

# Essex Walker

**Editor: Dave Ainsworth**

## ESSEX COUNTY HON RACE WALKING SECRETARY

An update on the vacant position of Hon Race Walking Secretary for the Essex County AAA has been sent to us from Peter Cassidy:

*"You will know that, upon Ray's retirement at the AGM, we were unable to complete Item 8(f) on the Agenda: Election of Race Walking Secretary. I am happy to say that **Melanie Peddle** has volunteered to take on the position. You will recall that Melanie is the County 10,000m Walk Champion, beating all the men; she is a member of Loughton AC, so she beats me in the Club Championships as well!"*

### 5th CECIL GITTINS MEMORIAL WALKS SATURDAY 17 OCTOBER 2020 from 12.45 pm

RWA Race Permit applied for; accurately measured course. Organised by Veterans AC.

Rules: Judging based on no loss of contact with ground (Category 'B').

Course: 2.5k/5k/10k road race on cycle track adjacent to A2 near Gravesend. In addition, 15k race will be available if numbers justify, otherwise participants enrolled in 10k.

**Race HQ:** Cyclopark, The Tollgate, Watling Street, Gravesend, Kent, DA11 7NP

Facilities: Cafe, toilets. Large car park (small fee goes to charity).

Entry Fees: Entries in advance only online as below; Seniors, U20 and over £7; Juniors U17 and under £4. Entry deadline **11 October 2020**.

Race numbers can be collected at Registration on race day from one hour before start of race. Exact race time starts will be determined when total entries are known.

Enquiries: **David Hoben:** [walks@vetsac.org.uk](mailto:walks@vetsac.org.uk) or 07507158605

2.5k/5k/10k entries go to: [onlineraceentry.co.uk/race/cecil-gittins-memorial-walks-2020](http://onlineraceentry.co.uk/race/cecil-gittins-memorial-walks-2020)

15k entries go to: [Cecil Gittins Memorial Walks 15k - Online Race Entry](http://Cecil Gittins Memorial Walks 15k - Online Race Entry)

## CHELSEA O'RAWE-HOBBS RIP (1991 - 2020)

So sadly we report that Chelsea O'Rawe-Hobbs, aged 29, has passed-on following a road accident in Kempston Hardwick on the outskirts of Bedford on Sunday 20 September 2020: [www.echo-news.co.uk/news/18746624.our-vibrant-chelsea-loved-save-lives-others/](http://www.echo-news.co.uk/news/18746624.our-vibrant-chelsea-loved-save-lives-others/). As bad news circulated it was met with both disbelief and shock from the many who've such fond memories of Chelsea. The O'Rawe family is one whose members have truly excelled at a number of sports, reaching high levels of performance with many successes.



Chelsea (U17) Blackheath Harriers

Chelsea's promising early race walking days were with Castle Point AC before really hitting top form with South London-based Bromley & Blackheath Harriers AC.

Far more authoritative than Essex Walker is athletics website ([www.thepowerof10.info/athletes/profile.chelsearawehobbs](http://www.thepowerof10.info/athletes/profile.chelsearawehobbs)) "Power of 10", which lists all her performances. This profile brings you a commendable entry where you'll be impressed by how often 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> are her listed finishing positions. During successful race walking years Chelsea amassed a large collection of cups, medals, plaques, certificates and prizes - proof aplenty of natural talent and ability. She also travelled to many walking venues - including Lugano, Switzerland.

Mention should be made of a rapid 14.45.82 in May 2006 at our Essex County 3,000 Metres Championship held at Chelmsford and which brought another gold medal. When our RWA National 10 Miles Championship was incorporated into an Enfield League programme in February 2009 at Lee Valley, Chelsea was 5th lady in a class field, clocking 97.41. June 2008 saw BBC Breakfast Television film our Veterans' 5 Miles Championship around Battersea Park, with a field of 49 (39 men/10 women). An appeal for a good field to impress the media brought 49 finishers - at a time when these series of races only drew 10-to-15 per race. Chelsea's time of 46.38 secured 15th position (overall) and 3rd in the ladies list. Afterwards BBC personality Mike Bushell, who completed this race after being trained/coached by Carl Lawton, chose 4 race walkers to interview. One was Chelsea who spoke positively about our event and was so enthusiastic she provided good reasons for youngsters to become involved. It must have made good television as it was shown 4 times on the same day! Chelsea was a keen Enfield League supporter making many appearances and winning the host Club's Ladies Open 7 Miles in November 2007 clocking 65.29.

Over many years a famous enthusiastic "*Canvey Island Support Squad*" were prominent at classic 100 miles and 24 hours events, with Chelsea a key member. Their best moment came at Newmarket's Rowley Mile Racecourse at the 2009 Captain Barclay Centenary 100 on 11/12 July. Come midnight it became Canvey Island competitor Steve Kemp's birthday and, as he approached the feeding area, a surprise birthday party broke out. This effort turbocharged Steve (Centurion 1075) to power on towards a 23:21.20 finish.

Chelsea was blessed with an ability to remember names and faces - and it is an ability - for when coming to support at well-attended Nicola 5 miles' races around Canvey Island and along the sea wall, she remembered everybody's name and encouraged one-and-all. The good lady was in the nursing profession, and at this time her absence will certainly be missed by her medical colleagues. She was a committed donor card carrier and, by the time you've read this, 9 persons will have had their lives improved for the better - thanks to Chelsea's personal decision. A Just Giving page has been set up to raise funds in Chelsea's memory for the East Anglian Air Ambulance service.

<https://www.justgiving.com/fundraising/chelseaslegacy>

Everybody who ever had the pleasure of knowing such a delightful lady - and being in her presence was a pleasure - will be shattered by such a tragic occurrence. On behalf of all our readers we express sincere and profound condolence to all her family members. Indeed the world was a much better place with Chelsea in it! DA



### Reactions, tributes and condolences:

"It is a very sad time for the Hobbs/O'Rawe family. It's hard to comprehend the sad loss of someone so young and is very hard for me to take in." **Andy O'Rawe**

Without exception, everyone has expressed both shock and sadness on hearing the news about Chelsea. Readers who have emailed to that effect include: **Cath Duhig** ("Oh no, this is awful"), **Sue Clements** ("Shocking news"), **Kathy Crilley** ("This is really sad news. I'm lost for words"), **Steve Uttley** ("Oh God, no!"), **Carl Lawton** ("Very sad news"), **Pete Selby** ("What dreadful news"), **Sandra Brown** ("That's inexpressibly terrible - I'm lost for words"), **Irene Bateman** ("Terrible, terrible news about Chelsea"), **Paul Warburton** ("That's shocking news"), **Len Ruddock** ("So sad obviously for all concerned" and **Peter Marlow** ("Really sorry and she was so young").

- "What devastating news! We remember her so well being a 'really bright star' on the race walking scene with the entire O'Rawe International Family. Bright and breezy and always a

pleasure to meet. May she Rest in Peace. As Kath said, 'We will never forget the happy times at so many venues in Essex!' With great sadness." **Kath and Bill Sutherland**

- "How very sad. I last saw Chelsea about 14 months' ago. She was really cheerful and in good spirits about her nursing training. How hard this must be for Alan." **Steve Kemp**
- "Absolutely gutted. Can't believe it. She was a beautiful and wonderful race walker. Real shame. Thoughts are with the family x. Your health is your wealth." **Angus Browne**
- "I believe for a while in mid/late 2000s she was member of Blackheath and Bromley Harriers when they had a good junior team. I will pass on details to B and B (Shaun Lightman coaches there now) and colleagues at Tonbridge AC. Chelsea started about same time as Tom Bosworth. She competed against the likes of Emily Symonds, Louise Bradley, Steph Rukin at TAC. Rest in Peace Chelsea, you were a great young athlete." **Peter Selby**
- "On behalf of Blackheath and Bromley Harriers AC, I would like to extend our heartfelt condolences to Chelsea's family and loved ones. We are terribly sad to hear of her tragic accident." **Helga Pullin** Honorary Secretary Blackheath & Bromley Harriers AC
- "Chelsea was an Enfield Leaguer and also the Ladies Open 7 winner in 2007. She was a breath of fresh air at our races in which she showed much promise and it was obvious that she had great potential, not just as a race walker but at whatever she decided to do in life. It's a tragedy that it was cut so short. My sympathy to Alan and all the O'Rawe family." **Ron Wallwork**
- "So sorry to hear the very sad news about Chelsea. Chris heard from Ben Wears earlier in the week. They were good mates on the junior development squad weekends. Please pass on our condolences to Maggs and Alan." **Jim and Simone Walker**
- "I would like to send my condolences to Alan O'Rawe, Margaret O'Rawe-Hobbs and Liz Stocker for the untimely death of Chelsea O'Rawe-Hobbs." **Jon May**
- "Unbelievably tragic! Please pass on my condolences to family and friends!" **Geoff Hunwicks**

#### WIGMORE HARRIERS ... WHO ARE THEY?

The above statement sounds like a famous Milk Marketing Board 1980s advertising catchphrase, "*Accrington Stanley who are they?*" Our last edition mentioned the late John Dunsford RIP belonging to an athletic club **before** signing on at the Bels. "*Not a lot a lot of people know that*" to quote a line attributed to Michael Caine, although he's fed up being associated with words he never uttered. Wigmore Harriers were founded in 1885 and kept going until 1972 when they merged with Camden & Hornsey AC (formerly Hornsey St Mary's Harriers which were founded in 1904) to form North London AC. In April 2000 North London AC joined with Muswell Hill Runners to form London Heathside. When the local Council stated that they might be unable to continue funding their base facilities, they formed Finsbury Park Sports Partnership to control their track.

#### FALLERS

We're sorry to hear 2 hard-working members of your RWA Southern Area Committee have suffered injuries after suffering falls. Stephen Cartwright (Colchester & Tendering AC), who looks after judges' and officials' matters, accidentally parted company with a step ladder as he performed home maintenance tasks. Olympian Ian Richards fell when coming into contact with a couple of *tearaways* on bikes while training, so causing him to miss 3 weeks of virtual racing.

#### OPENING TIME

Cricklefields Stadium is finally back open, albeit limited to 30 athletes on track or within the inner area at any one time.

#### GEORGE BEECHAM MBE 1931-2020

Article submitted by Carl Lawton

It is with regret that we have to announce the death of Life Member George Beecham MBE, at the age of 89 - a Belgravian for 69 years.

As a youngster George suffered from asthma. When he was 18 he decided to take up race walking to help improve his health. He had continued doing that and similar activities in a very serious way ever since. As a young man he represented his county of Surrey as well as Great Britain in race walking. In 1957, aged 28, he came third in a Belgian race won by Don Thompson, the only British man to win a gold medal in the 1960 Olympics. The following year he came first in

the tough Hastings to Brighton race which is 38.5 miles over the rolling Seven Sisters hills. When he took part in the London to Brighton race in 1951 he came fourth.

*George competing in the London to Brighton race*



*Leading Hughie Nielsen, 24-hour record holder, through Croydon*



*George, third from left, is wearing the number 1. Number 100 is being worn by Don Thompson*

George scored 3 times for the winning Bels National 50kms team- in 1957 (2nd scorer), 1960 (1st scorer - in 5th place) and 1961 (3rd scorer). He was also in Belgrave's winning team in the 1954 RWA National 20 Miles (4th scorer).

Since then he has walked many marathons and in 1981 he first took part in the 24 hour track race at Brighton in very wet conditions and passing the 100 mile point to become Centurion 716. in 22hrs 45m 12s and continuing to complete 104m 557yds.

In later years he was an athletics coach who helped train Commonwealth gold medal winner Dean Macey. [www.echo-news.co.uk/news/18729256.tributes-canvey-stalwart-george-89/](http://www.echo-news.co.uk/news/18729256.tributes-canvey-stalwart-george-89/)

George, who had lived on Canvey Island for many years, had worked tirelessly to raise money for charity and promote sport among young islanders. He was one of the founders of the Canvey Athletics Club, and had run in many London Marathons.

George was born in Hackney in 1931 but moved to Surrey during the Blitz. He married his wife, Marlene, in 1957 and the couple moved back to London before settling on Canvey in 1963, with daughter, Catherine, who was born in 1967. George continued to work as a Post Office engineer, but became involved in the fundraising branch of the Royal National Lifeboat Institute on Canvey and had been chairman.

As well as the marathons George took part in many of the annual Nijmegen, Holland, four-day 200km charity marches, with up to 45,000 competitors, raising funds for Canvey charities, while his marathons have raised thousands for asthma charities and the RNLI.

Despite ill health for many years George has always fought through it with great courage and determination. Although Canvey Island was his home Belgrave was always in his heart.

Any tributes to: 51 Tewks Avenue, Canvey Island Essex CO8 8 HG or Catherine [mrslliley@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:mrslliley@hotmail.co.uk).

Thanks to [www.CanveyIsland.org](http://www.CanveyIsland.org) for some of the information.

## TRIBUTES TO GEORGE BEECHAM MBE

- “We are sorry to hear this very sad news. It was a great pleasure and an honour to know George. George was a true Centurion, very proud of his membership, and we greatly enjoyed his company on the Centurions’ Canvey Island social walk – a very good walk made all the more memorable and special by George joining us there. It’s excellent that George gave the Centurions some wonderful photographs and press cuttings – these were added to our official archive at the Surrey county archives and will be a permanent and treasured tribute to his memory.” **Sandra C735 and Richard C760**
- “We are really sorry and sad to hear of the passing of George Beecham MBE a truly remarkable Centurion 716 achieved on the track at Brighton in pouring rain throughout. He was an extraordinary Clubman with Belgrave Harriers and a great team walker of a very high standard during the Golden Years of GB Race Walking. Being my handler in the Ewhurst 100 Miles when I qualified as a Centurion 890 we hold him and his family in the highest esteem. May he Rest in Peace. He will be massively missed by all who knew him. With sincere condolences.” **Kath and Bill Sutherland BEM**
- “Sad news. George had been so supportive to the Metropolitan Police Walking Club annual dinner and reunion. He was also very generous by donating many gifts for the raffles. May George rest in peace.” **Dr Kitty Hung**
- “What sad news indeed. I recall George on many Centurion social walks, that he turned up and walked with us and showed tremendous strength of character.” **Kathy Crilley**
- “I only met George once at an event on Canvey Island, about everything genteel years ago, obviously a staunch Belgravian. RIP. **Lionel Mann** Belgrave H
- “Another warrior down. I remember George, but not well, as a cheerful chap, but then I was a funny runner and not one of the walking brethren.” **John Thresher** (Belgrave)
- “Sad news re death of George Beecham MBE. RIP. A walker’s walker who was everything good about our sport, not forgetting Marlene who gave him great support over many years. This was a guy you could look up to as a team member, none better, who did it all with great pride in a club he was so proud of. We will miss a dear friend.” **Ray Middleton**
- “With the passing of George Beecham Belgrave has lost a walker who had a unique record. Joining the Club in 1950 serving his apprenticeship as the RWA introduced the 1 hour races to give awards based on the distance covered. At the same time a Junior event over 5 miles was introduced with George in the **Belgrave** team and it was then we heard that in preparation he had walked from his home in Sutton to Brighton for a work out! Soon he was selected for the National 10 at Stockport where he was in the third placed team - the first placing for some years. Within in a few years he found a liking for the longer distances. One name in particular appears with Beecham - Nijmegen. In 1923 a British group had taken part in a then famed Dutch Walk in Nijmegen and were presented with an award which was adopted by the RWA for the first club team finishing all 8 men in the National 20 miles championship. Belgrave, won over the years, the Nijmegen Trophy several times, few Clubs recorded more than three occasions. George was a member of the Belgrave winning team on 8 occasions. That trophy is no longer competed for, but George went to Holland to take part in the original marches on at least 17 occasions covering 55kms a day for four days. George worked tirelessly for our sport and as an example it was usual to see him doing a walk round the course for the Nicola 5 held on Canvey, then probably racing in the event and clearing up afterwards. Over the years we always parted by agreeing that we had competed in the best of years, having the best of times with the best of Clubs - RIP George. **Eric Hall**
- “Sorry to hear of George's passing, we all did speak on Friday that George was ill but it is still a blow, he was always a great friend of the Centurions and sadly missed, there is a really nice piece on George ([www.canveyisland.org/people-2/4-notable/george-beecham-mbe2/george\\_beecham\\_mbe](http://www.canveyisland.org/people-2/4-notable/george-beecham-mbe2/george_beecham_mbe)) on the Canvey Island website with a terrific picture of him Hughie. **Martin Fisher**
- “George was a very nice man, and I considered him the essence of race walking.” **John Webb**
- “Much sadness on the passing of a great character. He regularly attended the Met Police Walking Club annual reunion and dinner, and he was such a loyal supporter of the Centurions. He really will be missed, and all condolences to his family. **Chris Flint**

- “Very sorry to hear this. What a character and what an achiever. Always good company on the strolls. George was in BDWF – British Dutch Walking Federation. George was only the second person to be given a BDWF Life Membership award in recognition of all the effort that he put into the BDWF for the benefit of old and new members alike. BDWF organise Nijmegen entry for the Brits.” **Dave Hoben**
- “A lovely man, always cheerful, and greeted you like an old friend, which I suppose we were.” **Alex Ross**
- “Whenever I met him he always gave me a really warm greeting.” **John Eddershaw**

### LONG SERVICE

Harwich based former International of note Amos Seddon has appeared in race walks every year from 1959-to-2019 (inclusive). Nowadays he's a key player on the parkrun scene.

### SOUTHEND CENTURION QUALIFIER'S FEAT

New Zealander Richard McChesney qualified as Centurion 1131 when coming 7th on Southend's Garon Park track in 2014 clocking 22:39.00 - he's also NZ Centurion No 19. Recently he walked to all 270 London Tube Stations in 5 days, taking a selfie at each to prove he was there, on route to competing 523 kilometres on a carefully planned route. Richard penned a book, "Walk: Going The Distance". It was on sale at £4.99 but is now reduced (on clearance) to £1.99 at Amazon.

### NOT OUR FINEST HOUR

British Athletics Championships are covered by the BBC. Some years we're completely ignored, with not even a result given. In recent times coverage has been measured in minutes as Tom Bosworth has ignited interest in our event at the BBC - who like him - and we've enjoyed previews, post-race interviews and extended coverage of races with camera rolling from the start. **This year it was mere seconds.** An opening shot was of race leader Heather Lewis being red-carded late on. We were told this often happens in race walking. We saw a brief shot of victoress Gemma Bridge finishing. We then switched to the Men's race where the briefest clip was screened of Callum Wilkinson winning. We were told that had Tom Bosworth appeared, Callum would have given him stiff competition. Those few seconds of action were followed by a few more seconds of Steve Cram spouting out incorrect information. For instance, viewers were informed that **5 of 7 in the men's race were disqualified.** What an image? We needed more racing, if only to show viewers we're a popular event. Callum gave a really good interview after his recent UK 10,000 metres performance - so why didn't BBC want to hear what he had to say. If Tom had won, he'd have been interviewed. The 5,000 metres run got plenty of starters. However, we accept some were wary of Covid-19 and for other reasons. In a National Men's Championship our entire UK race walking world couldn't provide anybody to claim a bronze medal - which is shown on an official result sheet as **"Not Awarded"**. Again, what an image? Race walking continues digging its own grave. Few knew our Women's back marker - Abby Hughes. It was her first start in such Nationally rated company - Abby appears in "Power-of-10" ([thepowerof10.info/athletes/profile.abbyhughes](http://thepowerof10.info/athletes/profile.abbyhughes)) during 2019 at our U/17 Championships and 3 Schools meetings (Somerset/SW Counties/English) and earlier this year in the Molly Barnet and once on the IOM. Much enthusiasm is needed to pursue a race walking interest when Taunton-based. Nowadays there isn't an active South Western race walking scene as **gone** are well-supported Walking Sections/Clubs Dawlish & South Devon, Plymouth City Walkers, Exeter Harriers, Bristol RWC, Yeovil Olympiads, Worcester AC, Trowbridge & District AC, Weymouth St Pauls Harriers, Southampton AC. It's decades since great races were held in Gloucester. Some Clubs have totally disappeared, such as Trowbridge (most went to Avon Valley Runners, including Judy Farr and late husband Stan). That's **a major issue** for walking as great parts of the UK have seen a collapse with no revival signs. Further west the Welsh walks' scene isn't what it once was. We hope to see more of Abby and we really need more new names on race programmes.

**Our thanks to all who supported this race**, by participating or officiating. *There was a younger age profile which is helpful.* **Congratulations to our 2 National winners** - a first with neither having a British coach, which shows the International side of our event. **Let's all vow to make our 2021 British National Track 5,000 metres a proper "Showcase" for our chosen event, with a good field!**

## WRITES OUR RWA NATIONAL PRESS OFFICER, *John Constandinou*

"The BBC got it absolutely wrong again - they lied! **3 DQ's for men (not 5)**, 1 DQ for women. 13 started (5 men, 8 women). Doesn't help they have not been in judged races for many months, and it's an unusual environment. Pit lane was in operation, so would have required a pit stop and a 4th card for each DQ. There were 3 PB's which they should have focused on."

## BRITISH CHAMPIONSHIP 5,000 METRES WALK RESULTS - MANCHESTER 05/09/20

### Men 5000W

1	19:25.94	Callum Wilkinson	Enfield	SB
2	22:20.12	Luc Legon	Bexley	PB
DQ		George Wilkinson	Enfield	
DQ		Daniel McKerlich (T20)	Cardiff	
DQ		Cameron Corbishley	Medway	
DNS		Tom Partington	Manx	
DNS		Guy Thomas	Tonbridge	

SB = Season's best

### Women 5,000W

1	22:51.15	Gemma Bridge	Oxford	SB
2	23:46.04	Bethan Davies	Cardiff	SB
3	24:52.89	Jasmine Nicholls	Leicester	PB
4	25:27.61	Ana Garcia	2 Dash	SB
5	25:54.92	Abigail Jennings	AFD	
6	26:00.38	Pagen Spooner	Hyde	SB
7	27:16.91	Abby Hughes	Taunton	PB
DQ		Heather Lewis	Pembroke	
DNS		Natalie Myers	Sheffield	

## WHO'S WHO – DAVID KATES

Who's Who? Courtesy of Ilford AC website: [ilfordathleticclub.co.uk/2020/09/11/david-kates/](http://ilfordathleticclub.co.uk/2020/09/11/david-kates/)

**Name:** Dave Kates

**Born:** 1948

**Date joined:** I think it was 1970

**Personal bests:** Ah PB's. They're important in the moment, particularly when you are young, because they are a measure of how well you are adapting to the training process. You know that, Bob Beamon and Jonathan Edwards aside however, that PB's do not stand the test of time though. What matters is results against your peers in the era that you compete in.

**First club race:** Probably the annual Ilford Club Yacht Handicap Road run at Chigwell Row. For a couple of years I also ran Cross Country in the then Metropolitan League. Huge fields of 200 plus and tin baths to clean off afterwards. If you had a bad run you were treated to cold water and 5cms of mud in the bottom of your tin bath.

My first walking race was the Essex 20km Championship, I think it was 1972. I was disillusioned following a long period of injury. Roger Mills persuaded me to try Walking and I just turned up on the day with no training behind me, never walked before and not much idea of what I was doing. I did 124 minutes and everyone said I should give walking a try.

**Favourite race:** European Masters 30km Championships, Monte Gordo, Portugal 2005. Air Temp was around 34C, no shade along the seafront there. Huge field, hundreds of spectators all around the course and in my age group in the first 6 we were knocking 7 bells out of one another the whole race. Raw enough to make you feel alive.

### Notable performances:

World Masters Champs 50km Gold. Auckland New Zealand 2004 \*

World Masters Champs 30km Silver. Auckland New Zealand 2004 \*

\* These two races were 4 days apart. I plead temporary insanity.

European Masters Champs 30kms Bronze. Monte Gordo Portugal 2005

Centurion Badge 1995. 100 miles in 23hrs 20min 40secs.

**Biggest disappointment:** Our demons are best kept hidden. In truth, nothing is wasted. Learn from every experience. There is always something you can take.

**Typical week's training at your peak:** Ah that one. The one where they say 'don't try this at home'. What I did is not important because you are not me. Can I say this ... " If we do what we did yesterday, we will be beaten. If we do what others are doing then we can be competitive, we can be 'warrior'. If, however, we see and understand the science behind our event and we use it in a unique and innovative way, then maybe, just maybe we can be Champion.

**Favourite sessions:** The one that ends with a cup of tea and me not saying 'That's it, I'm packing it in'. More seriously you must ask yourself each time 'what am I looking to get from this session, where does it fit into the blueprint of what I am trying to build here?' Afterwards then

question 'what did I get from that?' Probably pain! You have to visualise the journey ahead of you and ensure that each session you do is a legitimate payment toward that. Otherwise you are just playing around.

**Favourite race distance:** Well it was 30kms but, as Fagin once said, I'm reviewing the situation.

**Favourite event – track, road or cross Country:** I prefer to compete on the road but I like to watch track & field also.

**What advice would you give our current crop of youngsters:** Enjoy it, listen to your trainer. Don't specialise too soon. Try as many events as you can to begin with, until you find what you enjoy most and what is right for you. General base fitness, agility, flexibility and elastic energy are first to reach for. Specialisation with technical coaching comes later probably when you are around 14/15. If you decide to stay with athletics, the view from the mountain top is a long climb. To the 'special one' reading this – you know who you are – GET HELP you can't do it on your own. Know this – 'the Champion is the one with the dominant mind'.

**Who is the most famous Athlete you trained with or would like to train with:** I've trained with Roger Mills and Arthur Thomson. I've also met and had the opportunity to talk with and learn from Robert Korzeniowski and Ronald Weigel.

**How would you improve the sport:** I'm too old and wise to answer that question.

**Favourite Athlete or Sportsman:** Mohammed Ali, Usain Bolt, Jose Mourinho and Graham Taylor. The latter did not just build a football team, he built with it a Town Community. From my own sport I choose Robert Korzeniowski, Jefferson Perez and Ronald Weigel because they are serial winners. In sport the 'serial winner' is not just a Champion – they become Legend.

**What other sports do you follow:** Football. I was on the Youth Coaching Staff at Fulham FC for 3 years and I also worked for a time with Watford FC on their Schools & Community Coaching programmes. I held an FA Coaching Badge. I also have a UKA Coaching Licence with Level 3 for Race Walking, but it needs updating.

Really I like to watch any Team Sport and amongst other sports I like boxing, cycling, tennis and rowing.

**Best country visited:** New Zealand followed by Australia. I'm also very fond of Italy.

**Favourite food and drink:** Christmas Dinner for the occasion and to be with my family. I also like a good pasta or a risotto. Drink – I like a good red wine and any local English Ale.

**Favourite TV shows:** The Big Bang Theory, Magnum, Line of Duty, Hawaii Five 0, The Wire, Dexter

**Last film seen: at the cinema:** Downton Abbey (a treat for my wife)

**Last book read:** I have two on the go. Eat and Run (Scott Jurek), also Natural Born Heroes (Christopher McDougall). I like autobiographies and a good thriller.

**Favourite band singer:** Needs thinking about. I'll settle for Annie Lennox.

**Last album bought or downloaded:** David Bowie – Greatest Hits.

**Last concert attended:** Russell Watson. I had Jools Holland booked but that's been cancelled – thank you Covid 19.

**Any pets:** Two dogs, a Lurcher and an Australian Kelpie. I've always kept dogs. They give unconditional love, keep me grounded and help me to forget whatever may be troubling me.

**What are your aims for next season:** With the present situation (Covid 19) in mind – just to have one. For the moment it's just to maintain a base level of condition and fitness that's sufficient to enable me to step things up quickly should the situation change. It does at least offer the opportunity to work on weaknesses without the pressure of competition. We have to try to turn obstacles into opportunities.

**Tell us a Joke:** Q: Why was 6 afraid of 7? A: Because 7, 8, 9.

## LOOK OUT MISTER - HE'S BEHIND YOU!

In our previous edition was a captioned photograph of a talented 1985 Belgrave Harriers squad. But who was in the background we asked? John Hall (who was in the picture) identified George Chaplin between Carl Lawton and Paul Warburton, and Bill King of SWC and Post Office on the far right. Bob Dobson also named George (No 28) and asked, "Could it be Mick Barnbrook behind No 3?" Martin Fisher wrote, "I think the guy sat down on the right is Sheffield's Mick Greasley, not sure". Mick Barnbrook got in touch to identify himself, saying that he hadn't realised how good looking he was at the time!



## ILFORD AC LOSS

Former long serving Ilford AC Secretary **Martin Etchells** has passed on.

- Wrote our Essex County AA Chairman, **Andy Catton**: "Sad news that former Ilford Athletic Club road, cross-country and steeplechase stalwart, prime instigator of Sportshall athletics and past club General Secretary, **Martin Etchells**, passed away on Sunday 6 September. I believe that Martin had been battling away against cancer since 2011."
- Wrote the Director of Competition at the South of England Athletic Association, **Linda Whitehead**: "It is with great sadness that I have to inform you that Martin Etchells died after a long illness".
- Olympian **Roger Mills** wrote: "Good bloke, another sad loss. Every day is a bonus".
- Former Southend-on-Sea AC walker **June Cork** wrote: "He was an excellent announcer and on the too-few occasions I had the opportunity to work with him found him very professional and very helpful: I learned a great deal about announcing from him. I had no idea that he was unwell though we worked together at the SE Indoors last winter and at the SEAA U20 at Lee Valley the previous season".

Other tributes have been received. Martin was both a Director and Honorary Treasurer of the Amateur Athletic Association of England and a former Sussex Athletics President. **RIP**

## MORE MEMORIES

Guess who passed through Airolo en route to Lugano last autumn. I competed for the Met Police team once and was manager on another occasion. Found the hotel we stayed in, now a posh restaurant with posher flats above. **Alex Ross**



## MY STORY - PART II (by Geoff Hunwicks)

In our last edition we published Geoff's response to an article written about his 70 years' celebration. *What we didn't know is that more was to come.* Geoff commences by explaining why his account stopped before its conclusion - then gives us the rest ...

"I stopped there as I am on the internet and afraid the light may go again and I'll lose it all! Chess was really my second biggest passion just after arriving at Weymouth and still is, although I play infrequently now but was once on the Committee of the Gambian Chess Federation and did represent Dorset 2nd team in the 6 counties of SW England tournament! Just after arriving in Weymouth I formed the Weymouth & Portland Green Party and did OK when running for local Councillor against a popular Mayor! Whilst at Weymouth I qualified in and practised Holistic Massage therapy, and founded and organised the successful Weymouth 10k Open walk along with a 5 mile charity walk for local business and sports etc teams. Also, I spent 2 years in Bethlehem as a volunteer in a Dutch-run home for mentally handicapped orphans where I got the call that my father was becoming confused and disorientated so had to leave to look after him after cycling from Nazareth to Jerusalem via the River Jordan for the Nazareth Christian Missionary Hospital!

On returning to Chadwell Heath I set up Dagenham, Havering & Barking Green Party and stood for Councillor there, with a pretty dismal result, but with promising showing. Since then it's become hugely successful! As has the Party nationally! It was during this time I went for a holiday in The Gambia and as they (who are these 'they'?) say, the rest is history! So I think that's it Dave. If you feel anything is not factual, then say so and be feel to flower it up in your usual inimitable fashion! Every Blessing."

Adds Hon Ed: Geoff's 3.07 marathon best was set in Essex - at the Unigate Marathon in Harlow - in days before "the Marathon boom". He's a double County Representative (Athletics/Chess) and at Club level in local Chess leagues always played on a high board. One doubtful distinction is his arrival on a London-to-Brighton start line 1 hour after they'd been set off by "Big Ben", having been picked up late. He got going, taking him 26 miles (near Gatwick Airport) before catching up with a then back marker. Geoff then powered on towards Brighton seafront only for the Referee not to accept his name on a result sheet when ruling he'd walked unjudged from the moment he started until *joining the race* on reaching a back marker! Geoff's Weymouth seafront 10K was something -

it drew crowds at this popular resort. A presentation saw local bigwigs present - the Mayor, Miss Weymouth, a few Councillors, the President of Geoff's Club etc, etc. It attracted top walkers from far and wide. Hon Ed once missed out on a prize - as "First Centurion gaining no other award" was on a prize table which groaned under the weight of all heaped on it. Having declared himself properly on entering and being first in that category, no prize came as it was awarded - erroneously - to a lower down finisher. Politeness dictated one shouldn't shout a complaint before so many local VIPs.

### ZOOM IN

There's talk of your RWA Southern Area AGM on Monday 9 November being held by "Zoom", and not in the London SW1 Civil Service Club. This is being discussed owing to a current and ever-changing medical emergency situation. Most years this AGM only attracts 1 attender, or on a good year 2-or-3, from outside of the Officers and Committee - some years even zero! On Saturday 22 August, British Masters Athletic Federation (BMAF) held their first ever "Zoom" AGM. It drew an attendance of 97 - way, way above numbers normally seen at their AGMs. *So that's a promising sign.*



If "Zoom" comes to pass, all with access to computer screens are able to attend this meeting - even if without a microphone you can still attend and have the same status as those who don't speak, and therefore just view proceedings. All logging in, in any capacity, have names automatically recorded and displayed on screen. You can show support for your RWA Southern Area Committee with no travelling expenses, without using public transport to-and-from Central London and still remain at home, so saving much of your valuable time. *Sounds like a good deal - if it comes off.* If on "Zoom" Hon Club Walking Secretaries will be sent full details and asked to forward them to all members. **Watch this space - as they say.**

### CLASS ACT

September's RWA Southern Area Committee meeting was held on "Zoom". Southern Area President and long-serving Honorary Secretary Chris Flint had a backdrop of classy water colour paintings by his famous grandfather Sir William Russell Flint - Member of the Royal Academy (RA). On display was "*Iberian Flounces*". Sir William Russell Flint (4 April 1880 – 30 December 1969) was active in the art world until his sad demise. His works still live on at many venues and exhibitions - now including race walking Committee meetings, where they've brightened up proceedings!

### Notice of Annual General Meeting 2020



Formal notice of 2020 Annual General Meeting (AGM) – to take place on Saturday 10 October 2020. The process for this year's AGM differs from other years due to restrictions as a result of Covid-19. Measures have been put in place to enable member clubs and organisations to exercise their voting rights by proxy.

The relevant information and links to documents, including proxy voting form, are available to access on our website [www.englandathletics.org/about-us/board-and-national-council/agm/](http://www.englandathletics.org/about-us/board-and-national-council/agm/)



Dear Dave ...

### GEORGE BEECHAM MBE, RIP

Sadly George passed away last evening at home. George's health had deteriorated since about March and especially so over the last month. His wife Marlene and daughter Katherine were with

George when he passed way. Not sure that I can quite believe it, George has always bounced back from everything thrown at him, some may recall how poorly he was years ago when he met us on our trek around Canvey, yet he bounced back attending social walks and AGMs until a few months ago. There will not be a funeral. The family are making private arrangements.

**Steve Kemp**

### **TREADMILL OFFER**

Greetings. Now that I am fully committed to remaining outside of the Yu-K I have decided to get rid of my treadmill that has been the singular most effective tool for both Pam and I during our most active (and successful) years of race walking. Indeed during the cold, dark and wet months when going out on the road was deemed to be hazardous on the unlit, pavement-less roads of rural Essex this item maintained and improved our fitness. If anyone in the race walking fraternity would be interested to purchase the item then I would welcome any enquiries. Perhaps you would be so kind as to circulate the note.

**Keith Phillips**

keith70301@gmail.com

### **BIRMINGHAM 2022**

I informed officers of the RWA and Tim about the decision to stage 10k at Birmingham. Tom Bosworth was on the committee that decided the distance and I think he was correct. Remember there are walks in the four international fixtures and our walkers have to decide what fixtures they will compete in. Remember Glasgow when there were no walks.

**Peter Marlow**

### **IT's A MAD, MAD, MAD, MAD WORLD**

2022 has a crazy International fixture list. World Race Walking Cup Minsk in April, World Championships in Oregon in July, Commonwealth Games in Birmingham August and European Games in Munich August. That's why the walking event in the Commonwealth Games is 10kms.

**Peter Marlow**

### **BRITISH CHAMPIONSHIP LOW TURNOUT**

There were many reasons why some of our walkers who were invited could not be there, which we knew about.

**Pam Ficken**

### **LIBRARY RECOMMENDATION**

Another wonderful Essex Walker edition. I mention **Birmingham University Athletics Library** - if Pat Furey seeks a good home for his records, I would suggest they go to this Library. I have not visited it yet, but it is planned to go at some time.

**John Northcott**

### **SOUTHEND VIRTUAL MILE WALK**

We do not usually get as many as 65 competitors! They do not seem to travel in from Australia, USA and Germany! Is it possible for you to determine which of these would qualify for the Essex based Centurion George Woods trophy? I have the trophy in my study at home at the moment. Good to see that you had been able to enter. Unfortunately I was into the start of my radiotherapy and chemotherapy treatment which left me quite unwell for the first few days. Now they do not make me feel too bad; just wondering if they will have any long-term effect.

**John Brock**

Adds Hon Ed: It's Alan O'Rawe - Centurion 791.

Reference Alan's success, **Andy O'Rawe** said: "*The 'old man' had been training every day for this one.*"

- "Good to see familiar faces taking part, although I am the only Surrey WC member participating. It will be interesting to know how our sport will respond when competition comes back. With enthusiasm or a lack of motivation leading to an exodus of athletes. I hope the former." **Chris Flint**
- "I hope we can get a similar number turning out next year for the real thing, a good showing from the Centurions and some good times from the senior competitors." **Martin Fisher**

Essex Walker issue No 397 (August/September 2020)

## **VIRTUAL RACING**

I'd been worrying that a long lay-off could mean an easy opportunity for many to abandon the sport, which is why I helped create the weekly series of 2km races now in its 23rd week. This has been very successful and has kept a sense of ongoing activity, fitness, competition, and community. Envied by other sports too. Had resistance at the start, but unusual times need unusual methods. I really do believe that this will result in the majority of UK walkers reappearing in real races soon.

**John Constandinou**

Adds Hon Ed: John deserves our thanks as his idea really caught on - big time!

## **EMAILS OUR SOUTHEND-on-SEA AC ORGANISER**

Wow!! We must do a Virtual Southend Mile again. What an incredible level of support for our, now, International event. Overwhelming. We haven't had a team event because it's an individual-entry competition forming part of our Club Championships with Age Group medals and the George Woods trophy being won by the first local Centurion. I have to say it's very tempting to offer it in this format again. With our Virtual Southend 10k the "race" is being offered over the spread of 7 days between 21 and 27 September.

**June Cork**

## **GEORGE WOODS TROPHY PRESENTATION IDEA**

Perhaps John Brock could do a "Virtual" presentation of the trophy by Zoom or some-such? Actually there's a fun way it can be done so that it's "officially" recorded. On video.

Video one: John, with trophy in hand, passes said trophy off-screen to his right (in between times trophy magically manages to fly to Ilford)

Video two: Alan stretches his hands to his left, off-screen, then brings the trophy in to shot.

Videos spliced, and the "presentation" can be emailed to some/most/all of the participants for a bit of amusement - and Alan gets his "podium" pic!

This was actually done by about 30 of our Club members early in lock-down, doing the "training shoe relay". It was very cleverly done and all the videos were spliced by one of our very techie young ladies. Just a thought.

**June Cork**

## **AN ESSEX POLICE RUNNER TRIED RACE WALKING**

I was volunteered to represent Essex Police in the annual Police Sport UK 10 kilometre walking championship in Birmingham in 2007. What makes it even more ridiculous is that the race incorporated the annual challenge match of British Police vs Civil Service, so I wore the vest of British Police!!! It was a baptism of fire and the speed with which the rest of the field accelerated away from myself and my Essex colleague (an orienteer also shoehorned into the team) was alarming. Needless to say, I was last as the orienteer even did me for technique and speed in the last 50 metres - finished in 70 minutes (as did my walking career). Or so I thought!!! I was shamed into racing the 2km walk in the Essex Police Athletics Championships alongside the 800m, 1500m, 5000m and 3000m steeplechase - all on the same afternoon - crippling mainly due to the silly walk.

**John Mackenzie**

Adds Hon Ed: John is an Ilford AC Past President and an accomplished runner with a 2:29.47 Marathon in 1983 to his credit.

## **LOOKING AT OURSELVES**

We have had a habit over the years of underselling ourselves as Race Walkers in Athletics. I have tried through a different approach to change this and publicise our achievements even though it is 50 years later. I was staggered by the interest shown and the booklet produced by Park Runners who have never been Race Walkers. Much more can be done on this front by the many past race walking medallists and Internationals. Howard Timms, Olympian in the 50 Kms

Walk at Munich in 1972 was a fine example of this with his stage play 'Accidental Olympian'. I just hope others will follow this idea for the future.

**Bill Sutherland**

### ESSEX WALKER APPRECIATION

- "I received the Essex Walker a couple of hours ago - a good read as ever!" **Kathy Crilley**
- "It was a lovely write-up about Andrew Wilmot. Thank you." **Sue Clements**
- "Thanks to all the team on another truly wonderful Essex Walker, a real masterpiece! Thank you for my inclusions. **Bill Sutherland**

### OUR TEMPORARY SWITCH TO MONTHLY ISSUES

The Essex Walker serves its most important purpose. That is to give us hope. **Dave Kates**

### A READER'S PROFOUND WORDS

Nice article on John Dunsford, RIP. It makes you think 'time is passing us all by' so let's DO or DIE as every day passes us by!

**Bill Sutherland**

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