

# Essex Walker

Editor: Dave Ainsworth

## MESSAGE FROM YOUR RWA SOUTHERN AREA SECRETARY

I survived the Nijmegen Marches. Reasonably good weather. 50 km on each of the four days is quite tiring! Now 26 completions, the very first in 1967 and intermittently thereafter. I'm writing to ask if you would add to the next Essex Walker a reminder that those who enter and participate in the South of England walking championships at Lee Valley on Sunday 13 August will receive a £10 grant towards the entry fee as a gesture of support by the Southern RWA. Entries close online 1 August. [seaa.org.uk](http://seaa.org.uk) - Home It is important that this event is well supported. **Chris Flint**

## PLEASE RESPOND POSITIVELY

Essex County Chairman Andy Catton has handed over 6 medals: gold/silver/bronze for men/women - new larger medals for our Essex County AA 10,000 Metres Walk. Since removal from our Essex County programme after 2 entered, Ron Wallwork "saved it" by combining it with an Enfield League 1 Hour, and has been so for over a decade. Recent years saw not all medals presented, so your Essex President hasn't attended. It's on **Saturday 23 September** (Donkey Lane track) with prior entry needed. Let's try to ensure all 6 medals are competed for so we can again invite our Essex President to present them. You've plenty of notice, so please keep this date free - for the sake of Essex County walking.

## ON PARADE

Decades' ago, Lieutenant Colonel Glen Grant was a well-known and respected person on our Essex race walking scene, this when stationed at Colchester Garrison. Talented athlete and motivator Glen has now retired from the Army and is a recognised defence expert. BBC Radio 4 listener Amos Seddon informs us that Glen was recently on that station giving informed opinions on the Ukrainian situation. He has also featured on [BBC Breakfast Time](#). Glen is well remembered among our readers and we'd like to welcome him again at our events.



## FAREWELL TO AN APPRECIATED SPONSOR

The death is reported of Leicester Walking Club's Past President John Maynard. He didn't have Essex connections, as far as we know, but certainly over decades many Essex race walkers benefited from his sponsorship of such well supported events as the Leicester Open 7 Miles and classic Leicester-to-Skegness 100 Miles - both now sadly defunct. John owned the Shoefayre premises in Leicester, in whose name such sponsorship came from, and from where some races were held. We thank him for his interest in racewalking and express condolence to his family members.

## IN THE WALKING

A recently appointed Vicar at Romford's St George's Church is the Reverend Nathan Joss-Pothen, who during an internship at Peel as part of his advancement towards Ordination, once took part in an annual Isle of Man Manx Telecom Parish Walk. This race starts in Douglas and finishes there 85 miles' later - with permitted intermediate points where participants may leave with recorded times/positions. Nathan reached Peel (32.4 miles). In order, these timing points are at Santon, Malew, Arbory, Rushen, Peel, Kirk Michael, Ballaugh, Jurby, Bride, Andreas, Lezayre, Maughold, Lonan before journey's end at Douglas. On route a front door of each Parish Church passed must be touched. 2023 saw 1,029 make a result sheet, with 133 competing an entire course. Such figures do wonders for our Race Walking Association per-head race levy. For many years Essex names graced result sheets - and for many, was seen as a good "build-up" for a tilt at 100 miles.

Alas, walkers from the mainland weren't prominent this year. Top 3 were: 1st. Dean Morgan 15:27.3, 2nd Paul Atherton 15:43.14, 3rd Simon Gawne 15:48.31. 1st veteran man was David Walker (5th overall) in 16:40.5. 1st veteran woman was Lorna Gleave (11th overall) in 17:27.32. 1st senior woman was Sophie Watterson-Jone (13th overall) in 18:16.59.

Back to St George's Parish, the previous Vicar - recently retired Reverend Shaun Moore - was a "rank-and-file" race walker at Woodford Green AC (as then called) in past decades with a then strong walks squad. His efforts were mentioned in Essex Walker a while back. Readers who've never sampled delights and atmosphere of large turnouts and great events on the Isle of Man should really make an effort to get along one day.

### NOW IS THE HOUR (1965)

The top 10 in the 'A' Section of an annual Highgate Harriers One Hour Walks at Parliament Hill Fields track were:

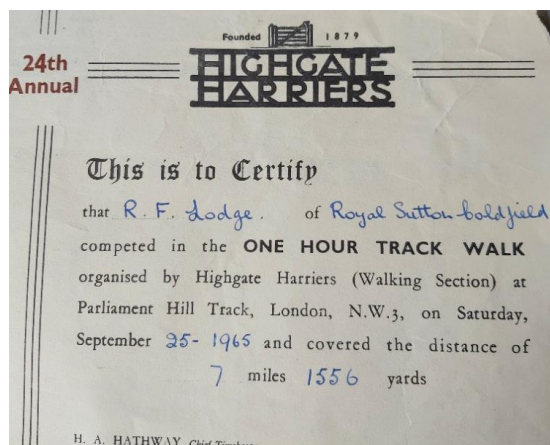
1	P McCullough	Met Walking Club	8.184
2	R Hart	Roath	8.160
3	P Fullagher	Surrey Walking Club	8.51
4	M Tolley	Sheffield	7.1638
5	R Middleton	Belgrave Harriers	7.1597
6	R Lodge	RSC	7.1556
7	J Paddick	RSC	7.1418
8	B Hawkins	Met Walking Club	7.1357
9	D Watts	Met Walking Club	7.1308
10	N Munro	Southampton	7.1257

In this Section 31 finished with all bar last competitor (J Godbeer/Cambridge H 6.1254) bettering 7 miles. 'B'/C'/D' Sections saw respectively 52, 68 and 60 finishers led by Bob Hughes (Smethwick H) 7.1110, Roy Thorpe (Don Valley) 7.510 and Tony Loach (Smethwick H) 6.1640. A St. Dunstan's Handicap Mile for blind walkers was won by J Simpson (RASC) with Ilford's Roy Mendham (REME) 5th, clocking 8.43 and 9.10 respectively - they were joint scratch mark starters. 24 on a Boys' Mile result list were headed by S Coleman (Coventry Godiva) in 7.40. Worth noting in a 3-scoring team race, William Morris School were 3rd - they supported Essex walking races into the early '90s. It's interesting to observe how many future big names are listed in slower graded Sections - ones who'd make their mark in times to come. Full results are easily obtained by reading Race Walking Record's [November 1965 No 278](#) issue (courtesy of the RWR Archive). All main section results are expressed in miles/yards.

Roy Lodge's memorabilia prompted a look at this race:

"Looking into my Race Walking archives I came across this certificate. I had only been race walking for a couple of years when I entered this challenge and may well have achieved the 8 miles in the hour at a later date. I would be interested to know who the leading walkers were in this event".

**Roy Lodge**



### MICK HOLMES RIP - Sad Notification from Tony Taylor

You might well have heard the sad news that Mick Holmes died. In my book he's very special - we had many a tussle in the early 70 after which he went on, despite diabetes, to become the type of racewalker we will never see again, expressed in his remarkable 1982 100 miles. I'm conscious Mick had close connections with the Essex race walking. In terms of the Centurions the Holmes name stands proud.

- Father: Harry Holmes Snr C104. 21-05-39
- Son: Harry Holmes Jnr C303. 19-31-08
- Grandson: Mick Holmes C717. 17-21-52

In sadness, infused with enormous respect. **Tony Taylor**

### FORMER SOUTHEND WALKER MICK HOLMES RIP

Sadly, July opened with news of Mick's death, after lengthy ill health. His impressive statistical record speaks for itself, with one performance standing out a proverbial mile. In August 1982 at Leicester Walking Club's 100 Miles race, held on their Congerstone course, Mick was in imperious form as he dominated a large 77 strong field to break the tape in 17:21.52 to claim Centurion No 717 racing for York Postal Walking Club (who had 5 other new Centurions in the race). It was the 2nd fastest Centurion **qualifying** time, headed only by 1970/74 Commonwealth Games 20 Miles' representative - Belgravian John Moullin RIP, who'd clocked 16:55.44 at Ewhurst in 1971. In 1982, 55 finished (1DQ) of whom 33 became new Centurions. That race also saw a fastest lady's qualifying time: Irene Corlett from the Isle of Man who was 3rd overall in 18:54.05. Other qualifiers that day included Bob Porter, Roger Michell (now Centurions' Captain), now nonagenarian Basil Gale, recently departed John Dunsford and a debut making Sandra Brown, 3rd lady, who'd go on to become a key player in ultra-distance race walking. The Eddie McNeir Trophy, in memory of a Cambridge Harriers' stalwart who completed 10 successive 100s all after passing 65 years of age, was placed on the prize table for a first time by Eddie's daughter - it was presented to 68-year old Jac Heidendaal as the first over-65 home. Mick's performance was our top distance achievement of the year and is still talked about to this day.

Mick's best known for his 1982 100 miles, but was truly talented at all distances from a short sprints to ultra-distance. When GB staged a Lugano Cup Final for a first time at Milton Keynes in 1977, Mick led home our 20K British quartet in 30th position clocking 1:33.06, with Mick Greasley, Roger Mills and Amos Seddon respectively in close order. In this issue we've published his impressive statistical record. A diabetic, Mick spoke in public about how he'd overcome his condition, so inspiring other sufferers. This included an appearance on Blue Peter in GB kit. Many Essex Walker readers can recall his brief time as a first claim member at Southend-on-Sea AC (now Southend City AC), at a South Essex based Estuary resort being 237 miles (474 miles round trip) from his Shipley front door. His move wasn't commented upon favourably in Yorkshire and proved controversial as views in Race Walking Record highlighted; one such remark asked "Does walking now have an open transfer market?". With such distance, Mick couldn't be expected to turnout in local races, nor Area and County races - had he been eligible in any case? He'd signed up for the "big time" - Nationals and major Opens - where he'd be an asset. Already Southend's squad were a "Who's Who?" of top British names, where making a scoring 4 (in such times all team races were in 4s) was difficult. As it happened Mick's Southend time was brief as their Walking Section "exploded" after a "behind the scenes row" which saw most big names leaving to join other Clubs or retiring. The local Southend "Evening Echo" had a headline "Walkers Walk Out" and likened it to a Roman Candle shooting its stars in all directions. When reporter Dick Marshall, one of walking best friends who'd been at the "Echo" for 40 years, died aged 63 in 2010, walkers attended his funeral. That wasn't the end of Southend's time as a force, as many years' later they rose to prominence with new members including the talented O'Rawe family and captained by enthusiastic Val Mountfield. Both "bust-up" and later *revival* were fully covered in Essex Walker's past editions.

Mick was a committed Bradford City supporter, through times good or otherwise, often the latter. One year he was their "Supporter-of-Year". A few years ago Mick was a hospital



Bradford City AFC

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We are saddened to learn of the passing of Shipley Bantams member and lifelong #BCAFC supporter, Mick Holmes. May he rest in peace.





patient when his beloved team's promotion charge was dented by a 0-6 home defeat. Good job he wasn't there that day, as that would have done his health no good! Mick hadn't competed for a long time, yet his best efforts are so well remembered by so many - and that's the true test of a great athlete. To his family, we extend our heartfelt condolences. Mick Holmes RIP. **DA**

### Michael Stephen 'Mike' HOLMES

(GBR) (b.26 Aug 1951 at Shipley) died on July 1 aged 71 (in Bradford). He was a junior international in 1969-70 before having eight internationals for Britain 1973-80 from 10000m to 20 miles. Competing for York Postal RWC and Yorkshire RWC, he was 2nd in the UK 10000m walk in 1980 and 3rd in the RWA 50k in his pb 4:19:55 in 1973. He won the CAU 3000m in 1979 and was Northern champion at 10000m in 1979-80 and 20k in 1979. Other walks pbs: 3000m 12:40.56 (1980), 10000m 43:34.55 (1980), 20k 1:31:46 (1980), 30k 2:29:34 (1974), 20M 2:42:01 (1974) and had a great 100 miles debut in 1982 17:21.52.

Acknowledgement to compiler **Peter Matthews** and his publication: Athletics International & International Athletics Annual.

**Note:** The deceased was known both as Mick and Mike in various publications.

### Tributes to Mick Holmes RIP

- He was always great company. I was privileged to race with him in Germany and I last saw him at the World Championships in London. RIP. **Peter Marlow**
- I was very sorry to hear of the passing of Mick Holmes ... such a classic race walker. His Centurion Walk was a brilliant achievement. **Adrian James**
- Overcame diabetes to set about the fastest 100. He walked for York Postal for some time. I did not know him personally. I started walking in 1982, the year he set his very fast 100. I was told he used to train up and down the cycle path from York to Tadcaster (about 13-15 miles). 40 miles sometimes. His dad (also a Centurion) used to do 20 miles on his bike with him and Mick then doing 20 miles on his own (or vice versa). **Richard Cole (Centurions Hon Treasurer)**
- I'm very sorry to hear the sad news about Mick Holmes C717. The Leicester 100 in 1982 was my qualifying 100 and also my first race. I felt a complete novice and was thrilled to finish the 100, in company with the Dutchman Jac van Steen, in 21.18m. I was utterly in awe of Mick Holmes's impressive winning time, and all the more so when I realised that he was diabetic. A wonderful race-walker, never forgotten by the Centurions and the race walking community. **Sandra Brown C735**
- Sad to hear. Mick was well respected and one of the few families to have grandfather, father and son in walking. **Carl Lawton**
- Mick and our friendship goes back to 1972, with weekly communication; a friendship which despite his passing is still alive today. **Roger Mills**
- Very sad to hear of Mick Holmes passing. A true gentleman in every sense of the word. He walked justly and uprightly in sport and life. May he rest in peace and rise in glory. **Roy Lodge**
- Very sad to hear of the passing of Mick Holmes C717, as distance racer with supreme talent being one of the special Centurions who truly treated the formidable distance of 100 Miles as a race from start to finish. I watched many Centurion races during the 60's, 70's and 80's and each and every one of them produced someone very special in podium positions and who are listed in the Centurion Handbook as extraordinary, and Mick was truly one of them. He was such a likeable Race Walker in every way, always encouraging others to achieve their best. May he Rest in Peace amongst so many Race Walking stars of the past in heaven. With sincere condolences, **Bill Sutherland**
- I had noted from Essex Walker that he was poorly. I did not know him personally as a member of Southend as my last race was in 1976, but I do recall seeing him at races in the 1980s.

Unfortunately we are in the age group where people passing on happens more often than when we were younger. **David Rosser**

### ILFORD AC'S CENTENARY CELEBRATION

It was a full house at Fairlop Waters Country Park on Saturday 8 July at Ilford AC's Centenary Celebration. So many from Ilford's past turned up, and in speeches Club Secretary Andy Catton especially praised those who'd travelled long distances, including some from overseas. It was truly a "Who's Who?" evening. Double Olympian Neringa Masilioniene was introduced to generous applause. Many former Presidents attended - one who couldn't was Roger Mills (*on holiday*) who sent an apology and message to be read by current Joint-President John Batchelor (Pam Jones is Ilford's other President). His message was so good it was also loudly applauded – it's featured below in this "Essex Walker". Ernie Forsyth - who race walked in the Essex League for Ilford years' ago - spent weeks compiling an exhibition to record 100 years. All night long people viewed it, with its many pictures and now faded press cuttings going back decades. Many exhibits were left to Ilford from the estate of late President Alan Lovatt. Also available were the last 6 unsold copies of Ilford's wonderful 1998 75th Anniversary Handbook - which were "snapped up". This book was launched at a 75th Anniversary Dinner at Chigwell Manor Hall. Ilford's Walking Section were again represented. Also present was great friend of race walkers - now millionaire - Ernie Barrett, who'd generously sponsored Eastway Circuit meetings plus an International walks' trial. Ilford AC will further celebrate 100 years with a 100 x 1 mile relay at Cricklefields Stadium later in this year.



Double-Olympian Neringa Masilioniene with walkers Len Ruddock (left) and former President Dave Ainsworth (right).  
Picture supplied by Len.

Readers' comments:

- I hope you all enjoyed the Ilford Fairlop party. It is great to have these big anniversaries. **Dave Hoben**
- Sure wish I could have been there. What a great photo - good enough that I have saved it. The three of you are looking good. Take good care. **Steve King**

### ILFORD AC CENTENARY

An Ilford AC Centenary celebration contribution from **Roger Mills**, Ilford AC's only member to have "done all 4 majors": Olympic Games, European Championships, Commonwealth Games and IAAF World Championships.



"Hello everybody. Regrettably I cannot be with you on this auspicious occasion to celebrate the amazing 100 years! Dave (Ainsworth) asked me to pen a brief resume' of Ilford Athletic Club and my membership to it.

I joined the Club in 1967 and gained my first International vest in 1969; my last being at the World Championships in Helsinki in 1983. But representing IAC locally and nationally was always a privilege and made me proud and determined to do the vest justice.

For me, the Club without doubt, significantly determined my way in life. Besides being privileged to compete in over 20 countries worldwide, some on several occasions through the Club, it created friendships both here and around the world that have endured for over 44 years. The Club as I say, signposted my life. The influence from club members, in terms of friendships, guidance, encouragement and humour remain to this day.

To young Club members here today, a word from an ageing juvenile. Stay the course, good and not so good, because the pay off from being part of Ilford Athletic Club, going forward, will truly enhance your life and you can't ask much more that.

Best in Sport, Roger”

### OUR UK CHAMPIONSHIP MEDALLISTS AT MANCHESTER

- [Men's 5,000m](#): Gold/Chris Snook AFD 21:35.72, Silver/Cameron Corbishley M&M 22:27.65, Bronze/Matthew Crane Bex 22:54.91. 4 started/finished with 1 no show.
- [Women's 5,000m](#): Gold/Heather Warner Pembrokeshire H 22:22.50 SB, Silver/Bethan Davies Cardiff 22:55.85 SB. Bronze Abigail Jennings AFD 24:11.68 PB. 8 started/1 DQ.

Full results on UK Athletics website.

### FIXTURES

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

\*10 min+  
walk to start

AUG	1	Veterans AC 5K + series awards (non-vets/non-VAC members welcome)	Battersea Park	7.00pm*
	5	Enfield League "Stan Mantor" 3/5/10K	Donkey Lane	11.00am
	13	SEAA Outdoor Championships Sen/U20 5,000m & U17/U15 3,000m	Lee Valley	TBA
	16	Tonbridge 5,000m + YAG	Tonbridge Track	6.30pm
	19	Middlesbrough 100 Miles/RWA Championship + Open 50K	Middlesbrough	12 noon
	19	IAAF World Championship 20K (Men)	Budapest	TBA
	20	IAAF World Championship 20K (Women)	Budapest	TBA
	24	IAAF World Championship 35K	Budapest	TBA
	27	England Athletics U15/U17 Championships	Birmingham	TBA
	28	Southend City AC Open 1 Mile ( <i>note earlier time</i> )	Garon Park Track	10.00am
SEP	2-3	British Masters Championships	Derby	TBA
	9	Eastern Masters League Final	Bedford Track	TBA
		Veterans AC 2,000m	Finsbury Park Track	TBA
		Centurions Social Walk 6.5 miles (all welcome)	St Albans Town Hall	10.30am
	16	English Schools' Championships	Bedford Track	TBA
	23	Enfield League One Hour (+ Essex AA 10,000m Championship)	QEII Stadium	TBA
27	British Police Champs/Civil Service Champs/Ryan Cup 10K	Cannonhill Park/Edgbaston	1.30pm	
30	VAC/Surrey/Middx/Herts/Sussex 10,000m Championships**	Coulsdon Track	1.00pm	
OCT	14	Enfield League 3/5/10K	Donkey Lane	11.00am
	21	Ray Hall Memorial Track League	Sutcliffe Park/Eltham	TBA
	28	Steyning Open 5K/10K	Steyning	2.00pm
NOV	11	96 <sup>th</sup> Enfield Open 7 Miles (incl opt-out distances)	Donkey Lane	10.30am
	Regular distance training walks are held from Leigh-on-Sea's Belfairs Park. Owing to popularity these continue – details from Centurion Steve Kemp on <b>07860 617899</b> .			

\*\* Dave Hoben advises: date subject to change.

### NEW FIXTURE WORTHY OF SUPPORT

After losing a number of race walking fixtures as potential participants have stayed away, it's positive to report a new one on our fixture lists - at a venue we've not raced at in decades. Veterans AC is organising a Masters' track and field competition on **Saturday 9 September**. Open to all Masters athletes (ie aged over 35) the event is hosted by London Heathside AC, at **Finsbury Park Athletics Track**, Hornsey Gate, Endymion Rd London N4 1EE. Tell your club colleagues events are planned across all Masters' age groups (5-year age



bands): 100m, 200m, 400m, 800, 1500m, Short Hurdles, Long Hurdles, **2km Race Walk**, Long Jump, Triple Jump, High Jump, Pole Vault, Shot Put, Hammer Throw, Discus Throw and Javelin Throw.

Vets AC need clubs with Masters who might compete to help with officiating. Please can track & field clubs reply to Ros Tabor [secretary@vetsac.org.uk](mailto:secretary@vetsac.org.uk) with numbers and levels of qualified officials they could send. The club will publish a list of officials who have volunteered to assist on the Veterans AC website so everyone can see what gaps they have, but a good guide would be for every club with members who are participating to supply 3 qualified officials, at least 2 of whom are field officials. If we get a positive response to this request, then we have a good chance of reaching the 50 or so officials needed. Please can clubs give priority to naming any of their level 3 or 4 officials who are willing to take on the lead roles of field referee, track referee, chief timekeeper or chief starter. Photo finish will be provided by London Heathside AC. *Entries will open soon on BMAF Open Track.*

**Peter Kennedy** VAC Track & Field Secretary

01273-477062, mob 07808 033532 [pkennedy@bmaf.org.uk](mailto:pkennedy@bmaf.org.uk) For and on behalf of [Veterans AC](#)

**Note from Peter Cassidy:** *Unfortunately it clashes with the Eastern Masters AC League Final*

### MOULTON OPEN 5 MILES

Two athletes in continuing top form were Men's and Ladies' category winners: Dave Annetts of North Herts RR (39.50) and Grazina Manzgotti of Tonbridge AC (45.03). Loughton's Melanie Peddle, one with a commendable record on this course, was 2nd in a convincing 47.14. Essex-born Sue Clements was 8th in a praiseworthy 64.55. Romford-born athlete, Dave Hoben was 8th in his category clocking 63.24. Unavailability saw a depleted Ilford AC team at Saturday's afternoon's annual Moulton 5 Miles Walk, on an out-and-back hilly course with road potholes in delightful Suffolk countryside near Newmarket. In the men's race Ilford's John Arthur and Simon Morgan were the Club's leading lights, confidently filling 5th and 6th positions in 52.48 and 54.05 respectively. Further down the order Dave Ainsworth suffered in 29 degrees' heat to come 14th in 79.50. In the ladies' race Shaheda Arthur came 14th in 89.18. High heat took its toll as most who'd competed in 2022 were up to a couple of minutes slower than then.

However, an Ilford AC vest passed the finishing line in a splendid and unexpected 2nd place clocking 47.14, although its wearer competed as an unattached athlete. One of the Club's leading walkers of a decade or more ago, Phil Barnard, left the sport in 2012. He showed up having been uninvolved since, with a couple of vests, one of which was an Ilford one. Although not currently a member he asked if he could race in it to show support for Ilford's Centenary, which was approved. His last race prior to Moulton was Ron Wallwork's wonderful 2012 Olympic Games tribute walk at Donkey Lane, which was a last time over 100 appeared on a UK domestic result sheet.

*There were names for the future as Elijah and Joel Barnard were joint 4th in a Youngster's Mile, held around the village, timed in at 15.18.*

We won't steal Enfield Walker's thunder, as that's where a [full results list](#) can be found. Also is a list of the organising team, officials, judges, recorders, timekeepers, helpers, many marshals, first aiders, water station personnel, team bar servers plus whoever else. It took much work to pull together such a dedicated team of volunteers. An excellent programme was produced, which contained pictures showing plenty of eager race walkers on past start lines. After racing, Ron Wallwork informed us he'd now step back as our Moulton 5 organiser - a position held since its inaugural 2002 race. In 2023 everybody enjoyed it, so an appeal for **more** to support this race should a new 2024 Organiser come forward to take it on.

It was a frustrating journey to the meeting as the M11 Newmarket turn-off was closed for roadworks as was a section of the A11 towards Newmarket, forcing attenders to cope with a lengthy diversion (on which were more road works) which saw some flustered entrants arriving close to start time.

- **Writes Phil Barnard**, the comeback man: *"I hope the Ilford Centenary event went well. Happy to have worn the Ilford vest across the line. Take care and hope to see you at the Southend 1 miler."*

### HONEST MOULTON

Regular entrant Paul Firman (Ryston) was 11th with 64.58 on the stopwatch. 13 months' ago, he left his talcum powder tin on a changing room window ledge. All this time on, it was still where he left it - needless to say he remembered to take it home this time.

### THE ODDS

After reading last month's 2023 TCS London Marathon facts and figures, which informed us that just 16 over-80 athletes completed the course, one (Ed Shillabeer) stated:

*"I'm not one in a million - I'm one in 16".*

### NO SHOW

The state of Victoria in Australia dramatically and suddenly withdrew a decision to stage the 2026 Commonwealth Games, so a new location has needed to be found. Some were keen to put Great Britain's name in the hat, but race walkers might well have had cause to be worried if this were to come to pass, as in 2014 (Glasgow) our event was totally excluded and our many complaints weren't even acknowledged. In 2022 (Birmingham) a decision was taken to ditch more popular road walking in favour of 2 morning 10,000m track races. Both decisions were taken in *"behind closed doors meetings"* with no outcome communicated to race walking enthusiasts - *until* in each case they only found out 2-to-3 weeks' later when *info was leaked* from far away.

- **Bill Sutherland writes:** "Shame Victoria have pulled out of the 2026 Commonwealth Games. Not surprised. The future of Race Walking looks bleak."

### VENIAMIN SOLDATENKO RIP

Always sad when an [all-time great](#) passes on, as is the case of this talented 84-year old, who was the 1972 Olympic silver medallist (3:58.24) and 1976 IAAF 50K gold medallist (3:54.40) in a race staged to make up for losing an Olympic 50K at Montreal. He also collected a full set of bronze, gold and silver European Championship medals respectively in 1969/71/78. Many Essex Walker readers will have seen him race over 50K at our 1977 Lugano Cup meeting in Milton Keynes where he came 4th (4:08.20) in a deluge. After retiring from active competition, he coached in his native Kazakhstan. *Thanks for the memories.*



### PARKRUN RECORD

Many readers gain additional fitness by turning-out for parkruns, and others both officiate, assist and spectate/support. Some parted company with race walking to participate in this highly successful form of popular athletics and others suggest we try recruiting potential race walkers at such events. A new 5K parkrun record of 13 minutes 45 seconds has been set in Edinburgh by double Olympian [Andrew Butchart](#) who raced at 5,000 metres in Rio and Tokyo. He took this record from 2008 Olympic 1,500 runner [Andy Baddeley](#) from the Wirral, whose mark of 13.48 was set 11 years ago.

### TONY PERKINS ACHIEVES PARKRUN MILESTONE

Since hanging up his race walking shoes, Ilford AC's Tony Perkins, Centurion No 685, has become a regular supporter of the parkrun scene at his local Great Notley event. Whilst park runners across the UK celebrated the 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the NHS on the weekend of 8/9 July, the Great Notley parkrun also had cause to [celebrate](#) Tony's 500<sup>th</sup> parkrun volunteering milestone.







World-wide, Tony was the 101<sup>st</sup> person to have achieved the 500 milestone, so he has earned a place in a fairly exclusive club! With his ongoing determination to attend both the Saturday and Sunday parkrun events, as part of the volunteer team, he should anticipate reaching the 1000 milestone in about 5 years' time! For many this goal might seem unrealistic, but probably not so for Tony – after all, he is one of just a handful of race walkers (4 in fact) to have completed 20 Stock Exchange AC London to Brighton walks, his best time being 9.41.24 in 1976. Indeed, he is 2nd only to the indomitable Dickie Green to have completed these walks in consecutive years (from 1973 to 1992).

*Photo features Tony holding his 'high five' hand, presented to him by a park runner during the Covid-19 social distancing period, and of course his milestone t-shirt*

## SUFFOLK GOOD NEWS

We've always taken interest in our neighbouring County, so were sorry to note that, as fields couldn't be guaranteed for a 3,000 metres walk in the main Suffolk County Championships, our event didn't make the programme for their last 2 meetings. So, it was most pleasing to see Suffolk awards being presented after July's Moulton 5 Miles - and this can hopefully be seen as a step forward towards getting enough participants to restore a 3,000 metres Walk to Suffolk's Championship meeting. *We all hope so.*

## JULY 2023 NIJMEGEN MARCH

Race walkers, especially those who relish a challenge of longer distances, have often showed up on annual long established Nijmegen Marches. These 4-day marches commenced in 1909 before, in 1924, moving to Nijmegen where the centre of action still is. Around 40,000 participate (including about 5,000 military personnel), with always over 90% finishing.

2023 International  
Four Days  
Marches  
Nijmegen  
Event



We heard Chris Flint, Dave Hoben, Hans Rennie and Sue Clements were among the throng, with Sue doubling-up as both participant and qualified first-aider. If any other "marchers" come to light, we'll give them a deserved namecheck.

## WEMBLEY STADIUM'S CENTENARY - WE'VE A LINK

There's been much in the press about it being 100 years since the famous [Wembley Stadium](#) (then Empire Stadium) opened its turnstiles for a first time - and we've a race walking link to that opening year when the 1923 FA Cup Final was its inaugural event. It was between Bolton Wanderers and West Ham United, the latter being first team to reach the final, since the Football League introduced multiple Divisions, without playing a team from the top tier. So many turned up the pitch took ages to clear so a start was much delayed, this task assisted by a white Police horse named "Billie". Ed Shillabeer, recently photographed next to Nat Lofthouse's statue at Bolton's stadium ("two legends together"), explains our race walking 'connection':

*"Also, next to Nat Lofthouse's statue is a tribute plaque which records the fact that my cousin Bobby Jack's uncle ([David Jack](#)) scored the first goal at the old Wembley stadium when Wanderers beat West Ham in the famous "White Horse" FA Cup Final. What it doesn't say is that the shot was so hard that the net bulged so much that the ball knocked out a spectator behind the goal!! The player whose throw in started the move didn't even see it because the crowd surged past him ... those were the days."*



**ANNOUNCEMENT**

Ann, Neil and Faye of the Holmes family wish to thank all who attended Mick's funeral of Mick on Wednesday 17 July at Shipley, and for an amazing sum of £505 which will be donated to a local Burns Unit. They state they're certain Mick would have loved his send off.

**PRIORITY REQUEST 1**

Our UK 100 Miles' Walk is soon - 19/20 August at an excellent Middlesbrough Sports Village, with plenty of parking, 24-hour lighting plus space for tents. Alas the number of entrants has just edged into the teens, with most from overseas. Much time, effort and finance has gone into promoting this race - and, indeed, all races are put on for you. Middlesbrough's Mayor is our celebrity "Mr Starter" and it'll not look good when shouting "Go" on a sparsely attended start line. Are any more "out there" who might like to take on a challenge of walking 100 miles. Also on our programme is an Open 50K, which at present is in low single figures. Readers have moaned about a demise of 50K events, so how about supporting one that's put on? It's been a dire year with single figures entering your Men's 10K, 20K and 5,000m Championships, and also in younger aged groups. Ladies' races have held up slightly better. So how about a few more for this classic event at Middlesbrough? **Entries close 4 August**, so please make your positive decisions promptly. Full entry details on the Centurions 1911 website, and were featured in previous Essex Walker editions. Staging a 24 hours' event requires many helpers, and an appeal for volunteers was made in previous editions. Any late offers of help please to Centurion **Steve Kemp 07860-617899**. *All offers welcome*. Can you please spare some time to help promote a major event and so keep our sport going?

**PRIORITY REQUEST 2**

Please let's see another great turnout, as seen last year, for an excellently organised Southend City 1 Mile at Garon Park track. For over a decade-and-a-half it's been our best supported Essex walking race, and last year again saw a great atmosphere. This event features race walking in a general athletics meeting which lasts all day, with over 800 folk present and June Cork's usual interesting and informative commentary to let all know what's happening. June Cork and Keith Palmer promote this walk with enthusiasm, so as Delia Smith once boomed, "Let's be 'aving you". The **George Woods Memorial Trophy**, donated by the sporting O'Rawe family, is competed for and awarded on a proper podium to our 1st Essex resident Centurion. George (Centurion 683) was a wonderful loyal long-serving stalwart member of Southend-on-Sea AC (as then called). Garon Park is just off Eastern Avenue (post code SS2 4FA) with plenty of free parking and excellent facilities. Please note earlier 10am start. Entries can be taken on-the-day. If looking for more excitement in Southend, your race will finish early, allowing you to spend the rest of your day in this popular resort, which can include a walk up-and-down the world's longest pier. **August Bank Holiday Monday 28 August 10am.**

**MEMORY LANE**

Here's Ed Shillabeer's recollection of legendary John Eddershaw, who celebrated his 90th birthday in July:

*"John did Plymouth to Dawlish 42 miler in the early seventies, one of the first ones, that my Dad organised and used his Royal Artillery connections for breakfast (and I think accommodation also) to start the race inside the Royal Citadel. John, if I recall correctly, won it on a Sunday of rain to claim his Devon cream tea at the finish. The points I am sure of concern were his full English half an hour before the start and his garb consisting of a knee length mackintosh! I didn't see much of him after the first few miles ... Very impressive and inspirational. I also respect his actions as RWA President, when every race I attended he was there to shake the hand of all finishers. Glory days, n'est-ce pas?"*

**LATE NEWS**

Roving reporter Bill Sutherland brings news from the steel city of Sheffield, where legendary John Eddershaw recently celebrated a **90th** birthday. Soon after addressing an audience, John slumped to the floor with a suspected heart attack. A traditional call of "Is there a doctor in the house?" boomed out, and remarkably 4 hands shot up. He was professionally cared for until taken to hospital for 3 days

admission during which a stent was successfully inserted, so enabling him to return home for rest and recuperation. We all wish John well.

### BELATED RETIREMENT WISHES

We've only recently learned that now Milton Keynes-based Michael and Heather Croft have retired and, of course, we all wish them a long happy and enjoyable retirement. In Mike's case, loyalty was shown by completing 43 years employment with the same firm. Michael, a talented race walker in the 70s, continued his fine form until qualifying as a judge (following in the footsteps of his father Arthur RIP) who rose to Grade 1 status and accepted many high-profile appointments, including many as Chief Judge. In later years Michael would still get his racing kit on and show us he could still give a good account of himself. Michael and Heather have now stepped back from officiating but daughter Helen maintains a family tradition as a qualified Field Judge and well-established walking judge. Michael became Veterans AC's youngest President in his first year of eligibility to join. We wish all the family well in Milton Keynes.

- **Bill Sutherland writes:** "We do remember him as a very likeable chap and very active judge. Couldn't we do with more like him today!"
- **Ed Shillabeer writes:** "I saw him frequently and was impressed by his dedication to officialdom!"
- **John Batchelor writes:** "I seem to remember Arthur and Michael walking in the same race at Cricklefields some long time ago. If you get the chance, pass on my own best wishes for his retirement, and hope to see him out and about at the odd event."

**THOUGHT FOR THE DAY:** "Try again. Fail again. Fail better" - written by Samuel Beckett



## Dear Dave ...

### Re DAVE SHARPE

It is very wrong what Dave Sharpe did and it is clear he is genuinely contrite. He raced relentlessly, supporting so many events, and did much to grace our sport before his sudden fall from grace. His becoming a Centurion was probably the most significant thing he has done in his life too. His health issues are very serious indeed. We should all find it in ourselves to forgive him and his genuine act of contrition in the autumn of his life. I, for one, forgive him and hope you all join me in wishing for him at the last lap of his life that he finds some final peace through this act.

*Oliver T Flynn*

### WRITES OUR 1967 NATIONAL 20 MILES CHAMPION

I was interested in Kevin Marshall's contribution to the Essex Walker and his aim to cycle from Land's End (LE) to John O'Groats (JOG) in 9 days. This reminded me of the same cycle journey in 2012 that I undertook to raise funds for Parkinson's UK. I was in my 70's and in the previous year did the JOG to LE. The LE to JOG ride took me 9 days and I was accompanied by my wife Gina in car. I suffered no punctures or mechanical problems, but on arrival in Wick was suffering from severe thrombophlebitis in my right leg which I was able to self-diagnose. Aiming to achieve in 9 days meant cycling approximately 100 miles each day. Cycling on the A30 in the West Country and on the A9 in Scotland is not to be recommended unless you have nerves of steel. My route for Kevin's interest was: Oakhampton, Bristol, Whitchurch, Kendal, Crawford, Aberfeldy, Carrbridge, Brora, Helmsdale Wick and JOG. I cycled this marathon in honour of my former athletics coach Terry Simons who died of a Parkinson's-related illness who inspired me to achieve my full potential in Race Walking. Go for it Kevin, and keep focused.

*Dr Roy Lodge MBE*

### PRAISE FROM AFAR

Congratulations for producing an excellent, informative Essex Walker 429. Congratulations too on your smart turnout for the Armed Forces Day Parade - thumbs and feet all in the correct position, your Drill



Sergeant would be proud. Re Keith Phillips thoughtful comments on the '*One never to be forgotten*', in my on-line dictionary '*character*' and '*eccentric*' are synonyms. Therefore, I have no objection to the editor using the term. There are far more derogatory synonyms on the same page. Lastly, I would be up (or in my case down) for Roy Lodge's reunion. *Keep up the good work.*

**Alex Ross**

### **SOMETHING TO LOOK FORWARD TO**

A possibility of an inter-County event is being seriously considered involving Herts, Surrey, Essex, Kent and Sussex. It is hoping that a 10 km will be held for Counties and clubs at Woodcote School, Surrey in late September or early October.

**Chris Flint**

### **LOOKING BACK**

One could write a book about the 60's and 70's in GB, Area, County and Met Police Race Walking. So many big errors were made with selections for Internationals. Race Walking was solely based on strength and style in the 60's with courses so severe for Nationals often in very hot weather for distance that it took countless years to reach the heights. I don't think many could last that long nowadays. I was so very fortunate to have the love and support of Kath on that long journey which we now find hard to believe! The week-in, week-out competition against such strong competitive opposition eventually brought the best out of me and so many others. Our coaches many of whom were stars in their era produced the Golden Era for British Race Walking. Long may we reflect on those great days!

**Bill Sutherland**

### **IN ST ALBANS**

I was in St Albans attending a service at the Abbey at which Annie Brewster was present as Chair of Hertfordshire County Council and I was able to introduce myself to her. We recalled our Race Walking experiences and other pleasantries. I felt it quite an honour to meet her and she recalled yourself as the Editor of the Essex Walker.

**Roy Lodge**

### **A WELCOME RETURN**

I will be in England during July and August staying at my daughter's home in Chelmsford and hope to get some park runs at Great Notley where Tony Perkins helps out. Many thanks for sending me the Essex Walker newsletter. Walking is not what it once was. I remember my first open 7 at Highgate with a field just short of 300.

**David Rosser**

Adds Hon Ed: True to his word, Dave did participate in the Great Notley parkrun event on 22 July.

### **IT'S ON - SO PLEASE SHOW SUPPORT**

The Ryan Cup Match which includes the Police/Civil Service Championships is still going ahead on Wednesday 27 September 2023. Start time 1.30pm for both men's 10km and Women's 5km on established lap course in Cannon Hill Park, Edgbaston, Birmingham adjacent to West Midlands Police Sports Club where registration etc and post-race awards will take place.

Please note that it may not be possible to race at this venue next year as there are proposed changes to be made at the Sports Club resulting it will be used for a different purpose and the Sports Club building itself will no longer be used as such. This means a new venue if this historic fixture is to continue may well have to be explored. A well supported fixture is hoped for this year in the present circumstances and in view of the proposed changes to the current facilities.

**Glyn Jones**

### **A READER'S SUGGESTIONS**

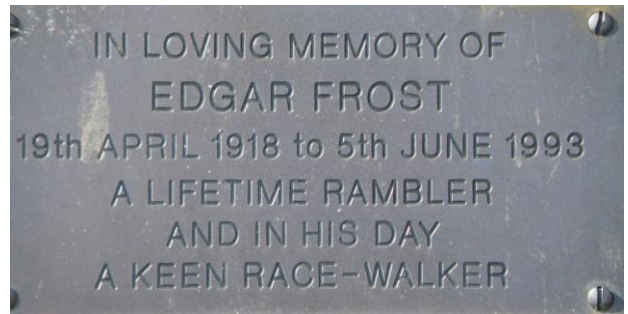
Don't you think we are going round in circles as most of the contact to improve race walking is with people who have a long-standing interest. Surely we need new blood, new events and much younger race walking aspirants to enhance the future of our great sport. The powers that be seem to be 'barking up the wrong tree' as they seem intent on us coming to them rather than us doing the hard miles to find them. The whole approach needs to change, but sadly at present we seem intent on digging our own grave. Sorry, but that is the true situation we are in. I was heartened to read Mike Parker's viewpoint and thank you for including his opinions and mine in the recent Essex Walker. I think it is farcical to assist

would-be participants for SEAA Champs Walk as it just presents a false image of the true picture. Good photo from Fairlop Waters at Ilford's Centenary Celebration. *Bill Sutherland*

### NORTH DOWNS WAY PLAQUE

I completed the North Downs Way and spotted this memorial plaque along the route. Did you know him? The plaque is on a seat beside steps on a steep descent on Oxted Downs. *John Hall*

- I knew Edgar very well, he was a great stroller for Surrey Walking Club but also held many posts in the Club over many years. The Club did know about the plaque as it was a walk he had done over numerous years. *Pam Ficken*



### A CHAMPION'S ENDORSEMENT

Thanks for all the latest news. I thought Mike Parker summed up the situation perfectly, but will anyone listen? *Carl Lawton*

### PRAISE FOR ROB AND MIKE

It's amazing how successful the Rob Hefferman Academy is with the Race Walkers in Ireland. He had race walkers in a Schools' multi-international in Scotland. Congratulations also to Mike Parker in your Essex Walker being one of the few to have the courage to put pen to pen to explain why we are where we are and the true worsening state of International Race Walking going back over countless years. *Bill Sutherland*

### ORGANISER'S REQUEST

Just a quick catch up about the Southend Mile this year on 28 August. Would you mind circulating amongst the walking fraternity that it's half an hour earlier this year at 10.00am please. Also, could you ask that as many walkers as possible enter online please. As always I'm allowing entries on the day for the Walk only. However, I'll be administrating this part myself so the fewer entries on the day I have to be taking the better, if most enter online please. *Keith Palmer*

### CENTURIONS' SOCIAL WALK

The Centurions will hold their late summer social walk around the beautiful city of St Albans on **Saturday 9 September**. The St Albans Green Ring offers an opportunity to get away from the traffic onto a network of paths encircling the city centre. The Ring is a continuous walking and cycling route covering 6.5 miles of open space, parks, nature reserves, disused railways and heritage sites. Paths are suitable for training shoes unless heavy rain has resulted in mud and puddles. Bring a snack for lunch or purchase along the way. The walk will conclude with refreshment back at the Old Town Hall. Non-Centurions, families and dogs are welcome. The pace will be leisurely, with short stops to explore the heritage of St Albans. The walk will be led by Centurion Steve Kemp. Meet at 10:30am, at the St Albans Old Town Hall (now a museum), St Peters Street AL1 3DH. The Old Town Hall is a large whole building. There is large shoppers' car parking available nearby at the Drivers Way Car Park AL3 5EB and Russell Avenue Car Park AL3 5EB. Further parking is available at St Albans City railway station but payment here is by phone or app. St Albans is served by two train stations. If coming into St Albans City station, a 10-minute walk along Victoria Street will bring you to the Old Town Hall. If coming into St Albans Abbey station, a 15-minute walk up Hollywell Hill and through the Market Place will bring you to the Old Town Hall. The Old Town Hall is a large whole building. If you arrive early, the Old Town Hall has a free exhibition on 'Tea time', the nation's favourite brew. Alternatively, have a wander around the adjacent market. Telephone number for questions or if delayed, Steve Kemp 07860 617899. *Steve Kemp*

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