

Essex Walker

Editor: Dave Ainsworth

CAPTAIN BARCLAY/RICHARD DUNWOODY MBE REUNION

Back in 2009 famous jockey Richard Dunwoody successfully completed a challenge to emulate Captain Robert Barclay Allardice's feat of walking 1,000 miles in 1,000 hours along that same Newmarket route. Captain Barclay (1779-1854), who was commissioned in the 23rd Regiment of Foot, struck a 1,000 guineas wager that he'd succeed - which he did from 1 June to 12 July 1809. Richard Dunwoody's successful completion came on the 200th Anniversary, walking from 29 May to 10 July 2009. Closing stages were slightly altered so it finished at Newmarket's July Course, where Channel 4 were televising a major meeting, so affording maximum publicity. Mr Dunwoody's efforts attracted much sponsorship and a considerable sum was raised, which was divided among 4 worthy charities. It was one of the best supported events ever in race walking - for instance most of Essex Walkers readers showed up in Newmarket during the 6 weeks' duration, as signatures in a thick visitors' book shows. Many came more than once, some several times, as so many walked those one-mile legs with Richard, encouraging him to keep going towards his 1,000 target. In those 6 weeks, a day out to Newmarket to be part of this occasion became a regular occurrence. It wasn't just walkers as several dignitaries and local celebrities dropped in to give encouragement and pledge donations. Among notables signing that visitors' book were Sheikh Mohammed bin Rashid Maktoum, owner of so many top racehorses - and actress Honeysuckle Weeks, best known as Samantha Stewart (later Wainwright) in the WW2 drama "Foyle's War". Due to good local publicity so many motorists driving along Newmarket's busy Bury Road continually "tooted" their support for Richard.

This anniversary has been a regular event on our calendar, except for the past 2 years when "lockdowns" kicked-in. The format is coffee at the upmarket 4* Bedford Lodge Hotel and Spa, which was a base for 6 weeks' effort and outside which a mile leg commenced/finished. Then a gentle social walk along the stretch of road that feats of 1809 and 2009 were staged on, followed by lunch at the hotel. Most years saw good turnouts, but this year it was down due to a number of reasons. For instance, 2 previous years of

Covid had caused a break in continuity, July 2022 saw Covid levels worryingly rising, there was a *heatwave* which resulted in some crying off, and - sadly - there are less of us about from that memorable 2009 occasion. But importantly, the tradition's continuity was maintained, and hopefully more will make it in 2023 and beyond.

Commented organiser Ron Wallwork, "There weren't many of us, but it was a lovely day with lots of credit to Jon and daughter Jenny who completed four circuits in four hours".

Picture taken on 14 July 2022: L-to-R Glyn Jones, Pam Ficken, Mick Graham, Ron Wallwork, Jenny, and Jon May at the front door of Bedford Lodge Hotel.



400 NOT OUT FOR TONY PERKINS



Iford AC life member, Tony Perkins, reached his **400th** parkrun appearance milestone, as an official, on Saturday 9 July 2022. Tony's a regular marshal at the Great Notley parkrun near his Crossing home, where the point he usually mans is known as "Tony's Corner". He served two terms as Iford's Honorary Treasurer: 1970-to-82 and 1987-to-88. Tony's one of Iford band of Centurion race walkers - those who've completed a 100 miles' walking race in under 24 hours, a feat he achieved in 1979 at Ewhurst (Surrey) when clocking 23 hours 45 minutes and 41 seconds to become their 685th member. Tony had a long spell as Iford's Hon Walking Section Secretary when he was known as "Mr Reliable" and has been entrusted with the Team Manager's position at GB Internationals, such is his vast experience in the sport. His reliability was also shown in other long-distance awards, as he's a recipient of a special award for completing 20 London-to-Brighton Walks (52 miles 352 yards).

WELL DONE No 12

Harwich-based **Amos Seddon** of Enfield & Haringey AC and the Metropolitan Police Walking Club was officially listed (at 15 July 2022) as No 12 in the [runbritain](https://www.runbritain.co.uk/) rankings for the V80 class of UK runners - that from 1,155 athletes! **Great!**



IN AND OUT

A seemingly continuous proverbial "*revolving door*" in top Sports positions has seen yet another change as national newspapers have reported that Olympian Christian Malcom has been sacked as Head Coach of UK Athletics. However, he'll remain in post during a congested summer of 3 major championships, but will then leave after a difficult tenure. He had an unenviable task of stabilising a British team low on star quality during the pandemic, but having failed to deliver a gold in an underwhelming Olympics for GB's track & field athletes (who won just 5 medals) he faced criticism. He said, "I am very disappointed to hear about the news but understand the rationale around this decision". In September 2020 he'd been appointed Head Coach of the British Athletics Olympics programme. One man overlooked at the time was Stephen Maguire, who experts now tip as favourite to step into a new Technical Director role - so a question we always ask is, "*What's his view of race walking?*" Mark Munro, interim Chief Executive Officer for UK Athletics said, "We are extremely grateful to Christian for his time and effort as well as his commitment and professionalism".

THOUGHT FOR THE DAY

"The past is a foreign country: they do things differently there". This the immortal first line of 'The Go Between', the 1953 novel by L P Hartley, regarded as his finest. Don't get confused with J R Hartley whose book "Fly Fishing" featured in an advert for "Yellow Pages" which is rated as one of the all-time top 10 British adverts, featuring the late Norman Lumsden as J R Hartley.

COMMENTATOR'S COACHING SUCCESS

IAAF World 1,500 metres gold medallist Jake Wightman has a coach who is much appreciated in our race walking world. In 2012 his coach - father Geoff Wightman - was co-commentator (with Dave Ainsworth) at our Olympic "try-out event" on The Mall, which was open to Club walkers as well as the good and the great. Many of our readers took the opportunity to race 20K on our official Olympic course. This, as the try-out title suggested, was a rehearsal for our real Olympic races later in the year. London Olympic organisers liked what they'd heard so asked the pair to sign contracts to work

in the same capacity at the Olympics. Geoff and Dave commentated on the Men's 20K Walk and then the 50K (a long session of nearly 4-and-half hours). Geoff wasn't available for the Women's 20K, a race best not mentioned further as the Russian 1-2 both ended up handing back their medals! Geoff himself is a former marathon runner of note, having appeared in both the European Championships & Commonwealth Games. The late Colin Young was a big admirer of Geoff's athletics performances and stated that he was unlucky not to get an Olympic selection. His marathon personal best is 2:13.17. Geoff's also the top in-house London Stadium commentator and at many other major venues, including Eugene, Oregon for the 2022 IAAF World Championships. We congratulate Jake and his coach Geoff and remember the latter's worthy contribution to race walking at our London Olympics.

TAKING THEIR TURN

Here's news of 2 more race walkers who've been selected for the 2022 Queen's Commonwealth Games Baton Relay. There's the Reverend Roy Lodge, former National Champion and International race walker of the '60s. We saw Roy at our Leamington Spa events and more recently at a service for the late Charlie Fogg RIP. And there's Paul Hawkins of Stratford-upon-Avon AC and Midland Masters, who recently won a number of individual medals in British Masters Race Walking Championship events. Both have current photographs taken this month.



Dr Roy Lodge, former mayor of Stratford
 "I am indeed honoured to be a batonbearer and it's a small but nice consolation for missing out on the 1968 Olympic Games in Mexico which I was selected for as a probable athlete but ruled out because of injury. I also missed out on the 1966 Commonwealth Games 20-mile race walking event in Jamaica due to academic finals, but in the following year 1967 I won the national 20-mile championship of Great Britain and Northern Ireland beating the gold, silver and bronze medalists from the 1966 Games. Life has its compensations if you're patient and never give up and I am humbled and excited to join colleagues for the relay and with the Commonwealth Games being right on our doorstep. It is also a great honour for Stratford to host the baton relay and I think I was chosen as recognition of my 20 years' service to the town."



Paul Hawkins, chairman of Stratford Athletic Club
 "I've been chairman for 21 years and I am very proud to be nominated by the athletic club. I started coaching in 1990 and became more and more involved. I specialised in race walking and that will help me with my part of the baton relay which is in Bridge Street and I've got all the kit ready."

Here is Roy's email: "Thought you might be interested in (extracts from) this article in Stratford Herald - also mention of Paul Hawkins."

AND IT'S GOODNIGHT FROM HIM

Tom Bosworth, rightly billed as our current World 1 Mile record holder - a record he's held for 5-and-half-years, set at the London Stadium (*as viewers were reminded*) appeared on London ITV Regional Television News. He'd previously appeared on Southern Television Regional News the previous week with the same tale. It was a fairly lengthy news item.

[Race walker Tom Bosworth announces retirement ahead of Commonwealth Games](#)

He announced his retirement after the Birmingham Commonwealth Games 10,000 metres' walk. After that he said, "I never say no to anything" so therefore he'll be ready for anything. The interviewer questioned it meant he'd be seen "in the jungle" etc. At a time when we urgently need, as an event, to generate more interest in our activities and attract newcomers, our "shop window" isn't that "eye-catching". For the Commonwealth Games we can select 6 English walkers - but only have 2. As for the IAAF World Championship in Eugene (Oregon), only 1 GB race walker was selected - he withdrew - so we had **no** British walker on show. With Tom stating in public, his decision to bow out, we've lost an athlete who has consistently proved he **can** attract publicity by whatever he does and says.

WHAT NEXT?

In this issue we report (above) Tom Bosworth's publicised race walking retirement. In one TV interview he was asked what he'd do next, to which he replied he'd never say "no" to anything. Perhaps, with his vast experience stretching from local races as a beginner to racing at our World's top meetings, he might be able to put something back into our sport by offering to take on one of the many unfilled positions we now have on our Committees (see previous issue)? Watch this space!

FIXTURES

AUGUST	2	VAC 5 Miles (non-veterans welcome)	Battersea Park	7.00 pm
	6	Commonwealth Games Women's 10,000m	Alexander Stadium	10.40 am
	7	Commonwealth Games Men's 10,000m	Alexander Stadium	11.30 am
	14	South of England 5K & 3K track walks (all categories)	Chelmsford	TBA
	16	European Championships 35K Men/Women	Munich	8.30 am
	17	Open 3K + YAG 1K & 2K	Tonbridge	7.35 pm
	20	European Championships 20K Men	Munich	8.30 am
	20	European Championships 20K Women	Munich	10.15 am
	20-21	Centurions 100 Miles + RWA Long Distance Championship	Middlesbrough	12.00 noon
	28	England U15/17 Championships	Bedford	TBA
	28	LICC/Enfield League 5,000m + 1K & 3K	StoneX Stadium	12.00 noon
	29	Southend City 1 Mile (+ George Woods Trophy)	Garon Park Track	10.30 am
	29	Tom Bosworth's swansong 3,000m	Tonbridge	pm (TBA)
SEPTEMBER	4	Eastern Masters League Final 2,000m	Bedford	TBA
	17	English Schools AA Championships	Bedford	TBA
	24	*Enfield League 1 Hour Race (Essex 10,000m Championship)	TBA	11.00 am
	28	Ryan Cup 10K Representative Match (+ Police/Civil Championships)	Birmingham (Cannon Hill Park)	1.30 pm
<i>* Enfield League 1 Hour may be brought forward (check nearer the date)</i>				
OCTOBER	1	VAC/Sy/Middx?Herts/SWC 10,000m Championships	Coulsdon Track	1.00 pm
	15	Enfield League 5 Miles	Enfield/Donkey Lane	11.00 am
	23	UK Athletics 35K Championships	Leeds	TBA
A series of training walks organised by Steve Kemp, to assist in building-up to the Middlesbrough 100 Miles, are being held from Belfairs Park, Leigh-on-Sea. Contact Steve Kemp for details on 07860-617899.				

JOHN FORD STEEDS NORTHCOTT MBE, RIP

Sad to report that, at the age of 87, Hertfordshire-based John Northcott has sadly passed away, having been a pancreatic cancer sufferer. A loyal member of Highgate Harriers to the end, early mention is made in the Race Walking Association's Centenary Handbook "A Hundred Years Afoot" where he's listed as winning the first indoor race staged by the Association - at RAF Feltwell on an unbanked 200 yards' track, winning in 7 minutes and 43 seconds on 26 October 1963. In 1962 at New Southgate, Highgate Harriers won our Race Walking Association's National 10 Miles team championship with a scoring quartet of Mike Shannon 9, John Northcott 11, John Elston 12 and J Leavold 21. They were clear winners with 53 points from Surrey Walking Club (65) and Belgrave Harriers (68). That day's victor, Ken Matthews of Royal Sutton Coldfield WC, clocked 76 minutes and 10 seconds followed by Bob Clark of Polytechnic Harriers (2nd) and Colin Williams of Ilford AC (3rd). John was a Middlesex Athletic Association stalwart in times when their

squad did well in at Inter-Counties level, winning the title on a number occasions, including a treble in 1959, 60 and 61. John won a now defunct Garnet 10 Miles' Championship in 1958 at Woodford Green when breaking the tape in 80 minutes and 53 seconds, followed by J Doland of Trowbridge AC & CG Ball of Southampton AC. Teams 1-2-3 were Polytechnic Harriers 54 points (scoring Frank Butler 7, Ray Pearce 12, H C Cooper 16 and WJ Attwood 19) followed by Trowbridge AC 62 and Essex Beagles 66. John won his first London Open 7 Miles at Enfield in 1959 as 53.34 just got him ahead of then future Olympic gold medallist Don Thompson (Metropolitan WC) who recorded 53.38 - both men clocking personal best times. Third was Colin Young in 54.03 - Colin also winning the handicap. There were 131 starters! Team order was Highgate Harriers, Metropolitan Walking Club and Ilford AC with points totals of 47, 51 and 52 respectively. The winning Handicap team were Highgate (scoring Messrs. Kingham, Watson, McAtee and Northcott) who were very narrowly ahead of Woodford Green AC (scoring Messrs Durrant, Thomas, Dewing and Neilson).

A much-travelled man, John had connections "*down under*". John was a successful businessman. His travelling took him to major meetings on the World stage, such as Rome's 1960 Olympic Games - John was a true athletics enthusiast! During his advancing years John remained active and drove himself all over the Country - indeed many last saw him at recent services for the late Charlie Fogg (who was in winning Middlesex teams with John) and fellow Highgate protagonist Fred Baker. Despite hanging up his racing shoes decades' ago, he kept in touch with race walking and was a frequent "*Essex Walker*" contributor, his words always being well worth reading. He also donated personal race walking items to a Midlands archives. His successful time in race walking saw him amass a considerable collection of medals, plaques, trophies, certificates and prizes - as his daughter can confirm. John was active with "[The Northcott Foundation](#)" - a registered charity - and was awarded an MBE in June 2013 "*for voluntary services*".

John leaves behind a widow Freda, a son Andrew and daughters Elizabeth and Susan. A [death notice](#) appeared in The Daily Telegraph. Condolence is expressed to all John's family members. **DA**

FROM THE FAMILY OF JOHN NORTHCOTT MBE, RIP

Thank you so much for your kind words and information about Dad's walking achievements. He was always very modest and hadn't told us the extent of his wins and medals which I am sure to find in the old office we call the warehouse which is floor to ceiling filled with papers and memorabilia. I just read your message out to mum and she wants to tell you that she takes great comfort and is also appreciative to learn some of these details that she didn't know previously. The service was held at All Hallows by the Tower on 8 June and I'm very sorry we hadn't informed you or the club of Dad's passing. He hadn't wanted anyone to know he was ill and so there were a lot of very shocked friends and family at the service. I hope you are able to see a recording of it here even though I believe the last few minutes and closing hymn were cut off. [Service of Thanksgiving for the life of John Ford Steeds Northcott MBE](#) **Liz Northcott**

Tributes to John Northcott

- John moved out to Australia to work in the 60s. The gift (of race walking items) was to the then National Athletics Library at Birmingham University. **John Powell**
- I do remember the name John Northcott, but by the time I joined Highgate in 1967, he had retired from race walking. I do recall him winning the Highgate one hour 'B' section in 1957. The meeting was my second ever race and I was in the 'D' section for my then club Southend AC. After my effort I sat and watched the 'B' race action ... and what a race it was, up front a battle between these four walkers: John Northcott, Roy Sheppard, D C Read, both of Steyning AC, and A G R Thomson, of Met WC. What a battle it was for a good part of the race, with the lead changing a number times as they tracked each other for lap after lap. It was only in the later stages that John was the stronger and pulled away to finish half a lap

ahead with 7m 626y in the hour. Sheppard came home in 7m 359y, with Thomson in third with 7m 276y and Read in 7m 275y in the hour. **Mike Hinton**

- Sad to hear of John Northcott's passing. I only really knew him briefly in my early days, but he was our saviour when team manager for myself and Bob Hughes on my first International, in Romania in 1971. I had a bad race and next day, still suffering, got to the airport to be told we could not return on BA but would have to wait for the following day on Romanian airways. He put his foot down and we were on BA. The last time I saw John was leaving the airport at Heathrow and never got another chance to thank him in person. **Carl Lawton**
- How sad to read of the passing of John Northcott RIP, a nice guy to have around you and on good days strolling on Sunday mornings. Will miss you John. **Ray Middleton**

Expressions of sadness were received from readers, including Bill Sutherland.

"AS YOU WERE"

On Saturday afternoon (23 July) BBC2 showed repeated highlights from the previous day's **IAAF World Championship** action. After waiting over 2 hours, a clip of the inaugural Women's 35 Kilometres' Walk was screened. It was around 13 seconds in length, showing the Peruvian winner approaching the tape, then standing on the podium, before the commentator quipped that Paddington Bear (a fictitious Peruvian) would be pleased. We were told that the Peruvian lady had also won the 20K and that was it. No mention of the story that the 1-2-3 in the 35K were also the 1-2-3 in an earlier 20K event. As for publicising race walking coverage it was difficult to find when these races were to be screened - it took a look on Athletics Weekly's website to learn that both 20K walks would be on BBC's "red button". With both races ending with exactly the same 3 medallists in the same order, it shows the failings in having 2 events so near to each other in distance: just 15 kilometres between 20K and 35K. However you look at it, 50K (now dead) was a totally different event involving mostly different specialist athletes using different tactics and training methods. Over athletics history those doing well in both 20K and 50K at the same games are few indeed. If the now 20K/35K races keep seeing the same names receiving awards, then the "powers that be" will have the ammunition they are perhaps seeking to withdraw one of these distances permanently - probably the latter.

Stu Cooper commented:

"It appears that the fears of many - that the 'speed vs endurance' dimensions displayed so vividly in the 20 vs 50 days - have been realised, at least in the female competition. Whether it would have been the same story had Yamanishi and Ikeda lined up with Percy in the 35k is moot. We all know that a 50km doesn't kick in until after the 35km mark, and I think the powers-that-be probably believe that too, but care less. Money talks - and it views the world with tunnel vision. That said, I'm not so sure the 50km is 'dead'. The 35km story has to be played out on many stages yet, and we'll have a better picture of its advantages and inadequacies by Paris 2024. Two of their arguments against the 50 are (1) Women's performances are too few in number and below par for the international stage, and (2) the 50k has died domestically in most countries. And those positions are going to be reiterated until something happens to nullify them."

Cath Duhig commented:

"I watched full coverage of all 4 (World Championship) races live on Red Button, and lost count of how many times Tim Hutchings mentioned that the medallists in the 20 and 35k were the same. He and Mara Yamauchi made a game effort, as ever, but lacked depth of knowledge and reference. Presuming it was mainly walking enthusiasts watching there really was no need for constant repetition of the rules and ways and workings of the judges. Spanish TV had engaged the services of Chuso, recently retired veteran walker Jesús Ángel García Bragado, who, with many years of competitive experience behind him, could flesh out the bones of the event rather more interestingly, even if I could only understand about ¼ of it!"

LONDON MARATHON PROGRESS

Despite our falling numbers there are still race walkers prepared to "showcase" our chosen event in the Virgin Money London Marathon, and we've many who are no longer active, but have participated in past decades and like most of us, still show interest. Just think how many times the East Dulwich based Watts brothers have been on the Embankment to cheer on race walkers as they near their journey's end.



[New entry policies for London Marathon](#)

Changes have been announced to be more inclusive of pregnant, disabled and religious participants.

- Up to 4 wheelchair users - who require assistance to take part - with up to 4 support personnel, will be able to take part.
- Pregnant entrants can now defer their places for up to 3 years.
- Those in a Virtual Marathon, who previously had to run on the same day as the actual race, are now able to postpone their efforts on religious grounds and compete on the next suitable day.

NOT A BAD IDEA

A while ago Hon Ed was phoned by a walker and told of a proposal to have a "Parade of English Commonwealth Games Walking Gold medallists" before our Birmingham Commonwealth Games Walks. It was further proposed that our first ever Commonwealth Games race walker victor (aka Ron Wallwork) be invited to present medals at a revamped Alexander Stadium. Good ideas. I was approached in my capacity as your RWA Southern Area Press & Publicity Officer to ask if I could assist by promoting this, should it come to pass. Since then I've heard nothing of any progress on this worthy project. It wouldn't take much to arrange, as names of men and a lady who are English Commonwealth Games gold medallists don't make a long list to contact. Back in 2014 we had a sell-out tribute luncheon to former Commonwealth Games representative race walkers at London's Tower Hotel - in a year when Commonwealth Games Organisers shamefully dropped walking from their programme! Good ideas need following up, and this would have gained publicity - when English race walking can only enter 2 race walkers for 6 available places. And one of those entered will call it a day after his Birmingham appearance!

At the 2018 Commonwealth Games in Australia I obtained favourable publicity for race walking when inaugural winner Ron Wallwork visited the Gold Coast to support talented prospect Callum Wilkinson. I sent an email giving details of both to the leading Gold Coast Commercial radio station. A lady reporter/presenter was so interested she called me back for more details - at 2am (it was 11am "down under" at that time). They met up with Ron and did an interview, which showed walking in a good light. So these events can be used to obtain good publicity - so one hopes something good will come from Birmingham 2022.

MILESTONES - CONGRATULATIONS

Close to Essex is based Tonbridge Athletic Club, who this year celebrate its 75th Anniversary (founded 1947). Well done to all at this always active Kent club. Even longer in business are Australian-based Victorian Race Walking Club, who are to hold a Centenary Lunch on Sunday 11 September at Middle Park (Melbourne), at which is billed "A Parade of Olympians". They were founded in 1921 - OK it's now 101 years, but last year's Covid situation prevented celebrations, so they're celebrating this year. Our link with this Club is via their newsletter "Heel-and-Toe" which many UK walkers read - as it's often first with news/results, even spreading news that home-based Officials don't want spreading! **Congratulations to both great Clubs.**




Dear Dave ...

BRIEF UPDATE ON THE KINGS

Dom King first 20kms, 95.57 Dan King 2nd 99.16 - at least they won in Finland.

George Nibre

M35 (20,0 km)

Rank	Bib	Name	Club	Result	Diff
1	2457	Dominic King	Great Britain and Northern Irel 	1:35:57	
2	2456	Daniel King	Great Britain and Northern Irel 	1:39:16	+3:19
3	1846	Nadir Herida	France 	1:53:07	+17:10
4	1770	Laurent Augustin	France 	1:56:40	+20:43
5	3588	Paulo Rigor	Portugal 	1:58:33	+22:35

[World Masters Athletics 2022 results](#)

CONGRATULATIONS ALL ROUND

Well done to Tony and 'Panda Queen Christine' as well as the Masters Gold and Silver Medallists Dan and Dom King. Great to hear some good news on UK Race Walking!

Bill and Kath Sutherland

Adds Hon Ed: Bill commends Tony Perkins for having achieved his 400th parkrun appearance as an official, and his wife, Christine, for her contribution to the production of the Essex Walker. Bill explains the background to his reference to Christine as 'Panda Queen':

“When I was Community Involvement Officer for Police in the Borough of Islington between 1979-1986 I and others organised a Schools' Panda Competition with an illustrated book covering the many roles of a Policeman. It was very popular with up to 30 Primary Schools taking part, with Community Beat Officers acting as Coaches. I used to spend many hours drawing out score sheets with a large Panda painting/ drawing by Christine Perkins as the centre piece. The Final was at the Islington Town Hall with the Question Master being from TV Fame ie Gloria Hunniford and Martyn Lewis (Newscaster) to mention a few. This was one of seven Borough-wide competitions which we organised annually when the Metropolitan Police were very well known and respected and seen daily on the Streets and at local stations. Great days indeed!”

WRITES DENIS HOLLY

Thanks for Essex Walker, especially the news about Marion Fawkes. Marion and I trained together in North Shields in 1974 whilst I was doing my MSc in Newcastle. She seemed surprised that a man could walk as fast as her as she was exceptional at that time. We travelled to Barcelona with a team including the late Ken Carter for the walks there. Hot and cobbled. I blistered my heel badly there so did not train with her again before moving back south as the world moved on.

Denis Holly

WRITES OUR TOP RACE WALKING JUDGE

I meant to write after the last edition when you reported on the appointed race walk officials for the Commonwealth Games. Hidden as a field official was Daniel Michaud who is an international race walking judge and also an International Technical Official (ITO). His duties first and foremost in Birmingham are as a race walking judge but because of his status will also act as an ITO. Not mentioned is Noel Carmody who is recorder/assistant chief judge for the race walks. Noel was appointed as recorder when introduced to the Technical Delegate, who would put forward names for roles, as the best in the world bar none!

Steve Taylor

A WELCOME ESSEX VISITOR

For your interest, I've spent the day at Woodford Green Essex Ladies track. I'm officiating National Athletics League here, just on the last events. Nice venue, never been here before, but I do recall seeing it mentioned many times by you. What a lovely area with Epping Forest. Birchfield stayed last night at Woodford Green Marriott hotel. Shame there hasn't been an ice cream van here today - everyone has mentioned that.

John Constandinou

Adds Hon Ed: John's seen more action at Ashtons Track than Essex walkers have this year, as a Summer season of Graded Athletics events (which feature race walking) didn't happen.

ESSEX WALKER APPRECIATION FROM CENTURION 1,000

I found it a very interesting – if slightly depressing – read. I haven't been involved in race-walking for a while, ever since Cambridge Harriers stopped the CH league, so have rather lost contact with race walkers and what's been happening. It was interesting to see so many familiar names, though the obits were too many and give one pause for thought. Time passes!

Wendy Watson

PUBLICITY COMMENTS

Certainly, Tom Bosworth has 'flown the flag' for GB walking over the past 10 years. In terms of performance and publicity it will be a big loss for our event. For him personally, it's interesting to hear him say, "I never say no to anything". In my opinion beyond retirement, he will want to capitalise on his name asap. I say this from frustrating experience. I had a lot of national publicity around my 5th 'selected' Olympics. My brother Peter gave me a letter from a Question of Sport who said it was an oversight on their part that I hadn't already been on the BBC TV programme and they would endeavour to rectify that soon; it never happened - shame because I would've loved it as a fan of many sports. When I was at the BBC 2000 Sports Personality of the Year awards in London the producer of the show approached me during the event and apologised for not featuring me on the show. What could I say, it seemed like a shallow apology as it was too late to do anything then! You may recall, I was awarded the Ron Pickering Memorial Award for services to athletics. At the award ceremony in London, I was introduced to publicist, Max Clifford (long before his downfall). We sat on the same dining table and he said you need an agent. I was put in touch with former 400m hurdler athlete, Mike Whittingham who apparently was, Seb Coe's agent. Mike and I had several phone calls and email exchanges with a view to setting up a meeting and getting the ball rolling. Months passed with a number of postponed get-togethers. Eventually, I tired of his postponements and my window of opportunity was gone. I have been told my name came up a few weeks ago on BBC's Pointless Celebrities. Close yet so far! Tom ... better luck making those good contacts you undoubtedly will have, count. Never mind Tarzan, his name might yet be heard in the jungle?

Chris Maddocks

Adds Hon Ed: Mention is made of "A Question of Sport", which many readers recall as once a good programme. In the late '70s RWA Officers met with then BBC Head of Sport Jonathan Martin OBE at their headquarters. We raised that no race walkers had ever been invited onto "A Question of Sport". Mr Martin said (*at that time*) household names appeared and promised, "If you get walkers through a tunnel and around a track to finish first at European or Olympic level, they'll be on". It's never happened since that meeting. As for BBC's "Pointless, Don Thompson and Ken Matthews were mentioned as pointless answers when contestants were asked to name 1960s GB Olympic gold medallists.

MORE OF THE SAME

I raced again last night, this time in Kettering and you won't believe it ... I did exactly the same time as last month for 2km 15.24!! I might not be the fastest but if there was a prize for consistency, I might just be in the running (or walking 🏃). It was a gloriously warm evening.

Hilary McDermott (nee Mockett)

PRAISE FOR AMOS SEDDON'S EFFORTS TO IGNITE INTEREST IN HARWICH

Glad to see Amos flying the flag for race walking. It is such a pity that a lively wire of 80 plus has to play this important role as the younger generation think speed walking and power walking are new sporting activities recently invented. If the Southern Area RWA had some literature or leaflets to pass around it would greatly help. Knock! Knock again!

Bill Sutherland

THE STORY BEHIND A WELL-ESTABLISHED MEMORIAL TROPHY

Jeff Slater was an old Brighton Walker whose widow gave us the Trophy and Arthur Jones and I decide to use it for a track 10k as we had just gone decimal (metric). Steyning took on our track trophy races when I retired from walking and the section, like the event, died.

Alan Buchanan

WRITES YOUR RWA PRESIDENT AND QUEEN'S BATON BEARER

It was a great experience with large crowds near the Deal Pier. I was nominated for my coaching input and possibly being Hon President. This made up for being nominated but rejected for the 2012 torch relay for my seven years' service to the NHS Cardiac Rehab programme. But perhaps folk appreciates the NHS a bit more these days. By nice coincidence the relay companion was an Ashford A&E Nurse with 34 years' service which was somewhat humbling as was the soldier injured in battle who is now able to run and other local heroes. The nurse "may" have been on duty when I needed help 13 years ago, who knows? The evening weather was perfect and showed how great Deal and Walmer were. I was great to see the Southern President and long-distance legend by the name of Chris Flint at the baton relay handover point. I think he was more interested in the baton escort team of 8 Midland police who were accompanying me. A couple of the escort team tried to race walk with me which was great. I just had time to explain the straight leg rule before my relay leg was over. Other Enfield Leaguers Jacqueline Benson and Grazia Manzotti were there too and could keep up easily, of course. Jonathan and I have tickets for the Games and will be cheering on Tom, Callum, Heather and Bethan.

Chris Hobbs



Adds Hon Ed:

Here's a picture of your Race Walking Association President, a hatted Chris Hobbs, on a Queen's Commonwealth Games Baton Relay changeover in Deal (Kent). There was a Police escort for baton carriers. Walkers turning out to support on this leg were Grazi Manzoti, Jacqui Benson (with parents Elizabeth & Simon) and Chris Flint - who described the occasion as "a fun evening".

TOM BOSWORTH'S INVITATION

You may or may not have followed my athletics career over the last 13 years. Regardless, I'd love to invite you all to Tonbridge Athletics Club, on 29 August, to watch my final race, to end my career, where it began as an 11 year old in 2001. The race will be early afternoon and I'll confirm a time soon. There will be an athletics meet on, so plenty to watch. My race will be over 3000m, a distance of which I actually hold the world record for (10:43). Just being able to say that is incredible. So the race won't last long! It would be great to see you all there, regardless of the last time we saw each other or have spoken. I know over the years many of you have been supporting me from home. So thank you. It will be a great afternoon and lovely way to end where it all began.

Tom Bosworth



Adds Hon Ed: It's hoped Essex-based walkers will support the annual Southend City 1 Mile on Garon Park Track at 10.30am (see previous issue for entry details). However, we've many readers south of the Thames who may wish to quicken their footsteps to the Tonbridge gathering. With our Essex race starting at 10.30am, and the Tonbridge race at an unspecified afternoon timing, some could be at both events.

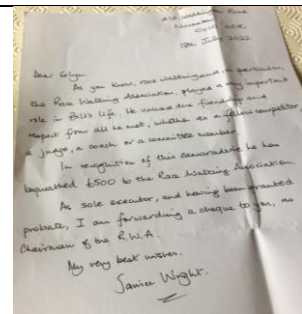
BILL WRIGHT'S LEGACY TO THE RACE WALKING ASSOCIATION

Please find herewith a copy of the letter I have received from Janice Wright and which enclosed a cheque in the amount of £500 which has been bequeathed to the Race Walking Association in memory of our great friend Bill Wright.

"As you know, race walking and, in particular, the Race Walking Association, played a very important role in Bill's life. He valued the friendship and respect from all he met, whether as a fellow competitor, a judge, a coach, or a committee member.

In recognition of this camaraderie, he has bequeathed £500 to the Race Walking Association.

As sole executor, and having been granted probate, I am forwarding a cheque to you, as Chairman of the RWA."



I have written back to Janice and will forward separately a copy of my thanks on behalf of the RWA to her.

Glyn Jones

OUR MAN AT THE GAMES

It was an absolute honour and amazing experience to carry my nation's flag in the (Commonwealth Games) opening ceremony rehearsal. The rehearsals were attended and manned by the volunteers as stand-ins to work out any potential problems and test the logistics. The real ceremony will not feature me, but I did educate the lady hosting the Cyprus team on all she needs to know and how to impress the team with words and knowledge. My wife Karen got to take part too, as a member of the Cook Islands team of three. Birchfield Harriers have been told that October will be the earliest we can return to the stadium! We left in March 2020 "for six weeks".



I am extremely busy with the Games. Having done around 40 days so far since September, I will be working ten days at the games - although they have now asked me to work an 11th, and will probably offer me a 12th as personnel changes are constantly happening:

Five days on the track in the stadium, you will spot me on TV.

- One day at the marathon, up and down, I'm responsible for various things on the course.
- One day at the Triathlon.
- Four days based at HQ in mobile response, ready to be driven to any venue at a moment's notice to work where they are short.

I returned last night from a festival in Buckinghamshire (PennFest) where I had been working for five days. I'd left the festival to pop up to Birmingham for the ceremony rehearsal then return back down! I am just about to go to the accreditation centre to queue for three hours again, as I have to have my pass changed for extra roles.

John Constandinou

Adds Hon Ed: I visited an accreditation centre (an otherwise empty factory near Stratford) to get my London Olympic 20212 pass. I saw a long queue in strong sunshine, of programme sellers, stewards, ticket staff, caterers, volunteers, security personnel etc. Before joining a queue I had to show my formal letter to a Security Officer - who then directed me to another queue marked "Media & VIPs" (I attended as a commentator). At this queue were just 2 others - both Channel 4 Cameramen who were due to cover the Paralympics after the main Games.

ESSEX WALKER

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