

Essex Walker

Editor: Dave Ainsworth

SUSPENSION OF ATHLETICS COMPETITION EXTENDED TO 30 JUNE 2020 ENGLAND ATHLETICS U20/U23 TRACK & FIELD CHAMPIONSHIPS POSTPONED



England Athletics, in collaboration with the other Home Country Athletics Federations and UKA, confirms the suspension period relating specifically to athletics competition has been extended until at least 30 June. Full information can be found [here](#).

The decision to extend the suspension of licensed competition activity was collectively taken due to the ongoing coronavirus pandemic and in recognition that event organisers, clubs, athletes, officials and coaches at all levels of the sport need clarity, advanced notice and time to plan. In addition to this announcement, England Athletics also confirms the postponement of its own U20/U23 Track & Field Championships – originally scheduled to take place on 6-7 June 2020 in Bedford. Licensed competition providers may need to make decisions relating to facility hire if they are contractually bound and we also need to be realistic in considering the likely availability of officials between now and June and first and foremost to ensure their safety. In addition, securing the required level of first aid medical support for events has become increasingly challenging with providers such as the St John's Ambulance ceasing to support major events until at least the end of June. Some licensed competition providers have already taken the decision to postpone their competitions during this period and our latest domestic competition planning with UKA and the other Home Countries now makes provision for a 1st July start at the earliest. However, this may move back further depending on government guidance and advice on issues including insurance, health & safety and medical service provision.

Whilst all licensed competition events in our sport scheduled up to 30 June 2020 are suspended, the wider suspension of all other athletics activity outside of competition (currently set to 31 May 2020) will be kept under review.

England Athletics continues to stress the importance of following UK government guidelines in relation to restrictions of movement, social distancing and out-of-home exercise.

England Athletics CEO Chris Jones said: "This is a collective UK wide decision and whilst we would all love to see the return of athletics competition as soon as possible, the safety of our members and the general public is of utmost importance. We understand the challenges that athletes, coaches, officials, event organisers and clubs are facing at this time and it was important that we reviewed our suspension of competitions activity and provided an update as soon as possible. The coronavirus situation has added new layers of complexity to the planning and organisation of events and these logistical issues, as well as the need to help clubs and competition providers, were central to our decision making."

"England Athletics continues to work with the other Home Country Athletics Federations and UKA to help ensure that competition at all levels can take place in some form, if permitted, later in the



year. We are working on a revised competition calendar with the input of our Regional Councils and established providers to shape this and will be communicating more about this in the coming weeks, including guidance on what an alternative schedule of competition may look like from July onwards. We are considering new initiatives in what will be a shortened season and are exploring virtual competitions as part of this approach, with recent partnerships enabling England Athletics member clubs and RunTogether groups to have access to the **OpenTrack** and **Racefully** virtual running platforms free-of-charge."

"We are also continuing to offer new digital activities, resources and partner initiatives through our [Athletics & Running for Everyone @ home campaign](#) which has seen fantastic engagement as we help the whole of the England Athletics family to stay active, stay connected and keep developing while spending more time at home."

LEW MOCKETT RIP - OBITUARY

Lewis Mockett was born in Harpenden, Hertfordshire but wasn't there long as the family moved to the delightful Forest of Dean hamlet of Gorsley - 6 miles east of Ross-on-Wye. He was a bright pupil and passed a scholarship to attend the prestigious Monmouth Boys School 16 miles' away - so involving Lew on a daily round bus journey of 32 miles. With studies over Lew thought about a military career but opted to enlist as a cadet in the Metropolitan Police and trained at their Hendon Training College. Like so many others, Lew came into race walking via his employer. He was interested in athletics and turned up for a track training session - only to find the track was booked for race walking only.



"If you can't beat them, join them" thought Lew so he took part - the rest is history as they say.

Lew's natural talent and fitness came to the fore early and he was to win many medals, cups, plaques and certificates in Metropolitan Police athletics. In those days all Areas had their own Sports' Days, and the Met Police itself held Championships at most distances. Lew featured in these with success! So much so he was often in Metropolitan Police representative teams which competed at a high level against so many opponents. Indeed "Met Police V whoever" was a regular item on fixture lists when no major National or Open events were on the calendar. This in turn saw Lew selected to represent the British Police at even higher levels and awarded his National sporting colours. Most certainly Lew will have left behind a large collection of athletics sporting awards.

Lew joined Woodford Green AC (as then called) and he appears in their Centenary Book (author Tony Maxwell) among those in their all-time Club 20K road rankings list with 104.05 clocked on 23rd March 1963 at Enfield. Lew was a competent and diligent administrator and was this Club's Honorary Walking Section Secretary from seasons 1966/67-to-1971/72 taking over from the late Brian Ficken before handing over to Jack Thomas.

Lew made a short move from Woodford Green to nearby Ilford AC, mainly as he wanted more involvement in team competitions. His proverbial "high water mark" came just down the road at Victoria Park on 3 August 1974 when among 69 lining-up for a European Games 20K trial. All top race walkers of the day were on the start line, knowing only a top-3 finish would get them considered by selectors. Lew was 10th in a personal best 94.11 with many great names in his wake. His time saw him listed highly in our National 1974 rankings - and he's still in GB Athletics' all-time rankings. As for selection, alas, only 2 made the plane to Rome for the European 20K Championship - they came 3rd and 6th so who knows what a full complement could have achieved?

In team competition Lew was always in the scoring teams of 4 for both Ilford AC and Essex County. Lew's top team moment came in the 1975 Race Walking Association National 10 Miles' Championship at Southwick (West Sussex) when Ilford won this prestigious event for the first time

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in their history. In his personal tribute, team colleague Len Ruddock described Lew's contribution as the key element of the team's success. The winning scoring 4 that day were: Roger Mills 3rd, Steve Gower 9th, Lew Mockett 16th and Geoff Hunwicks 26th. Ilford AC had so many walkers and supporters that then Walking Secretary Tony "Mr Reliable" Perkins organised a coach from Gants Hill to-and-from the venue.

Another triumph, among so many, was the 1974 Gloucester Festival Open 7 Miles (organised by enthusiastic Chris Newman) which Lew won in 52.17 just ahead of serious rival Alan Smallwood (Halesowen AC) in 52.36 with promising fellow Police athlete George Nibre completing the frame on 57.04. In a successful return to Gloucestershire Lew was called up onto a bandstand in the City's main park to receive his prize from Miss Gloucester. Other Police walkers in that race were John Bromley, Noel Carmody, A Thomas, M Lewin, P Wright, P Lovell, A Thompson and P Cassidy (no, not the Essex one).

When returning to race another Gloucester Festival 7 Miles, which started/finished on grass in the City's main park, with 3 circuits of an "around the houses" course in-between, things didn't go Lew's way when he suffered a very rare disqualification as he left the grass and ventured out onto the City's roads. Lew competed with excellent style so this was a most unusual end to one of his races. Nevertheless this day still ended well as Lew invited some of our walkers to make a short drive to Gorsley where his parents laid on a wonderful afternoon tea, and a good time was truly enjoyed by all in delightful rural surroundings.

In 1977 at Chelmsford's dusty Melbourne Park Stadium cinder track the Race Walking Association staged a 100 X 1 Mile walking relay (10 walkers each walked 1 mile in rotation, again-and-again). Ilford's 10, in order of appearance (as said in theatres) was George Nibre, Lew Mockett, Dave Ainsworth, Geoff Hunwicks, Bill Sutherland, Steve King, Lawrence Dordoy, Dave Neagle, Brian Armstrong and Steve Gower. Team Manager Tony Perkins. Ilford's time of 13 hours 14 minutes and 52 seconds (inside the previous world record) secured 5th team position. Lew's 10 separate miles had an average time of 8:08.5.



Photo: (front) Lew Mockett; (first row) Bill Sutherland, George Nibre, Geoff Hunwicks; (second row) Laurence Dordoy, Steve Gower, Dave Neagle, Brian Armstrong; (back row) Christine Perkins, Karen Embleton, Jeannette Gower, Tony Perkins, Steve King

Lew was an individual title winner of our Essex League; over 12 races (within 12 months) of varying distances from 3,000m-to-50 Kilometres. All 12 (ie it wasn't best 9-from-12 or something similar) counted. Organiser John Hedgethorpe stipulated this as he wanted a "tough competition" and wouldn't listen to any doubting his ruling. Before switching to a calendar year format (ie Jan-to-Dec) the Ilford Hour at Cricklefields Stadium in July was its 12th-and-final event. Lew completed the Basildon 50K, which he hadn't previously appeared in, and led the table with only that 12th race to go - on a midweek evening. But - he could still be caught and was on a family holiday in Blackpool that week. Lew agonised and pondered - then decided to break his holiday by driving from the North West to Seven Kings to appear, finished his race (so winning a League title) and immediately drove back north. Lew remarked that this hadn't met with approval from Brenda, his wife. If the good lady had objected, one thinks that she had a very good point!

At another Ilford AC Essex League fixture Lew was in the spotlight. The Ilford Hour became so popular it could no longer be held as a "One Section" track promotion - so became a road 10K, 6 times around exterior roads of the town's South Park. One evening a hobbledehoy in South Park

Drive, for his amusement, shied eggs at race walkers as they passed, with a number being hit - none more so than Belgrave Harrier and Southend-on-Sea 2nd claimer Paul "Scoop" Warburton who was going well until he got covered in the stuff and left the race to get cleaned up. On finishing, Lew carried on for another lap until reaching the offending job to halt his activities and give a stern admonishment.

Lew also turned out in Police cross county runs and when retiring after 33 years' service, the Metropolitan Police Race Walking Club presented him with a decanter and tray of crystal glasses to show appreciation of his long meritorious contribution - in which he'd been a long-serving Honorary Walking Club Secretary. As for "The Job" his last "patch" was geographically large as it covered all of Chigwell and Barkingside. When saying, "Evening All" for a final time it was in the rank of Chief Inspector. Police Service is truly in the family as both son Philip and daughter Hilary enlisted - as cadets in the Metropolitan and Hertfordshire Forces respectively. Viewers of Thames Television News may well recall Inspector Philip appearing on screen appealing for witnesses to a fatal Croydon tram and car accident. Hilary once made an Ilford AC appearance. Most UK Clubs signed-up for a National 100 X 1 Miles Running Relay. Several local Clubs combined to stage their efforts at Ashton Playing Fields Track. To raise 100 athletes was a task involving members of all sections and former members to boot. Lew volunteered to run a mile and allocated a turn-up time. Shortly before he was called into work on an urgent matter, so rather than let the Club down he handed an Ilford AC vest to Hilary and asked her to run in his place. Hilary made the short journey from Chigwell-to-Ashtons Track and duly obliged.

After ending race walking Lew kept himself fit as he'd use Chigwell Police Sports Club as changing facilities before heading out for runs or race walks - often with other former athletics' colleagues. As a member of that Club Lew was helpful in getting us bookings for our walking races and Championships.

Lew was missed and all wished he'd stayed in race walking for longer, but in reality this involvement in athletics was only a "warm-up act" for more successful times to come - in another pursuit, that of bowls. Lew and Brenda moved to Rustington, near Littlehampton, in West Sussex. They became members of Norfolk Bowls Club, situated in Norfolk Gardens on Littlehampton sea front. At this Club Lew served as a trustee and became a qualified coach. He really had talents on the green, as he reached County representative standard. His Sussex team played a number of other counties, including Essex home-and-away. In 2006 Lew was Sussex County Bowls President. Both Lew and Brenda were frequent players and trophy cabinets at home were packed with trophies, plaques and medals - more than ever achieved in athletics (and that was many). Both Lew and Brenda also held various important positions at Club and County level in the bowls community. Many Sussex Bowls Clubs' websites have published their tributes to Lew. He'd recently made contact with near neighbour and old rival ex-Scottish International Alan Buchanan. Lew liked listening to BBC Radio Sussex in the mornings when another rival, ex-GB International and Centurion John Lees, was then a sports presenter/reporter on that station.

His wife Brenda predeceased him in 2018, and now Lew sadly left us in April aged 81, as a pancreatic cancer sufferer. He'll be so much missed as everybody will remember a true gentleman who always showed courtesy and civility to all he came into contact with. To Philip and Hilary, and all other family members, we express our profound condolence on the loss of a lovely man and a true "good-un". A funeral service was held on 27 May and, in keeping with Government advice on assembling, was for family only. A gathering for others is being considered for when our current medical situation is declared over.

The world was a better place with him in it!

Dave A

Donations in Lew's memory can be made to Pancreatic Cancer UK and may be sent via H D Tribe Ltd, 63 Sea Lane, Rustington, BN162RQ. <https://www.legacy.com/obituaries/worthingherald-uk/obituary.aspx?n=lewis-mockett&pid=196153877>

TRIBUTES TO LEW MOCKETT

- "I well remember Lewis (did we call him Lew or Lou?) and the race at Southwick (the Church stands out I recall). Nice bloke and a true sportsman." **Peter Selby**
- "A very sad loss to a very `gentle` and thoughtful man. I trained with Lew on quite a number of occasions, always a good session physically, both having put the world to rights by the time we got back home. A sad loss to this troubled world. Dormi bene amico." **Roger Mills**
- "Very sad news. Lew was a wonderful person, a great walker and team player. RIP Lew." **Chris Flint**
- "This is indeed very sad news. My Dad and I used to meet up with Lew on Sunday mornings, often accompanied by George Eastwood. Lew was an interesting character and I valued his friendship." **Mike Scamell**
- "Sad to read of the death of Lew Mockett RIP. A nice guy, great walker for the Police, Essex and Woodford Green. Will be sadly missed." **Ray Middleton**
- "Sorry to hear this. He was a neighbour of mine and I spoke to him on the phone a year or so back. He was going to arrange for us to have lunch at his bowling club and this explains why it never happened. He was a lovely man and a good host when he had our annual 10 miles at Hayes with the police, and when I was their guest for their dinner at New Scotland Yard all those years ago." **Alan Buchanan**
- "The photo (below) brought back many happy memories. Had many a good walk with Lew." **Hans Rennie**
- "Sad news indeed, a very placid, unassuming man but a valuable and reliable member of any team. I'm sure his family will be proud of all his achievements." **Bob Dobson**
- "So sorry to hear about Lou Mockett. He was a lovely man." **Mick Barnbrook**
- "So sorry to hear of the passing of Lew Mockett. He was an excellent and very dedicated Club secretary for the Met Police Race Walking Club over many years and a very promising race walker for County and Clubs. It was most difficult for him to compete at the highest level due to being a very busy senior officer at Hackney Police Station on 'G' District and competing frequently in the golden era for British Race Walking, when the competition was of the highest level and you were only as good as you last race! I trained with him on a few occasions at Chigwell Row and Highgate as I know did the great Roger Mills. Many condolences at this very sad time to his family and friends. May he Rest in Peace and always be remembered fondly by so many race walkers." **Bill and Kath Sutherland**
- "Really sorry to hear of the passing of Lou Mockett. He was a great race walker and a true gentleman. He will be sorely missed." **Peter Marlow**
- "What a sad loss of a lovely man. We were mates in many 'N' Division teams along with Bill. Charlie Fogg, Peter Hodgkinson and others. Lew also turned his feet to the occasional cross country for the Division. A sad loss indeed." **Alex Ross**
- "I recall Lew Mockett passed me in the closing stages of a Police Championship held on Chigwell's "Big Ten Miles" course. When I finished, just behind, Lew apologised for beating me - what a gentleman! I often trained with him very early, for between an hour and an hour-and-half, from his home in Chigwell, and we'd get back in time for a tea and toast breakfast." **Amos Seddon**
- "I was really sad to hear the news about Lew's death. He was always such a nice and gentle character and great to have him in our Ilford squad. A quality race walker and I reckon he was the key element for us in winning the blue ribbon event of Race Walking, the National 10 Miles in 1975. Even though I got disqualified late on in that race, being 5th scorer at the time, it was one of my proudest moments whilst racing in an Ilford vest. Lew and I had some tussles but it was usually me that he left behind in races. His strong and compact style taking him away along the road in front of me. My heartfelt condolences go to his immediate family during this sad time." **Len Ruddock**
- "That's a real shame. Sorry to hear this. My sympathy goes to the family." **Angus Browne**

- "I remember him as a very nice gent and an impressive walker. I remember that he took part in the Airolo to Chiasso Relay in Ticino, Switzerland, on more than one occasion." **Reg Denny**
- "He was great company and always a redoubtable competitor. Looking at the pic of the starters in the Barking to Southend annual Police walk showing so many greats we all recognise who have gone before, and some still (thankfully) with us, they will make a space for him to join them and reminisce about the wonderful days and camaraderie he enjoyed with us all in the Race Walking community. RIP Lou." **Oliver T Flynn**



This photo (left) shows the Met Police Walking Squad in Lew's heyday - but amazingly Lew was absent on the day this picture was taken. The photograph was taken in 1977 at the No 4 Area Met Police Sports Club at the Warren, Hayes, Kent.

Back Row (left to right) - Vic Moore, Amos Seddon, Dave Salter, Stuart Bennett (Senior), Ted Leach, Bill Sutherland BEM, Stuart Bennett, George Nibre, Chris Flint and Andy Williams

Middle Row (left to right) - Jack Clifton, Reg Denny BEM, John Evans, Graham Scott, Charlie Fogg BEM, Colin Fisher, Hans Rennie, Peter Hodkinson, Derek Warrilow, Mike Shields and Mick Barnbrook

Front Row (left to right) - were Doug Fotheringham, Arthur Eddlestone BEM, Reg Youldon, Bert Stevenson, Commander Tony Lowndes BEM, Assistant Commissioner Henry Hunt CBE, Assistant Commissioner Geoffrey McLean CBE, Alex MacFarlane, Fred Denny, Len Taylor and Jim McAtee.

"Eight Trophies are on display plus the Winning Trophy for the Lugano 5 Stage Relay in Switzerland. A further photograph was also taken in 1988 I believe at the Hendon Training College. Very sadly around 12 are now deceased. Quite a few additional representatives were in the later photograph, but I think this truly illustrates the wonderful past years of the outstanding Metropolitan Police Race Walking Club." **Bill Sutherland**

MET POLICE 1977 TEAM - ASSESSMENT

Former Scottish International and Essex Champion walker **Stuart Bennett** recalls that team and gives his praiseworthy opinion, "That Met Police team was pretty good. I make it 7 internationals, 14 sub-60 for 10k and 6 of those under 50 mins for 10k. I think that would beat any of today's teams". He's got that right hasn't he? It's so sad the Metropolitan Police isn't a major race walking recruitment source nowadays.

THE VEST OF BRITISH

Well an East German vest actually - but presented at a British International meeting to the late Steve Gower. On 10 June 1978 at Crystal Palace on a mild cloudy morning but regarded as ideal conditions, on a track then rated the best in our country, was held an International match between

Great Britain and East Germany. The fixture list hadn't been well compiled as this major representative event was just 7 days before a Commonwealth Games Trial which was to be held in conjunction with the first RWA National 30 Kilometres' Championship (replacing our long-established National 20 Miles' Championship). There were difficulties in assembling a GB team as 3 top Internationals turned down a chance to appear (as reported in Race Walking Record) - so keeping their proverbial "powder dry" for that important Trial a week later. It was 2-a-side with our GB team consisting of Steve Gower and Amos Seddon, both patriotic and willing to represent their County as well as heading to Sheffield for the Trial a week afterwards. The race was a German 1-2 courtesy of Hartwig Gauder and F Sparmann who clocked 84:22.8 and 87:18.6 respectively. Steve Gower, having the race of his life, completed the frame in 90:27.4 with Amos Seddon 4th in a close 90:53.6. Two top walkers guested: Chris Harvey and George Nibre who completed the result sheet in 94:25 and 94:39 respectively. Hartwig Gauder, the victor who recently passed away - his death was mentioned in our last edition - presented his East German International vest to the first Briton home - Steve. By coincidence Steve's sister - Hornchurch-based Jeanette - on the very day that our last edition was distributed - sorted out some of Steve's old possessions. And there among them was the great future Olympic gold medallist International's vest. So sadly, Steve took his leave of us in August 2002 at the age of just 51 after an extended spell of ill health and is still very much remembered with fondness by all.

A week later came that Chapeltown (Sheffield) trial where the first 3 home were Olly Flynn, Brian Adams and Amos Seddon clocking 2:21.54, 2:22.26 and 2:25.26 respectively - all 3 booking places on a plane to Edmonton for the Commonwealth Games 30 Kilometres Walk. Things didn't go Steve's way and he retired during the race. Steve had expended much energy the week before while answering his County's calling - and had also given blood a few days before the race, believing his body would have recovered from an extraction of its 500 mls. As for our selected trio at these Games Olly won in 2:22.03 followed by 2 Australians in Willi Sawali (2:22.58) and Tim Erikson (2:26.33). Brian was 4th in 2:29.41 and Amos 5th in 2:29.57. A trio of Manxmen appeared with their best showing coming from 7th positioned Graham Young in 2:31.14. The other 2, John Callow and Robert Lambie, were among 4 "DNFs", the others being Kenyan David Munyao and New Zealander Mike Parker - one well known on our British race walking scene.

ILFORD AC WALKING SQUAD CIRCA 1968



Back row: Colin Williams, Johnny Kinch, Brian Armstrong, Keith Phillips, Steve King, Geoff Hunwicks, Tony Perkins and Roger Mills
Front row: Lawrence Dordoy, Frank Clark, John Stannard, John Perkins and Len Ruddock

Notes: John Perkins is not connected to a race walker of that name who competed for Ilford AC in later years. 1968 Olympian Frank Clark is now back in Australia and Geoff Hunwicks is based in The Gambia.

Acknowledgement: Thanks to **Brian Armstrong** for captioning this photograph.

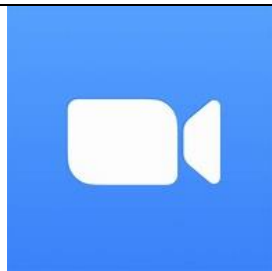
John Batchelor commented: "Classic photo! I didn't know that Colin was still competing at that late date. Ilford AC walking had folded and was reborn between Colin's golden days and when this photo was taken. I was living in Edinburgh 1967-70. I knew all but the two youngsters in the front row, even Frank the Aussie, and helped a few on the Brighton road on occasions."

HELP FOR THE NEEDY

World Athletics – the international governing body for track and field, cross country, road running, race walking, mountain running and ultra-running – and the International Athletics Foundation has unveiled a \$500,000 support fund for athletes affected by the COVID-19 pandemic. Sebastian Coe, World Athletics president and IAF chair, said the fund would be "used to assist athletes who have lost most of their income in the last few months due to the suspension of international competition". As featured in last month's EW, Tom Bosworth had highlighted how athletes were worried about their incomes drying up in this current situation ... so perhaps, for the elite at least, this will be welcome news.



<https://swimswam.com/world-athletics-creates-support-fund-for-athletes-affected-by-covid-19-pandemic/>



MODERN THINKING

Now non-active competitive race walkers and officials can be assured that their Race Walking Association's Southern Area Committee is still functioning and looking after the interests of our sport in the South. At the initiative of Chairman Noel Carmody, a Committee Meeting was held in May - having been staged by "Zoom".

ANN SAYER – THE LAST WORD

BBC Radio 4 recently featured a brief interview with Julie Welch about Ann Sayer in its 'Last Word' broadcast. This programme can be found online (for a period of one year), and the section relating to Ann is 21:03 minutes into the programme.

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/sounds/play/m000hwsj>



PHILOSOPHY: It's better to arrive 10 minutes' late in this life than 10 years' early in the next.

HOW HAVE YOU BEEN DOING IN LOCKDOWN?

A few readers have enquired - so here's how one keen reader has been occupying his time:

Tony Maxwell reporting from 27, Forest Edge (Buckhurst Hill):

- 1 I am leading Carol 119-118 in our noughts and crosses competition.
- 2 I have solved 14 easy sudokus but failed miserably with the moderate one.
- 3 I have re-read 'Jenny Goes to School' and 'Biggles Flies North'.
- 4 I am practising solving quadratic and simultaneous equations as it is my turn to work with our two English grandchildren on Home-School next week.
- 5 I thought I had ordered five packets of Vanish for Carol, the washing material I hasten to add, but Amazon sent me five packets of Viagra. Seemed a pity to waste them.
- 6 I was passed the other day by 91 year old John Hayward while walking in Knighton Woods near us.

Would love to hear how you have been managing ...

KING OF THE BRIGHTON ROAD by Bryan Hawkins



PRAISE FOR CARTOONIST BRYAN HAWKINS

"I have a cartoon he did of me many years ago. He went by the name of Bry in cartoons he did for a well-known film magazine. Very talented artist, comic and script writer for many stars including Tommy Cooper and Harry Worth, and that was in his spare time!" **Alan Buchanan**

"Bryan Hawkins was a great character in our wonderful sport and is so much missed. Metropolitan Walking Club have a great team in heaven now. May he and other well-known race walkers Rest in Peace."

Bill Sutherland

Adds Hon Ed: Praise indeed from Alan and Bill - both Scottish representative athletes in their wonderful heydays. Bryan, who appeared in a European Games, is a former Enfield Open 7 Miles' winner (1954/55) who also belonged to Brighton & Hove AC. He also wrote for the late Max Miller. Thanks to Christine Perkins for unearthing his cartoons to cheer you up during "lockdown".

TONY CHALLIS RIP

Early (6am) on Saturday 16 May, Tony Challis died in his Cambridge care home at the age of 89 (he'd have been 90 in November). Dementia had brought about his demise. He'd recently received a negative test result for coronavirus. The staff at his Home had stayed up with him all night. Tony had been a care home resident for the past 4 years.

Tony had been a successful racing cyclist and runner before giving his all to race walking. Tony served in the Royal Air Force for 35 years with 19 different postings, being demobbed in the rank of Chief Technician ending with 4 years at RAF Coltishall near the Norfolk Broads. Tony and his wife Barbara liked Norfolk as they had a caravan in that County where they enjoyed many pleasant times. Like many talented Royal Air Force race walkers Tony joined a now defunct Trowbridge & District AC. In competition Tony's name is in many Open 7 Miles' result sheets - always with early/mid 50 minutes' timings - with sub-80 minutes' National 10 Miles' times also on an impressive record. On the track Tony was always prominent in Royal Air Force Championships over 2 Miles, then 3,000 metres as metrication kicked-in. Tony was responsible for a rule being imposed across the board in all RAF sports - this after an annual triangular Representative Match - Royal Air Force v Trowbridge v Bristol over 7 Miles at RAF Colerne in Wiltshire. In charge of the Royal Air Force team that day was Flying Officer Fry. For some reason (maybe even an administrative error) Tony wasn't selected for the Royal Air Force team. As Tony belonged to Trowbridge AC and was then stationed locally, he turned out for his Civilian Club. Not only did Tony win this race, but Trowbridge pipped the RAF to win the match. Afterwards the proverbial "muck hit the fan", following which the Air Ministry brought in a rule that no serving Royal Air Force personnel may appear in sporting teams against the RAF. Over a long period Tony gained selection for the Combined Forces who did well in annual Ryan Cup Representative Matches against the British Police & Civil Service over 10 miles in its heyday. A Combined Services team - actually it was 9 various RAF men plus the late Lance Corporal Phil Thorne of the Hussars - who was also a Trowbridge AC star. Tony was proud to have been a lifelong non-smoker and teetotaler.

In civilian life Tony was resident in Great Shelford (on the Cambridge outskirts) becoming a
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member of Eastern Veterans AC (as then called). He held office at that Club, being an excellent and long-serving Newsletter Editor - then produced in booklet form, so reminding folks of the old "Athletics Weekly" format. In this role Tony was outstanding and readers couldn't wait for it to drop through their letter boxes each month (no email distribution then). Every edition contained Tony's Quiz - and each featured at least one race walking question. During his time as Editor Tony conducted a number of in-depth interviews with prominent East Anglian based athletes which produced many comprehensive articles. A number of race walkers were featured in these columns. In 2002 when Ron Wallwork commenced his highly popular Moulton Open 5 Miles (+ supporting events) Tony was a helper - in early years he sat at the numbers/pins tables and greeted arrivals. He was about for quite a few years before illness began to take its toll. Tony was famed for his photographic skills at Moulton Fives - though many wished he hadn't brought along his camera - for every year he caught a few competitors "up" as they say!

Tony was married to Barbara for many years - it would have been 70 in August. They were married, in Cambridge, when Tony was aged 20 and doing "square bashing" while on National Service at RAF Bridgnorth in Shropshire. Like many Service marriages in such times, it was held while the groom was on a weekend pass. For some, the last we saw of Tony was at a Cambridge funeral of 96 year old Dave Blyth (EVAC) - among mourners from Royal Air Force days and our athletics world. On that occasion Tony was a care home resident and turned up in a wheelchair - but chatting to so many athletics and ex-Servicemen really ignited great spirit in him, and we enjoyed seeing him look so well in such company. Dave served in the Argyll & Sutherland Highlanders before his RAF days and a Pipe Major in full ceremonial attire came to play at the service. The Army did their best, but could only get one from another Scottish Regiment (Black Watch). Tony thanked the piper for coming so far - only to be told he was on 6 months' secondment to Cambridge City Centre Army Recruiting Office and could have walked it, but for carrying all his gear. Dave was one of Tony's selected featured athletes in his Newsletter and after this service Tony wrote an account of this occasion for the publication he used to edit.

When notifying of Tony's death, Barbara wished to thank those who'd kept in touch with him over these difficult years and among those specifically mentioned was were Cath and Peter Duhig and Dave Gulliver. To Barbara and the family we extend our condolence on a sad loss of one who gave so much to his chosen sport and will be missed.

Condolence messages may be sent to Tony's daughter, Wendy Roberts (wroberts6@live.co.uk) where they'll be promptly forwarded.

NB: The funeral service, in keeping with current Government advice, will be restricted to family members only. Barbara would like to have read out a few tributes from former colleagues and rivals alike from our race walking world - which had meant also much to Tony over decades. You could put such words in with your condolence card/message.

TONY CHALLIS RIP – TRIBUTES

- "Sad news. Many years past on holiday with my family in remote Devon, I went out for a spin from the hotel, didn't see a soul for about an hour, when into the distance I saw the mirage of a race walker! Up strolls Tony, who I had met many times when staying with Geoff Saxty, training with him and the late great Judy Farr in Trowbridge. Anyway, after that encounter, we met up each day I was there to enjoy wonderful Devon and get some miles in. I can't recall the RAF base where he was stationed at the time. RIP. Ciao." **Roger Mills**
- "Oh dear. The news we had been dreading, and thank you for sharing it, and such a wonderful, informative tribute. We will, of course, be in touch with Barbara soonest. In many ways this will be a release, for her from the pain of watching Tony deteriorate and looking for signs of the wonderful, twinkly, living, kind man we all knew him to be, hidden increasingly behind the frustrations and ravages of dementia. Their 50th wedding anniversary fell when we were away in Canada. We had had a painting done for them of the beach at Waxham Sands, where we

had spent many fun static caravanning days, mainly drinking each other's tea, and then rang them as a surprise on the day of the celebration. I remember Tony being especially thrilled that a brass band had been mustered to play for them at the venue where a celebratory dinner was being held. It was tragic seeing such a bright and fertile mind declining, and I am sure many tributes will be mentioning Tony's wit and sense of fun, coupled with a genuine interest in people. When we first met, he barely mentioned his race walking achievements, focussing totally on asking what I had been doing, how I trained etc. Such a modest and unassuming man. If anyone hasn't met him, think of Gene Wilder as Willy Wonka, and there you have the mischievous eyes, sense of fun, and concern for people that I think characterised Tony Challis." **Cath Duhig**

- "What sad news and what a lovely tribute." **Pamela Abbott**
- "In recalling Tony Challis I looked up my race walking results sheets and noted that he competed in the Calne six mile Open in October 1969. I came second to Paul Nihill 42.09 [R Lodge 43.12 (2nd) R Mills 43.16 (3rd) and my dear friend W Sutherland 43.40 (4th). A Challis was 37th in 50.09.] I am sure we must have shared a conversation and competed together in RAF events. Condolences to his dear wife and family. May he enjoy "a safe lodging, a holy rest and peace at last". Unbelievably there were 116 entries in that race. What brought a bout this decline in our great discipline of athleticism? **Rev Dr Roy Lodge MBE**
- "So sorry to hear of Tony's passing. A quiet, unassuming man who I was vaguely aware of until he spent the best part of a day with me gathering material for an EVAC magazine feature about me. I realised then what a dynamo of a man he was in promoting athletics and race walking in particular. He was a dependable and reliable helper at numerous Moulton walks, always without fuss and with a confident calmness." **Ron Wallwork**
- "Very sad news. Always remembered in the Ryan Cup walking matches. A real stalwart! May he rest in peace. Sincere condolences." **Kath and Bill Sutherland**

UPDATE ON GEORGE EASTWOOD - CENTURION 576

Epping (Thornwood) resident George Eastwood, who is now aged 96, suffered a stroke a couple of months' ago. We're pleased to hear he's getting over it and making progress - however he's a little unsteady on his feet.

George and Charlie Megnin used to go out training together once-a-week after both had retired from competitive race walking. In earlier times George used to train with Mike Scamell. In Woodford Green AC's Centenary Handbook (a tome compiled by Tony Maxwell) George penned a 7 pages' long detailed and informative article about the 1976 Woodford Green 24 Hours at Ashtons Playing Fields, which was, in the end, reduced to a 2-man scoring team competition and won by the host Club. George covered 115 miles 1705 yards and the late Ken Turner (a City of London Police Officer) 103 miles 1434 yards. Their 100 miles times were 20:29.39 and 22:53.36 respectively. George and Ken became new Centurions. Twenty-three started, 15 completed 100 miles and 8 made 24 hours. Eight became new Centurions, others being Jack Rossiter (Borough of Enfield Harriers), Dave Sharpe (Newham AC), Alan Pickering CBE (SWC), George Hallifax (SWC), R Thew (Yorkshire WC) and D Reavey (Dawlish & South Devon).



Dear Dave ...

ANN SAYER MBE RIP - TRIBUTE

Sorry to hear the news. I remember her 24 hours track race at Hale, Altrincham - wearing spats to protect her feet from the cinders!

Ed Shillabeer

ANN SAYER MBE RIP - ANOTHER TRIBUTE

With the passing of Ann our sport has lost one of the giants of Women's Race Walking. It is with great disappointment and sadness that I again re-read the discriminatory issues she faced. To Race Walking's credit the motions concerned were never seconded therefore

spared our sport from much future embarrassment. There is no need for me to repeat her tremendous sporting achievements as an athlete and even greater achievements as an administrator which underlined her MBE was a richly deserved award. It is this latter attribute we all too often forget it is people like Ann who we have to thank for keeping our sport going for us all to enjoy. Ann RIP.

Oliver T Flynn

NEWS FROM MAKE SCAMELL

Although it is several years since I raced, I still train every day. The "lockdown" has actually seen me doing my largest monthly mileages - 230 miles so far this month - so I am in good shape. I do miss the gym.

Mike Scamell

GOOD NEWS FROM SPAIN on MAY 2nd

Today was the first after almost 50 that we could go out and take some exercise. I felt like a released pit pony - and probably walked in a mode that resembled one too. But it was lovely to do a bit of stretching out rather than 50m laps of the living room and terrace.

Cath Duhig

CHURCH-TO-CHURCH CANCELLED

Due to the ongoing coronavirus the Sarnia Walking Club have cancelled this year's Church to Church walk due to be held on 6 September 2020.

Rob Elliott

Press Officer Sarnia Walking Club

COLCHESTER 100 MILES - 8/9 AUGUST 2020 - CANCELLED

This message is to inform you that as result of the Coronavirus pandemic the Colchester 100 miles on 8-9 August is cancelled. We apologise for any inconvenience this may cause and hope to welcome walkers to a future event. Stay safe.

Sue Clements

Hon Secretary for Centurions1911

FROM OUR TV CRITICS - ANN SAYER MBE RADIO 4 TRIBUTE

I listened to the broadcast today and thought it a lovely reflection on Ann.

Steve Kemp

It should be fascinating and it's so good to know that Ann's dedication and commitment to the LDWA/Centurions and other bodies is

being recognised in this high profile programme. Well done Ann.

Chris Flint

BILL SUTHERLAND REMEMBERS

The famous Barking to Southend Walk: 3 times I was honoured to organise it. On the last occasion we had over 300 start no less! on a dreadful day when it rained buckets from the start to the finish. After that the then Chief Constable of Essex Ken Burrows decided that enough was enough and passed his thoughts to our Chairman of the MPRWC Assistant Commissioner Geoffrey McLean CBE. Those were the days eh!

Bill Sutherland

MESSAGE OF HOPE

We are now living at a time when we have to recalibrate our existence. The things we have taken for granted such as freedom of movement and assembly and freedom from pestilence are no longer an option. A seismic change in the way we have to live our lives. The advice we are now being given is to stay away from the people you love to show your love for them. Much of what is happening now is counter intuitive. Many people are speaking about this crisis as a war – and that might be helpful in some ways but not in others. That in a war, our instinct is to get together, to comfort each other, to strengthen our resolve.

What we are being asked to do now is not that. It is to stay away from each other physically. We are to find other ways to connect and communicate.

But for most of us, in forcing us to act in ways we find extremely difficult, this social distancing is uncompromisingly requiring us to act in each other's best interests not our own. For those who are still moving, still going out, still walking towards situations the rest of us are asked to stay away from, we are full of admiration for our front line workers in a crisis such as this, while others become strangely still, worrying about the sudden loss of income, circumstances and prospects.

However frightening it is we can find good in this crisis, both practically and spiritually. Yes, there are some people who want to grab everything in the supermarket, but there are far more people who want to help and are thinking

practically about neighbours and people in isolation for whom they may be a lifeline. And spiritually let us think of love being viral too. That the love needed to fight the virus is communal. Although self-isolation is an individual act, it should be recognised by neighbours and colleagues as an act of sacrificial love for the community.

Rev Dr Roy Lodge MBE

RECOMMENDED READING MATERIAL

I'm sure you'll be pleased to know that the latest Road Runners Club magazine includes a good tribute to Ken Mathews by Alistair Aitken, including his interview with Ken in Tokyo in 1964. The RRC was founded by Ernest Neville, a founder and pillar of Centurions and a SWC stalwart. (It was always said of him that he had no need of a megaphone when officiating at events.) He was involved in long-distance running as well as walking, and was instrumental in setting up the RRC in 1952 and in introducing the London to Brighton running race which the RRC promoted. I'm one of those who was lucky to do both the walking and running Brighton events in the 1980s.

Sandra Brown

NEWS FROM A POPULAR FRENCH-BASED READER

I remember Ann Sayer well as I had the pleasure of looking after her at Roubaix as she competed in the 28 hour race. All is well here in France, I've had a few problems that have been sorted with surgery ... a back operation that was so successful that for the first time in 30 years I am back pain free ... I feel so good I am in my second week of getting fit on the road. We are still under curfew here and only allowed out for one hour recreation running or walking and only within 1 kilometre of your home. I hope you are well, I still remember you overtaking me when we finished the police race ... finished on the track and you flashed passed me. Good memories.

Kevin Perry C912

Adds Hon Ed: Kevin was a key part of a strong Southend-on-Sea AC Walking Section. He joined The Centurions at a memorable joint 1993 Surrey Walking Club/Metropolitan Police 200 Kilometres' promotion in Battersea Park when reaching 100 miles in 22:02.32. Before relocating to France, Kevin was a successful competitor in many events which included

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.becoming our National Long Distance Champion at Blackpool in 2002 when completing 182.591k in a 24 hours track race. When leaving us he was much missed by his Club, Essex County and our National race walking scene. Readers will all wish him well in France.

A READER'S IDEA

Following Martin Rush's plan, another thought has crossed my mind regarding moving from local to regional to national events again as things open up. Some years' ago I was introduced to virtual events via children's Sportshall. At the time we were encouraged to have reasonably serious local club events and then submit the results to Sportshall where they were combined with results from other clubs etc. Similar virtual events have been held for other purposes too – children's marathon relays, etc. I wonder if a similar sort of thing may be helpful for regional and national race walks. A few reasonably local clubs/competitors competing and then forwarding the results? Just thoughts.

Steve Cartwright

PAUL REMEMBERS THAT "EGG RACE"

I remember the occasion very well. I stopped first time so (a) I could wipe the egg from everywhere and (b) because I too gave a kind of half-hearted chase to a couple of lads. They disappeared, of course, and by the time I came round again there they were - back on the wall. It was then I stopped knowing what would happen if I went past. I don't think they were aiming at me particularly - they just got lucky with a hit, and wanted another go. But I do remember Lew going for a look after the race.

Thanks for Essex Walker, and yes, I still enjoy it very much. Saw the various tributes to Colin, of course. I still knock out something like 29 to 30 minutes for 5kms, but these days I stretch and warm-up almost as long as I walk! Things creak! Stay well and keep Essex Walker going - always a good read!

Paul Warburton

Adds Hon Ed: Paul was a leading light at Belgrave Harriers and competed in our Essex League for Southend-on-Sea AC. He was also a gifted athletics journalist. Sports journalism was his profession

ESSEX WALKER

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