

# Essex Walker

Editor: Dave Ainsworth

## WALKING AXED FROM ANOTHER ESSEX CHAMPIONSHIP MEETING

The weekend of 2/3 March sees our annual Essex County Athletic Association Indoor Championship meeting at Lee Valley Indoor Arena. An all-day programme sees us showcase our athletics discipline before large crowds - who've always been well informed as to what's happening by June Cork's commentary in a bid to enthuse them and ignite interest in our event. **But - not this time.** After too many years of poor support from our County's walkers a decision was taken to remove it from the card. In recent times "Essex Walker" implored full support - to keep it going, often using a slogan used by campaigners against Dr Beeching's severe railway cuts in the 60s, to wit "**Use It or Lose It**". We've lost it. It's come close to being axed on a number of occasions, as you can't occupy meeting time for a field of 3-or-4 (as often) - but on past occasions we had an Essex County Walking Secretary in the Committee Room to argue our case for retention. For nearly 3 years, we've allowed that position to be vacant. Again, we **need** such a person to represent Essex County race walking in the Committee Room - so please readers, have another thought. Sadly, athletics history clearly shows that once an event disappears, it rarely returns. The "*stayaways*" have won again. *The best way to support race walking is to turn out in those races still on your fixture cards.* The absence of this race gives race walkers yet another blank weekend - however, on its demise, we must pay tribute to Peter Cassidy who for many years did his best to generate interest in *drumming-up* entries for this this Championship and deserved a better return.

**Comments your Essex County AA Chairman Andy Catton:** Regrettably a walk is no longer on the programme. There was a lengthy debate about removing other poorly supported events from the champs. No volunteer as Walking Secretary.

## ESSEX COUNTY TROPHIES

After a short time in Office, your County Trophy Secretary resigned. Nobody offered their services so new arrangements need making to cover this vacancy. Sadly, Trophies Secretary has become a testing position, as often they're not returned on time and when they are, can be seen in poor, uncleaned states. So, if a trophy holder, please treat them with respect as so many are presented in memory of former athletes of note.

**Comments Andy Catton:** No-one stepped forward for Trophy Secretary. So, temporarily the following have agreed to split the job between them: Elaine Forrest - Track and field, Vicky Trevor - XC, Gary Chandler - Road (which he does already). It is on the table to discuss at next County meeting whether we continue awarding any trophies.

## CHANGE OF ROLE

Ex-Hertfordshire County Council Chair, and former County Councillor - former race walker of note in earlier times - **Annie Brewster** has stepped down from politics to concentrate on becoming the 184th (13th lady) High Sheriff of Hertfordshire. In this community role Annie is keen to support athletics in the County. Annie is mentioned, and indexed, in the Race Walking Association's comprehensive Centenary Handbook (wonderfully edited by Peter Cassidy) and was a regular in popular evening Veterans/Masters 2,000 metres track walks. As High Sheriff Annie is committed to encouraging sports in Hertfordshire, including athletics. In respect of the latter, Annie's already met with enthusiastic Hertfordshire Walking Secretary **Dave Annetts**. We wish the good lady well in her new role. Comments **Cath Duhig**: "*That's good news - Annie still being focussed on athletics.*"

Annie is a former Mayor of the City of St Albans - which was a location of September's Centurions Social Walk organised by Canvey Islander Steve Kemp. One of those participants was Chris Flint. Like many he tuned into BBC2 on 11 December for "Mastermind" when a specialist subject was "The History of St Albans". One question asked was: "What was the unusual name of a now disused railway station on the St Albans-to-Hatfield railway line?" The TV contestant passed. When answers were read out it was "Salvation Army Halt", closed when passenger services ceased in 1951 (though freight services ran until 1969). The line itself had opened in 1865. This disused line now forms much of the popular "Alban Way" footpath - and the one platform at Salvation Army Halt station still exists in run-down form. The Centurions Social Walk visited this railway station on route.

### NEW POSITIONS FILLED AT THE TOP

Dame Denise Lewis DBE is the new President of UK Athletics. Denise won gold in the 2000 Olympic heptathlon - the first European to do so - and is a former European Champion who was twice Commonwealth Games Champion. Nowadays she's a regular BBC Television athletics pundit. Denise is married to Steve O'Connor, son of late comedian Tom. Middle-distance runner of note, Hannah England, is a new England Athletics Vice President.

### SPOTTED by BOB DOBSON

#### Faster walkers less likely to die of cancer and dementia

FAST walkers are less likely to die of cancer and dementia than those with a slower pace.

A study monitored 391,652 men and women aged 57 on average using UK Biobank data for around 13 years, with 22,000 deaths recorded.

Participants in the research, published in *Progress in Cardiovascular Diseases*, self-reported their pace as 'slow' (below 3mph), 'steady' (3-4mph) or 'brisk' (above 4mph).

Faster walkers from both sexes were 71 per cent less likely to die from dementia. Men with a brisk walk were also 29 per cent less likely to die of cancer than slower males, and women 26 per cent less likely.

The researchers, from the University of Leicester, suggested a fast walk could aid circulation and protect against cardiovascular disease.



[New study shows the heart health benefits of more intense physical activity | News | University of Leicester](#)

### HAPPY BIRTHDAY

Respected Olympian Brian Eley will celebrate his 85th birthday on 29 January. Weston-Super-Mare based Brian competed for a strong, but now both defunct Trowbridge AC and Bristol Walking Club. His highlight was 7th (4:37.32) over 50 kilometres at the 1968 Olympics - held in Mexico City's high altitude. Brian was only 7 minutes behind bronze medallist Larry Young (USA) in a race East German Christoph Hohne won by over 10 minutes. We'd hoped to meet up with Brian at our memorable 2012 Race Walking Association Olympic walkers tribute lunch in London's Tower Hotel - he'd booked his place, but scratched during the week. Nowadays Brian keeps fit as a regular user of indoor rowing equipment. He deserves his mention - and we all wish him well.

### HOPEFULLY COMING SOON

On St George's Day 2024 currently 99 year old Centurion No 576 **George Eastwood** (Woodford Green AC was - now known as Woodford Green with Essex Ladies AC) - will hopefully celebrate his 100th birthday. He qualified as a Centurion at Ashton Playing Fields Track in 1976 when leading his Club - the host Club - to team victory in the Woodford Green 24 hours Track event. George passed 100 miles in 20:29.39 on his way to covering 115 miles 1705 yards when the stopwatch showed 24 hours. Other new Centurions that day included C577 Jack Rossiter, C578 Dave Sharpe, C579 Alan Pickering CBE, Woodford Green colleague C581 Ken Turner, R Thew of Yorkshire WC and Dan Reavey from Dawlish. 23 started, 15 completed 100 miles (8 new Centurions) and 8 lasted a full 24 hours. When retiring from competitive race walking, he continued going for walks and runs (the latter in Hainault Forest) with C288, the legendary Charlie Megnin in order to maintain fitness. Nowadays he needs carers - but is still in his own home! *One for birthday cards in a few months' time.*

Tue.

23

April 2024

St. George's Day

The only UK Centurion known to have reached 100 years of age was Bill Brown of Polytechnic Harriers, who reached this milestone on 7 December 1978. Also an Essex resident, Bill died in December 1981

just after his 103rd birthday. He'd retired from Ford Motor Company at Dagenham aged 65, so his Pension Scheme made a loss on him. He was an Olympian at the 1908 London Olympics (disqualified in the 3,500 metres walk). At his 100th birthday party Centurions were present, including C254 Fred Duff and C413 John Hedgethorpe, who gave a speech at the function. Bill qualified as a Centurion in the 1907 Surrey Walking Club London-to-Brighton-and-Back (104 miles) clocking 20:38.01 at the finish. He became a founder member of The Centurions. Birmingham Walking Club member C450 George Mitchell died aged 99 when so close to "the ton".

### PROGRESS REPORT

We're pleased to let you know that, after a lengthy spell in Chelmsford's Broomfield Hospital, Fixtures Secretary, diligent official and former race walker (Centurion C798) Shenfield-based Pauline Wilson of Loughton AC is now back at home, and receiving treatment in her residence. We all wish the good lady well.

### READER'S OPINION

It's very sad and following the AGM I'm no longer clear whether we have a functional Southern Area RWA. I suspect not. The Midland RWA is basically Glyn Jones and a couple of others of similar age. All the movers and shakers are in their 70s and beyond. There is no one coming up behind them except maybe a few in their late 60s - hardly a succession plan!

I think it will dwindle down to almost nothing in the next couple of years. Power walking and hiking have sort of taken off but racewalking is just too complex. Rules designed by the IAAF for international competition are just beyond the ken or competence of any casual competitor so they don't bother. Especially when the barrier to entry for runs and hikes and power walks etc is so low. Even worse is the fact that should they ever catch a glimpse of walking on TV at the Olympics or whatever, they are far from convinced by what they see.

This problem has no solution (some problems don't have) because the IAAF are not going to budge on this. They 'know they are right' and so do the small but extremely vocal bunch of internationals who shout down any criticism on social media and insist that it is the public that needs to be 're-educated' rather than the event needing to change. Ironically, I foresee that this will ultimately end with the exclusion of walks from major championships so even that rationale will bite the dust.

I don't see how anyone can possibly dispute this other than by burying their heads in the sand. The facts entirely support it. The falling numbers in nearly all former strongholds internationally (save maybe one or two), the increasing indifference of the public and the hostility of the governing bodies that has already de facto seen the event more or less dropped from the Commonwealth Games and the 50kms from the Olympics. I predict the vociferous minority will continue to double down on the view that the status quo is immutable and the decline will continue until the event fades away. Happy Days!

*Name & address supplied*

**Adds Hon Ed:** Race walking is truly in decline. Why should newcomers want to take up race walking - as for most it's an athletics discipline which in those very few areas it currently exists, can only usually offer just 1 race a month? In the south there used to be 4 pre-Christmas December races. Enfield League, Cambridge Harriers Winter League, Steyning's Track Broadbridge Heath track meeting and Ilford's Pre-Christmas Chigwell Row10K. This year, an Enfield League race saw about a dozen finishers (excluding "opt-outs"), Cambridge Harriers ceased Bexley races (risk assessment on roads), Ilford's 10K for the same reason (should have ended years' earlier due to rising traffic levels on narrow roads). Then Steyning have cancelled their track races. Fitting in 4 races - all on December Saturdays - always saw ill-will over fixtures clashing. Even at 1 race each calendar month - numbers supporting it are so low, an end must soon come to pass. Single-figure fields, or only slightly above, are increasingly common (look at November's results). The writer (above) mentions our Southern Area - well, for many AGMs and

probably however many more may come, should it keep going, the same people are re-elected without voting for positions. Persons trying to deal with decline are all a year older each AGM with no "new blood" providing a boost. In recent times 4 more County Athletic Associations saw 3,000 metres walks fail to appear in main Championship programmes - in the case of Essex an officials' shortage saw a 3,000 metres/2 miles walk off the programme for a first time (bar War years) since 1888 when A Searl of Chelmsford Football Club covered 2 miles in 16:44.6. The same County has just ditched walking from their annual Indoor Championships and, as we know, races once dropped rarely return. As a newsletter Editor I often receive questions and comments about race walking : some recent ones include: "Is there still a Northern Area RWA and, if so, is there a Secretary?" and from a respected former walker in the West Country, "I'd like to help out but nearest walks to me are in the Midlands and Greater London" and another, "I live in Reading and just to have a go is an 84 miles' round trip". That sums it up, how can you get race walking going where race walking isn't established? In recent times readers Bob Dobson and Len Ruddock drew attention to large numbers of race walking newcomers who came to our event via employers - an recruitment area now almost dead: Civil Service, Several Police Forces, Post Office, Stock Exchange, Banks, Insurance Companies, London Business Houses, Bus Companies, Universities, Royal Air Force and others etc. To showcase our event, we need one of ours on a major Games or Championship podium. If a runner or parkrunner, several races are local each weekend - all we offer is 1 race a month and often miles away. And yes, as the writer (above) tells us - technical laws now make it difficult for newcomers. In heyday decades, it was only "unbroken contact with the terra firma" which was understood by all - including *Joe Public*. We've all seen newcomers, albeit few, travel long distances to race - end up seeing red discs, then never seen again. A regular EW correspondent frequently called for RWA Southern Area Officers and Committee members to go into schools and attend parkruns to spread the word. *Hmmm!* They're in the 60s, 70s and even 80s and few in number without newcomers in sight - indeed a number of permitted Committee positions can't be filled! Recently, when **nobody** outside Officers and Committee came to an AGM and only 1 (yes 1) apology for absence was received (from Ron Wallwork) a respected senior Southern Area Officer asked, "Does anybody not present care what we do in this room?". The fact is most in the South are mainly interested in one Enfield League race a month (also enjoying a social side of this wonderful competition) and, as result sheets prove, don't support National, County and Area Championship races under 'A' laws.

Of course, we hear that cry, "What about the juniors?" This publication has frequently called on **all** to encourage them, as they're our future. But when reading results of National and Area Junior and Youth Championships we often see only low single figures. How many senior (and very senior) walkers can name many in our Younger Aged Group categories? It was so different in earlier decades when younger walkers were well-known and often appeared in senior races to give more established names something to think about. Bill Shankly stated, "There is no future in looking to the past". He's right - but worth comparing our current Youths/Boys' scene to 1973, when after an RWA National 10 Miles at Leyland (210 starters/191 finishers, won by the late John Webb after a great battle with Roger Mills 2nd) our RWA National Junior and Youth Squads were announced. For interest they were (no specific order):

- **Youths** (18 names): J Lord/Highgate, R Emslie and K Emslie/Steyning, P Ryan, M Greasley and P Slinn/Sheffield, B Woods/Greyfriars, G Nibre/North Shields, K Brewster/Lakeland), D Sheppard/Essex Police, P Dallow, P Meredith, P Simmons and R Chaplin/Nomads, K Sturdy and D Finch/Bromsgrove & Redditch, T Lee/Ilford and D Cotton/Holloway Poly.
- **Boys** (7 names): G Morris/Steyning, M Dunion/Holloway Poly, I Wainwright/Greyfriars, W Bolton/Lancs WC, K Underhill/Bromsgrove & Redditch, T Tidy/Brighton & Hove and P Burt/Medway.

A majority now think UK mainland race walking has passed a proverbial tipping point. Our writer, above, states we've **no** solution. Perhaps it's time for the same continuously serving Officers and Committee members of our Race Walking Association, and its Area Organisations, to look at ways of bringing our domestic sport to a *respectful and dignified* ending - as anything would be better

than pressing-on with the slow progress and lingering 'death by a thousand cuts'. That until the last one standing turns off the lights when leaving. **DA**

### HAPPY RETIREMENTS FROM WORK

South Essex Centurions Steve Kemp C1075 (left) and Steve Allen C1102 (right) retired in December and celebrated with a cuppa following their training walk on the morning of Saturday 16 December. Photo taken by Kim Howard C1020. Kempy says goodbye to the tie at reinsurance company Scor at the end of the month, whilst Steve Allen's last day in his cab was on Friday 22 December. We all wish both worthies long and happy retirements. As for what's actually in their mugs (?) - *we'll have to guess!*



### 100 MILES

Race walkers have always been keen on the 100 miles distance races - either as competitors or by showing interest in those who enter such events. Perhaps worth noting a Women's World 100 Miles **run** record was set at a World Championship in December when Miho Nakata (Japan) covered 270.363 kilometres (167, 997 miles). This bettered a previous world record of 270.116 (167, 842) set by Camille Heron (USA) in 2019.

### SAD NOTIFICATION from Sandra and Richard Brown

The Christmas card from Brigitte Aris tells us that **Mike Aris** C914 sadly passed away in June this year. Mike was a talented ultra-runner and ran for the GB 24h team at the European 24h championships in Basle. Encouraged to try race-walking, Mike joined Surrey WC and became Centurion 914 in the 1993 London 100m/24h, in a time of 22h 22.35. Mike also walked for the SWC team in the Manchester to Blackpool 50 miles. In later life, he took up cycling; he once rode down from London and stayed with us in Dorset, en route for Exeter, cycling impressive distances through hilly countryside each day. Mike was always good company, and he will be greatly missed by family and friends. We will send condolences to Brigitte. Vale, Mike, C914.

**Sandra and Richard Brown, C735, C760**

- Mike was a SWC member for 35 years and was 75. **Peter Hannell**
- Impressive CV but I never knew him. RIP Mike. **Ed Shillabeer C590**
- This is very sad news. I recall Mike's efforts at the Surrey WC/Met Police 200 km race in 1993 when he qualified in a time of 22:22.35, just ahead of Hans Rennie. He was a determined athlete. I shall ensure he is remembered at the Centurions AGM and listed in the President's Christmas letter. I am writing a Christmas note for the Surrey WC Gazette and will add the sad news. **Chris Flint**

### IMPORTANT ESSEX COUNTY AA AGM NEWS

Your new County President is **Chris Akehurst** of Colchester Harriers. Septuagenarian Chris, also a motor sports enthusiast, is a retired underwriter. He's a respected athletics coach with over a quarter of a century under his belt in that capacity, and one serving as a timekeeper. Chris is an esteemed Life Member of his Club and Honorary Secretary of Essex Cross County League. Your County President-Elect is **Richard Charlston** of Chelmsford AC, where he serves as an Endurance Coach, Child Protection Officer and Road Running/Cross Country Secretary. Your Chairman is again **Andy Catton** of Ilford AC with **Gerry O'Doherty** of Billericay Striders as Vice Chairman. Vice-Presidents are : Ron Dawson, Kaye Merrywest, Ray Pearce, Jean Tierney and John Weir. **Malcolm Bailey** and **Gerry Chandler** retained positions as Secretary and Treasurer respectively. At the AGM, esteemed Life Membership status was awarded to long serving auditor (over 40 years) **Rodney Silk** and **Diane Wooler** for her outstanding service over many years. Worth noting the Committee has 7 vacant positions; which may be of interest to readers who wish to commence making their mark in athletics administration at County level. It's minuted that our Walking Secretary position remains vacant (*any takers?*).

**FIXTURES**

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

<b>JAN</b>	13	Enfield League 3/5/10K + 2023 Series Presentation	Donkey Lane	10.30am
	20	Steyning Open Walks 5/10/15K	Steyning	2.00pm
	26	Race Walking Association AGM	'Zoom'	7.00pm
	27	The Centurions' AGM	'Zoom'	1.00pm
	28	Ray Hall Memorial Winter League 4	Aldershot	TBA (am)
<b>FEB</b>	11	EMAC/VAC Indoor Championship 2K	Lee Valley Arena	TBA
	24	Enfield League 3/5/10K	Donkey Lane	11.00am
	25	Eastern Masters Inter-Area Indoor Match 2K	Lee Valley Arena	TBA
<b>MAR</b>	9	England Athletics 10,000m Track Championship	Kettering	TBA
	30	Enfield League (details to be announced)	TBA	TBA
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Regular distance training walks are held from Leigh-on-Sea's Belfairs Park – details from Centurion Steve Kemp on <b>07860 617899</b>.</li> <li>Reminder: All <b>Enfield League</b> races now require online pre-entries.</li> </ul>				

**INVITATION** to all Met Police Walking Club members and friends

You are cordially invited to the MPWC annual dinner and reunion on **Wednesday 6 March 2024** from 5pm to 10pm at the Trafalgar Room the 2nd floor of the:

Civil Service Club, Great Scotland Yard, London, SW1A 2HJ

Join us for a delicious All-You-Can-Eat Buffet dinner including:

- Cocktail sausages + chunky chips GF
- Chicken wings GF
- Mini beef burgers GF
- Breaded Calamari GF
- Vegetable samosa V
- Vegetable spring rolls V, Ve
- Margherita pizza V
- Macaroons V, GF

GF = gluten free

V = Vegetarian

Ve = Vegan

There will also be exciting raffle prizes!

Thanks again to the kind partial sponsorship from the Metropolitan Police Walking Club (MPWC) towards the cost of the dinner, we are keeping the ticket price for **£10** per person, covering the full buffet. Drinks can be purchased separately at the ground floor bar. It will be a joyful evening of food, drinks and friendship. Your presence would mean so much to us. Please RSVP by **15 February 2024** so we can ensure there is plenty of time to confirm the guest number to the venue. Friends and families are most welcome. Please purchase tickets by replying to this invitation to confirm you are attending and transferring the money to:

**Bank:** Natwest **Account Name:** DR KSY HUNG **Account Number:** 98997564 **Sort Code:** 602423  
(Please put your surname on the reference box)

We look forward to celebrating with you.

**Dr Kitty Hung** MPWC Dinner Secretary

**BERYL RANDLE - FURTHER TRIBUTES**

- Not that I ever knew her, of course, but another prominent name from the Walking world now practising sky-walking - along with the many others we've lost over the past year or two. Much sad news indeed. **June Cork**
- Very sad. I found her to be a very likeable lady - I stress "lady" - and had great respect for her being a pillar of racewalking. Even when she put in a card against me. Blessings. **Ed Shillabeer C590**
- We are of that generation but it makes it no easier to accept. **Tony Taylor**  
**Adrian James** and **Verona Elder** also wrote to express their sadness at this news.

## ATHLETES AMONG THE HONOURED

The New Year's Honours List contains a few athletes of note - among them double-Olympians **Tom Bosworth** and **Jos Hoyte-Smith** (Chair of The Olympians) who were both mentioned in our previous Essex Walker edition. Our congratulations to these worthies.



For a full account, here's your direct link: [Tom Bosworth and Joslyn Hoyte-Smith awarded an MBE - AW](#)

## BBC SPORTS REVIEW-OF-THE-YEAR

Once compulsive viewing, but not so in recent years, this extended programme always features lists of notable sports personages who'd passed on during the year. No walkers included this time around - but pictured and captioned was one of race walking's best ever friends and supporters - Peter Matthews who left us in September when aged 78. Peter's name was synonymous with Enfield, where he'd been a long serving President in earlier times - and of course, was Guest Speaker at our Race Walking Association's 2007 Centenary Dinner at the Piccadilly Royal Air Force Club.

**Note:** The BBC Sports review website mentioned many more names, which included Ilford's first Olympian Phyllis Perkins (800 metres/Rome 1960) and 1964 Tokyo 50K walker Ray Middleton: [Sports Personality of the Year 2023: Remembering the stars we have lost - BBC Sport](#)

## EXPRESSING OUR OPINION

Lord Sebastian Coe has questioned high ticket prices at the Paris Olympic Games, expressing concern it'll prove too expensive for athletes and their families, as well as fans. In his role as President of World Athletics, he's communicated such concerns to organisers. Seb referred to affordable prices in 2012 at London and said, "I don't want fans being costed out of the stadium and I certainly don't want athletes and their families being costed out".



The noble Lord wasn't finished with criticism as he turned his attention to finalists and a winner of the BBC Sports Personality-of-the-Year award. He expressed surprise that 1,500m World Champion Josh Kerr never made their short list and also claimed heptathlete Katarina Johnson-Thompson would have been a worthy recipient of the top award because, unlike some on the list, "she won something". He diplomatically added, "This isn't being disparaging about anyone else on that list."



## NEWS FROM MARTIN OLIVER

Legendary Enfield League founder - and of 'Enfield Walker' writes, "I must admit I do miss 'Essex Walker' - it was always a good read, but I have **NO** intention of having anything to do with the 'Libel Line' (or the Internet as it's otherwise known). I was always perfectly happy to pay for a proper paper version (a **Real** magazine rather than a virtual one) but no matter. Such is Life, eh? Race walking seems just a distant memory now!" Sadly Martin also informs us he's not well nowadays and adds, "I no longer worry about anything".

## WALK REPORT

As traditional for decades, City of Southend AC staged their annual 2 miles run (and walk): out-and-back along planks of the world's longest pier on St Stephen's Day/Boxing Day at Southend seafront. It's a

"different course" as you might say. For many years race walkers joined in and were made welcome - so many that a kind hearted person offered to put up a trophy for our 1st walker. That offer wasn't taken up as, by the time this offer was made, walking fields were beginning to dwindle. Good job a trophy wasn't accepted as in recent years local walkers haven't warmed to this event. Fields were reduced to a few, then years of either nobody race walking or, at best, ones-and-twos. Local organiser June Cork, a former race walker herself when Southend-on-Sea AC (as then named) had a great ladies' team, remains one of our discipline's greatest supporters. June continues inviting race walkers to appear at this event, and despite this year's latest disappointment will - we're sure - continue doing so in 2024 and beyond. Here's June's brief report - sadly brief as like in too many 2023 races. Writes June: "We had an unusually small field - 21 out of the 33 entered; no Race Walkers, although a mother and daughter did walk/stroll the two miles."



## Dear Dave ...

### RESPONSE TO HIS ARTICLE IN PREVIOUS EDITION

Nice one, DA! Appreciate the plug for the show, and have attached a link ([Player | Coast FM](#)) for anyone who can't listen live, but fancies giving it a go on Catch-Up. Still walking once a week trying to get under 32 minutes for 5km. Age shall not weary them - oh yes, it will! Otherwise on a road bike or in gym attempting a circuits class.

Really sorry to hear about Pauline Wilson and Steve Uttley. Had (make that "have") time for both, especially as they were omnipresent back in the day. After all, Steve also plays the trumpet, and the Wilson wit augmented Cassidy's laconic humour. All the best to friends back in Essex-land. Hope you and they thrive in 2024.

**Paul Warburton**

**Adds Hon Ed:** You can listen to some renditions of Steve's trumpet playing on his YouTube channel: [Steven Uttley - YouTube](#)

### A SUGGESTION FROM GERRY GROSSE

Thanks for the EW and information on Arthur Jones which I'll pass on to Paul Maidment. Just a comment on the new Highgate track, is it not possible to encourage local schools to take part in a short track race which could be included in the inauguration meeting? Way back when, there used to be a one-mile event in the annual schools meeting at White City. Pleased to find you are still involved in the sport, give my best wishes to Chris Flint.

**Gerry Grosse**

### SHOULD WE SEEK A WALK IN HIGHGATE'S BIG MEETING?

I don't think the Southern Race Walking Association (SRWA) or Race Walking Association (RWA) have any answers to Gerry Grosse's interesting idea. When did our Great Sport last spend any money on publicity to the general sporting public outside the inner circle that currently runs our sport? We need change, refreshing initiatives and new younger officials all round looking to the future. Over again to you all! I don't believe the big Highgate Meeting in May you refer to is the ideal place for such a race. Who is going to gain admittance to schools and coach these children as you need countless certificates in protection and safety to get near to the children you refer to today. The meeting you refer to would make a laughing stock of such a suggestion and drink is also a big part of the back straight throughout the long meeting. We do not have the coaches or officials in the SRWA to manage such a race. So, with the present set up I personally would NOT wish to be associated with such an idea.

**Bill Sutherland**



Hidden Gold with Paul Warburton

27/12/2023

Great singles that, for one reason or another, never made the UK top 40.

**APPRECIATION**

- Congratulations Dave on yet another bumper issue. You seem to have contacts all over the place supplying you with interesting facts from the 'walking community'. I am sure everyone who walks appreciates what you do - keep it going. **Gerry O'Doherty** - Past President Essex Athletics
- Where would we be without Dave Ainsworth? **Jon May**

**WHAT CAN WE LEARN FROM SPAIN?**

Competition numbers - seeing all the reports on events being discontinued due to lack of numbers has me questioning what is the difference here, where events are bursting with competitors. I think a lot of it has to do with the status afforded to walking. There is a walking event in every track and field meet, regional age group championships, almost weekly "criterium" competitions which enable people to get properly judged races and times posted, the status of the event is equal to that of any other track and field or road event, and, of course, success breeds success, so the recent World Championships double golds bagged by Maria Perez and Álvaro Martin (whose mum came to stay with us for a couple of night in September!) have been acknowledged at the highest level (presentation to the President, numerous regional and national awards, top media coverage) are a matter of national pride. **Cath Duhig**

**Adds Hon Ed:** With her comments Cath sent a recent Spanish 10K entrants' list (held at Getafe) - which took up 3 full pages of A4. Our 2023 National 10K Championship had 15 finishers (from all categories and both genders). Thanks to Cath for informing us what the Spanish are doing.

*Comments:*

- Planets away. Answer? Move to Spain. **Roger Mills**
- Yes, that's why I gave up travelling long distances to watch events with 2-or-3 walkers, let alone judging such events. **John Powell**
- Fantastic. Even in our heyday we couldn't match those figures. **Peter Marlow**
- Makes you cry. **Ed Shillabeer C590**

**LATEST UPDATE ON PETE DUHIG'S HEALTH**

In a fortnight it will be a year since Pete came home from hospital after the initial stroke. We have returned on at least 5 occasions since, not including scheduled outpatient visits, and I am thinking of asking for a loyalty card. It has certainly been a very tough and testing year and life will, clearly, never be the same again, but we must look for joy in the tiniest moments and hang on to hope for the future. Pete's current situation is that he can now walk short distances, with a stick, but retires very quickly. He still cannot use his right arm and communication is a struggle as he has little speech. This doesn't stop him making his needs and choices understood by me, anyway, but does not mean he cannot be left to himself for very long and it is difficult for anyone else, no matter how well meaning, to provide him with alternative company. He is, as you can imagine, very bored and frustrated, at times quite depressed. There is only so much daytime television anyone can survive. **Cath Duhig**

**Adds Hon Ed:** Readers have often asked, as they're concerned - and always look forward to soon hearing better news.

**READERS' COMMENTS**

- Listen to the YouTube Interview with Carl Lewis who speaks the truth ([Carl Lewis on why he turned up to the British Cross Challenge in Liverpool](#) on the Athletics Weekly Channel). Stop talking about ourselves and bring in marketing and sponsorship to develop our great Sport. Athletics and Race Walking needs to learn that lesson NOW! **Bill Sutherland**

**PS:** Look what we did at the Accolade 8 Hour Walk in 1974 and the London 200 Kms Walk in the early 1990's.

- Sad news that Essex Indoor Championships has no walk. **Chris Flint**



**NEW YEAR MESSAGES**

- Should we not NOW be concentrating on the FUTURE with NEW OFFICIALS and NEW YOUNGER WALKERS, because without ANY FUTURE the PAST will soon be forgotten! Reference Essex dropping their Indoor County Championship Walk: no surprises. No doubt many other Counties will follow suit due to little interest in our Great Sport in the UK. As for a 100 miles on the track promoted by Gloucester AC (24/25 August) it's an interesting prospect. One wonders how many British Long Distance Walkers would support such a venture in 2024? Good luck in 2024! **Bill Sutherland**
- 2024 will see the 50th anniversary of Roger Mills winning a European bronze medal and Ilford AC closing in a team in the 100 miles Leicester to Skegness. **Tony Perkins**

**Adds Hon Ed:** Tony, who headed a support team, draws attention to Roger's wonderful major success and also the first time Ilford completed a full team over 100 Miles (in order: Dave Neagle/Alan Barber/Dave Ainsworth). A possible Gloucester 100 could be a 99th British 100miles/24 hours event - so if plans reach fruition a 2025 event would be our 100th and truly worthy of celebration.

**REACTION TO ST STEPHEN'S DAY/BOXING DAY RACES**

- Not surprising no walkers appeared at Southend 2 Miles. No doubt the Pier would have been slippery and wet, which would turn people off. Remember we live in a Health and Safety mad age! Hardly surprising that on Saturday 23 December and Monday 25 December (Christmas Day) at Finsbury Park Run we had the upper 300s in attendance on both days. No entry forms or entry fees, but just turn up on the day makes things just so simple. Race Walking needs updating urgently! **Bill Sutherland**
- **Adds Hon Ed:** Southend saw no entry payments or forms.
- Re Preston Park races: 10 on the start line, 2 of which DNF without a word to anyone, and including 2 juniors from Lewes AC. New course, the long gradient largely missed out. Lots of usual festive kit amongst the runners, including one in pyjamas. **Dave Hoben**

**TOM BOSWORTH MBE**

- I imagine Tom will be very pleased at his award of the MBE. He should be the next RWA President and use the accolade to help develop interest in race walking. **Chris Flint**
  - I have sent my congratulations to Tom. **Chris Maddocks**
  - Great to see Athletics getting a "look in" in the Honours. **June Cork**
- Adds Hon Ed:** At the previous RWA AGM, when no nominations were received as Hon Press & Publicity Officer, it was suggested by someone "from the floor" that Tom be approached for this position, as he can attract much publicity.

**ESSEX WALKER**

Dave Ainsworth  
18 Angmering House,  
Barnstaple Road, Romford,  
Essex RM3 7SX

**Telephone:**

01708-377382

**Email:**

[dave\\_ainsworth@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:dave_ainsworth@yahoo.co.uk)  
[essex.walker@btinternet.com](mailto:essex.walker@btinternet.com)

**Please note that you may unsubscribe to the Essex Walker at any time by contacting the Editor.**