

# Essex Walker

Editor: Dave Ainsworth

## Dear Essex Walker readers

With the suspension of all athletics activity at the current time, England Athletics asks that “the athletics community in England continues to help one another by staying connected and supportive of each other whilst at home in these unprecedented times.” In response, this issue of Essex Walker has been produced a month early. The Editor is pleased to report that he is now ‘online’ and (subject to readers contributing sufficient news) every endeavour will be made to issue more frequently in the short-term at least.

## ENGLAND ATHLETICS CORONAVIRUS STATEMENT

England Athletics acknowledges that “athletics, running and sport in general is special and is an important contributor to our way of life but it is very much secondary to protecting and saving lives at this current time.”



The organisation has issued an official statement [www.englandathletics.org/coronavirus](http://www.englandathletics.org/coronavirus) which provides the following guidance to individuals and clubs:

1. **The suspension of all athletics activity in England is extended to 31 May.** *[Initially this had been agreed to the end of April].* This suspension includes all organised athletics activity in the UK, including all competitions, formal club activities, running groups, and all Education activity (coach, official, teacher).
2. **All physical coaching must cease, and only be conducted via virtual means during this period.** Bringing groups of people together to train, however small, can no longer be permitted under the strict ‘Stay at home’ measures implemented by the UK Government.

## FIXTURES

Well, it's not happening is it? However, on behalf of all readers we must give our thanks and praise to Loughton's Pauline Wilson who has spent much time on issuing regular bulletins informing of us of an ever-changing situation and keeping all informed. Sincere thanks to Pauline.

## INS-AND-OUTS

Readers will wish to congratulate long-serving stalwart and Centurion Roger Michell on taking over Surrey Walking Club President's Chain-of-Office from Dave Hoban. Roger intends to ensure SWC are put back on the map. Former Essex (Chadwell Heath) resident Peter Crane has stepped down as this Club's "Gazette" Editor after 20 years in this post. Kathy Crilley has offered to edit an annual digital publication.

## WALKER ON THE MOVE

Octogenarian Tony Challis has settled into a new care home at: Woodlands Care Centre, Hawkins Road, Cambridge. CB4 2RD. It's just a reasonable taxi journey from his wife Barbara's residence in nearby Cottenham. Barbara gives permission for her telephone number **01954-253306** to be circulated to walkers, should any readers seek news of Tony.



### TRANSFER TRAIL

Shoeburyness-based Val Mountford has signed for Eastern Masters AC, and will now compete for them in 1st claim capacity. Val was an inspirational Captain of a truly strong and talented Southend-on-Sea AC squad which won the now defunct Essex League under her direction and motivation. Val is also a regular supporter of Civil Service events. We wish Val well in her new Club colours.

### CHANGE OF DIRECTION

With so few people in the streets of London, Centurion Steve "The Knowledge" Allen has quit the cab trade. So readers will no longer be entertained by yarns of famous passengers he's had "in the back". We wish Steve, one talented at both running and race walking, well in whatever he decides to embark on next. I'm sure we all wish he'd come back to our starting lines, where a warm welcome awaits!

### LEN CREO RIP

We recently briefly mentioned that Len Creo (one well known to Essex Walker readers) had sadly passed on. We added that we'd hold back further mention as recent issues had contained too many obituaries, making our bulletin a glum read. So purely for journalistic reasons, our report was delayed.

Len was wounded while campaigning in Europe with the US Army, and while recovering took up art as therapy. He became so good he earned a living from his interest in art with many paintings sold. Len ran with Worcester AC for many years before being introduced to race walking by John Marshall at a meeting in Derbyshire when aged 60. He really took to it and when aged 67 in 1990 he completed the Leicester 100 Miles on a tough Hungarton course in 22:20.55 becoming Centurion No.871. He became the oldest athlete to qualify for UK Centurion membership (a distinction now held by Loughton AC's John Borgars who qualified at Redcar/2016). Len was well known as he was so active, competing in 5 World Masters/Veterans' Championship (Malmo/Buffalo/Gateshead/Brugge/Oregon) as well as Championships around Europe and in the UK. Doughty Len also completed the Roubaix 28 Hours on 6 occasions. In 2005 when aged 82 he won the M80 category in the Cardiff Marathon, and more recently was 1st M95 category finisher at the Seaton (Devon) parkrun.

His daughter Annie attended January's Centurions' AGM in Edgbaston to hear tributes paid to Len. Sincere condolence is expressed to his family.

"Dad was so incredibly proud to be a Centurion it meant a lot to him and he loved having his number (871). I supported him on the event in Leicestershire when he qualified."

**Annie** (Len's daughter)

Photographer: Sue Clements

Pam Ficken (President) with Len Creo's daughter Annie



"Poor Len has passed away, and at the wonderful age of 97! I have a strong recollection of Len talking to me about art and its many manifestations, and he was very interested to learn that my son is an accomplished artist. Alexander Russell Flint was building up a career and Len (this is some time ago when we were both competing in the Roubaix 28 hour race and sharing a room at the hotel) he kindly gave some thoughts and ideas which I conveyed to Alex. Len was a great character and a very resilient athlete and he was great company in the race. He clearly enjoyed life and his love of art came through loud and clear in everything he said. Len was a lovely man and he talked very knowledgeably about art. He was a professional artist himself and exhibited in his native Canada. He was a great competitor and Centurion. Condolences." **Chris Flint**

"Not sure if you remember Len Creo from the late 1990s/early 2000s, but he sadly passed away just before his 97th birthday. He used to go to Roubaix with the walkers from the Midlands. I found some race results from 1996 and there was quite a party from the UK taking part." **Kathy Crilley**

## **NEWS FROM THE WEST**

John Marshall, a respected coach who introduced Len Creo to race walking, is nowadays not at all well. We all wish this lovely man well. After hanging-up his racing pumps John still attended many of our meetings being a regular supporter at Moulton, which he truly enjoyed (who doesn't). Another Worcester AC walker - Centurion 935 Bernie Yates who qualified at Battersea Park (23:17.19) in 1995 - has sadly lost a leg. However, even with a prosthetic leg, he managed to finish a half-marathon. What tenacity!

## **ANN SAYER MBE, RIP**

Readers will be profoundly saddened to learn of the death of the one-and-only Ann Sayer at the age of 83. Before making a name or herself in athletics Ann was an established GB rowing international from 1960-to-65, her peak being selection for our GB eight at the 1962 Women's European Rowing Championships at Grunau (East Berlin). In athletics' terms there was a strong County connection as Ann was a member of the famous Essex Ladies AC, in times before it merged with Woodford Green AC. Ann became an experienced fell and cross country walker and made her formal athletics debut in May 1977 in the Dutch 100 Miles, which was completed in 21 hours and 46 minutes - so becoming the first British lady member of the Continental Centurions. In October that year Chas Shelley C356



staged the 3rd Bristol 100 Miles on a testing rural 10 x 10 miles' rural course, much of it in the proverbial "middle-of-nowhere" and with a mountainous climb at the end of each circuit. His Grace the Duke of Beaufort turned-up to shout "Go" and set 84 hopefuls on their way of whom 56 made the result sheet - no classified finishes in those days as you either finished or didn't! First-time finishers numbered 29. One non-finisher was Member of Parliament Lieutenant-Colonel Dick Crawshaw, who'd just set a world non-stop walking record of 231 miles at Aintree racecourse. Manxman Derek Harrison C466 won, as he'd done the previous year between Leicester-and-Skegness. At Bristol Derek led them home in 17 hours and 43 minutes. Among new Centurions was former Woodford Green AC man Jack Thomas (C606) who'd never walked beyond 20 miles previously - he clocked 21:57.19 in the host Club's colours (the now defunct Bristol RWC). However, most interest was shown by 2 lady finishers - Ann in 20:37.14 and Medway AC's Dianne Pegg in 22:05.30. The result sheet showed them separately - the Centurions Handbook asked, "Is this equality?" A week later an AGM discussed (at great length) their Centurions' admission. Assistant Secretary Frank Jarvis C258 put forward a resolution that women be allocated different numbers and proposed W1 and W2. There was no seconder. George Hallifax C580 proposed that neither lady be admitted at all. Again, no seconder. As both had complied with rules (being an amateur, walking 100 miles within 24 hours) they were admitted by majority vote and allocated Numbers C599 and C608 respectively. Both, who were also LDWA (Long Distance Walking

Association) members, remained in the spotlight and 2 years' later Surrey Walking Club's Ewhurst 100 saw a whopping 107 face the starter. It could have been 109, but this wasn't to be as Ann and Dianne's luck ran out when their entries were refused by Organisers, who stated there were insufficient facilities at the venue to accommodate ladies. This issue featured prominently in the National press! Sadly Dianne Bullard (nee Pegg) suffered a fatal heart attack while skiing at Val d'Isere in January 2012. Much more was to come from Ann, who in 1979 set a women's record for the arduous 3-Peaks' Walk (from Fort William, then up Ben Nevis, up Scafell Pike, up Snowdon then down to the sea at Caernarvon). A year later the Land's End-to-John O'Groats was walked in 13 days, 17 hours and 42 minutes so gaining recognition by the World Famous Guinness Book of Records. A back-up team of 16 aided this notable deed. In 1994 Ann was again mentioned by the Guinness Book as her selection for a 200 Km race in France at the age of 57 saw her become our oldest British female GB representative athlete. Ann wonderfully and continually made eye-catching news in both race walking and long distance walking. In 2005 such sterling contributions were recognised by the award of an MBE. Ann knew all the right people and managed to get Julie Welch, author of "Out On Your Feet: The Hallucinatory World Of 100-Mile Walking" to be an after-dinner guest speaker at the Metropolitan Police Walking Club's Annual Dinner and Reunion. That year was a sell-out with a waiting list, and the occasion is well remembered by its attendees! Ann continued her Essex connection when enjoying time as a valued Loughton AC member. After being the first Lady Centurion member, Ann later became their first Lady President and had a most active 3 years' term wearing her chain-of-office. Ann became based in Teddington and, sadly, suffered the loss of a leg. So many will be saddened when told of such a busy, lively, productive, eventful and highly successful life reaching its end. To the always popular lady's family, we express sincere condolence on their loss.

DA

*Further reading is available on the websites of Centurions Worldwide and Long Distance Walkers Association*

*The following obituary relating to Ann Sayer written by Gail Elrick, has been shared by David Morgan, and published courtesy of the Long Distance Walking Association.*

**OBITUARY: Ann Sayer MBE (LDWA no 646) Vice President of the LDWA**  
born 16.10.36 died 15.4.2020

“Ann died on Wednesday morning. She had been in the local hospital for nearly 2 weeks. She was admitted because of breathing difficulties, a problem that had affected her for some months. Also she had recently undergone an above the knee amputation of one leg and the remaining leg was causing problems. However she remained incredibly cheerful and positive throughout and had adapted to life in a residential home. Fortunately her window in the home gave a view of Bushy Park (she refused offers of bigger rooms to keep this view) and she recently took delivery of a second mobility scooter (the first having been returned as it was not fast enough).

This ability to remain positive and determined marked the lady who did so much to promote walking and the MBE, awarded to her in 2005, was for just this achievement.

Her first sporting love was actually mountaineering and her first competitive sporting activity was rowing. The latter began when she was in University and led to her selection for the GB Eights Team that rowed in the European Championships. Walking began in earnest with the completion in 1973 of the Long Mynd Hike (after which she joined LDWA) and in 1974 she did her first LDWA 100, the Peakland 100.

At this time she also began race walking. Unlike the LDWA where there were no restrictions on female participation, race walking restricted women to short distances. But this did not deter Ann competing in races not open to women and in 1977 Ann (and her friend Di Pegg) were allowed to

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race walk in the Bristol 100 and they both finished. Thus Ann became the first female Centurion (100 miles within 24 hours).

Further triumphs continued including in 1979, with an LDWA support Team, completing the 3 Peaks (Ben Nevis, Scafell Pike and Snowdon) walking 420 miles in 7 days and 31 minutes (a new record).

Land's End to John O'Groats then followed, also with an LDWA support Team completing a route of 840 miles in 13 days, 17 hours and 42 minutes. Another record and entry in the Guinness Book of Records.

Many other Challenge Events and 100s continued, too many to list here. She also helped on numerous events and in Local Groups, served for 15 years on the NEC and was the first female Chair of the LDWA.

Remarkably these were not the only things in her life. She spent most of her working life as a geologist with BP and particularly in later years she was heavily involved in the life of the local community including leading walks for Walking for Health, acting as a volunteer guide at Strawberry Hill House and working in the visitor information centre in Bushy Park."

*Further details of this remarkable life will appear in appear in the August Edition of Strider.*

#### **TRIBUTES to Ann Sayer MBE RIP**

- "Ann was a member of Loughton AC for a time and we shall miss her. When she lived at Buckhurst Hill, she would walk to Basildon for races and then walk home again. She was, of course, a top class rower in her younger days and had an oar on her wall to prove it! A great lady!" **Peter Cassidy**
- "How sad about Ann Sayer. I only knew her briefly but she was always so pleasant and positive. I had no idea of her tremendous achievements and experiences." **Steve Kemp**
- "Sad to hear this news. May she rest in peace and rise in glory." **Rev Dr Roy Lodge MBE**
- "I am so sorry to hear about Ann. What a lady and what an athlete with such charisma and charm and athletic achievement. How cruel that a mere bug takes her down." **Andy Bignold**
- "RIP to Ann. She used to attend the Metropolitan Police Walking Club Dinner. Please send our condolences to her family." **Kitty Hung**
- "One of our greatest and earliest female Centurions has passed on. We all have stories to tell of such a ground breaking female athlete who broke down the barriers against long distance female race walking and straddled the worlds of race walking and cross country walking." **Sandra and Richard Brown**
- "Sad news. Your health is your wealth." **Angus Browne**
- "Very sorry to hear of the passing of Ann Sayer. A really great first female Centurion coached by the late great Tommy Richardson of Woodford Green AC. May she rest in peace." **Kath and Bill Sutherland**
- "A very sad bit of news that Ann has joined the great number of losses from the disease, regretfully she has been through some tough times over the last two years." **Carl Lawton**
- "It is hard to believe that Ann has left us. We are the poorer for her passing. Her walking exploits were indeed second to none and many of us (especially the female walkers) have much to be thankful and grateful for her determination in championing our cause. She just would not say NO! It's always a sad time to lose a friend and loved one but currently it is heart-breaking." **Kathy Crilley**
- "It's probably not possible to say in a few words that would do justice to a quite remarkable athlete who scaled the heights not just in her walking exploits but also as someone who led from the front. She was a most respected President of the Centurions 1911 who guided its committee with invaluable advice, she was a campaigner to allow females to take part on the

100 miles events, and was one of the founders of the Long Distance Walking Association. Personally Ann's passing is a great sadness as we have lost a lovely lady and remarkable friend. RIP." **Chris Flint**

- "Very sad news. She had fought her problems with great courage. The last time I spoke to her she was very positive and had accepted her difficulties. Sadly you find out so much about someone when they have passed away, she was truly a remarkable person who achieved so much in her life to the highest order. Even in her later years, and after her 3 years as a great Centurion President, an honour so greatly deserved, she would attend meetings and give her valued opinions. All this until her illness and awful problems which she overcame and fought with great courage, but this terrible virus she could fight no longer. RIP Ann." **Pam Ficken**
- "Ann was a good friend who contributed greatly to walking, both as a participant and committee member. She will be greatly missed and I shall remember her with fondness and admiration." **Sue Clements**
- "It's terribly sad news and it is incumbent on us as association leaders, that Ann's achievements are celebrated and widely publicised. I cannot imagine a woman in our modern times, pushing the boundaries with such stunning achievements again." **David Morgan (LDWA Chair)**
- "Ann was a pioneer and an inspiration to the Centurions always at our committee meetings." **Martin Fisher**

### **BAD NEWS FROM SOUTHEND**

Our previous edition informed readers that Mary Green (nee Tagg) had been re-elected Southend-on-Sea AC President. Sadly Mary's husband Andy has suffered a fatal heart attack, aged 77. Andy was our 1967 AAA National 1 Mile Champion. Andy was 2nd in '65. Andy was first to break the 4-minute mile in the north. We extend our profound condolence to Mary and her family.

Writes Southend-on-Sea AC Honorary Secretary **June Cork**: "I think we're all still reeling from the shock. No-one expected this."

Writes **Mel Watman**: "So sorry to hear about Andy Green. My condolences to her and their two sons. I have fond memories of Andy and I was privileged to report for AW on his great AAA mile win at the White City in 1967. This is what I wrote at the time: 'I had to go one better than my wife – I couldn't have her crowing over me!' The speaker was Andy Green, whose wife Mary had run Lillian Board to inches in the WAAA 440, and he was understandably elated after his surprise win. He admitted he was 'a bit worried' after allowing Witold Baran, John Whetton and Walter Wilkinson to open up a three yard lead over him before the bell (reached by the Pole in 3:03.8) but a 55.6 last lap carried him past everyone for victory in 4:00.6. Time for his final half ... inside 1:56. Result: 1. Green 4:00.6 (championship record); 2. Whetton 4:00.8; 3. Alan Simpson 4:01.0; 4. Wilkinson 4:01.6."

### **A-B-C-D**

Let's focus on the '**B**' Section of the **1968 Highgate Harriers 1 Hour** meeting held at Parliament Hill Fields where we saw a Scottish 1-2, courtesy of Essex resident Alex Ross (Highgate Harriers) who accounted for 7 miles/1,121 yards - 2nd being Brighton's Alan Buchanan with 7/1,112 on his record. Later in his career, when this meeting was switched to Cophthall Stadium as Parliament Hill Fields track was being relaid, Alan earned a coveted 8 Miles-in-an-Hour plaque. Third was another Essex resident, Welsh representative Dave Rosser 7/1,020. In 4th spot came the first Englishman, and another Essex man, in Brian Armstrong with 7/916. Next three on the result sheet were Dave Stevens, Paul Maidment and Geoff Robinson. Others in this Section included Pat Duncan 12th, Ted Holmquist 13th, Carl Lawton 14th, Ron Penfold 16th, Jack Thomas 17th, John Telford 19th, Ken Tuson 21st, G. McCormack (Basildon) 22nd, Doug Hopkins 23rd, John Hedgethorpe 32nd and Tony Challis 33rd. 41 finished.

The main race - 'A' Section with 20 graded starters were led home by Peter Fullager - the only one passing 8 miles, which he did and then added a further 319 yards to his total. Peter, who emigrated to Australia, showed great form around that time, winning the 6 Miles Chippenham-to-Calne and Leicester Open 7 Miles from 118 and 126 starters respectively. 'A' Section 2nd/3rd awards went to Jake Warhurst and Bill Sutherland respectively. Colin Young was 4th. The 'C' race saw Geoff Hunwicks victorious with 7 miles and 732 yards. Now resident in The Gambia he maintains a keen interest in our domestic race walking scene. Denis Holly (2nd) AND future Olympian Wilf Wesch (3rd) completed the frame. Among Others in this section were 6th Steve Gower, 9th Mike Hinton, 11th Bob Dobson, 15th Doug Fotheringham, 18th Keith Phillips, 34th Jack Clifton, 39th Hew Neilson and 45th John Sales. 53 started. The 'D' Section saw Essex do well as R Fortune (Essex Beagles) was the only one bettering 7 miles, which he did so by 42 yards. G. Lee (Essex Police) was 3rd. Other 'D' finishers included Bill Fenlon 6th, Jim Hurley 10th, 15th Steve Holliday, 16th Alf Roberts, 19th George Hallifax, 25th Johnny Atkinson, Eddie McNeir and 44th Joe Scamell 54 were in this Section. As well as 168 in 4 Sections, another 34 contested a Boys' 1 Mile plus 9 were in the St Dunstan's Mile. What a meeting!

### NEIL BACK RIP

Former UK Athletics Performance Director Neil has sadly died at the age of just 60, due to "natural causes". He stepped down as Performance Director only last October. While at Morpeth Harriers he recorded wins against Seb Coe and Steve Cram plus many others. Coached by 1966 Commonwealth Games Marathon Champion Jim Alder he clocked 3:40.40 for 1,500 metres as a teenager in 1978, but was forced to retire a few years' later owing to injury.

### STILL ON THE TELLY



Sunday afternoon television on 26 April 26 featured an extended lookback at the first "Gillette" London Marathon - and there was Edbanger (aka Ed Shillabeer) race walking strongly in an athletic top marked "EDMUND". More favourable and constructive coverage obtained on our behalf - by the great one. When (if) the delayed 2020 event gets going on Sunday 4 October, we hope a number of walkers will appear as it's all good publicity, both on TV and in front of an estimated 1 million who line the route. We used to have many race walkers giving it their all - but, alas, numbers have dwindled of late.

Note: 'The 1981 London Marathon: An Historical First' can be viewed on BBCiPlayer until 24 May 2020: <http://www.bbc.co.uk/iplayer/episode/m000hrf7>

### DEATH OF AN ALL-TIME GREAT

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Hartwig GAUDER (Germany/GDR) (b. 10 Nov 1954 Vaihingen, Württemberg) died on April 22 in Erfurt at the age of 65. An outstanding walker for two decades, he is one of the élite few to have won European junior (10km 1973), European (50km 1986), Olympic (50km 1980) and World (50km 1987) outdoor titles. At 50 kilometres walk he also won bronze medals at the 1988 Olympics (when he recorded his best ever time of 3:39:45), 1990 Europeans and 1991 Worlds, and was 4th in the 1982 Europeans and 6th at the 1992 Olympics, prevented by the boycott of 1984 from competing at a fourth Olympics. At the World Cup he won in 1985 and was second in 1981 and 1987. He concentrated on the 50 kilometres, but at 20km he had a best time of 1:20:51 in 1987 and was 7th in the 1978 Europeans, and he set a world indoor 1 hour best with 14,906m

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in 1986. He won GDR titles at 20km 1975-6, 1985-6; 50km 1979, 1982, 1986; and the German 50km in 1993 and also set GDR walk records at 20k in 1979 and four at 30k to 2:12:11 in 1984. Track pbs: 3000mW 11:20.0 (1984), 5000mW 18:59.67i (1988), 19:31.62 (1984); 10000mW 39:13.15i (1988), 40:13.36 (1990); 20000mW 1:22:47.47 (1990).

He trained as an architect and competed for TSV Erfurt; coached by Siegfried Herrmann, the stylish runner who set a world record for 3000m at 7:46.0 in 1965. Gauder's family moved from West Germany when he was five. Gauder had a heart transplant in January 1997, but made such an excellent recovery that he competed in the New York Marathon several times.

#### Hartwig Gauder progression at 50k walk

Gauder had 12 years ranked in the world top ten at 50k, second only to Jesús Ángel García 15 (followed by Robert Korzeniowski with 11), although four years at no. 1 to García's one with Korzeniowski the leader at seven and Raúl González with five.

Year	Best	WL	WR	Year	Best	WL	WR
1979	4:01:20	58	-	1987	3:40:53	2	1
1980	3:48:15	7	1	1988	3:39:45	3	3
1981	3:46:57	2	2	1989	retired		
1982	3:49:44	12	7	1990	3:47:08	9	4 (3)
1983	3:43:23	3	5	1991	3:49:10	12	4 (4)
1984	3:41:24	2	2	1992	3:56:47	30	6 (7)
1985	3:43:33	5	1	1993	3:52:46	17	
1986	3:40:55	2	1				

WL = position on annual world list

WR Track & Field News world ranking position (PJM)

This informative article has been submitted by Peter Matthews, a member of the National Union of Track Statisticians (NUTS), who was guest speaker at our Race Walking Association's Centenary Dinner.

Adds Ed Shillabeer. Nice bloke too. I competed in same "Schweppes Cup" Spring meeting in Bekescsaba, (Hungary), behind the Iron Curtain in the early '80s and we all had "down time" in the hot springs baths in Gyula, a nearby town on the Romanian border. Happy days!



## Dear Dave ...

### THANKS

I have thanked Don Cox for his donation of a Race Walking Association 7 Miles-an-an-Hour badge. Dad was over the moon when it was given to him and I have attached a photo.



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Unfortunately the quality isn't very good as I couldn't get close to him due to the social distancing rules.

**Geoff Riley**  
(Terry's son)

### BABY NEWS

Just a snippet for the Essex Walker. Many of your readers will remember Jason Le Noury from here in Guernsey (Sarnia), well he and his fiancée Kira had a little girl on 17 March. Proud grandparents are Jayne and Kevin Le Noury who have seen the baby just once because of the Coronavirus lockdown in Guernsey.

**Jayne Le Noury**  
Sarnia Walking Club



## FROM EX-BEAGLES WALKER ERNIE FORSYTH

Hope you are keeping safe and well in the current crisis. I just wanted to thank you for your kind message regarding my Ilford AC life membership. It certainly was a surprise and a great honour.

**Ernie Forsyth**

## CENTURIONS LONDON WALL WALK

Thank you for including a write up of the Roman Wall walk in Essex Walker. In addition to the wall, our walk also took in the London sculptures currently being exhibited in the square mile and points of interest such as the green Penfold post box near Postman's Park.



Perhaps you could include my thanks to those who came along, to Ken Livermore for assisting and George Beecham who accompanied me on reconnaissance walks but whose health preventing him joining us on the day.

The following photograph:

- (Back row L-to-R) Ken Livermore, Pam Ficken, Carl Lawton, Peter Hannell, Trish and Henry
- (Front row L-to-R): Steve Kemp and Dave Hoben



**Steve Kemp**

## WHERE ARE THEY NOW?

I've had an enquiry from a relative of Colin Fisher an Enfield Harrier who competed in the mid-to-late 70's and was a member of their World record 100 miles' relay team. If you have any information about what happened to him, kindly let me know and I'll pass it on?

**Ron Wallwork**

## WHAT'S HAPPENED TO RACE WALKING IN THE SOUTH?

From **Alec Ross**:

What an interesting thread this is. Thanks Bill for provoking thoughts, once again. I don't stick my head above the parapet very often as I am a bit out of the way up here on the Moray Firth. I must congratulate Pamela, however. What an excellent and succinct summary of her ideas and achievements locally. Also several valid pointers for a way forward, albeit tempered by her experience on the reality of getting more individuals to turn out. In the meantime my regards to all those who know me, I too have given up walking and running in favour of a road bike, and a big mention for Pilates. I can't believe the benefit I get from an hour a week lying on a mat following instructions! A Guid New Year tae ane an' a frae bonnie Scotland.

From **Pamela Abbot**:

As a race walker as well as a keen parkrunner about to complete my 250th parkrun and regular run director and results processor at parkrun too, I thought I'd join the discussion. For me, at the mediocre end of race walking and running, it's about community of fellow athletes as much as competition. I really value

my fellow race walkers, both in what I can learn from them and their friendship, but I have to travel a long way to train or race with them and it's off-putting as I do a lot of travelling for work. When I started parkrunning in 2012, I race walked at parkrun for a couple of years preferring the local nature of parkrun to a trip to London for an official racewalk. Our course became too muddy and my coach suggested that coping with the conditions was contributing to my bent leg tendencies so I started to run the course instead of race walking and kept the race walk training separate. Lots of people do walk at parkrun and I always give out encouragement for their walking technique but no newcomers want to make the leap to race walking.

A while ago, I did start informally coaching a few parkrunners in basic race walking technique and 4 of them entered our county championships. However, I was limited by the time I had to devote to this, my lack of training as a race walk coach but mostly by the lack of coaching and competition infrastructure locally to provide support. My beginners were not keen to travel for over an hour when they feared disqualification or being very much at the back of the field and imagined everyone having to wait for them. The nice, nearby and inclusive race of the Moulton 5 was the exception. This year I was the only entrant in my county championships and was scheduled to race at the same time as the 75m hurdles to save 'wasting the track for all that time' to quote one county official organiser. We only got the race walk added to the championship in my county as I'm on the county committee and petitioned for it.

The success of the relatively newly formed Scotia race walking club which started meeting at different parkruns as well as training and travelling to compete as a team is a good example of a way forward to complement our existing strong clubs and regions. It was great to meet the Scotia members at Edinburgh parkrun when they were just forming as a club, they were so encouraging and inclusive. If we could find a way to build or rebuild a set of communities and coaching hubs with competition opportunities too, that could make a difference and I support Trevor's proposal to

have a race walk 'race' at particular parkruns. Adding the social element of meeting fellow race walkers afterwards as a way to potentially build new communities of race walkers allied to local parkruns and then hopefully local athletics clubs and build in coaching sessions too.

Adds Hon Ed: In this email Pamela highlights an advantage in having a race walker on her County Athletics' Committee, and the point made shows why it's so disadvantageous that, for a first time ever - no Essex race walker is filling such a position.

From **Peter Fawkes:**

A major problem we have today is getting people to travel very far to attend races. This could be because of cost, time, transport difficulties or distance. However, here in the North we are trying to get around some of these problems by scheduling at least one race per month at variant locations throughout the North, Scotland and possibly the IOM so that everyone can have a few races nearer home. Events will form a league with points awarded not only for positions attained but also on attendance. Officials will also be awarded points for attendance to encourage inclusion and participation. Participants will be allowed to submit results from race walking in their local Parkruns once a month quoting their best time (which can easily be checked on-line) and this will be added to the points score at a reduced level. I know judging will be an issue but the walking fields are so small that everyone's capabilities will be readily known and can be rejected if they are unduly fast for the competitor concerned. It's hoped that those doing so will fall back on the "honesty" culture shown throughout the sports past history. We feel that we have enough officials willing to turn up for this to be a success and hopefully we can showcase race walking at Parkrun events.

The above proposal is not mine but has come from Trevor McDermot and is thought to be a possible way forward to keep the sport alive.

From **John Paddick:**

Very good to hear from Roy Lodge after such a long time - Roy is right! Walking had much

more of an attraction when we had medallists at major games - The sport was widely accepted when I started and had a big competitor base to draw those medallists from. Like Terry Simons, I have also been into schools and have been well-received. Youngsters are always very enthusiastic. When I taught in Birmingham, my school, Acocks Green Secondary modern had a race walking team. We used to race against other local schools on an eight-a-side basis. My teams at Leicester won national medals. I could easily return to schools locally because I have a teaching certificate, DBS clearance and I do not need supervision. I also have an England Athletics Coaching badge for all athletic events including walking. HOWEVER, locally there are no races for eager youngsters to take part in and no youngsters to compete against without travelling a long way. Hence, there is no point in making a start again until something is in place that I can lock into.

From ***Dr Rev Roy Lodge MBE:***

What happened to race walking in the South could be extended to saying What happened to race walking in the North, South, East and West indeed nationally? I am somewhat disadvantaged and comment from a distance since I am not involved with race walking or Park Runs meets these days having taken to cycling! Occasionally I have spectated a park run and have often thought why can't they include race walking in these events, not competitively as such so much as participating in a training spin. Indeed I have noticed one or two walkers doing just that in St Albans. This may help to publicise race walking. Education in our schools may also be a way forward. Some of you may remember the late Terry Simons of Bromsgrove and Redditch. I remember him going into schools in the area and bringing coach loads of young kids to our Midland Winter Leagues. This did not always go down well with the judges and officials. Terry Simons was a great promoter of race walking and believed it could become a national sport - such was his optimism and enthusiasm. Another reason for the decline in numbers is that we have not produced Olympian, European and Commonwealth gold medallists which always has a tendency to bring any sport into the limelight and attract

new participants.

I have no regrets in promoting the straight leg definition of race walking for therein lies the credibility of race walking. For me it was a great sport, it was demanding physically and mentally and leaves me with fantastic memories of hard-fought races and great friends.

### **LACK OF BOXING DAY FIXTURES**

Many park runs are relatively easy to get to either running or walking and many are held in central locations. For those who rely on public transport, travelling on Boxing Day can be very difficult. And for those who are visiting friends and family over the holiday period - it is equally as difficult.

***Kathy Crilley***

### **JIMMY ROOKE RIP - FURTHER TRIBUTES**

- How sad. Another stalwart gone. Jim was always so enthusiastic and encouraging. ***Cath Duhig***
- Jim was a regular helper at Ilford's many walking races when our cycle pilot around the lanes of Chigwell Row! He was also a frequent cycle pilot on the old Basildon 50K course. ***Ray Pearce***
- Sorry to hear the news. He did a good job for us. ***Len Ruddock***
- This is sad news. Kind regards to all friends and family. ***Kim Howard***
- Sorry to hear the sad news. ***Angus Browne***

### **CENTENARIAN/OLYMPIAN BILL BROWN (C12) ARTICLE**

What a gem of an article and so interesting too! The Centurions certainly are a very unique group whose stories deserve to be spread far and wide! I remember my local press asking where I stopped for my food or overnight accommodation? And finding out that the great Belgravian George Beecham wasn't a driver of a car and I would have to drive around 40 miles home afterwards and witnessing a near fatal accident when a car in my fast lane lost it flew over the central reservation landing up its roof on the grass banking of the oncoming carriageway with 2 dogs flying out of the back doors too! It made an interesting aftermath following the Ewhurst 100 Miles Walk.

***Bill Sutherland***

## **BILL BROWN ARTICLE**

Thanks for sight of the newspaper article on Bill, and his role as a founder member of the Centurions marks him out as someone special. Definitely something for the archives. I recall you describing the 100 birthday celebration you organised for Bill. Well done.

**Chris Flint**

## **THANKS FROM TERRY RILEY**

I would like to thank you for making my 80th birthday a great day to remember. I thought it was great to get so many birthday cards and good wishes from all of my race walking friends. I would like to thank them all so much. I would like to say a special thank you to Don Cox for giving me his 7 miles-in-an-hour badge which I lost as a postman years' ago; and a special thank you for all you have achieved with my son Geoff.

**Terry Riley**

## **THANKS FROM IAN ROOKE**

I must admit I found the piece that you put in the recent issue of Essex Walker about Dad simply wonderful. It was so overwhelming to see the kind words being said about Dad, and the mere fact that you dedicated so much space to it. I was just speechless. I often accompanied my father as a child when he took part in running or race walking events. I remember above all his Beagles team mate Syd Webb - a lovely man if I recall. Once again, thank you so much for what you did in Essex Walker. It was also hugely and immensely appreciated by my Mum and sister. Thank you!! Once again, I am eternally grateful for all you did for my father. I wish you all the best.

**Ian Rooke**

## **MY RACE WALKING GURU**

Multi-talented inspirational David Ainsworth, Centurion extraordinaire! Soon after I took up race walking Jim Hurley (now deceased), who had just moved to Devon, persuaded me to join his club - London Vidarians - whose captain was Dave! It was Dave's communication skills that got us and another RAF man (from Chivenor, Devon) Ray Flynn, to compete regularly on the "Open 7s" circuit. Without Dave's encouragement then (early 70s) I doubt if my involvement in race walking, which has given me so much ever since, would have lasted for more than a handful of years.

Now, in the latter years, Dave's encouragement is once again prime in my continuing involvement. Many, many thanks.

**Ed Shillabeer**

## **KEEPING IN TOUCH**

What a strange and unpredictable time we are living in. Thank goodness one has the enthusiasm and drive to exercise every day. One recalls the Race Walking days when one was training up to 100 miles a week, that discipline stays with you or at least it has with myself and many other athletes. So much so that I am now taking advantage of the lockdown to raise funds for our local hospice cycling up to 90 minutes every day. I don't hope to equal Captain Tom's marvellous effort but hope to raise several thousands. So far have covered over 300 miles and hope to reach 500 miles by the end of the lockdown. Hope all my friends in the race walking fraternity are keeping well and safe.

**Roy Lodge**

## **NEWS FROM MAD MAX**

Very good obituary from Peter Matthews on Hartwig Gauder. I wrote a piece for Facebook with images. It's had well over 100 responses with folk from all over paying tribute. This picture below was taken shortly after we had finished a 35kms at the 6 Nations in Ornskoldvik, Sweden.



I finished 5th with a still standing GB record of 2.36.19; Hartwig finished about one minute in front of me.

**Chris Maddocks**

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