

Essex Walker

Editor: Dave Ainsworth

Dear Essex Walker readers

This issue of Essex Walker reaches you at the start of a very challenging time for every one of us. Do protect yourselves, and others, by following official advice.



Please note:

Currently Hon Ed is unable to access his personal email account, which is curtailing communication. Apologies if this issue has failed to include any recent information, articles or letters submitted by contributors.

Please do use the essexwalker@btinternet.com mailbox to keep communications going. With sport suspended for the time being, there may be little to report on the race walking scene. However, on a personal level, readers will undoubtedly be keen to keep in touch remotely, and know that others are keeping safe and well.

FIXTURES

All scheduled events in the next few months have been either postponed or cancelled due to national coronavirus measures. Publication of future dates will resume once rescheduling has been confirmed by event organisers.

ESSEX OLYMPIAN BILL BROWN

An Olympic Walkers' special booklet was issued at our memorable 2012 Tribute Luncheon in the Tower Hotel - a missing name was that of Westcliff-on-Sea resident Bill Brown. In the 1908 3,500 Metres' Walk at a now long since demolished White City Stadium, GB walkers came 1st and 2nd in the final while Bill of Polytechnic Harriers (also a SWC member) appeared in Heat 1 (of 3). https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Athletics_at_the_1908_Summer_Olympics_-_Men%27s_3500_metres_walk Bill was disqualified, along with Alfred Yeomans in the 1908 Olympics 3,500 Metres Walk. It wasn't Alfred's year as he also got chopped in Heat 1 (of 2) in the Olympic 10 Miles' walk. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Athletics_at_the_1908_Summer_Olympics_-_Men%27s_10_miles_walk George Larnar won the opening heat of the shorter walk in an easy 15.32 and earned gold in the final with 14.55 on the stopwatch. Mr Yeomans was born in Enderby (Leicestershire) in 1876 and died in Swansea 1955.

Bill was a founder member of The Centurions, qualifying in the 1907 London-to-Brighton-and-Back race over 104 miles - which he completed in 20.38.01. Bill was a founder member of The Centurions when they formed in 1911. Although a founder member, he wasn't present at their

inaugural meeting on 11 May 1911 in "The Ship and Turtle" in Leadenhall Street EC3. This public house opened in 1377 and was rebuilt in 1887 and again in 1969. Until 1735 it had no frontage - entrance being down a side alley known as Shafts Court. Historians shouldn't go looking for it, as this building was demolished in 2008 in preparation for office development. Its final years saw it become "Vino Veritas", as a wine bar was needed to attract an influx of yuppies working in the City! In 1962 Bill was elected as a Centurions' Vice President. Bill worked for the Ford Motor Company at their Dagenham factory. He retired in 1949, but drew his pension until 1982, when passing-on aged 103. The Company Pension Fund certainly made a loss on him! Bill thus far is the only Centurion member to actually reach 100 years of age - though not long ago much respected Centurion 450, George Mitchell of Birmingham Walking Club made it to 99.

In 1979 he became the first Ford pensioner to reach 100 years (now 6 have achieved that milestone). A 100th birthday party was organised for Bill - it was only then his athletics past as an esteemed Centurion was rediscovered. The Centurions had lost touch with Bill - until a link was re-engaged by this function. At his party Bill never mentioned an Olympic appearance - perhaps because it ended in disqualification? At this Party some local Centurions were invited, such as Fred Duff and John Hedgethorpe. The latter made a well-received stirring speech at the function.

Recently, descendants of Bill got in touch with Ford seeking information about Bill's time with the Company and for more details of his 1979 100th Birthday Party. Ford passed on this enquiry to me, and I was able to assist. Those seeking info weren't even born in 1979! They were very proud of his athletics' endeavours, especially his ability to walk 104 miles in 20.38.01. It was his descendants who told of his Olympian status.

A TOAST today to Will Brown. He's someone rather special.

Will has just become Ford's first-ever centenarian.

He has clocked up a magnificent 100 years and cut himself a slice of company history.

It was way back in February 1949 when Will retired as a Dagenham time checker after 18 years' service. He was then 70.

He was at Dagenham while it was being built on the marshes and production was still way off.

When he finally packed in work, Will was earning a princely 3s. 9d. an hour.

Amid cheerful but quiet celebrations at his home in Westcliff, Will proudly received the traditional telegram of congratulations from the Queen.

There were many others, too. From Ford Chairman and Managing Director Sir Terence Beckett, for instance. And from the Amateur Athletics Association and the Race Walking Association.

Will was one of the best known British athletes at the turn of the century and is a member of that most exclusive club, the Centurions. For completing a 100-mile distance in less than 24 hours.

A number of special gifts from the company were presented by Pension Funds Manager Alec Pitt.



Congratulations to Will on his 100th birthday from Balmoral House
Matron Monica Goodridge.

STAFF PAY MEETING

ANOTHER meeting between the company and the three staff unions was arranged for yesterday (Thursday), aimed at concluding the Agreement on improved salary claims and other conditions.

A MONEY SAVING OFFER

ATTENTION IS DRAWN TO THE FOLLOWING SPECIAL DISCOUNTS OFFERED TO THE STAFF AND EMPLOYEES OF FORD MOTOR COMPANY LTD.

22½% DISCOUNT OFF	20% DISCOUNT OFF
MOST MAKES OF WATCHES	CUTLERY, STAINLESS STEEL, AND SILVER PLATE WARE
25% DISCOUNT OFF	10% DISCOUNT OFF
ALL TYPES OF RINGS AND	WATCHES, BANGLE, LIGHTERS

Picture courtesy of Ford News

REVIEW

UK Sport has commissioned an independent review into UK Athletics after a number of recent issues raised 'major concern'. Nic Coward is now interim Chief Executive of UK Athletics after Zara Hyde-Peters, who had been appointed new boss, failed to take up her position. UK Athletics are in further disarray as Chairman Chris Clark stepped down just 6 months after taking up his position. Nic Coward will take up the Chairman's position until the end of this year. However, a new Chief Executive has been appointed - Joanna Adams who had held the same role at England Netball - and who will soon take up her new position.

MORE ABOUT MICK

Few articles drew as much praise as one which detailed Mick Barnbrook's 49 years in race walking, and introduced many to good works he'd undertaken in his interesting life. At readers' request, here's another snippet:

Mick competed the first 10 Great North Runs, as a race walker. The last time he attended this wonderful event he flew on a domestic flight from Heathrow to the North East and found himself sat one row behind BBC television presenter Sue Barker - who was going to the same event (as a

TV presenter). Mick wrote his achievements on a breakfast tray liner before leaning forward to introduce himself to the one-time tennis star and handing her his notes. They chatted about Mick's achievements and when the conversation ended she said sweetly, "That's interesting". Alas in TV coverage Ms Barker failed to give Mick a mention. Oh well, you win some and lose some! On his final appearance in this race Mick nearly brought down thousands of runners within sight of the start line. Around 200 yards from a massed start line, Mick saw a £1 coin in the road. He stopped and stooped to pick it up - nearly causing chaos in his wake. Quite a few race walkers are fabled for picking-up coins as they compete. Mick isn't a tightwad! He picks up coins for patriotic reasons saying, "I can't bear to see our Queen's head lying in a road or pavement".

INTER-AREA INDOOR CHALLENGE Lee Valley, 1 March 2020



Two sprightly Welsh-born race walkers giving it their all "on the boards" at Lee Valley Arena in the Inter-Area Representative Match - Arthur Thompson followed closely by Chris Flint.

Photographer: Cliff Hide

HON ED TURNS INTO AN ANORAK

Hon Ed attended a historical talk in my local Library this morning (12/03/20) - given by Francis Mullan, a City-of-London tour guide. His talk was most informative. In his introduction he said he'd joined the Metropolitan Police at a young age, hence when 30 years were completed, he was still young-ish. Francis said he'd recently reached 60. He made Sergeant, then looking for something to do, he trained as a City-of-London tour guide. Speaking afterwards he said he'd been a marathon runner in his day, but had turned-out for 2 Barking-to-Southend Walks. He remembered 2 walkers specifically, to wit the late Charlie Fogg and double Olympian Paul Blagg. I was impressed he even knew Charlie had passed-on, so had obviously kept in touch with news. Police service is in the family as his son is now stationed at Brixton. If any remember Francis, he's still going strong and looks well. It was the second time I'd heard him talk. The first was about "Victorian Crime" and the recent one was about Victorian Sewage and Drainage History. He has the gift-of-the-gab!

THANKS

Geoffrey Riley (Terry's son) is delighted our appeal got Terry a replacement RWA 7 Miles-in-an-Hour badge. It was Don Cox who produced one! Thanks to Don.

NEWS FROM THE NORTH

Essex Walker reader **John Eddershaw** reports that fellow International race walker and Centurion **Mike Holmes** Junior (once a Southend-on-Sea AC member) is out of hospital and making good progress. From other sources we hear his health is such that he's been able to get back to following his beloved Bradford City FC - another good sign, indeed a very good one!

GOLD MEDAL FOR RACHAEL LAWLESS

It was "on the boards" around Lee Valley's Indoor Arena that Ilford's Rachael Lawless convincingly won a W55 age-group gold medal in the British Masters' 3,000 Metres Championship. Walking a brisk and steady pace throughout, despite tight turns, Rachael was first W55 over the line in 18

minutes and 47.7 seconds. As well as the kudos of striking gold, the Ilford AC athlete had the additional satisfaction in recording a personal best time.

FROM A ROVING REPORTER

CENTURIONS LONDON WALL WALK: Saturday 7 March 2020

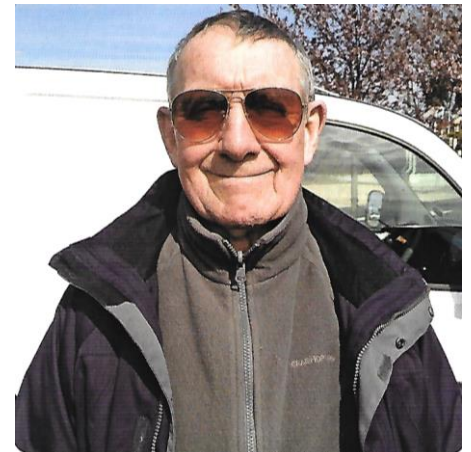
A group ten met up outside Fenchurch Street station with Steve Kemp as our guide. We started down by Tower Hill station and followed the roman-built wall northwards towards the Barbican, viewing en route the various locations of the now demolished "gates" through the wall and where buildings have been built around the existing wall. Various sites of interest were located by our guide, most of which are missed by the public as they traverse the London streets, including many small peaceful gardens some built on the site of partly demolished churches. Lunch was taken at the Barbican museum, but not long enough to visit the museum ... that is for another day. After lunch we headed towards Blackfriars and Lower Thames Street where the original London Bridge started, to finish back at Tower Hill.

NEW PRESIDENT

Ilford AC held an Emergency AGM via email, owing to the current medical situation. The Club's new President, taking over from Nicola Hopkinson, is runner Gary Floate - who race walked in an Enfield League 5,000m track walk at Lee Valley many years' ago. The Club also elected 2 new esteemed Life Members: stalwart runner Ernie Forsyth and hard-working Hon Social Secretary Sharon Honey (both Past Presidents). Ernie is a former Essex Beagles' race walker and has walked for Ilford in the now defunct Essex League. Ernie had a tribute to the late Colin Young published in our February/March issue.

JIMMY ROOKE RIP

Readers will be sorry to hear of Jimmy's death, as he's been part of our Essex athletics scene for a very long time. Jimmy's professional life was spent in the print trade. He made his name as a runner with Essex Beagles (as then called). One of his proudest photographs is of him and Queen Elizabeth, when she popped out of Windsor Castle to shout "Go" at the start of the famous, but now defunct Windsor-to-Chiswick Marathon. Jimmy made the front row that year, and as Ma'am walked along it doing her "And what do you do?" routine a camera's shutter clicked - and Jim's presence was captured for posterity! Jimmy came into race walking after a successful time in running, becoming a regular supporter of Essex League fixtures where he was noted for a fast pace, especially in sprint walks. He

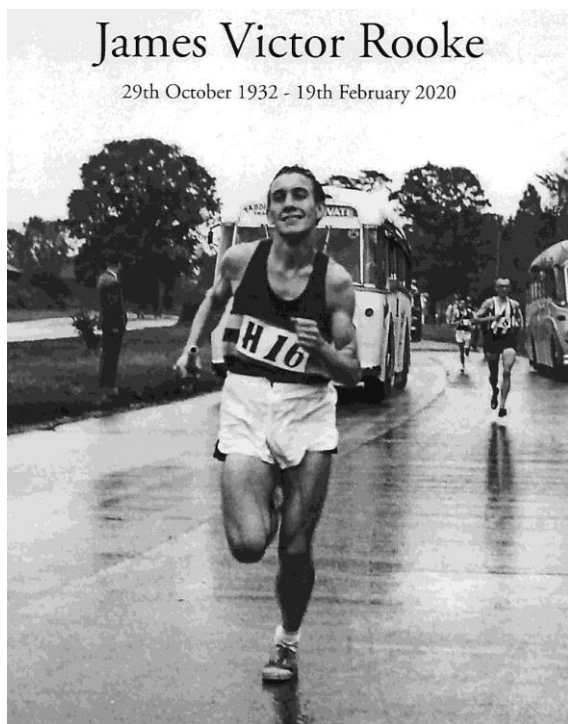


participated in our memorable 500th Essex League promotion at Redbridge Cycling Circuit - which was his final competitive performance. When moving out Hockley way he continued to keep in touch and would offer his services at athletics meetings. He got along to Chigwell Row to act as our cycle pilot and performed the same task at the famous Basildon 50K Championship races as well as at a much-missed Southend 5 miles around Thorpe Bay. He linked up with Southend-on-Sea AC and often assisted at their promotions, particularly at cross-county races around Rayleigh and Hadleigh. "On his bike" Jimmy continued turning the pedals into his 80s. Also, into his 80s he was still giving up his time to sell poppies for the British Legion. He was a popular man and profound condolence is expressed to his family on behalf of all readers.

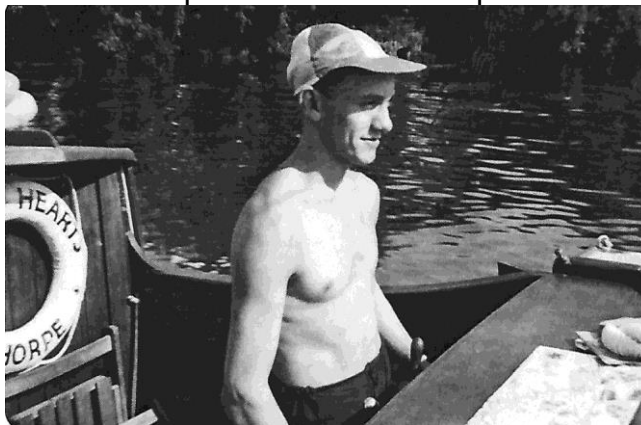
JIMMY ROOKE TRIBUTES

- "I'm sorry to hear the news. I remember him at a number of venues, especially when the Essex League was ongoing. What a great personality. I'm sure the send-off will be a big one. Think of the people we would never have met if it weren't for involvement in running and walking." **Dave Hoben**

- “I do remember Jimmy and his ever-cheerful countenance. It is sad times like this that remind us how many people, in so many different ways, freely lend their time and energy to our sport to make our sport the success it is. RIP Jimmy.” **Oliver T Flynn**
- “Please accept our sincere condolences.” **Barbara Wilson** (Newham & Essex Beagles AC)
- “Fred Roskilly let me know that Jim had died. Up till a few years ago Jim used to turn up unexpectedly on my doorstep every so often for a chat. More recently that honour has gone to Fred, who lives nearer to Jim than I do. I have missed Jim's visits. He was a funny old fellow, but I was very fond of him. My condolences to his widow.” **Alan Perkins**
- “I have fond memories of Jimmy. Please pass on my regards to the walking community.” **Jamie O'Rawe**
- “Jimmy was a likeable chap and we had some great laughs when marshalling together at Essex League races staged from Chigwell.” **Ron Wallwork**
- “Always a pleasure to meet up with Jimmy and share a yarn. A down to earth unassuming individual who graced race walkers, especially the Essex ones, with his presence and pedalling power along the Essex road championships. A character who will be sorely missed and fondly remembered.” **Bob Dobson**
- “Sorry to hear of Jimmy's passing. Please pass on the club's sincere condolences to Jimmy's family. I have passed on the information to other club members who may have known Jimmy.” **Nina Hepburn** (Hon General Secretary, Newham & Essex Beagles AC)



Adds Hon Ed: Many walkers had intended to be at popular Jimmy's funeral service on 20 March, and afterwards at Hockley British Legion Club. Many wanted to give him the good send-off he so richly deserved, but alas restrictions due to the coronavirus situation prevented that from happening. Jimmy's son, Ian, kindly forwarded a copy of service from which these photos have been reproduced.



SOUTHEND-ON-SEA AC ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

This took place at their Garon Park Clubhouse in March, just before lockdown came into force. Fifteen showed up. President **Mary Green** (1968 Olympian) is to continue as custodian of the chain despite currently suffering a spell of poor health. On behalf of all our readers we wish the good lady well. Southend 1 Mile regulars will have met the President at her Club's annual and popular August Bank Holiday meeting.

Frequent Essex County AA race walking medallist **Keith Palmer** stepped down after an active 5 years as Chairman – alas nobody came forward and the position is vacant. Stalwart former race walker **June Cork** retained her offices as Hon Secretary and Hon Membership Secretary. June stepped down as Hon Press Officer after a colossal 40 years in the post. As nobody came forward, any athletes wishing to see their names and performances in print will have to submit

materials themselves! The key position of Hon Trophies Secretary also went unfilled! The trophies will be stored away at Garon Park until a volunteer makes his or her name known! On a more positive note, another stalwart – **John Brock** – retained his position as Hon Walking Secretary. We look forward to Southend-on-Sea AC making waves on our county race walking scene, and even further afield.

Like at most clubs, members seem reluctant to offer their services in order to fill various posts that are need to keep things going. “Whenever our AGM gets to the election of officers”, said June, “many attenders get a sudden urge to look at the floor to see if it’s clean, or at their feet to check their shoe laces are tied and that they’re not wearing odd socks”. As for activity, their Garon Park track was closed in late March, until further notice.

PARKRUN ACHIEVEMENTS

- In our last edition of Essex Walker, we acknowledged the achievement of **Amos Seddon** where (at many venues) he's set course M70 records and is now doing likewise in the M75 category. His latest personal achievement is to have participated in parkruns in 50 different locations.
- Parkun enthusiast, **Tony Perkins**, continues his weekly volunteering efforts at the Great Notley event. The event report (14/03/20) acknowledged that “amongst the volunteers (*on 14 March*) was stalwart Tony Perkins who has volunteered on 300 previous occasions”, remarking “not bad when you consider we're on event 307! Tony was presented with an award to mark his dedication. I wonder which he's more proud of, the award or having his marshal corner named after him?” <https://www.parkrun.org.uk/greatnotley/news/2020/03/17/event-307-14th-mar-2020/>



At the Great Notley parkrun annual awards in 2019, Tony's efforts were recognised by the event organisers by naming his marshal corner as 'Tony's corner'.

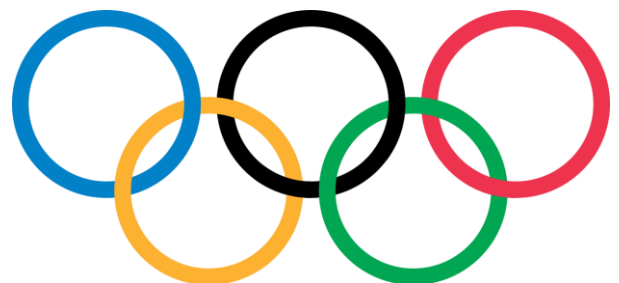
MERITORIOUS SERVICE

Peter Crane, who resided in Chadwell Heath and taught in Ilford for decades, took over as Surrey Walking Club Gazette Editor in 1996. He's just retired after a long spell. Well done Sir!

OLYMPICS

Readers now have longer to build up their efforts to gain Olympic selection for Tokyo – as the games have been postponed until July 2021.

Race walker Tom Bosworth is one of seven athletes selected to compete in the forthcoming Olympics which *Sportmail* (Daily Mail) had been following on the road to Tokyo.



<https://www.dailymail.co.uk/sport/othersports/article-8118785/Coronavirus-UK-British-race-walker-Tom-Bosworth-says-hell-retire-Olympics-cancelled.html>

In this report, published just prior to the announcement to postpone the games, Tom contemplates the impact of the uncertainty of that decision - not only on his training preparations, likely fitness and performance for 2021, but also (like very many others whose employment, in diverse roles, has ceased) on his financial situation and mental well-being.

CONDOLENCE

We extend our condolence to **Pat Browning**, a member of Surrey Walking Club since 1963 and long-serving Stock Exchange AC participant, on the sad loss of his wife Norma.

ALF EMERY RIP

At the age of 99, Alf Emery, Stock Exchange AC, has recently passed away. Alf competed in 10 Stock Exchange AC London-to-Brighton races (between 1952 and 1962), recording his best time of 10:00:58 in 1960.

RACE WALKING ON TV

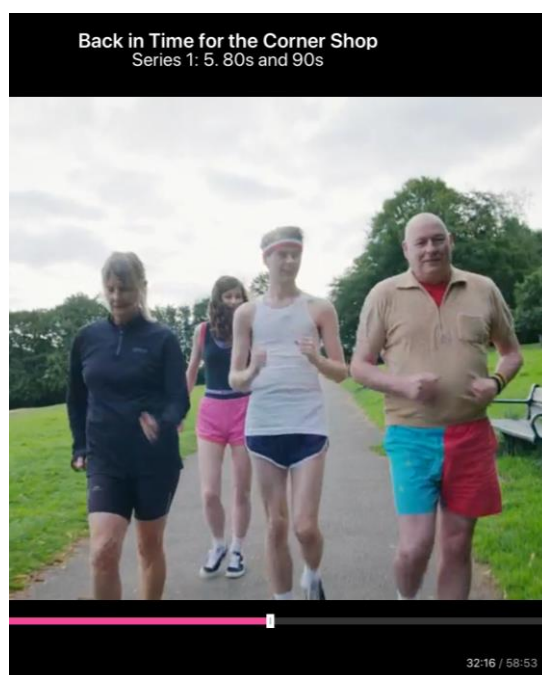
Programme 5 (of 6) in the BBC2 documentary series "Back in time for the Corner Shop", which was transmitted on 24 March 2020, showed race walkers in action, while one of the show's featured participants bemoaned the end of the famous "Sheffield Star Walk". Viewers were told how popular this had been and how much it was now missed, plus a bit about the event's history.

Pictured right:

Helen Elleker, RWA President, participated in the event, alongside the TV show's featured family who donned 80s sportswear in keeping with the theme of the show.

The TV programme is bound to be repeated (unlike the great walk, sadly!), but if you are quick you can download it from BBCiPlayer (it will only be available online until 21/04/20).

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/iplayer/episode/m000qp4b/back-in-time-for-the-corner-shop-series-1-5-80s-and-90s>.



The 3-minute race-walking feature appears in the programme at 30m:30s – 33m:30s.



Dear Dave ...

COLIN YOUNG RIP - ADDITIONAL TRIBUTE

Colin Young - one of the great race walking characters, never to be forgotten (1935-2019). Colin Young's reputation and influence crossed all borders, regional, national and international. Certainly he was held in affection by all those members of Lancashire Walking Club.

Tony Taylor

ROGER BUXTON - HOSPITAL REPORT

Just in case you haven't heard, Roger's
Essex Walker issue No 393 (April/May 2020)

operation was, according to his son Jonathon, a great success and the outcome was better than even the surgeon could have hoped for. I've known Roger since our teens when we played table-tennis against each other in the Southend Junior League.

Dick Davies (BBC Essex)

AT THE ENGLISH SCHOOLS

In September I was an invited guest awards presenter during the English schools combined

events and race walks at Exeter. During the course of the weekend I had several chats with David Hemery, former UK Athletics President - there loyally supporting his son who was acting Wiltshire team manager. Also had the extra pleasure of seeing Bob and Olive Dobson with Shaun Lightman.



On the final afternoon the four of us left together heading for the car park outside; exiting through the foyer of the Arena we bumped into a certain 1968 Olympic gold medallist. He came over and said a final farewell whilst also shaking the hands of my friends. Strolling away, Shaun in all innocence enquired, who was that? The three of us looked at Mr Lightman thinking he was joking. The look on his face when we enlightened him was priceless!

Chris Maddocks

Adds Hon Ed: Mr Hemery set a record in Essex. At an Ilford AC Annual Dinner & Dance, held in the "Room-at-the-Top (a function room on the top floor of Harrison Gibsons furniture store in Ilford High Street) his after-dinner speech went on the longest!

PROFOUND CONTRIBUTION

Thanks again for the Essex Walker. I wonder if below may be suitable as a piece. It's from the 2005 Penguin Version of Lorna Doone. Having been reading Lorna Doone by R D Blackmore recently one section seemed to have some parallels in race walking ...
"... said Jeremy Stickles ... people have a

different way of thinking from what we are used to in London. For instance now, among your folk, when any piece of news is told, or any man's conduct spoken of, the very first question that arises in your minds is this – 'was this action kind and good?' Long after that, you say to yourselves, 'does the law enjoin, or forbid this thing?' Now here is your fundamental error: for among all truly civilised people, the foremost of all questions is, 'how stands the law herein?' And if the law approve, no need for any further questioning. That this is so, you may take my word for I know the law pretty thoroughly."

Steve Cartwright

EDITOR'S PROFOUND CONTRIBUTION

A sign of austerity is a queue forming for a sale to start at the Pound Shop!

NOEL KELLEWAY RIP

I don't know whether you knew Noel Kelleway. He was a Vestall Vergin, the running club that ran the Southend Half Marathon for a few years. And the news came as a complete shock. One of his Club-mates was Philip Jackson a former Southend AC man. Noel was 68 and died after a short illness. For information, his funeral, at Southend Crematorium, is scheduled for 11.20 am on Friday 17 April.

June Cork

<https://www.echo-news.co.uk/news/18280744.noel/>

Adds Hon Ed: Although not a walker, he's mentioned as the Southend Half Marathon was an event which attracted entries from those wishing to race walk it - including 2 who did so in eye-catching "Union Jack" shorts!

HISTORY ENQUIRY

I have received the following enquiry via the RWA Facebook page. It's way before my time, and probably even yours, but I thought you might have some ideas of where he could seek assistance in his quest. (Obviously it's not the Graham Jackson we know, it did throw me for a minute).

"Good afternoon. I'm hoping you may be able to assist me or direct me to another sources. My late grandfather was 85 when he was mugged and died from his injuries in 1965 in Birmingham. We know he was a Road Walking

Race champion but not sure if he was part of a team etc like Birchfield Harriers. He was an RSM in WW1 and awarded a DCM. I was born in 1951 and from about the age of five I remember my grandad walking everywhere and always a minimum of 10 miles per day. We know he was involved in the Birmingham Outer Circle road walk race competitions and led to believe he had many trophies but, like his war medals, they disappeared. Can you help me uncover a bit of his history re road walking races. His name was Thomas Jackson from Aston Birmingham. He was born December 1880. Thanking you in anticipation. Graham Jackson”

If you've got any ideas or advice then you

could reply via me (the undersigned).

Colin Vesty

Honorary General Secretary
Race Walking Association
1 Crossley Close, Barrow Upon Soar.
Loughborough. LE12 8QL. Tel: 07857 246803.
E-mail: rwasecretary@Yahoo.co.uk
Web: <http://www.racewalkingassociation.com>

Reminder:

Until further notice, please submit any comments, information, articles for future issues to the editor at:

essexwalker@btinternet.com

ESSEX WALKER

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

Telephone:



01708-377382



Email

essexwalker@btinternet.com

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