

Essex Walker

Editor: Dave Ainsworth

ROLL-UP- ROLL-UP

The South of England Athletic Association annual Track & Field Championships are to be held on Sunday 13 August at Lee Valley Track. These 'A' races are over 3,000 metres (U15/U17 for £16) and 5,000 metres (U20 & Senior for £20). Entries close Tuesday 1 August (no late entries). This showcases competitive race walking at a well-supported Track & Field meeting. In 2022, two days before closing, just 2 walkers had entered. This ignited a major phone/email effort to obtain 10 entrants/9 starters. We've lost walking races owing to low entries, so need numbers to keep us in SEAA Championship meetings. Don't leave it for others to enter - enter yourself! Go to: seaa.org.uk - [Online Entry](#)

ALL THE FIVES (all times respectively)

Looking at a **1969** Race Walking Record (then a small booklet) standing out is a top-class Highgate Harriers One Hour 'A' Section at Cophall Stadium where 5 covered 8 miles (12,875m). Those worthies were Paul Nihill, Bill Sutherland, Phil Embleton, Roger Mills and Shaun Lightman, covering 13,671, 13,393, 13,291, 13,192 and 13,050. **Wow!** That year's Southern Counties 10,000 metres at Battersea Park top 5 were Paul Nihill, Shaun Lightman, Roger Mills, Colin Young and Phil Thorn who clocked 44.24, 46.31, 46.49, 46.54 and 47.12. The Kent 10 Miles (Bexley) top 5 were: Peter Fullager, Dave Gulliver, Doug Hopkins, M Lees and S Percy clocking 80.47, 84.11, 86.02, 86.16 & 87.28. At a Trowbridge AC Open 6 Miles in Calne, 5 leading positions were occupied by Paul Nihill, Roy Lodge, Roger Mills, Bill Sutherland and Brian Eley; timed at a course record 42.09, 43.12, 43.16, 43.40 and 44.13 from 124 starters - those were the days. Our RWA Southern 10,000 metres Championship (Victoria Park) saw 5 leading names recorded as Phil Embleton, Steve Holliday, D Saunders, Richard Emsley and Kevin Emsley with a timekeeper calling 47.19, 51.11, 51.21, 52.55 and 54.41. An AAA 3,000 metres at the famous White City Stadium saw a Roger Mills win followed by Peter Marlow, Phil Embleton, Ken Easlea and Brian Armstrong recording 12.57, 12.58, 13.11 and 13.42 (both 4th and 5th). Famous names filled top places in Battersea Park for a Metropolitan WC Open 20K: Peter Fullager, Bob Hughes, Bill Sutherland, John Webb and Shaun Lightman: 93.37, 94.27, 94.30, 96.24 and 96.54. A fast 5 Miles Essex League race at Ilford saw another Roger Mills victory followed by Olly Caviglioli, John Webb, Alec Banyard and Dave Rosser in 36.26, 37.44, 37.44, 38.28 and 38.31. A slower top 5 over 10 Miles at Cambridge was won by local resident Bob Barnes, followed by Dave Ainsworth, Barry Ingarfield, Barry Wallman and J Guy recorded at 88.42, 89.02, 89.14, 98.44 and 99.54. It was an interesting race which showed walkers' initiative as, being County Championship day at many other locations, no officials were available. These were honest days and walkers were trusted to walk properly. Bob Barnes shouted "Go" and set a stopwatch ticking, which with clipboard and pencil he then hid in a hedge. We agreed whoever was first would take retrieve the clipboard/pencil and use the stopwatch to record the others. As it was a straight "out-and-back" we only needed one person to stand at our turning point - who was a friend of Bob's.

Also in 1969 we read that stalwart Harry Callow was voted Race Walking Association President and 1948 Olympic 50K bronze medallist Lloyd Johnson took over as National Coaching Secretary replacing Len Mitchell who was in Croydon's Mayday Hospital with serious injuries after a car accident. Len was in for some time and was never the same again as walked with considerable difficulty until the end of his days.

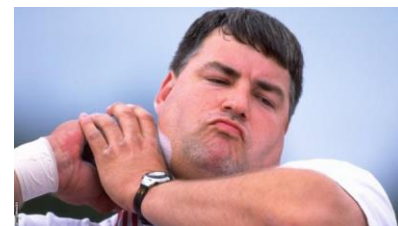
In a 1970 edition our Essex 10 Miles at Chigwell Row saw a top order as Roger Mills, Phil Embleton, John Webb, Bob Dobson and Alec Banyard recording 71.42, 72.38, 74.10, 74.46 and 75.21. At RAF Colerne near Bath in intense cold with a gale force wind, 9-of-27 starters failed to finish; the leading RAF

20K Championship 5 were Roy Hart, John Kirk, Graham Abley, Tony Travers and an aptly named Larry Miles with stopwatch times of 102.07, 104.58, 106.00, 106.09 and 115.47.

We thank enthusiastic Martin Oliver for sourcing these times from the RW Record.

SHAUN PICKERING RIP

Not a race walker but one who assisted race walkers in his time, after taking over running the "Ron Pickering Memorial Fund" after his Olympian mother Jean died. Shaun's father was Olympian Ron Pickering, a legendary coach and athletics commentator who was the "silvery tongued maestro of the small screen". In his time Olympian Shaun won Welsh Senior titles : 9 hammer, 5 shot and 5 discus. Shaun was aged 61, one year older than when also so sadly Ron had died early. We express condolence.



[Shaun Pickering: Welsh Olympian dies aged 61 - BBC Sport](#)

WALK FAST, LIVE LONG

Scientists report that fast walking can slow ageing, and "picking up the pace" could make people feel 16 years younger by midlife - according to a study. Data was collected from over 405,000 Brits wearing activity tracking devices which revealed that those who strolled more quickly had more of the DNA which reduces ageing. Researchers from the University of Leicester previously showed that just 10 minutes of daily brisk walking is associated with longer life. www.sciencedaily.com/releases/2022/04/220420133538.htm

MYSTERY RACE WALKER IDENTIFIED

Reference a picture in our previous edition - the guy race walking past the late Barbara Dunsford in a London Transport Sports event was Bob Blackmore of Holloway Bus Garage, who was racing to make up the numbers.

OTHER MARATHON PARTICIPATION

On the same day as London's TCS Marathon, Lancashire Walking Club's **Roy Gunnett** race walked at a wonderfully consistent pace to complete a Blackpool Festival of Running Marathon in 6:13.18 on a course based along the town's famous sun-basked promenade. Roy was 4th in the Over-70 category. Also in April **Fiona Bishop** sped around the Schneider Paris Marathon course in an impressive chip-timed 4:20.29.

MPAA LIFE MEMBERS' LUNCHEON – Friday 26 May 2023

The Spring lunch of the Metropolitan Police Athletic Association Honorary Life Members was held at the Union Jack Club on Friday 26 May, and 55 of its members and guests enjoyed an excellent meal during which many stories of past deeds and exploits were recounted. Chaired by Sir Brian Hayes, former Met Police deputy commissioner, it's a regular twice yearly chance to have an update and remember some of the greats who became Life Members since 1955 when the Met began to recognise its talented athletes in all sporting disciplines. Race walkers who attended were Olympian Paul Blagg, international Peter Hodgkinson, Commonwealth Games bronze medallist Bill Sutherland BEM and his wife Kathy, and Chris Flint. Some other eminent walkers were unable to attend. We also remembered Charlie Fogg BEM and Doug Fotheringham, and members from the far past – Bill Stevenson, Reg Youldon and Wally Batson OBE. A most enjoyable function.

*Report by **Chris Flint***

FIXTURES

It is recommended that dates/start times are confirmed directly with organisers for accuracy.

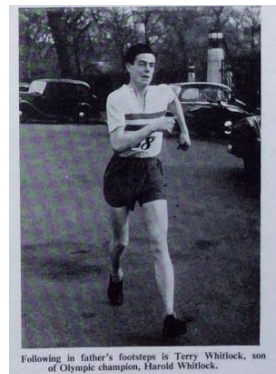
*10 min+
walk to start

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*
	11	Ilford AC Centenary Picnic	Chigwell Row	11.30am
	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
	28	SWC/Blackheath Harriers Open 4 Miles	Norman Park	7.00pm
JULY	5	Eastern Masters (North) 2,000m	Kings Lynn	TBA
		Eastern Masters (Central) 2,000m	Bedford	TBA
		Eastern Masters (South) 2,000m	Bury St Edmunds	TBA
	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*
	5	Enfield League 3/5/10K	Donkey Lane	11.00am
	13	SEAA Outdoor Championships 5,000 metres	Lee Valley	TBA
	19	Middlesbrough 100 Miles/RWA Championship + Open 50K	Middlesbrough	12 noon
	28	Southend City AC Open 1 Mile	Garon Park Track	10.30am
SEP	2-3	British Masters Championships	Derby	TBA
	23	Enfield League One Hour	TBA	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 .			

TERENCE WHITLOCK RIP

Sadly, a death is reported of **Terry Whitlock** once of Metropolitan Walking Club and son of late Olympian Harold. Terry came to our 2012 London Olympic 50K Walk with the 1936 Berlin Olympics gold medal Harold Whitlock MBE 1936 won in the 50 Kilometres Walk. Terry's daughter, Norwich-based Hayley Gerrard, was also at the London Olympic 50K Walk. Terry was interviewed and held up Harold's gold medal so it could be seen on large screens alongside the course while the race was in progress.



Following in father's footsteps is Terry Whitlock, son of Olympic champion, Harold Whitlock.

"GET WELL SOON"

This well-used message can be used for 2 who are well known on our Essex Walking scene. Firstly, now retired Essex Radio sports show presenter **Roger Buxton** suffered a bad fall which resulted in him going into Southend General Hospital. Roger's now out. Roger was one of the best media friends race walking ever had, both on the Southend Standard and on local radio. He was a diner at our 2012 Olympians' Tribute Dinner in the Tower Hotel, and when he commenced a "live" Friday night sports show featuring a weekly guest, the first chosen was Roger Mills. Secondly, alas Romford-born octogenarian Centurion and Police Representative walker **Mick Barnbrook** (Cambridge Harriers/Ilford AC/Sarnia WC) was admitted to Margate's Queen Elizabeth The Queen Mother Hospital following a heart attack. We wish both genial and popular patients the best as they make their recoveries. **Dr Kitty Hung** writes: "Please send our best regards to Mick and we hope he will get well soon. From all of us at the Metropolitan Police Walking Club".

TRIPLE SUCCESS

At the recent Lee Valley Veterans/Masters Track & Field League meeting, Ilford's **Neringa Masilioniene** thrice broke the tape - at 400 metres, 1,500 metres and, of course, the 2,000 metres walk. **Wow!** Well done.

RACE WALKER "ON SONG"

Former Race Walking Association Press & Publicity Officer, Birchfield Harrier **John Constandinou** has been employed at many major occasions over the years. He's added another as part of a preparation team for the Eurovision Song Contest in Liverpool.

"THE SPORT OF POLITICS"

That's what the late John Hedgethorne called the goings-on at higher levels in athletics. National press accounts report UK Athletics are to vacate their Alexander Stadium HQ, so saving over £100,000 a year rent. It's been their home since 2011. Chief Executive Jack Buckner is looking at ways of avoiding another round of redundancies, meaning staff are to work from home. The Times reported their financial concerns need easing or it'll leave the Governing body facing bankruptcy. They've lost vital broadcasting and sponsorship revenue. The Times further reported that, recently, coaches of some of our leading athletes hadn't been paid on time and some were owed money from the end of last year. It's speculated they may acquire a smaller office tenancy in future. Would race walking survive if they vanished completely? - of course it would - as we'd hardly notice they'd gone! Athletics was in good health before they arrived on the scene; and to put on a Saturday race at Donkey Lane doesn't need many well remunerated layers of administration.

IDEAS TO SAVE RACE WALKING ARE COMING IN by Hon Ed

Alas we are "*where we are*" today. We haven't got these up-and-coming Officials in their 40-50s. In fact we've hardly any race walkers in this age group. The Leicester Mercury had a separate Novices' 20 Miles Walk which unearthed many great Midlands walkers, as did the Sheffield Star Novices Walk in Sheffield - in April "Essex Walker" I looked at the Reverend Roy Lodge's great year (1967) in which he won National 20 Miles and an "Open" Mercury. In that article I pointed out that also in 1967 beginner Jake Warhurst won the Sheffield Star and progressed to Olympian status in 1972. All Open 7's (bar Enfield) and the wonderful Highgate 1 Hour (4 Sections) are gone (probably forever). Sadly, if a sudden stampede of persons wanted to become race walkers - we couldn't cope with them. The vast majority of our country doesn't have any Clubs with Walking Sections - as our recent survey confirmed.

All ideas to save race walking are published - in hope some might grasp the challenge and try to reverse our fortunes.

Sadly, my view is that race walking has passed its "*tipping point*" and is going the same way as the *hula-hoop and yo-yo*. We ought to be looking at ways to wind it up **with dignity** rather than this terrible situation of struggling on as it dies gradually by a thousand cuts; as more participants and officials age, become ill or bow out completely - with very few replacements arriving. We've a great history and should be proud of it. Just read our excellent RWA Centenary Book and the wonderful 1962 book "The Sport of Race Walking". We've so much to be proud of - but not much longer to go. In a much-appreciated article (May edition) Tony Taylor reminded us of 236 starters in our 1969 National 10 Miles at Morden - never again. Tony included a list of that day's top 20, with great names on it. If staging a National 10 Miles this year we wouldn't have a top 20; as we wouldn't even muster 20 starters! If applying a "*Business Plan*" to race walking nowadays, you wouldn't invest a penny in it. But suggestions as to what those controlling race walking should be doing provides "*food for thought*". We hope these ideas will be taken up.

In the short term we appeal to readers to try and keep things going for as long as we can - the only way to do this is by giving your support to what races are put on **for you** and giving support to ideas originating from those new to holding offices - such as enthusiastic **Dave Annetts**. A big obstacle nowadays are "*stayaways*" as this causes organisers to drop walking races - usually for good. The last few years have seen a loss of fixtures gathering pace. The future? - we're reminded of that 1838 hymn by Scottish schoolmaster Andrew Young - with a first line of "**There is a happy land**". Sing on and the 2nd line is "**Far, far away**". **DA**

ON TRACK

In the colours of Cambridge & Coleridge AC, Pamela Abbott won a mile walk at Milton Keynes (Stantonbury Campus track) in May's Eastern Masters Track and Field League evening meeting - it was a hard-earned victory. Pam also scored points in the hammer, triple jump, 100 metres and shot putt. Pam, who regularly attends parkruns at East Anglian locations, used to be an Enfield league race walking regular and made many successful consecutive appearances in Eastern Counties Indoor Miles (held in conjunction with our Essex 1 Mile) at Lee Valley indoor arena. Many readers will recall Stantonbury Campus as a venue for our 1977 Race Walking Association 50 Kilometres' Walk (winner Brian Adams/4:25.28) and the "Lugano Cup" later that year, which drew a large crowd of race walking enthusiasts to see a World class field. In 2008 this track hosted the Milton Keynes AC 100 miles which saw 29 entrants/25 starters/17 finishers among them 5 new Centurions. One of those commendably overcoming spells of bad weather was 1980 Olympian Ian Richards in 19:37.11 which as the first home-based walker, saw him become our RWA Long Distance Champion - this after nearly 30 years away from race walking. In this race Martin Fisher completed a 20th UK 100 miles race, so having his name engraved on the "*Fred Baker Pate*". Chris Flint completed his 18th 100 miles and had enough left in him to organise a presentation and act as its m/c. Another Centurion qualifier was genial Sean Pender who showed "*excellent pace judgment*" to finish in 23:56.11. *Well done Pamela, a participant in many events!*



Pamela at the Great Notley parkrun

ANDY CATTON's 70th

We congratulate our hard working and long serving Essex County **Chairman** Andy on his 70th birthday, to be celebrated on **18 June**. Hornchurch-based Andy's a past Essex County AA President and now possesses our County's gavel. At Ilford AC he's an esteemed Life member, Past President and now a long serving Honorary General Secretary. He's a talented athlete of note, having made International representative appearances on tracks, cross-county surfaces and roads. He tops Ilford AC's all-time ranking lists at 3,000m, 5,000m, 10,000m, 10 Miles, Half-Marathon and Marathon with superb times of 8:03.0 (1978), 13:45.3 (1980) and 28:57.4 (1980), 47.38 (1978), 65.00 (1986) and 2:19.54 (1985). Second in these 3 track rankings is Ilford's 2nd Olympian, now octogenarian Fergus Murray (1964 Tokyo Games 10,000m). By the way, not a lot of people know this, but Andy could run a rapid 3,000m steeplechase (9.02). Andy's made a big impact on our veterans'/masters' scene, which is remarkable as he sustained a career-ending injury some years ago, which caused him to announce a retirement from competitive athletics. With great determination he completed lengthy treatment which enabled a return to start lines and success, so earning more medals, prizes and awards. He's a most popular chap and we all hope he enjoys his 70th birthday revelling! **A happy birthday to the one-and-only Andy Catton.**

HAPPY BIRTHDAY TO NERINGA

Over many years Essex Walker has reported readers' "*milestone*" birthdays - always seeking their permission first. On **5 June** we'll wish 40th Birthday greetings to **Neringa Masilioniene**, who joined Ilford AC as Neringa Aidietyte in 2011. Soon after joining came 4 National titles: 10 miles in 2011 (76.19) and 2013 (79.43) and 20 Kilometres in 2011 (94.11) and 2012 (98.21). In London's 2012 Olympics and Rio's 2016 Games Neringa competed in the 20 Kilometres Walk. In 2012 she became Ilford AC's 5th Olympian after Phyllis Perkins (1960/800m), Fergus Murray (1964/10,000m), Wilbert Greaves (1980/110m hurdles) and Roger Mills (1980/20k Walk). In 2016 Neringa became Ilford's only double Olympian. While with Ilford she's appeared in 3 IAAF World Championships (2011/2013/2015) as well as European Championships and European Cup of Race Walking meetings. Neringa has twice won the Enfield Open 7 Miles and was 2nd in that memorable 90th Enfield 7 Reunion in 2016. Recently Neringa concentrated on competitive running and enjoyed spectacular victories in the highly popular Elvis Series of mid-week summer races (held of 5K and 5 Miles distances) - indeed Neringa is unbeaten

in several events. Also came a win in Ilford's well supported Open 10 Miles cross country around testing Hainault Forest and a brilliant 2:53.10 in April TCS London Marathon run. **We all wish Neringa a happy birthday!**

SAD NEWS

We're sorry to learn that the mother of former Centurions Honorary Secretary, now Archivist and Website Manager Sue Clements has passed-on at the grand age of 99. She protected her independence as long as she could and was well loved and will be greatly missed.

70th 'MILESTONE' BIRTHDAY

"It's great being old" to quote **Hans Rennie**, who is to celebrate his **70th** birthday on **Thursday 29 June**. Hans is one of a number of Metropolitan Police Officers who've race walked with distinction for Cambridge Harriers over the years. He wore Metropolitan Police Walking Club colours on numerous occasions and earned Representative honours when appearing for the British Police in Ryan Cup matches against the Civil Service and Combined Services (really just the Royal Air Force). Hans became Centurion No 915 in 1993 when competing around the Battersea Park Queen's Carriageway in a 200K/24 Hours race jointly promoted by Surrey Walking Club & Metropolitan Police Walking Club which saw 105 starters/58 finishers of whom 53 reached 100 miles - 25 for a first time - from those 25, 10 ventured on to cover more distance. At the 100 miles marker Hans was timed at 22:23.19. It was the 2nd largest number of UK 100 miles/24 hours race starters (largest was 107 at Ewhurst/1979). It was the first time a UK 24 hours race had been held on a road (previous ones were on tracks). Competitors were permitted to leave this race at 100 miles with a recorded finish and Centurions' membership. Centre of activity was at the bandstand where this race ended - but a 100 miles' opt-out point was a mile down the lap in a remote part of this park beside a public toilet, so the "*big moment*" achievement of completing 100 miles and joining The Centurions proved a "*low key*" affair. The late Doug Fotheringham, Centurion 373, was one of the recorders sent to that remote 100 miles' marker. Up front the top 3 didn't need to spend 24 hours on their feet as they were the only ones completing a 200 kilometres distance before timekeepers' watches stopped. 200k winner was Russian Alexsey Radionov in 22:04.39 who was 50 minutes ahead of the 2nd placer - becoming the 2nd Russia Centurion member after C24 G Lind, who'd qualified in a 1908 White City 24 hours walk. Alexey's 17:32.30 time at 100 miles got him 4th place on an all-time fastest men's Centurions qualifying list. He's twice since entered UK distance races, but scratched both times. Also making the all-time fastest qualifiers table - in 12th spot - was Leicester's Chris Berwick with a highly commendable 17:57.07. Others joining The Centurions that day included Lillian Millen as 20:13.15 secured her 2nd spot on an all-time women's fastest qualifying list, Parminder Bhatti of Midlands Post Office fame, Southend's Kevin Perry who went on to become a key player on our ultra-distance walking scene, and now resides in France, Michael Lewis of a now defunct Trowbridge & District AC and Surrey's Christine Gray who recently celebrated her 70th birthday with an Isle of Wight social walk led by respected Centurion 898 Jill Green. To raise spirits over the final few hours an excellent Kent Police band played. Afterwards, Steve Wynn placed the "Bill King Memorial Trophy" on the prize table, in memory of a stalwart Post Office distance walker of note - it was presented to the winning home team in a GB v Netherlands Centurions side match. Publications described the promotion as one of the best British ultra distance races ever seen and before dust had settled on the tarmac, calls were made for it to be repeated. Hans had qualified on a truly wonderful occasion.

This year sees his 46th Nijmegen March; last year he completed his 25th RAF 2-Day marches. As a pastime he's Somerset Army Cadet Force's Road Marching Trainer. His old employer - the Met - could do with his return; judging by drill standards seen on regional television when new qualified Constables participate in "Passing Out" parades. Hans and Derry Rennie are both Metropolitan Police retirees who now reside in Somerset. Hans supported many local opens, area events, Club races and endless Met Police fixtures - and at Blackheath was 8th on an all-time Blackheath 9K Yacht handicap appearance list with 92 completions, just behind fellow Police retiree Stuart Bennett (London Vidarians version) whose campaign ended with 7th place/94 appearances. Hans finished his Blackheath sequence on relocation to Somerset while Stuart suffered a moped accident which left him with one foot shorter than his other.

But for these events both Hans and Stuart would have easily reached 100. The leading 6, who all passed 100 races and received magnificent wall clocks, are all Centurions.

Hans is efficient at administrative tasks as seen by diligent duty as Honorary Treasurer to Organisations/Clubs. Special must be mentioned to service in that role for The Centurions. When Hans volunteered to take over, he probably didn't know quite what he was letting himself in for. He soon found out as the previous office holder had suddenly quit after he "*got the hump*" over something or other - we never quite worked out why? Money was left behind but he stormed off with all paperwork, files, ledgers, correspondence, bank statements and details etc, which were never returned, leaving Hans with nothing to work with. To create an annual report and balance sheet plus full admin from absolutely nothing, was a truly professional and indeed wonderful achievement, for which much praise rightly went to Hans.

Hans played a big part in race walking during a most successful era - and we all wish Hans a memorable 70th birthday celebration.



Dear Dave ...

NEWS FROM KEVIN MARSHALL

I have not prepared at all for a 100 mile walk this year! My focus is on Land's End to John O'Groats, which I will be cycling starting on 9 July. I last cycled LEJOG in 1980, so 43 years later I will hopefully be completing the journey again, albeit at a slightly more leisurely pace. In 1980 I completed it in just over 5 days, this time around I am planning a 9 day schedule!. I think last year's experience at Middlesborough proved to me that, whilst I still love endurance, I have lost the appetite for trudging around in circles! There is a whole lot of adventures to be had before it's too late!

Kevin Marshall

MORE MARATHON INPUT

- Reference Kim Howard's 112th Marathons : Wow I didn't realise Kim had done so many! My tally is probably around 40 in all including ones walked in Budapest, Italy, Spain, Rotarue, Kharkiv, "Big Sur" up to Carmel in California, Brugge, Plymouth x ca 10, London x ca 25. No way will I do a London Marathon again. Brilliantly organised this year I must admit. Now I look forward to getting fit again so as I can race!! *Edmund Shillabeer*
- We did not attend or support this year's London Marathon as they have turned it into a Charity Circus, hence British distance running at the top bears no relationship to past years. *Bill & Kath Sutherland*

WRITES MARGARET WHITLOCK

Thank you for your email and condolences. I was at the 2012 50 kilometres walk with Terry, his daughter and her family - she had bought the tickets for Terry's 81st birthday (8 August). When Terry was interviewed, we were some way from the nearest big screen; the family all rushed off and I was left with all the bags etc so could not follow them and I could only see Terry's face on screen in the distance!

Although Terry had given up race walking a long time ago, he never lost interest in the sport so it was a wonderful day for him and brought back many memories. Unfortunately, I never met Terry's father as he died the year before I met Terry. A few years ago, we went to Berlin and to the Olympic stadium, and found Harold's name on the wall listing the winners in 1936.

The next year we went to the Olympic Park to the Sainsbury's games as England Athletics had set up a pop-up tent with Olympic memorabilia, and Terry had loaned them everything he had relating to his

father's win. Again the family were able to go and very much enjoyed seeing the exhibit, which created quite a lot of interest.

Margaret Whitlock (widow of Terry)

OFFICIALS

Shortage of officials is a general problem. It's also led to the demise of the Essex League and the Pednor race and to the fact that several counties who were actually willing to put on championship walks this year couldn't do so because of the lack of judges. Until this year when the money tap appears to have begun to run dry there has been an increasingly big gap between an growing number of extremely well remunerated bureaucrats working full-time at the top of the sport on God knows what and a decreasing number of unpaid volunteers at the grassroots. One by one they have begun to walk away and there is no one to replace them.

Steve Uttley

MIDDLESBROUGH 100 MILES

It is great information. I certainly would love to be a Centurion one day. I hope to attend an event nearer to me as soon as possible. I will tell as many people as possible about it. Sorry I haven't been to anything for a long time; it's not because I don't want to. I hope racewalking is treating you well, and life is good.

Tessa Killingbeck

WHAT NEEDS DOING TO TURN THINGS AROUND

Perhaps it would be a good idea to put Dave Annetts, Annie Brewster and Ilford's live-wire Stuart Bennett in touch with Peter Cassidy and the 300 interested folk in Race Walking to start up some new clubs in London with new events too. Mark Easton, Chris Flint and the SRWA could become jointly involved too. How about a new event in Herts versus Surrey, Essex, Kent and Middlesex to boot, over a variety of distances throughout the year? Over to them! Thanks for another great Essex Walker and grateful for my inclusions. I just wish more Ex-Police Walkers and concerned others would write in and give their opinions on the current state of our great sport and what can be done to revive it from its long-term decline in the UK!

Bill Sutherland

WRITES "Character" DAVE SHARPE

I left the sport of walking in disgrace. That was 11-and-half years' ago. I won't be the comeback man again as I broke two bones in my left foot 2 years ago when ran over by a jam jar car. I also had infected bowels and am now on an NHS waiting list for an operation on my prostate. I did bump into Tom Bosworth in a supermarket a couple of years ago. I did do good things in this sport: coaching, officiating and organising events but you can do a million things right and only one wrong, for which you are remembered for. I found some who became top walkers and I found young boys who made GB status. Well, you can publish this love letter or dump it into "*Dusty Bin*". All my athletics stuff went into that. The first walker I ever saw training along Southend seafront in the late '60s was Ray Pearce. "Publish and be Damned" said Arthur Wellesley, the Duke of Wellington.

"A Nobody" (**Dave Sharpe**) Centurion C57

Adds Hon Ed: Last heard of in Leeds, a postmark on "Dagenham" Dave's letter was "*North & West Yorkshire*" so he's still there. In a chosen signature block he quotes his Centurion number - Dave always said it was his greatest achievement (1976/Ashtons Track). Dave was ubiquitous in race walking and since "*going to ground*" (using his words) many have asked how he is? - so publishing a letter (which he wants publishing) assures all he's still about. Over the years, opinion that Dave should be forgiven and welcomed back - or the opposite - is roughly 50/50. However, that's neither here-nor-there as Dave has no intention to be seen again. Dave's "milestone" 70th birthday is on 13 September.

WELCOME OPTIMISTIC VIEWS

It seems that racewalking survives in the Paris Olympics, perhaps thanks in part to the French hosts who are strong in the discipline. Indeed, there will be individual 20kms racewalk events opening the Olympic games 2024, plus the new mixed relay. We thought the mixed triathlon in the last Olympics was an interesting and worthwhile event and the race-walk relay has the potential to be similarly gripping. I can only say warm thanks to those who are keeping the race-walking flag flying in Britain. British

athletics has some good athletes in various areas just now. Ultra-distance remains one of our national strengths. Let's hope race-walking, including ultra-events, regain their popularity and performance levels.

Sandra Brown

END OF RACE WALKING?

Well, it looks like the 35km will now disappear completely and walking will become a short distance discipline. Dreadful! Of course, the big question is, who is this handpicked "specific Working Group in representation of athletes, coaches, judges and Member Federations"? Depressingly ... **Tim Erickson**

Adds Hon Ed: As with a decision to ditch road walks at the Birmingham Commonwealth Games, many continue to question **who** are those in "behind closed doors" meetings which decide race walking issues?

FIXTURES CONFUSION - FURTHER CONTRIBUTION

You appear to have mixed up the message from Linda. You mentioned you encouraged people to race in the **SEAA Inter Countries Match** last year but what you did was encourage them to race in the **SEAA Champs** last year. The SEAA Walks are being held this year, so no fixture was lost recently. The SEAA Inter Countries Match had the walk removed a while ago. You have listed the SEAA Champs in your fixture list. I don't have any info on the timetable at the moment. I do appreciate it can hard to get the info on future fixtures.

Mark Easton

Adds Hon Ed: Before mentioning fixtures up to 10 people are circulated asking for amendments/mistakes/errors/additions/deletions etc. Normally about 3 reply, if lucky. And - try getting anybody to "go on the record" about start times is near impossible. Anything more than "local races" has a difficult communication pattern. For instance, Club race walkers also have trouble finding out not only when to be held, but at what start times? Also where do they enter and when are closing times? It's no wonder few show up, meaning walkers are few on-the-day - which of course hastens that day yet another major event joins a long list of those to have ditched race walking. Before our previous Essex Walker a bewildering series of emails circulated about this topic. To make sense of it would have required a venturesome spirit, an enquiring mind, a set of logarithm tables and a copy of "Glasses Guide".

MENTION IS MADE OF TWO CENTURIONS

Thank you for all the news especially of **Dave Sharpe**, who we believe deserves forgiveness now for the past. We all do things that we regret in life, be they good or bad, but everyone deserves a second chance! Multi-Centurion the late **Bill Symes**, C216, of Queens Park Harriers was a pupil at Westminster School gaining a much-prized scholarship. They played a prominent part in King Charles III's Coronation.

Bill Sutherland

ILFORD AC CENTENARY HISTORY: COMMENTS

- May I say I thoroughly enjoyed the Ilford AC Centenary history. **Ron Wallwork**
- Seeing that picture of Ilford's 1973 squad at the Essex 20K prompted me to think of Tom Lee RIP. I recall him as a really nice lad who said little. His early death while still a junior was tragic. **Noel Mooney**

NEW COURSE ARRANGEMENTS AT DONKEY LANE

A lovely morning at Enfield and the first ERWL on the new 1km loop that was measured and certified by **Mark Jefford** on Wednesday last week. This now makes a simple out and back course with the start halfway between the turns. The km loop makes a number of options available for walkers of all experience and easier to manage at 1,3, 5 and 10k as well as smoother continuation possible from 10-15k within the 75 mins cut-off for those who want it.

Dave Annetts



Mark Jefford on the course

REPEATING LAST YEAR'S GENEROUS OFFER

Both Mark Easton, Chris Hobbs, and myself, on behalf of the SRWA committee, have agreed that each participating entrant to the SEAA Walks Championships will receive a subsidy of £10 to offset some of the entry fee costs.

Chris Flint

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