully been trying to persuade me to become a tour guide. However, twelve months ago I finally relented, gave it a go, paid my money, became the oldest student in the world and was pitched in with twenty others who were mainly a mix of academics, historians and teachers.

Earlier this month, my fellow students and I attended the Mayor's Parlour for a free food and free booze graduation ceremony. I came away with a certificate which confirms that I am now a qualified tour guide and my own profile has appeared on <https://camdenguides.com/guides/>

Although this was one of the toughest things I have ever done, it has been also one of the most enjoyable. I have created my own 'Alternative Kings Cross' walk which go back to the time when I walked the beat back in the early 1970s. More alternative walks are being planned for the future.

**Chris Foster**

Adds Hon Ed: Chris was an Enfield and Metropolitan Police race walking stalwart and former Middlesex County individual medal winner. Chris was an official at that memorable Enfield Open 7 Miles 90th anniversary and reunion. His main Essex connection was amassing Essex League points for Loughton AC as an enthusiastic 2nd claim member. Readers will know that ex-Met Police race walker Reg Denny is also a qualified tour guide (of blue button standard).

**GEORGE CHECKLEY RIP**

My father George S L Checkley passed away on 15 June 2019 aged 98. He was a race walker with yourselves in the 1950s. Apparently in 1955 he was your 20 mile and 50 kms champion and in 1956 he won the PPA10 mile Championship and Barking to Southend walk and was 5th in the National 50 kms. Later he added Hastings to Brighton to his list of wins. I remember as a child watching him race around Wimbledon Common.

The above information was from an article in

the Police Review dated 12 July 1957 as Sportsman of the week. If you have any other records of his achievement it would be nice to hear from you and anyone at your club that would be interested.

**Alan Checkley**  
[alan\\_checkley@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:alan_checkley@hotmail.co.uk)

Adds Hon Ed: George did well when competing in Essex, as he twice won the Police Barking-to-Southend Walk (33 miles 6 furlongs 50 yards) - when a Police Constable racing for 'T' Division. He won in 1956 and 57 clocking 5:19.12 and 5:08.54 respectively. In 1957 at Leyland he was 3rd in our National 50K Championship, clocking 4:50.28 headed only by legends Don Thompson (1st) and George Chaplin (2nd). On that day he led Belgrave Harriers to a team victory, being backed up by Canvey Islander George Beecham, H McGreechan and R Newson. The '50s were a great period for the Bels in distance Championships over 20 miles and 50K, with George always in winning teams. Over 20 miles the Nijmegen Trophy was additionally awarded for the best team closing in 8 - that shield was virtually Belgrave property in such times, with George always among their numbers. The tough and testing Hastings-to-Brighton Walk (38 miles) saw George lead them all home in 1956 with 6:01.02 on the stopwatch.

Adds Bill Sutherland: There is a great report on the 1957 London-to-Brighton (53+ miles) where he was 3rd to the late Don Thompson and Tom Misson. Don's fantastic record of 7:35.12 was achieved that day and rumour has it he had showered and changed, returning to greet George in with a time of 8:18 no less! 80 finishers with many famous names - what a race eh!

Adds Chris Flint: You mention the Nijmegen Shield, and reference to the RWA's The Sport of Race Walking published in 1962, shows George a member of the winning Belgrave Harriers team of eight in 1952, 1955, and each year until 1960. Formidable dominance by a single club in those days. George's individual performances put him at the forefront of the 'greats' of the '50s.

Please pass our deepest sympathy to Alan Checkley and family. RIP to Mr. George S L

*Essex Walker issue No 389 (August/September 2019)*

Checkley. Our condolences to his family. Wow, 2 more years and he would have been a centurion!! He left this world with a great legacy and footprints for his race walking achievements throughout his life. I'm sure his children, grandchildren, great grandchildren must be so proud of him. With deepest sympathy from the Met Police Walking Club.

**Dr Kitty Hung**

#### **KEN MATTHEWS MBE, RIP**

I was part of the Joint AAA Supporters party plus Athletics Weekly, who had a Britannia charter flight to Tokyo for the 1964 games and as the plane could not fly all the way it stopped over in Bombay. The following day prior to leaving Sheila Matthews had some problem with the hotel plumbing and was in need of rest. So Phil Gale, the party leader and also AAA Treasurer, said to me, "Sheila is Ken's wife and you are a race walker, you can look after her". An interesting responsibility as it involved a taxi, not a coach trip, to the airport. One of the most fascinating taxi rides I have ever made. We made it safely. I did not see a lot of either Ken or Sheila subsequently living in the south etc. Ken was far better than I. It was by Tokyo 64 that I had hung up my boots - still in the suitcase in the roof, a pair of Laws.

**John Northcott**

#### **THANKS TO A LONG-SERVING JUDGE**

Doug Hopkins has decided to hang up his judging paddles at the age of 80. A great London Vidarian and a great coach.

**Chris Flint**

Adds Hon Ed: Doug has graced our scene for decades. He became Centurion 347 way back in 1963, when reaching 100 miles in the Brighton-to-London and back with a time of 22:24.10. Yes, you read it correctly: Brighton-to-London-and-back. All previous "doubles" on the A23 were from London-to-Brighton-and-back. This change was to try and offset rising traffic levels, as a 52 strong field commenced action at 5pm in an event sponsored by the makers of "Ovaltine". The great Frank O'Reilly won it, making it 5 successive No.1 finishes, with another great - Hew Neilson - an hour and half behind in 2nd place. Torrential rain over the closing stages made it a difficult ending. 17 finished a full distance (106 miles), as

others got out of the rain when ceasing their efforts at 100 miles - the Centurions Handbook account describes those as wise. In all 31 got to 100 miles in under 24 hours, 17 of them for a first time with 1 d/q (first ever in a UK 100 miles race). Of those 17, six were from one Club - London Vidarians - so setting a new record. Long-time Gravesend resident Dick Hyland, now based in Hythe, led the Vidarians home in 20:47.17, and behind Doug came Messrs. AJ Clarke, DH Hill, CT Mason & A Parsons - all these Vidarians opting to leave this race on passing the 100 miles' marker. Doug served the London Vidarians well for a long period before switching to Medway AC, who later became Medway & Maidstone AC (one of many mergers around that time). Doug represented Kent many times and was a respected Kent County official as well as his status within race walking. He has put much back into the sport by officiating, and was doing so until very recently. We'll miss Doug and we thank him for all he's done.

- "I have fond memories of quite a few tussles with Doug over the years, always a gentleman and a great competitor. What an achievement to become C347 at the age of 23, and in a unique race on the A23 to boot. Well done Doug, best wishes for the future and thanks for all you have done for our sport." **Alex Ross C854**
- "I was reunited with Doug at the London Olympic walk listening to someone who I had no idea was giving a commentary." **Brian Keegan**
- "Thank you for another wonderful article. In any other sport with your reporting ability you would and should have reached the top level just as the BBC's Jonathan Martin (former BBC Head of Sport) said many years ago. We well remember Doug Hopkins being so often on the side of the road officiating at so many Southern Area Race walks. I didn't know his history but we are greatly privileged to hear it. May he have a long, healthy and happy retirement." **Bill Sutherland**

#### **YOUR SOUTHERN AREA PRESIDENT'S APPEAL**

Could you give some prominence to the SEAA (South of England AA) championships on

Sunday 18 August at the Julie Rose stadium, Ashford, Kent. It's important that we have a good entry to avoid any possibility that the walks may be discontinued in these championships. I have forwarded details to various club race walking secretaries but it still needs to be given publicity.

**Chris Flint**

#### **CHANCE MEETING**

I do remember George Checkley, but only slightly, from days at Belgrave Hall. I of course, remember Carl Lawton, Ray Middleton, Ray Hall, Eric Hall, Paul Nihill (who also was a runner!) and many others. Just recently, while I was out birding with my wife Eva on Lake Erie, I met a walker from Brighton & Hove AC. who was on holiday with his wife and son. His name was John, was probably in his 70s, and had won the London-to-Brighton walk in his time. He also told me he had set a world record for walking across the USA. A prodigious feat. We talked about all the names above, and how we were both now "Birders!" You probably know his surname. He even asked me for my autograph as he collects those of British & English Internationals. It has been 50 years since that happened!

**John Thresher**

Adds Hon Ed: John Thresher was a top Belgrave runner in the '60s - he obviously refers to the one-and-only John Lees.

#### **ANN SAYER - UPDATE**

I have been informed she has had one of her legs amputated above the knee. Ann is now recovering in the Deerpark View Care Centre, Bushy Park Road, Teddington TW11 0DX where she has her own room and telephone and use of a wheelchair. On 6 August she is due to be assessed at Roehampton, a specialist hospital for amputees. Ann is reported to be in good spirits and I have been assured she is agreeable for friends to contact her. She can be telephoned on 0208 614 0019 or 0751 459 4403 or post may be sent to her home address at 29 Twickenham Road, Teddington TW11 8AQ (a neighbour collects her post and takes it to the care home). I am thinking of Ann and shall wish her a steady recovery.

**Sue Clements**

*Adds Hon Ed:* Centurions' Honorary Secretary Sue speaks for us all when wishing Ann a steady recovery. Ann was a trailblazer when becoming, in the colours of Essex Ladies, our first lady Centurion by claiming No 599 in 20:37.14 at the tough 1977 Bristol 100 miles. Ann, who has also been a member Loughton AC, is a true activist and enthusiast in race walking, having served a truly busy term as The Centurions' Honorary President. The good lady is very much in all our thoughts.

- “Very sad news indeed Dave. She was of course the first Lady Centurion and a real tough cookie coming from a rowing background, coached by the late great Tommy Richardson, Woodford Green AC.” **Bill Sutherland**
- “This is very sad news, especially cruel when considering her magnificent records in ultra distance events. I'm sure her strength of character will see her through this and that our collective thoughts for her recovery will help.” **Chris Flint**

#### ESSEX WALKER

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

Telephone:



01708-377382



Email

[dave\\_ainsworth@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:dave_ainsworth@yahoo.co.uk)  
or  
[essexwalker@btinternet.com](mailto:essexwalker@btinternet.com)

**Please note that you may unsubscribe to the Essex Walker at any time by contacting the Editor or Essex Walker mailbox.**