

Essex Walker

Editor: Dave Ainsworth



RECRUITMENT INITIATIVE

Highgate Harriers would like to gauge interest in a race walking taster session. If interested, or know of others who might, please notify:

jonathan.laybourne@highgateharriers.org.uk.

100 MILES ENTRIES

Your fixtures column gives details of this event, which has National Championship status. We've previously published entry details - and these can be obtained by visiting [The Centurions 1911 website](#). So, come on readers, have a second thought and give your support to this major project in Middlesbrough. Among entries received is one from a person unknown in our race walking world - he's a member of a Martial Arts Club, so let's hope he doesn't "get the chop".



HERE'S YOUR ENTRY DETAILS - submitted by **John Constandinou**

- U20/U23 Champs details are confirmed on the entry form [here](#):
18 June, 3,000m, 10:00, Chelmsford Athletics Stadium
- Senior Champs details are confirmed on the entry form [here](#):
22 July, 5,000m, 10:00, Chelmsford Athletics Stadium
- I can find no record of the SEAA Senior Championships in August - the [dates](#) are for junior events.

FIXTURES

*10 min+
walk to start

Month	Date	Event	Location	Time
MAY	9	Veterans AC 5 Miles (non-vets/non-VAC members welcome)	Battersea Park	7.00pm*
	21	European Cup Team Competition	Podebrady	TBA
	22	Masters League T&F 2,000 metres	Lee Valley	6.40pm
	24	Cambridge Harriers Open 3,000m	Sutcliffe Park	6.40pm
JUNE	4	"Cecil Gittins Memorial Walks" (incl Enfield League) 5K/10K	Gravesend Cyclopark	2.30pm
	6	Veterans AC 5K (non-veterans/non-VAC members welcome)	Battersea Park	7.00pm*
	12	National 20K Championship	Leeds	TBA
	17-18	England U/20 & U/23 Championships	Melbourne Stadium	TBA
	18	BMAF Veterans 5K Road Championship	Bolton Arena	11.00am
	24	Manx Telecom Parish Walk 85 Miles	Douglas, IOM	8.00am
JULY	28	SWC/Blackheath Harriers Open 4 Miles	Norman Park	7.00pm
	8	Moulton Open 5 miles (incl Enfield League)	Moulton Village	12.30pm
		Ilford AC Centenary Celebration Party & Buffet	Fairlop Waters	7.00pm
	17	Masters League T&F	Lee Valley	7.15pm
	22-23	England Athletics Senior Championships	Chelmsford	TBA

AUG	1	Veterans AC 5K + series awards (non-vets/non-VAC members welcome)	Battersea Park	7.00pm*
	12-13	SEAA Outdoor Championships	Lee Valley	TBA
	28	Southend City AC 1 Mile	Garon Park Track	10.30am
SEP	2-3	British Masters Championships	Derby	TBA
	Regular distance training walks are held from Leigh-on-Sea's Belfairs Park. Owing to popularity these continue – details from Centurion Steve Kemp on 07860 617899 .			

"HAPPY 60th"

Essex Walker mentions "*milestone*" occasions and we've one on **6 May** – King Charles III's Coronation day - as Shoeburyness-based **Chris Cattano** is to celebrate his **60th** birthday. Chris gives a good account of himself in both running and race walking races and for many years was on the books of Southend-on-Sea AC (as then called). He's naturally fit as seen when he's raced after absences and performed with success - including victories. Chris joined Southend's impressive list of Centurions at Surrey Walking Club's 100 Miles/24 Hours held 40 times around Battersea Park's Queen's Carriageway. At that event 60 started/39 finished (1 DQ). Only one British walker became a new Centurion - so Chris was a sign of how things were going on our domestic ultra-distance scene. He reached 100 miles in 23:44.19 at which point competitors were permitted to leave the race with a timed recorded finish - Chris (C963) pressed on for a full 24 hours to complete 105 miles. In that race at 100 miles the late C939 Ray Platt was 9 minutes' ahead of Chris, then Chris found extra pace as the clock ticked and headed his Clubmate when 24 hours elapsed. Chris represented Essex in Inter-Counties races, and won one such event at Kingsmeadow Athletic Centre. Two notable victories also came on tracks. In September 2007 the Race Walking Association staged a Centenary Celebration 5,000 Metres at Ashtons Track - this race replacing our usual 3,000 metres distance. The RWA did much to promote it, billing it as a major Centenary Celebration Year event - sadly this event was bedevilled by a total Central Line service suspension, which halted journeys of entrants and RWA President Paul Nihill MBE, who was due to present awards. Nevertheless, a good standard field ranging from the talented to frequent back markers assembled in earnest, being led home by Chris in 24:28.2 followed closely by Phil Barnard, Stephen Crane and Steve Allen. The first 2 appeared for Castle Point AC. Another notable victory was in the 2014 August Bank Holiday Monday 1 Mile at Garon Park track. Notable as this event was firmly established as our best Essex supported walk. Chris sped around the track 4 times to win in 8:45.9 just ahead of then Southend resident Martin Fisher with Olympian Shaun Lightman completing the frame. A result sheet shows Chris as "Southend AC/Castle Point AC". Chris has many successful Eastern Veterans/Masters evening track races on his record plus appearances in Eastern Veterans Masters Championships and also League Finals. He retains a strong athletics interest and we all wish him a "**Happy Birthday**" on 6 May.

ILFORD AC CENTENARY

As part of Ilford AC's centenary celebrations, Hon Ed was asked by Ernie Forsyth (Ilford AC Chairman) to compile a history of Ilford AC's walkers during the 100 years of the club's existence (founded in 1923). Essex Walker is serialising the report for readers' information, with part 1 featured in the previous issue (No 426) of Essex Walker, and the final part 2 published below:



ILFORD AC WALKING SECTION - 100 Years' Report (continued)

In Olympic terms 1980 was a red letter occasion for Ilford as hurdler Wilbert Greaves and 20K Walker Roger Mills were in Moscow. Roger was 10th 1:32.37.8. It had been triumph for Roger to earn selection, as he'd been within touching distance during both 1972 and 1976, only to be harshly thwarted. Those with less resolve would have been downhearted; but not Roger who pressed-on to seize his chance. In 2012 and 2016 Neringa Aidietyte bettered 20K Olympic

qualifying times to represent Lithuania. In London Neringa was 36th in 1:34.01 and in 2016 suffered injury which forced a retirement. At London's Olympics Dave Ainsworth had a contract as co-commentator (with Geoff Wightman) for walking races. The early '80s saw Steve Gower surprisingly announcing a retirement when in good form, and was missed.

Iford walkers were hot stuff at records' setting. Roger Mills was unbeatable at both 1 mile and 1,500 metres and the darling of Crystal Palace sponsored meeting evening crowds. His 6:01.75 mile time stood for ages. Bob Dobson held UK records at 12 hours and 50K and Welsh records at 100 Miles and 24 hours. Bob was a Welsh Senior Champion at 3,000 metres (1981) and twice (1983/85) at 10,000 metres. Dave Ainsworth, another walker who was to hold the Iford President's chain, won the Welsh Senior 3,000m title in 2014. At one time Steve Gower was 4th in our all-time UK track 20 Kilometres when clocking 1:30.27.38 against West Germany in 1978. As well as those mentioned, Iford AC's George Nibre became a full GB International, Roy Sheppard a Junior International, Stuart Bennett represented Scotland, John Evans Wales and Francisco Reis Portugal. In addition to those already mentioned 2nd Claim walkers Bill Sutherland BEM and Ken Easlea served as President. Bill, a 1970 Commonwealth Games bronze medallist before joining Iford switched membership status to 1st Claim and enjoyed many good seasons with us. Ken was a Councillor representing Abridge, and when a greyhound "*flapping track*" in fields near "The Camelot" was planned, which would have attracted hundreds on Saturday afternoons with many vehicle movements - Ken successfully battled to halt this, which would have adversely affected runners and walkers in both races and training. In Iford's colours other walkers who became Centurions were Reg Bond, Steve King, Olly Browne, Stuart Bennett, Dave Kates, Kevin Marshall, Micky Sutton and Steve Allen. Steve King was one who could tackle any distance, short or long, and give a good account of himself - he was much missed after relocating to Canada and is always welcome when visiting Blighty especially when once donning racing shoes for National 10K duty around Victoria Park. Ex-Royal Marine Stuart Phillips showed his fitness and so often was at or near the front of fields, before leaving us with many memories when injury ended his athletics career. He often served Club members at the Wanstead sports shop "Athletic East" whose proprietor was Roger Mills.

Even attempting to catalogue Iford's many Opens, Essex County and Southern Area Championship successes would take up pages, but all are recorded in various publications. It's a similar tale for Veterans/Masters events - just too many good days to recount. Mention must be given to Dave Kates who travelled the world to support British, European and World events, being rewarded with many medals including a M55 World Gold at 50K at Auckland in 2004 (5:30.29). Dave led home a winning GB team whose other 2 scorers were ones with Iford AC connections - Peter Ryan and Ed Shillabeer. Another seasoned traveller was Bob Dobson whose M40 golds came in 1983 in Puerto Rico over 5,000m and 20K with 23:38.7 and 1:44.07 on the stopwatches respectively. Bob won the 1989 M45 European 30K gold medal. Also getting a passport out with regularity is Plymouth-based octogenarian Ed Shillabeer, who has featured in medal winning teams. His West County Club folded so he joined Iford as he has connections in Chigwell Row. He's still our UK 100 Kilometres record holder: set at Colchester Garrison back in 1985, before joining Iford. A truly magnificent sequence was accomplished by Scott Davis, who from 2005-to-2011 (inclusive) won 7 successive British 50 Kilometres Championships so equalling a feat by great Olympian Don Thompson MBE. Much credit must go to qualified coach Dave Kates for his input. Another with Iford connections is George Nibre who also achieved success in mentoring long distance walkers. At 100 miles Bob Dobson won the 2001 National title in 19:46.11, well backed-up by Mick Barnbrook to see the Club as 3rd team. Not long afterwards Bob served a 3-year term as Race Walking Association President (2001-2003). At Newmarket racecourse in 2009 Iford won the 100 miles team race when led home by Kevin Marshall, the GB individual bronze medallist (to go with 4 silver medals previously earned in this event) as Micky Sutton and Olly Brown secured success. The latter broke a bone in a foot inside 20 miles but carried on despite the pain to finish. Soon after Olly twice completed sponsored 100 miles walks at Westcliffe-on-Sea in support of Help-for-Heroes. In 1991 Councillor Roland Hill, Mayor of

Redbridge shouted "Go" for our Summer 10K around South Park - it was in torrential downpour, thunder and lightning throughout, on the same evening as Pavarotti's followers were soaked at a Hyde Park concert. Mr Mayor wisely got back into his mayoral car as the Referee deliberated about stopping the race due to lightening, but didn't. Among competitors was Ernie Forsyth, who'd been a promising junior walker in his Beagles' days. Ernie is one of 3 respected runners to have worn our President's chain and also joined in walking races, as did Alan Lovett and Les Hislop. A few years' later in the same event, from the safety of an upstairs room in South Park Drive, a hobbledehoy shied eggs at competitors. A competitor was Ilford's Lew Mockett, a Police Chief Inspector - he wasn't struck and on finishing walked an additional lap to reach the house and deal with the miscreant.

The late Arthur Croft and son Michael, who'd raced many times in Ilford vests, both rose through the ranks as Walks Judges; the latter reached Grade 1 status and received many top Chief Judge appointments. Walking is now in a sorry state with few participants below veterans age - yet Ilford often get numerically good turnouts owing to enthusiasm generated by qualified coach Stuart Bennett. Among those active in our cause are in-form members John Arthur, who's completed 2 "Comrades Marathons", and equally talented Emma Dyos. When it comes to appearances over decades our Walking Section Secretary Steve Uttley tops our appearances list with a vast amount on his record as he made start lines for all standards of events, from major Opens and Championships to Inter-Club and League races. "Race Walking Record" used to publish annual tables of walkers making the most appearances, with Ilford providing 2 past winners - Dave Ainsworth and "*character*" Dave Sharpe. A light-hearted moment occurred when BBC television programme "Grandad" wanted 7 "extras" to appear as race walkers, among them was Dave Ainsworth, Bob Dobson and Steve Gower who trained in an Ealing park and knocked over a jogging Clive Dunn. It made a good scene when transmitted. Dave Ainsworth stepped-in at short notice to act as Dinner & Dance toastmaster in 1978, when someone upset regular gavel custodian Dennis Snow at a Cricklefields training night causing him to storm off. Dave accepted the role as a '*one-off*', then officiated ever since, except when President as Frank Heaney wielded the gavel. As race walking fields declined Ilford still managed to field teams and in 2007 at Earl's Colne became the first Club to win 1st and 2nd team medals at a National Championship - this at 10 Kilometres. For good measure Ilford repeated this feat a few years later at Victoria Park. When Britain hosted the 2007 European Cup of Race Walking at Royal Leamington Spa, Dave Kates and Tony Perkins were on the Organising Committee with responsibility for transport duties. Ilford were grateful for contributions made by 3 signings from previous Clubs: Alan O'Rawe, Mick Barnbrook and Peter Ryan. The latter made many running appearances for Ilford, but still fitted-in walking races to become a stalwart at such places as Enfield, Battersea Park and on Guernsey, where he enjoyed much popularity. Alan was an enthusiastic person who always brightened-up the scene and another who'd venture abroad in our colours. Mick turned up everywhere and also enjoyed popularity in Guernsey, where Ilford enjoyed successes in that island's annual Church-to-Church classic walk.

Over the years Portuguese international Francisco Reis made a big impact - in 2 spells many years' apart. Four other overseas short term members making briefer contributions when "*passing through*" were Frank Clark (Australia) in the 60s, Ross Pilkington (New Zealand) and Todd Scully (USA) in the 70s, and New Zealander Graeme Jones in the 90s.

Let our last words belong to Roger Mills. In a Club Dinner Presidential speech Gerry Pells - a true walking supporter - mentioned his choice as Ilford's top 5 athletes. From this famous 5 he selected Roger Mills as our top all-time great. Roger is the only member to have achieved all-4 majors: Olympics, European Championships, Commonwealth Games and IAAF World Championships. You could make it 5 if adding the Lugano Cup; for many years the World team event of race walking.

Issued by Ilford AC – this completes the report for the Ilford AC Centenary. Below is a selection of photos provided for the Centenary Exhibition display.

ILFORD'S WALKERS BEFORE THE ESSEX 20K/CHELMSFORD (1973)

**L-to-R:**

June Siburn, Noel Mooney, Brian Armstrong, Terry Riley, Tony Perkins, Dave Neagle, Steve Gower RIP, Tom Lee RIP, Dave Ainsworth and Geoff Hunwicks RIP.

ILFORD AC WALKING SQUAD CIRCA 1968



Back row: Colin Williams RIP, Johnny Kinch, Brian Armstrong, Keith Phillips, Steve King, Geoff Hunwicks RIP, Tony Perkins and Roger Mills

Front row: Lawrence Dordoy RIP, Frank Clark, John Stannard, John Perkins and Len Ruddock

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

Acknowledgement: Thanks to Brian Armstrong for captioning this photograph.

ILFORD AC IN "EDGAR'S" at CHIGWELL ROW after a CHRISTMAS 10K WALK in the late '70s



Back row (L-to-R): Geoff Hunwicks RIP, Stan Hart RIP, Steve Gower RIP, Frank Heaney RIP, Arthur Croft RIP and Dave Ainsworth.

Around the table (L-to-R): Roger LeMoine RIP, Brian Armstrong, Mike Croft, Roger Mills, Roy Sheppard, Bob Dobson, Colin Young RIP, Don Cox, Florrie and Gilbert Embleton RIP.

Seated in front of the table: Mike Scammell

INFORMATION

Some readers have enquired what "The Ray Hall Memorial Winter League" is? This was advised as the good cause to which you could donate in lieu of flowers at Ray's funeral service. So as you know where your money is going, we can inform it's a new project of 4 events for youngsters at 4 different tracks during the winter. It hasn't been finalised as yet but is in progress.

TCS LONDON MARATHON

Three Centurions race walkers took part in this year's event.

Iford's Octogenarian **Ed Shillabeer** (C590) appeared in support of SSAFA (Soldiers, Sailors, Airmen & Families Association). He clocked 7:36.09 (3:39.44 at halfway) and made BBC

television coverage. [Devon vet, 83, among oldest to take on London Marathon – BBC News](#). Iford AC colleague **Stuart Bennett** (C858) competed in support of Great Ormond Street Hospital. He was timed at 5:33.07 (2:32.07 at the half).

Both Iford members' "Just Giving" pages are still open for your contributions.

- [SSAFA, the Armed Forces charity: Edmund Shillabeer's Fund Raising Page](#)
- [Great Ormond Street Hospital Children's Charity \(GOSH\): Stuart Bennett](#)

Benfleet based **Kim Howard** (C1020) finished her 22nd London Marathon, and her 112th overall, in 5:47.46 (2:24.00 at half distance). A wonderful sequence of Kim's distance appearances is continuing!

Another race walker was Leicester's septuagenarian George Smolinski. Many Essex Walker readers will recall him as he appeared in the 2017 "Positive Steps" Bury St Edmunds 100 Miles, which several of our readers crossed the border into Suffolk to help and support. George got to 90 miles and tried again at Castletown in 2019, but without success. He'd not race walked since the latter event, but was still game for a challenge! George recorded 5:34.12 (2:46.04 at half way).

Also walking in step with Stuart Bennett was his daughter Louise (see *photo right*) with an identical time as she covered the distance also in support of Great Ormond Street Hospital.



Some known in race walking competed as runners, with pride of place going to Iford AC's double Olympian race walker and twice UK 20K Champion Neringa Aidietyte (now Masilioniene) who was 75th woman in an excellent 2:53.10 (1:21.40 at the half). Afterwards, Neringa (see *photo left*) stated she'd started too fast - well many do, don't they?

Also in the running was David Crane of Surrey Walking Club who sped around the course in a PB of 3:27.23 (1:42.00 at half distance).

Our congratulations to all, and their supporters, for their efforts in rainy conditions on a crowded course.

TCS MARATHON COMMENTS

- *Writes **Ed Shillabeer**.* "Heartfelt thanks to Iford AC and the thousands of voluntary and paid people who organised a brilliant event - apart from the bleddy rain. Good news about Neringa. I was chuffed to do 7:36.09 given all the circumstances."

- Writes **Andy O'Rawe**: "Great results from all the race walkers! I am hoping to run the Brighton Marathon next year with a couple of mates ... will all depend on my knees which are shot at the moment! Have started back running over the last 2 months and have reached up to 7 miles without any injuries ... so keeping my fingers crossed."

YOU'VE MISSED THE BUS

Essex Walker often appeals for race walkers to enter the London Marathon as it showcases our event before a million spectators who usually line the route, and the media - particularly television. However that usual million route-lining figure was down this year as many didn't fancy venturing out for a soaking. Few race walkers started, but we thank those who did as their efforts positively promoted our athletics discipline. We hope to see extra walkers in 2024 as perhaps more have applied, and then will be lucky in a ballot. If you haven't already applied - *hard luck* - as entries closed on Friday 28 April at 9 pm!

FUNERAL OF RAY HALL RIP

The funeral of Ray Hall will be held on Tuesday 9 May at 2pm at St Mary's Church, The Ridgeway, Fetcham, Leatherhead. Surrey. KT22 9AZ. Family flowers only. Donations to Ray Hall Memorial Winter League via L Hawkins and Sons - [Independent Family-run Funeral Directors | Hawkins and Sons Ltd. \(lhawkinsandsonsltd.co.uk\)](http://Independent Family-run Funeral Directors | Hawkins and Sons Ltd. (lhawkinsandsonsltd.co.uk)) - 01372 372435. The family would like to invite attendees to refreshments after the service in the church annexe.

[Obituaries & Donations | Hawkins and Sons Ltd. \(lhawkinsandsonsltd.co.uk\)](http://Obituaries & Donations | Hawkins and Sons Ltd. (lhawkinsandsonsltd.co.uk))

RAY HALL RIP

Ray was the first of 3 talented race walkers who beat 8 hours in a Stock Exchange London-to-Brighton Walk. This in 1962 when clocking 7:58.33 with recently departed Ken Mason 2nd in 8:08.54 and stalwart Dickie Green 3rd in 8:18.06. The other 2 sub-8 hours finishers are Dave Jarman 7:59.07 (1983) and event record holder Adrian James 7:55.27 (1985). When Ray was 4th in 1955 he was just ahead of future Olympic bronze medallist Stan Vickers. Ray was 2nd in 1956/59/63/65 and 66. In the 1962 European Championship 50K at Belgrade he came 13th in 4:55.47. In 1962 at Luton he was bronze medallist (4:42.25) in the National 50k, headed by Don Thompson and Belgrave Harriers clubmate Ray Middleton. Ray was in scoring 4s in a number of Bels National team victories at 10 Miles/20 Miles/50K, and closing 8s at 20 miles and 50k. After hanging up his racing shoes he put an enormous back into athletics in so many ways, particularly by passing on his "*know how*" to others. Condolence is expressed to his family on their sad loss.

Tributes:

- We have lost another good one, whose commitment to, and passion for, race walking were immeasurable. I benefited so much from his knowledge and experience as a coach and, of course, from his most sincere friendship. **Cath Duhig**
- I remember him being small in height, a very good style in race walking and a great Clubman for Belgrave Harriers. May he rest in peace with so many other Race Walking Champions of the past. Sincere condolences. **Bill Sutherland**
- I was very sorry indeed to hear of the passing of Ray Hall. He was a sub 8 hour "London to Brighton" race walker ... so understandably it hit me very hard ... we knew each other especially around the late seventies. A true classic race walker with a massive history. **Adrian James**
- So sorry to hear this sad news. I have some very happy memories of training with Ray and other Belgrave Harriers down at Battersea Park and he really taught me how to walk "properly". **Kathy Crilley**
- Ray Hall was a lovely man and a great company. He gave me a lot of good advice when I became a coach. I wouldn't be the coach I am today if it wasn't for Ray. **Chris Hobbs** (Hon President Race Walking Association)
- Very sad news indeed. He was very popular and helped many people who ventured onto the Brighton Road. He will be sadly missed by the many people who knew him. Condolences to the family. RIP. **David Neagle**

- Sorry to hear this sad news. Ray was GB team manager on a number of trips including the 1993 World Cup in Mexico. I think this may have coincided with his period as national walks coach. **Helping out at the drinks station**

L-R: Julie Drake, Graham Jackson, team physio, Geoff Ford, Ray Hall, Chris Maddocks. **Chris Maddocks**

PS: I know you sometimes dip into Facebook; my recent post saw me blowing on a birthday cake candle - I'm wearing the same t-shirt!



GOING DOWNHILL

Over the past year readers will have noticed great gaps in Fixtures Columns as published in this and other athletics publications. For instance, we'd no race walking fixtures from before the middle of December to beyond the middle of January - except two Boxing Day races in Southend and Brighton which "attracted" 2 and 4 competitors respectively. So many races have folded as numbers supporting them nosedived. You'll now always see long gaps with nothing for race walkers. The way to continue this trend is to stay away when races are put on for you all - the only way to try and arrest this worrying decline is to show up on our increasing few race days. Indeed - *"food for thought"* for all! **DA**

FEW ARE SENT TO COVENTRY

Race Walking Association 10 Kilometres Championship + YAG

Just 6 senior men finished plus one under 20. Just 15 finishers in the 10kms across 4 races. 11 walkers had cards on the board out of that field. A short report about a small field as stayaways win again. Report from "Our Man in the Midlands".

Note: The more popular Enfield League postponed their April fixture (scheduled for that same weekend) to free up the date so walkers could support their National Championship in Coventry.

NATIONAL 10K CHAMPIONSHIP + YAG

15th March at Morden

RWA NATIONAL 10 MILES CHAMPIONSHIP

		m	s
1	P. Nihill (Surrey W.C.)	71	14
2	J. Webb (Basildon A.C.)	73	05
3	R. Hughes (R. Sutton W.C.)	73	27
4	B. Eley (Bristol W.C.)	74	02
5	M. Tolley (Leicester W.C.)	74	20
6	G. Chaplin (Coventry G.)	74	22
7	R. Wallwork (Lancashire W.C.)	74	51
8	S. Lightman (Metro W.C.)	74	55
9	P. Embleton (Metro W.C.)	74	58
10	P. Thorn (Trowbridge A.C.)	75	20
11	W. Sutherland (Highgate H.)	75	24
12	A. Taylor (Lancashire W.C.)	75	26
13	R. Mills (Ilford A.C.)	75	28
14	R. Middleton (Belgrave H.)	75	32
15	A. Ross (Highgate H.)	75	55
16	L. Duquemin (Belgrave H.)	76	06
17	J. Maullin (Belgrave H.)	76	13
18	G. Goodair (Wakefield H.)	76	17
19	B. Adams (Leicester W.C.)	76	21
20	C. Fogg (Enfield H.)	76	28

It's difficult to respond without sounding nostalgic and behind the times but this turnout is embarrassing. The RWA 10k on the road is the equivalent of the old RWA 10 miles. For example (see image left), over 50 years ago, in 1969, 236 started, 47 beat 80 minutes and the standard at the front stands comparison with today. **Tony Taylor**

Adds Hon Ed: Those were the days when our leading walkers were so often seen in domestic competition - for instance in the top 20 at Morden in 1969 were 9 Olympians or future Olympians - and another (George Coleman) in 51st position. Also in the top 20 was the respected author of this contribution. On a result sheet were also European, Commonwealth Games and Lugano Cup representatives plus other Internationals. Tony mentions 236 starters - I add that there were 31 declared teams of 4, from whom 29 closed-in, the last being Essex Police; who also had the last individual finisher in much remembered Keith "Mountain" Mann in position 211. Tony mentions 47 beating 80 minutes - 142 beat 90

minutes, including a 20-year-old Hon Ed in his first National 10 miles racing for London Vidarians. A full result and report is in Race Walking Record Issue 319/April 1969 which is available to read on the [Race Walking Record Archives website](#). Such wonderful reading is recommended.



Dear Dave ...

CENTURIONS SOCIAL WALK

- To Steve Kemp, thanks for an excellent report. Many thanks to Brian Boggenpoel for the great photos. They capture the terrain, sea and weather very well, and the intrepid walkers. **Chris Flint**
- To Chris Flint thanks again for leading a great day. **Steve Kemp**
- Many thanks for organising and leading a walk on this spectacular coastline. **Sandra Brown**

AFTER A PLYMOUTH-TO-DAWLISH 42 MILES

We've great memories with Michael Sweeney, including Tetley's beers on the train home and cramp during the race. Brilliant. He loved that race. Will send photographs if we find them.

Olly and Angus Browne

A VIEW ABOUT OUR IRISH ARTICLE

There is a very big pool of young walkers now in Ireland competing in international events in Europe, far cry from my day.

Pat Furey

INTER-COUNTIES' CHAMPIONSHIP ANNOUNCEMENT

There are no plans to have a Walks event at either of the Inter Counties events Championships this year. Walks were withdrawn from the U15/U20 event long time ago due to lack of interest from the Counties.

Linda Whitehead

Adds Hon Ed: Last year Essex Walker urged walkers to support this event: others made phone calls/sent emails to implore support. "Stayaways" again have hastened a demise of domestic race walking as yet another walking race disappears. Our past editions quoted an oft repeated imperative, "Use it or Lose it" - words much used by campaigners against infamous Dr Beeching's severe railway cuts.

IN OFF THE POST

- Congratulations on another excellent edition of Essex Walker. I don't know how you do it as a largely one-man project. It's by far the most entertaining read amongst all the current Race Walking publications (and many of them are also excellent). I also note with interest the controversy re the proposed Olympic relay walks. I think we should give it a chance. Quite a few seem to assume a God-given right to Olympic race walks. Yet there are few race walkers worldwide in total, despite many countries having a handful of walkers. Other events such as cross country have many participants yet no Olympic representation since 1924. In fact, there are probably more cross country runners in England alone than race walkers in the world. There is a big risk that the governing bodies will tire of us and that continuing carping and negativity from the walking community re any new ideas will be the end of walking in major championships. If that happens there is probably very little prospect of a 70s style campaign for reinstatement achieving any traction this time around. I may be wrong but I fear we are going to put it to the test. **Steve Uttley**
- Thanks, Dave, for spreading the word on the combined County initiative. **Dave Annetts**
- Thanks for all our inclusions in the latest Essex Walker, yet another brilliant edition. Thanks to you and all. Really lovely email from Mick Barnbrook. **Bill and Kath Sutherland**

- Thanks, Dave, for ESSEX WALKER. Super. **Adrian James**

Adds Hon Ed: Thanks gratefully received - it's an effort by a trio, as **Christine Perkins** (layout) and **Tony Perkins** (distribution) are key players.

BARBARA DUNSFORD RIP

Another Belgravian has passed. I have received news that Barbara Dunsford has died. The Dunsford family were all members at one time. We lost John a year ago. I do not have any contact details although Wendy puts out information on Facebook. **Carl Lawton**

Adds Hon Ed: Barbara was the widow of Centurion 734 John Dunsford.



Photo (supplied by **Pat Furey**):

Barbara Dunsford officiating at a London Transport 7-mile road walking Championship in the early '70s. **Who is the race walker?**

- So much sad news. **June Cork**
- A big shame. **Paul Warburton**
- I saw the post on Facebook. Coming so soon after the news of Ray Hall too. Very sad for Belgrave Harriers too - they have lost two stalwarts of athletics and race walking. **Kathy Crilley**
- Such sad news! She was a great organiser and true Belgravian with her late husband John. I can picture them in my mind's eye at Battersea Park in the great days of the past. May she rest in peace with so many famous athletes and race walkers of yesteryear. Our sincere condolences. **Bill and Kath Sutherland**
- Sad about Barbara. I knew her very well. Last time we met was in Lyon. Great organiser, I remember her veterans coach to Rome especially, when Barbara and a young Helen came along. **Edmund Shillabeer**

ILFORD AC WALKING SECTION HISTORY - COMMENT

That's a superb history Dave. There are things in there that I didn't know, but it really brings home the achievement and substance of the Ilford AC walkers. I remember very clearly Brian Armstrong and Colin Fox joining the club, because, with Brian Moon, it meant we now had a Boys' cross country team. Interestingly, there was virtually no road racing for the boys age group and very little for the Youths age group in those days (61/62). Essentially, we did cross country and then switched to the track - how the athletics world has changed since then! However, I would say Ilford has had great walkers for all of the time I have been at the club and, I guess, the halcyon time was probably when Roger Mills and Brian were at their peak? Anyway, thanks for the fascinating article and keep up the good work Dave. **Tony Nixon**

Note: Tony is an Ilford AC Past President and former Essex County 1,500m champion.

ADRIAN JAMES - GBR INTERNATIONAL WALKER



ADRIAN JAMES - MAJOR FEATURE ARTICLE

It was great to see Adrian James being recognised with the February 2023 Enfield Race Walking League named in his honour. I have since been working with Adrian to put his career down on paper. I finally have a finished product. Feel free to spread the news. Adrian joins the long list of English walkers included in my archives at [Tim's Archives](#). **Tim Erickson**

Adds Hon Ed: We make available a direct link to a detailed article about Adrian James, which among many other things covered the 1980 Olympic selection issue. Also, a direct link

unearths a wide selection of quality feature articles about our World greats, among them many of our GB leading lights. Wonderful reading from a talented author.

CONTINUING THE DEBATE

I see the IOC/IAAF have finally published their proposal for the Olympics and it's a mixed marathon walk (1 male, 1 female). There is predictable outrage on Facebook and calls for a boycott. I must say I didn't expect this. A mixed 35kms team race would have been something I could live with but this is bizarre. It resembles a PR stunt more than a legitimate event. I doubt however we can do much about it. This isn't 1975 and the world has changed. The Olympics now has BMX and skateboarding because the IOC thinks it's 'down with the kids'.

That said, I think it's a missed opportunity. The marathon walk does have some legitimate history (eg New York). A marathon distance mixed event, where everyone walked the full distance (3 men 3 women per nation) would have some resonance with the public and would be a viable alternative to 50kms. Whereas even a 3.30 50kms would mean nothing to the general public I feel a marathon walked in 2.55 would mean something because literally millions of people worldwide have actually completed a marathon themselves now and millions more know someone who has and so marathon times are not meaningless. Whereas I feel a campaign to completely reverse this and reinstate 20 and 50kms (plus a women's 50kms) is almost certainly doomed to fail (a 99% certainty in my view) a campaign to amend this from a relay to a mixed event where all complete the distance might get somewhere.

Steve Uttley

Adds Hon Ed: While sad Olympic 50K racing has ended, I accept that many don't know what 50K is, but can relate to a marathon distance. It's the same with field events which went all-metric many decades' ago, but still have many who like yards/feet conversions as it means something to them.

MAXIMUM NOTICE/AUGUST BANK HOLIDAY MONDAY



Just to say the Southend Mile will be going ahead as usual at this year's Open meeting.

Keith Palmer (City of Southend AC)

KEN MASON RIP - ADDITIONAL TRIBUTE

I am very sorry to learn of the passing of Ken Mason. Ken's time of 8 Hours 8 minutes for the London to Brighton (Stock Exchange) was very special - a super fast time.

Adrian James

REGULAR CORRESPONDENT'S MARATHON OVERVIEW

Great results all round! Very well done to all! I only wish many years ago Race Walking had accepted a slot as part of the Great London Marathon, as I am sure our great Sport would be much more recognised and appreciated than it presently is behind the closed doors of the RWA and SRWA.

Bill Sutherland

2023 ESSEX AA TRACK & FIELD OUTDOOR CHAMPIONSHIPS 13/14 MAY

We have been advised that the track refurbishment that is taking place at Chelmsford will not be completed in time for the Outdoor championships in May. Our sincere thanks go to Thurrock Harriers AC who have very kindly agreed to host the event at their stadium at Blackshots, Springfield Road, Grays. Parking - as well as the stadium, the adjacent Rugby club will be available. We would also like to take the opportunity of thanking both Woodford Green AC with Essex Ladies and City of Southend AC who had offered to support, if needed. Please can you kindly advise your athletes of the change of venue.

Malcolm Baily, Essex County AA Secretary

Adds Hon Ed: No walks - but published in case readers which to attend our Championship meeting.

"FEW SENT TO COVENTRY" - NATIONAL 10K CHAMPIONSHIPS + YAG

So sad to hear, but the reality of so-called Race Walking in the UK is plain to see! On Sunday Kath and I had a really great day visiting friends in Cuffley and retracing all the courses at Enfield from Queen Elizabeth's Playing Fields to Crews Hill via Whitewebbs Lane and beyond Botany Bay over 7 miles, 10 miles and 20 Kms and 20 miles. Some really great Opens, Middlesex County Championships and in 1970 the 20 Kms Trial for the World Cup on a really hot day, where victor the Great Paul Nihill walked superbly ending up in an ambulance with exhaustion. The hills were enormous and all races were packed with stars and were fiercely contested. I must say looking at the courses now used they are so uninteresting, whereas those selected in those great days were so challenging from start to finish. Today the roads are so crowded and polluted that it would be a tremendous challenge to finish and impossible to promote. Such great days we were ALL privileged to be part of when the Race Walking Association was so strong in depth and knowledge. They will ALWAYS remain in our memories with great appreciation to ALL.

Bill and Kath Sutherland

GUERNSEY CHURCH-TO-CHURCH ANNOUNCEMENT

Unfortunately there will be no Church walk in 2023. As you have probably seen from our results we are down in numbers of walkers and only have few club members. We are struggling but keep going with short races. Of our walkers only a few can compete over the longer distance. We just don't have the bodies to control the walk over such a big loop and are very wary of the increase in traffic on the roads, so we are thinking of safety first.

Rob Elliott

Adds Hon Ed This news from a 7-times' winner isn't surprising but - hey - what great memories Essex Walker's readers will have, as many have done well in the 19.4 miles classic race which passes every Parish Church on a delightful holiday island. The event enjoyed a much-extended heyday and reading this event's website ignites wonderful memories. It's wise to consider road traffic - as the late John Hedgethorpe stated when ending our highly popular Chelmsford-to-Southend 20 Miles (sparking many objections), "*It's better to stop a race the year before the accident than the year afterwards*". John was right - he always was! We thank Sarnia Walking Club for great memories and giving so many the opportunity to participate in a true classic.

- "I'm gutted of course but it's amazing that they have still got a few doing it." **Ed Shillabeer** (Ed's a 4-times winner: 1988/89 and 2004/5)
- "Sorry to hear this. The Church-to-Church race has a lot of history. I really enjoyed being a small part of it. Thanks for the memories." **Chris Maddocks** (1998 2:25.35 course record win with Ed Shillabeer 2nd)

MEETING COUNCILLOR ANNIE BREWSTER

Just a note to say thanks for the initial tip-off to contact Annie Brewster. I found that Annie is on the Board of HSP (The Herts Sports Partnership) and I met yesterday with her and John O'Callaghan who leads that organisation to talk about how Race Walking might be promoted in the county. All very useful and I think a definite case of needing to know the right people to have any chance of making progress. HSP are central to sports development in the county across all points where we might look to encourage participation - traditional athletics clubs of course but there are diverse ways in which in time I would hope to explore.

Dave Annetts

Adds Hon Ed: Annie is Chair of Hertfordshire County Council and a former World Veterans/Masters individual age group medallist, who's mentioned in our Race Walking Association's Centenary Handbook "*A Hundred Years' Afoot*". The good lady has offered to attend any major Hertfordshire walking races to present awards/prizes if wanted. Her athletics contribution was featured in a recent Essex Walker edition.

2024 ESSEX COUNTY AA 3,000 METRES CHAMPIONSHIP STATEMENT

I raised the idea of a separate combined county walks champs (Middx, Herts, Hants and Essex - and Kent?) at our Executive Committee meeting. This obtained unanimous support to endeavour to combine in 2024.

Andy Catton, Chairman Essex AA

DAVE EVANS RIP

You will also be aware, I'd imagine, of an Essex stalwart (non-walking) of yesteryear, Dave Evans, formerly of Hadleigh Olympiads, who used to be the Essex Announcer long before I picked up the mic. He was 83, had dementia and was in hospice care. Funeral in May (10th I think).

June Cork

Adds Hon Ed: Readers who've appeared in Essex Track Championships (3,000 and 10,000 metres) over the years will have had their efforts called by Dave. He was also a Mr Starter and did so much else for our County's athletics. Condolence to his family.

ESSEX WALKER

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