

Essex Walker

Editor: Dave Ainsworth

GEOFF HUNWICKS RIP - AND THERE'S MORE!

Our last edition was a fitting tribute to a "one-off" member of our walking family, who'll never be forgotten and a wonderful introduction for newcomers who've entered the sport since Geoff emigrated, so had never known him personally. There was a small blip, as a typo saw his year of death wrongly recorded - but we all know it anyway - as it was this year. Geoff would have laughed if ever he saw it - indeed Geoff was always a subject of incorrect details - for instance his Dorset Echo [obituary](#) erroneously published his name as Hunswick on each occasion it was mentioned. *Sorry Geoff!*

We've had another moving tribute to Geoff to bring to your notice:

- I first met Geoff when I was 16 years old, so we go back a very long way. We trained together occasionally at the Cricklefields track in Ilford and we met frequently at races. Geoff made the decision to sell up and move to the Gambia, devoting his life to helping handicapped children. I had the opportunity to visit Hart House a few years ago and I was so impressed by the love and care he gave to the kids. Geoff just believed that everyone deserved to be treated with dignity and respect - he was a very special person. When people hear the term "superhero", they tend to think of Batman or Superman, but to me, the term always conjures up an image of Geoff. I am immensely saddened to hear the news of his passing. He made a genuine difference and was a force for good in a cruel world. Rest in Peace, old friend. **Mike Scamell**

In Bill Sutherland's tribute he mentioned how Geoff was attired in bright cyclist's kit when attending a funeral of Centurion 362 Reg Youldon. This story can be added to as Geoff arrived late that day and a well-attended service was already in progress. Outside Geoff removed his bicycle pump and headlight and looked for somewhere to chain the bike. He couldn't find a suitable railing or anchor point, so opened a squeaky door at the rear of the church and pushed his bike, with pump and headlight carried, into the church. Whatever was being said faded from the congregation's attention as all heads turned round to see who the latecomer was (as always happens when one arrives after time), as Geoff propped his bike against a wall and made his way to a pew. There were a few "tut tuts" but as one retired Senior Police Officer remarked afterwards, "Reg would have seen the funny side of that".

"AND IT'S GOOD NIGHT FROM HIM"

After **48 years continuous** membership of our Race Walking Association General Committee (*the Great Train Robbers only got 30 years*) Olympian Peter Marlow has resigned. During his span, he served as President, Honorary General Secretary, Honorary Championships Secretary and Race Walking Record Editor. Peter was responsible for organising many Nationals plus European, Commonwealth and Olympic races, trial races and was co-organiser (with Pam Ficken) for our Tribute Luncheons at London's Tower Hotel. What service he has given, for which he is profoundly thanked.



THOUGHT FOR THE DAY

'What this Country needs is fewer people who know what this Country needs.' A one-line quote from a philosopher.

FIXTURES

Readers are recommended to check the Race Walking Record [website](#) for details of forthcoming walking races.



MEMORY LANE

This picture shows the time Ilford AC won the RWA National 10 Miles' Championship for a 2nd time - in 1978 at Crystal Palace.

L-to-R:

Steve Gower (9th), Geoff Hunwicks (22nd), Brian Armstrong (27th) and George Nibre (12th)

Photographer: Mike Street

RACE WALKING ASSOCIATION 200 CLUB - ESSEX SUCCESSES



Your latest monthly draw saw more cash won by those with Essex connections, as Centurions Pauline Wilson and Bob Dobson were 1st/2nd respectively (£25 and £15) with Graham Chapman landing a 3rd prize tenner. Essex Walker recently published an appeal for more readers to sign up, as all profits go towards financing race walking activities. Our appeal didn't do well, so it's repeated. **It costs just £12 for 12 monthly draws.** With so many having retired from race walking and therefore no longer having transports costs and entry fees to stump up for, how about dipping into your coffers for such a small amount a year, to help our sport make progress? Full details from your RWA Honorary Treasurer Mark Easton: rwatreasurer@yahoo.co.uk

C939 RAY PLATT'S FUNERAL SERVICE

Held on Friday 4 February at Southend Crematorium with standing room only, the race walking world were well represented, as was our wider athletics scene in general with many Southend-on-Sea runners in attendance. Centurions present in alphabetical order were Dave Ainsworth C540, Steve Allen C1102, Alan Barber C535, Kim Howard C1020, Steve Kemp C1075 and Alan O'Rawe C791. Other walkers present, all with Southend-on-Sea AC connections, included June Cork, Val Mountford and Andy O'Rawe. Ray's long time in athletics was prominently mentioned in speeches. He'd been consistent over 100 miles with 22:33.41 and 23:35.32 times in his 1995 and 1999 finishes. It was speaking about times that derailed the celebrant, so causing a "George Towers moment" - that when George rose from his pew to interrupt the Vicar at double-Olympian George Coleman's funeral in Halesworth to correct a wrong fact! It was said Ray's best marathon time was 3 minutes 17. *Hmmm!* Almost immediately a number of runners simultaneously called out that this wasn't so and laughter burst out from all parts of the chapel. The celebrant re-read that sentence and Ray's time shot up by 3 hours to 3 Hours 17 - which, of course, is commendable.

Ray's coffin entered to "Simply The Best" (Tina Turner), a period of reflection was held as "*Imagine*" (John Lennon) was heard and we filed out to the strains of "*Break Free*" (Queen). The chosen hymn was "*Abide With Me*", one associated with sporting occasions. Ray's poem about a 100 Miles' Centurion event was read in full. Afterwards as we mingled, one of several Southend runners said how funerals had now become "re-unions" as so many now only see old teammates - and ex-rivals - on such occasions. There wasn't an arranged post-service gathering, so a number moved on "*The Saxon King*", a nearby establishment, to raise a glass for Ray. It really was a most moving service and he certainly had a good send-off.

One mourner, Andy O'Rawe, had been at Southend Crematorium earlier in the week for a funeral of one who turned-up at a number of our Essex walking races. After a successful amateur time in boxing, Andy had an impressive 21 bouts' professional career under Frank Warren's management. When returning to athletics as a re-instated amateur, Andy took race walking by storm as his trophy collection proves. His

trainer in past times was "Mick The Red", who came to walking races to give support to talented sportsman Andy. Few of us ever knew his surname - as he was known only as "Mick the Red", who now sadly has passed-on aged 84.

A CENTURION STORY by Ray Platt

The sun shone proudly from cloudless skies
Hats, sweat and sunglasses protect our eyes
We check our watches as the time nears one
For we know we walk and dare not run

One hundred miles or more or less
My legs will venture with some distress
Remember the training, remember the pain
Each strike of the foot again and again

The hours pass and my legs are strong
Lonely thoughts, lonely time are helped by song
My back held straight, tired arms are swinging
To the gentle song my head is singing

Great shock as I peer at my swollen hands
Blood congealed and congested like swollen glands
The torture and pain one suffers for glory
Will open the pages of life's full story

The sun has gone, the moon appears
Long hours have passed since starting cheers
My thoughts travel briefly of forthcoming night
Long shadows, dark trees cast daunting a sight

Dawn, sunrise appears once again
My body sways with onslaught of pain
My lips are dry, I search for water
Without such fluid my body will falter

My legs recover by body strong
The speed increases, I march along
I search for reasons of knowing why
One hundred miles do or die.

RAY PLATT, THE POET

Previously published in [Essex Walker 256](#) (January 2005), a number of readers have requested Ray's poem be repeated. It was read out, in full, at his well-attended funeral service.

- Ray's poem has an uncanny similarity to those penned by Colin Young C317. They do show the pain and eventual triumph of the 100 miles. **Chris Flint**
- This is an excellent poem by Ray and certainly reading it brought back memories of the Colchester 100 back in 2012 (great memories)! **Daniel King**

Mrs JUDITH WELLS RIP

Here's a sad notification received via Peter Fawkes: "Only last week I received a mail from Reg Wells's daughter informing me that Judith Wells passed away last October."

- John and Sarah Webb commented: "We were shocked by that news. She liked rambling and she looked quite fit. We did keep in touch with Judith on and off and always sent Christmas cards to each other. Thanks for letting people who knew her know."

DOUBLE DEBUT ON A WINDY SATURDAY MORNING

Iford AC introduced new race walkers at Saturday's morning's Enfield League 5 miles held over 5 circuits inside the town's King George V Playing Fields. In the men's race former Scottish International Stuart Bennett was always making good progress just adrift of the leading bunch and was rewarded with a creditworthy time of 51 minutes and 21 seconds, which secured 5th spot. With him, almost step for step was Club newcomer John Arthur, who claimed 6th spot in 51.39. Racing as an unattached athlete he'd won last year's Essex County 10,000 metres Championship, pipping Stuart. John who is confidently tipped to do well in his new Club's colours, also has experience in marathon running, having appeared in a number of the arduous Comrades Marathon in South Africa. In the Women's 5 miles star performer Abigail Jennings (Aldershot) dominated the race as expected leaving the rest to scrap for 2nd place. Ensuring she got that 2nd spot was inform Emma Dyos who pulled away from the chasing bunch early on to finish in 47.51, and extended her fine sequence of making the frame. In 4th came Rachael Lawless in 52.31 who coped well in the conditions. In the Women's 3 miles Club debutante Shaeda Arthur finished confidently with 49.20 on the stopwatch, in what was for all, a most testing occasion with strong biting cold winds throughout. In total Iford had 6 on the road, with Tony Perkins also contributing a virtual 5k performance for the M70 category.

WORLD ATHLETICS RACE WALKING TEAM SELECTIONS



Five athletes have been [selected](#) by UK Athletics for the **World Athletics Race Walking Team Championships Muscat 22** on 4-5 March. **Dominic King** will represent the British team over the 35km race walk distance in Oman, alongside Tom Bosworth, Cameron Corbishley, Bethan Davies and Heather Lewis who will be contesting the 20km race walks.

JOHN (*Paddy*) DOWLING RIP

We're sorry to report his sad passing aged 93. He'd been a recent hospital patient in Sheffield and had resided in a home. Not one with Essex connections, but one much admired by so many walkers in our County and elsewhere. Born in County Waterford he had a tough childhood entering an orphanage when aged 5. When 12 he attempted to escape and was badly beaten as punishment. He left at 16 to work as a farm labourer for a couple of years before heading to Sheffield for hard work in coal mines. He next joined the Royal Air Force in which he was introduced to athletics and made good as a runner. On discharge in 1950 became an insurance agent in Sheffield. A chance conversation with a client changed his sporting life when he was invited to try race walking with Sheffield United. He soon decided he was better at race walking than running. At this time he married Dorothy and they raised a family of 4 children. His 1962 100 miles' debut saw him become Centurion 331 in 22:09.27 in a race won by the great Frank O'Reilly in 16:58.16. Paddy gave little hint of what was to come - but that was to be plenty, for he completed 8 more UK 100s of which 3 were in the 18 hours' time bracket and 3 in the 19 hours' bracket! At the 1969 Bristol 100 Miles (won by C413 John Hedgethorpe) his 19:27.31 time brought GB selection for the Roubaix 28 Hours. He became a Roubaix regular and his 1970 time gained him entry in the Paris-to-Strasbourg. Paddy was unprepared for this classic challenge and showed-up without an attendant. Somebody was found to assist, but such a minimalist approach didn't work in his favour and he retired at 205k when 13th. He competed in 21 Roubaix 28 Hours races with just one non-completion. He unsuccessfully tried to complete a Paris-Strasbourg on 7 occasions between 1970-&-84, his best being in 1980 (439k). He won 100 miles and 24 hours races on the Continent and competed a number of ultra-distance challenges in both Britain and Ireland. He was one of an invited 16 to contest the great "Accolade 8 Hours" at New River Stadium in September 1974, where he covered 44 miles. In 2015 Paddy was awarded a "*Special Lifetime Achievement Award*" at the Irish National Awards occasion. On our domestic scene Paddy was a key member of a most successful Sheffield United squad who were brimming with talent. He leaves many wonderful memories. We express condolence to his relations. We thank athletics historian and statistician Tim Erickson for much of this information - his [article](#) on the great man, written on 10 November 2016, was referenced in the 15/02/22 issue of the always informative "Heel and Toe" publication.



PADDY DOWLING - FUNERAL DETAILS

Daughter Patty has been in touch to advise: Friday 11 March at 11am - Hutcliffe Wood Crematorium, Periwood Lane, Beauchief, SHEFFIELD. S8 0HP. Live [webcast](#) of the funeral (login PIN 177-2859).

PADDY DOWLING TRIBUTES

[Tribute to John Dowling, 1929 - 2022 \(muchloved.com\)](#)

Expressions of sadness were received from readers, including Peter Fawkes. Others commented:

- "It's strange to say, that with some people I know, I always think they will last forever - despite their old age. I have known Paddy for many years having first met him at the Vallorbe 24 hours in 1991 and have kept in touch with, rather sporadically, over the decades. He had a great number

of long distance records to his credit - and some very long lasting. I was in France doing a 6-day race (2018?), when a French race walker broke Paddy's long standing 6-day record and so I phoned Paddy to break the bad news to him! He was very gracious but typically asked "was he a real race walker?"! Sadly, I had to say "yes"! Paddy was held in great regard in France, as well as his native Ireland and indeed in England for his great walking achievements. What a sad loss." **Kathy Crilley**

- "Very sad. Tough as old boots; one of my memories, apart from his seemingly perpetual bonhomie, was being told he walked Roubaix with no attendant, helping himself from his judiciously placed food bag backed up by cups of tea from the friendly Dutch camp! (Not as a back marker either!)." RIP John. **Ed Shillabeer C590**
- "He was an outstanding performer in the ultra-distance events and, most important, a lovely human being." **Tony Taylor**
- "Paddy was a real gentleman and a kind man as well as a great, classic walker, someone we loved and greatly admired." **Sandra Brown**
- A childhood such as he endured would be inconceivable to many people today, and it's disturbing to consider that, for every one like John whose early life of abuse strengthened them, many others would have been emotionally and spiritually destroyed by it. Thankfully he wasn't one of them. And he obviously never let it define him. His walking achievements and other aspects of his life did that. **Stu Cooper C5**
- Sad to read the passing of Paddy Dowling RIP - a good old boy. I last walked with him in Boras. They don't make them like Paddy anymore. **Ray Middleton**

JOHN (Paddy) DOWLING - A SPECIAL TRIBUTE by Peter Selby

What a character (Race Walking is full of people like Paddy) but there is (or was) only ONE PADDY DOWLING (I can hear them singing this from the terraces of Roubaix, Paris Colmar, many parts of Europe where he competed in 100 miles 24 Hours or 200k). I also recount three memorable happenings.

The first was when he competed at Blackheath in the Rainer 24 Hours Race circa 1986/87 (the Crane twins of Himalayan Running Fame competed and helped organise). Wendy Wallace (as she was then known) the late Phil Hastings, myself and others provided the race duration feeding station. In the evening when Paddy was asked what he would like he firmly stated Fish and Chips (and he meant it). Anyone who knows Blackheath would not normally associate it with F and C, but how wrong can you be. Paddy was served up with a Super de Luxe Cod and Chips which we purchased in the Village Centre. He ate the lot and very thoughtfully put the rubbish in appropriate bin and finished "his supper" with a large mug of tea, all this without stopping!

Having just completed the Roubaix 28 hour race Paddy returned to his room (I was sharing with him) at The Campanile and promptly fell asleep. The normal procedure after the event was to attend the prize giving and then a meal. He slept through all of this and the following night. He had had the chance to shower and change his clothes before disappearing to the land of Nod (I did have to remove his shoes however as it must be uncomfortable trying to sleep with booted feet plus the fact that they would spoil the nice clean sheets provided). He would just not wake up the next morning when we were to depart for the ferry at Dunkirk. I was aware that smoke was a great sleep breaker so struck a match and held it close to his nose (smoking had not yet been banned in hotels, motels and similar). The "trick" paid off and he jumped up not sure where he was or whence the odour. Safe to say all caught the allotted Ferry with plenty of chat especially from Paddy catching up on the near 15 hours he had missed by being asleep.

The third occasion was in the early 1990s after the Paris Colmar. Paddy was one of a support team for Jill Green, Richard and Sandra Brown on the epic 500k plus event from the outskirts of France's majestic capital city to the banks of the Rhine. All 3 had satisfactorily completed the task and they and most of the back-up crew were staying overnight before the journey home. However, Paddy along with Bob Dobson, Colin Young and myself had to hot foot back to England mainly for work. One can imagine the "patter" during the 18 hours the trip took including a diversion to the Charles de Gaulle Airport to return mobile phones hired for use during the race (very few of which worked) and a picnic on the Vosges mountain range. Need I say more when you have two of the greatest storytellers in Race Walking, Paddy and Colin,

as passengers from 6pm until noon the next day non-stop recalling some of their most interesting races, etc. Bob and I were grateful to be able to share the driving as a "rest period". That trip was one of the most memorable I have ever taken and to be with such eminent athletes and sportsmen is something I will cherish always.

Rest in Peace Paddy, you forever remind me of a member of the cast of *Ryan's Daughter*, an epic film of 1970, the Parish Priest then played by Trevor Howard of Brief Encounter (and Carnforth Station fame.

Peter Selby

TALES OF PADDY DOWLING *sent in by Centurions Treasurer Richard Cole*

York Postal walker **Wally Johnson** told me the following anecdotes:

- Paddy completed the Manchester-to-Blackpool walk (52 miles then) and got a lift back on the York Postal bus. He asked to be dropped off on the way. Quite happy to walk the 20 miles back to Sheffield!
- He covered a massive distance in a 24-hour race in France. Only overtaken towards the end because he was exhausted. It was a very hot day. He had no support, so no drinks or food etc.
- He held the 6-day distance walking record in France for many years. Only recently beaten.
- Only met him a few times. A very unassuming, pleasant and modest man. A great athlete.

INDOOR EMBARRASSMENT

Essex County AA held their annual Indoor Athletics Championships at a well-appointed Lee Valley Arena. Despite giving maximum notice well before closing date, the sum total of entries for the Men's 1 Mile Championship was ... er ... **NIL!** The Women's race had ... er ... **ONE?** We thank Loughton's Melanie Peddle for showing the Essex race walking flag, before a decent sized crowd. There was a meeting clash as the Enfield League was a short hop away at Donkey Lane. Please read Ron Wallwork's report (below) and you'll see our officials made hasty progress from Donkey Lane to Lee Valley to enable the Championship to be adjudicated. Spectating Melanie was a keen supporter at the Enfield's 5 miles before making tracks to race on the boards. In conjunction was the Eastern Counties Mile, which saw 2 men and just 1 other woman (a Kent guest walker) joining Melanie. This poor show of Essex walking, before the County Officials and those spectating a range of events, does our profile no good at all. Added to that, for a first time in over 50 years, our discipline isn't represented in the Essex County Athletic Association Committee Room. We still need - yes need - an Essex County Walking representative. Is there somebody who currently doesn't fill any position and can give a small amount of time? It's 5 Committee meetings a year, and Essex County AA Chairman Andy Catton advises that you don't have to attend all - as you can send in emailed reports when you can't make a meeting. As our Essex walkers, in the main, continue to stay away - this event has been close to being dropped from the programme. **Next year is your Essex County Athletic Association's Centenary season.** Will this be the year stayaways return in numbers to show race walking in a better light? Hopefully 2023 won't see a fixture clash. If removing walks from our Indoor Championship is to be discussed, Peter Cassidy has pledged that - even though not your Walking Representative - he'll put up a strong case to give it another go. By sticking his neck out to promise a decent field, he'll hope readers will match his words by their efforts on the day.

THINKING CAPS ON ... Seen in a recent Guardian weekend supplement quiz:

Question: "What links snooker players, race walkers and flamingos?"

Answer: "One foot on the ground." (Rules in snooker and race walking, and for flamingos it's an energy saving activity to avoid muscular fatigue.)

ESSEX/EASTERN COUNTIES INDOOR 1 MILE CHAMPIONSHIP

There was a speedy get away from the Enfield League race by Dave Annetts and George Wilkinson along with judges Stephen Cartwright, Peter Cassidy, Mark Culshaw and Pauline Wilson who were scheduled to be in action at the Eastern/Essex indoor championships across town at the LVAC for a 1.30pm start.

Sensation! Or seemingly so at the Essex and Eastern Indoor championships at LVAC on Saturday 12 February ... there were only four competitors in the 1 mile walk and **all were disqualified** according to the result sent through to the announcer who didn't bother to announce it.

Unbeknown to the walkers, they hung around patiently for the result to be made or posted on the results board. An early report that all four had been disqualified was ignored as a 'tongue in cheek' joke. However, after another hour, another enquiry produced the documentation showing the 4 DQs (see below).



George, Jacqueline, Melanie and Dave - before the shock news!

No red paddles had been waved by Chief Judge Peter Cassidy, which only left infringements spotted by the track judges, as the likely reason for the DQs and four in one race? Very unlikely.

Once brought to his notice, Track referee David Lipsombe reacted swiftly to the protestations and consulted his team, who confirmed that no infringements had been observed and so two hours and twenty-minutes after the race the following result was announced:

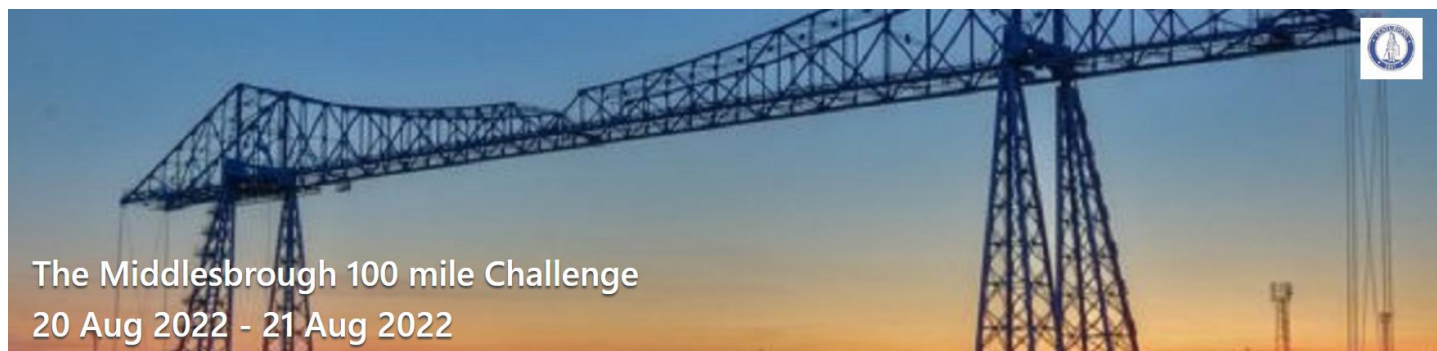
George Wilkinson (EHAC) 6.40.6 CBP Jaqueline Benson (Ashford AC) 8.21.15 (Guest)
 David Annetts (North Herts RR) 7.38.1 Melanie Peddle (Loughton AC) 8.22.19

Place	Id	Lane	First Name	Last Name	Affiliation	License	Time
DQ	321		George	Wilkinson	Enfield & Haringey AC		
DQ	780		David	Annetts	North Herts AC		

Place	Id	Lane	First Name	Last Name	Affiliation	License	Time
DQ	682		Jacqueline	Benson	Ashford AC		
DQ	554		Melanie	Peddle	EX Loughton AC		

By Ron Wallwork and reproduced by kind permission of Enfield Walker

ADVERTISER'S ANNOUNCEMENT - MIDDLESBROUGH 100



Entries, now in double-figures, are being accepted for August's big race. A website listed gives full details of this event and how to enter. Of particular interest is a regularly updated list of entrants. Among them, in alphabetical order, are: Steve Allen (Barnet version), Richard and Sandra Brown, John Constandinou, Jonathan Hobbs and Graham Jackson. Let's see more of our readers stepping up for the challenge, and also volunteering to assist, as these events take much work to put on. If you go to [The Middlesbrough 100 mile Challenge](#) and click on 'List' under 'Dates and Status' you'll see a list of entries to date.

TRAIN WITH THE CENTURIONS TO WALK 100 MILES

The Centurions are planning opportunities to train for the annual 100 mile race. Richard McChesney C1131 is organising the first one on [23 April in Richmond Park, London](#). Starting at 07:30am, walkers can continue for as far, or as long, as they want so it is suitable for existing and aspiring Centurions.

Richard writes:

"I am organising an informal 12 hour training walk for people who wish to see if they could complete 100 miles in 24 hours and qualify for membership of The Centurions. The training walk will consist of seven laps of Richmond Park and is not a race. Each lap will start at a scheduled time which will enable walkers to come and go as they like – there is no obligation to complete all seven laps. Each lap will be walked at a pace of approximately 9 minutes per kilometre/14 ½ minutes per mile – which is the required pace to complete 100 miles in 24 hours. It is hoped that both experienced and less experienced walkers will participate, with experienced Centurions sharing their knowledge with less experienced walkers, providing guidance on proper ultra-distance racewalking technique and sharing their training and racing strategies."

More information on the [Centurions website](#). Questions directly to Richard McChesney at: richard@richardmcchesney.com or telephone 07786 395779

RACEWALKERS REUNION - 14 May 2022

Andy Flear and Steve Arnold are organising a reunion of Racewalkers past and present and its supporters. This used to be a regular event years ago where racewalkers of all ages would get together to celebrate our great sport. Hopefully we can spend a few hours catching up and sharing many memories of all the good times we have had from training and racing with and against one another.



**RACEWALKING
REUNION**

MAY 14TH 2022
4pm - 9pm

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COST £6 Per Person

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DATE 14 May 2022

VENUE Coventry Rugby Club, Butts Park Arena, Butts Road, Coventry CV1 3BH
This is within 10 minutes' walk of the station, bus terminus and city centre. There is plenty of parking available on site.

TIME Venue booked 4pm to 9pm.
We've decided to make this an afternoon/evening event to make it accessible to as many as possible due to travel, health, and age etc. For those wishing to carry on till late, the bar will stay open and the city centre is a short walk away with many bars, clubs and restaurants.

ACCOMMODATION For those wishing to stay over there is a Premier Inn next door. We would advise that you book early as prices tend to increase nearer the date, cost circa £45 per room, parking is via multi-storey carpark @ £5 for 24 hrs.

FOOD We intend to book a buffet but need to establish how many to cater for. To ensure that we can do so we are asking for attendees to pay up front £6 per person towards the cost. We intend to raise the balance of the cost by a raffle, etc at the event.

PAYMENT EITHER send cheque payable to J Flear, 35 Kentmere Close, Potters Green, Coventry CV2 2GE, OR **Text Andy** on **07515476849** and he will send bank transfer details.



Dear Dave ...

NEWS FROM A STALWART

My main exercise these days is on my e-bike, getting out in the Essex lanes from my brother's home in Wickford. Good fun.

Len Ruddock

Adds Hon Ed: Len is one of so many walkers to have taken up activity in the saddle.

WRITES YOUR ESSEX COUNTY AA CHAIRMAN

Great tribute write-up for Geoff. Mammoth edition! Sad that RIP notices far outnumber race results again. *PS Not only is it Ilford AC 100th anniversary in 2023 but we have just realised it is Essex County AA 150th as well next year!*

Andy Catton

APPRECIATION


Wonderful latest Essex Walker with around 50 plus contributors no less! As Jonathan Martin, then Head of BBC Sport in years gone by, said when we met him as an RWA Press and Publicity Group in the 70's Group - 'If you had been connected with publicity in another major sport you would have reached the very top as a Sports Journalist.' We are so lucky in Race Walking to have you and your team spreading the word of our great sport far and wide and we should be so grateful!

Bill Sutherland

Adds Hon Ed: I mentioned that top level meeting at our RWA AGM, recalling when asked why no race walker had ever been on "A Question of Sport" (which was a decent programme in those days), Mr Martin said that panellists needed to be well known. He promised, "Get one of your walkers through a tunnel and around a track first in an Olympic or European Games and they'll be put on". DA

ESSEX WALKER ONLINE

I have now added all of the old Essex Walker newsletters to the RWA website, so now anyone can access them anytime they need: racewalkingassociation.com/Newsletters.asp

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Newsletters

John Constandinou

Adds Hon Ed: Many thanks to John who has kindly uploaded a complete set of Essex Walker newsletters from December 2004 (issue 255) to present date.

FOR YOUR DIARY

Saturday 21 May 2021 at 3:30 pm. Cecil Gittins Memorial Walks (incorporating Enfield League) at Cyclopark, Gravesend. 5k/10k (road) organised by Veterans AC. Category 'B'. Contact: walks@vetsac.org.uk

Dave Hoben

NEWS FROM AN ESSEX GREAT

Remember me? I have just stumbled across a copy of your newsletter. The edition I was reading filled me with a mixture of emotions, so many great memories but so many obituaries. It is great to see so many names I remember and competed with still involved in the sport. My time in the sport was relatively short compared to some but I was lucky enough to meet some great characters. I retired from Essex Police in 2007 and moved to France where I now work for an estate agency. Unfortunately, due to knee and back problems, my main form of exercise is restricted to cycling but I still get out and do a bit when I'm not visiting houses. I look forward to 'keeping in touch with the field'.

Mike Dunion

Adds Hon Ed: Senior & Junior GB International Mike won National Junior and Schools' titles, Essex Junior titles and an Essex Senior title. He represented Scotland. His family were keen race walking supporters. It's great to hear from him. DA

GATHERING OF WORTHY WALKERS

Thank you for sharing this photo. I was actually in attendance as the Mayor of Stratford upon Avon and sat on the same table as Charlie Fogg and Chairman of the District Council.

Roy Lodge



Back Row. Olly Flynn, Ron Wallwork MBE, Jake Warhurst, Ken Matthews MBE, Bill Sutherland BEM, Ray Middleton, Lisa Kehler, Paul Nihill MBE, George Williams. **Front Row.** Maurizio Damilano, Roy Thorpe, Ian McCombie.

Adds Hon Ed. The picture was taken at the launch dinner of the EAA Cup at Leamington Spa in 2006. This function was in Royal Leamington Spa Town Hall. Location and function identified by Peter Marlow.

RAY PLATT TRIBUTE

How very sad to hear about Ray. I was not able to attend the funeral but send my condolences to his family - as suggested, I will make a donation in memory of Ray and happy road walking days.

Annette Gentleman

Adds Hon Ed. Many readers will remember her as Annette Forkin, who once won the Essex League ladies' title.

APPRECIATION

Many thanks for Essex Walker - my congratulations on an amazing publication, packed with fascinating detail!

Annette Gentleman

GEOFF HUNWICKS ON THE A23

Thank you for your latest Essex Walking newsletter, with the moving tribute for our Geoff. I've been looking through my archive and thought I'd pass on the attached. His finish at the London to Brighton 1973 or '74. It was a proud moment for Geoff and indeed the same for anyone who completes a distance classic. I was pleased to have caught the moment on camera. The official result shows Geoff further down the list than what you might expect. We (his team) and Geoff had a mix-up in the morning and got him to the start line about an hour late (Ilford AC not at its best!) However, really glad that it was a notable day for all involved.



Len Ruddock

QUALITY MERCHANDISE FOR SALE



The sale of Centurions merchandise has been badly affected by the absence of 100 miles events and AGMs for the past two years as these are our traditional sales opportunities. However, there have been enquiries and sales over the past 12 months and these have included Dutch Centurions as well as UK Centurions. These sales have contributed to the overall general fund of the Centurions, and the purchasers are thanked for their support.

The opportunity has been taken during the lockdowns to ensure our stock of merchandise is built up and it now boasts good quality fleeces and reversible fleeces, polo shirts (navy, royal blue and white), wickable T shirts (with our website address on the reverse), buffs (face coverings/neck warmers), and handbooks. These handbooks are being distributed to interested persons and a donation encouraged in lieu of a set price as they require updating. The prices (as shown on the website, [Merchandise - Centurions 1911](#),) are as follows:

Reversible Fleece	£32.00	Polo Shirts	£16.50	Neck Warmers	£8.50
Fleece	£20.00	Wickable T shirts	£12.00		

Our supplier is APC Workwear at Bristol. They have a good understanding of our requirements and their ability to meet our orders. For example, some Centurions have asked that their number is added to an item and this, for a nominal fee, can be arranged.

It had been suggested that we contact 'print on demand' services for clothing and other merchandise such as mugs, mobile phone covers, etc. This is an option to be further explored but has considerable merit.

Chris Flint C849

AMOS EXTENDS RECORD-BREAKING STREAK

Some readers may be aware that I am a regular volunteer at my local parkrun (Great Notley, Braintree), having supported 360 events at the time of writing. In fact I have only missed 11 events since the inaugural race at Great Notley country park - not that I am counting! Many volunteers and runners have personal parkrun goals outside of the actual times of runs. Recently, at my local parkrun, I got talking to a runner, Dave Milton, who has achieved the goal of participating in 100 different parkrun locations. In our conversation he mentioned that he had met a fellow Parkrun 'tourist', Amos Seddon, at the Mersea Island Parkrun, and that Amos had told him he was planning to participate this weekend at Great Notley. With this in mind, and recalling Amos's reputation for having a good appetite, I popped into a supermarket on my way to the park to get him a quick bite, as I was sure he'd have made an early start from his Harwich home to the Braintree venue. Amos turned up as anticipated, instantly recognisable in his trademark headband, although swapping his famous shorts for leggings nowadays. Anyway, Amos did not disappoint - he successfully smashed the Great Notley age best for 80-84 year olds (clocking a time of 28:20), and enjoyed a tasty *'pain au chocolat'* to accompany his coffee after the race in the Tesco car park. Amos was quick to point out that he no longer eats as much as he used to because he doesn't train as much so doesn't burn off the calories. Sadly I couldn't say the same for myself, which is of course is one good reason why I am a volunteer and Amos is still making and breaking records!



Amos holds the age best for 74-79 year olds of 25:25 (January 2018) at the Raphael Parkrun, Romford, and he told me he was now setting his sights on their age best for 80-84 year olds. With this currently

being 26:21 he does appreciate this could be a tall order, so he may well be having second thoughts. However, if he does take up the challenge, he informed me that he's looking forward to meeting up afterwards with local resident Dave Ainsworth for a well-earned brunch/lunch at a nearby Wetherspoons.

Tony Perkins

- Do please pass our congrats and best wishes to Amos. A truly committed eventer at so many distances. All the best from us both. **Richard and Sandra Brown**

APPRECIATION FROM A CHINA-BASED READER

I can't believe just how much work goes into the writing and production of Essex Walker. Amazing. It's a top-class read. And the contributing members are really proactive in helping make it a great read. It's a great newsletter. I'm always impressed by all the work that goes into it. You do a great job and I know you are always so much appreciated and valued. Always nice to catch up with a copy. Thanks so much and keep up the great work.

Mike Sweeney

MAN OF ACTION

There are so many trails to walk. We are doing the [LDWA 100](#) again this year (this will be my 23rd!) and later in July we will be doing the coast-to-coast path and then of course I am preparing for Land's End-John O'Groats cycle ride in 2023 (44 years after my first LEJOG!), so doing 100 mile plus rides as and when I can.

Kevin Marshall

GREAT MEMORIES OF ST PAUL'S HARRIERS RACE WALK STARS

[Looking back: Great memories of St Paul's Harriers race walk star Ron Jones | Dorset Echo](#)

Looking back: Great memories of St Paul's Harriers race walk star Ron Jones



Weymouth St Paul's Harriers race-walking team of 1978. Back from left: Kevin Baker and Den Jones; front from left: Charlie Dunn, Ron Jones, Brian Copp and coach Harry Callow

Ron Jones's sons Denys and Greg were into motocross and karting, so he always had a very large 7 seat Citroen estate car from the main dealer Old's of Dorchester to transport the karts that just fitted in the back, and also served well in taking the walking team all over the country too. His daughter Ellie was a race walker in her early years and became an accomplished local pottery company owner. Ron hosted a special 90th birthday party for Harry Callow at his home, attended by many walkers. Harry and his wife Ann were good friends with my parents and we visited whilst on holiday, I remember cutting their lawn once with a petrol mower with a dodgy clutch. Denys emigrated to Canada, but prior to that he'd studied to degree level in motorsport engineering and then he progressed as motorsport race engineer/team

manager in the Porsche Cup UK national race series and at the Le Mans 24 hours. Ron was an architect and designed some of the local Haven holiday village club houses and swimming pool buildings. As you will remember, Geoff organised the seafront races, firstly with a 5 miler in which Chris Maddocks did a 33 and me a 34, before he made it a 10k for a couple of years, attracting some of our top walkers to compete, changing at the pavilion and then the harbour master's facilities. The race was an ideal replacement for the Bournemouth Piers 6 miler which Nigel Parkins used to organise. Geoff was remarkable as he could either walk with Brian Copp slowly or Kevin Baker fast, without showing any style change. After training with the boys at the track during the summer, I remember dropping Geoff off at The Marquis of Granby pub on the outskirts of the town. Brian was lovingly called the "team mascot" for Weymouth and will always be remembered with his towel around his neck after a race, like he did as a junior boxer. I think the Dorset Echo did an obituary for Brian too. Kevin was a tough and consistent racer and I had to be on top form to keep him behind

me. I believe he worked in Yeovil during his racing days but I've no idea what became of him after he stopped walking? We spent many miles around the Brianspuddle village lap, helping each other along at pace. Charlie Dunn was a convert from running, having spent years with his brother leading the Weymouth men's road running team. The Weymouth St Paul's Harriers website has a brief history of the club including the walking section and there is a published book available on Amazon. Now I've stopped training and racing, I'm reminiscing lots more about the old days. The older I get, the faster I was ...

Jim Ball

Adds Hon Ed: Recent reports of Geoff Hunwicks have turned the spotlight on a once thriving West Country scene, and we thank Jim for his memories.

ESSEX WALKER

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