

Essex Walker



Editor: Dave Ainsworth



INVITATION TO WALK THE PLANKS - 70th ANNIVERSARY

Southend-on-Sea have staged their annual **Boxing Day 2 Miles' Pier Walk** since 1954, apart from 2020 when Covid-19 restrictions halted racing. It commences at **10am** when slower entrants stir themselves into action. It's a *yacht handicap* as the World's longest pier is open to ambling members of our general public, who might be at risk if a large group of runners went flat out from the start - so they set off in ones-and-twos. *It's also more fun*. Yes, you read correctly it's a **run** - which is well supported and is for Southend Club members **only**. *So where do we come in?* For decades race walkers have been invited as guests and made welcome - and have often showed-up to compete in past years. Sadly, recent times failed to see walkers lining up. It's a mile out-and-back along the pier's planks. Come ready changed. Your entry fee, by tradition, is a small wrapped gift (confectionery/toiletries/drinks etc) which is placed on a table. As each competitor finishes, they pass this gifts' table and pick up something - so everybody gets a mystery prize - which is all part of the enjoyment. Afterwards several places are open for a warming coffee or something stronger. All entrants have to do is advise Southend-on-Sea Secretary (and former Essex County President) June Cork - an ex-race walker - of your intention to appear and give an anticipated 2 miles' time, so your yacht handicap mark can be assessed. June's contact details are: june.urry.parris@gmail.com or call 07702-649434. Let's see a few walkers on the pier burning off those Christmas calories. Please put Thursday 26 December in your diaries.

Adds June: "Re parking, it's along the seafront, both sides of the road; unfortunately one has to pay - I'm not sure whether one can use actual money, since I no longer opt to park anywhere in Southend if I can avoid it, and will travel with my trusty Bus Pass. You should get change out of £10 to cover parking for up to 3 hours on the seafront near the pier. I rang the Council to ask but listened only to "if you want ... press 1" etc and the call ended without me having engaged with another human.

Technology! Basically, walkers will need to take their card/iPhone or whatever. Last year someone paid for me with his card and I gave him the cash. If/when I get anything positive out of the Council, I'll notify anyone who contacts me to enter."

June Cork

YET ANOTHER EXPRESSION OF CONFIDENCE IN YOUR SOUTHERN AREA COMMITTEE

An Annual General Meeting was held on Monday 11 November at which all Southern-based walkers, officials and supporters had opportunities to criticise anything, make suggestions, promote new ideas and elect new office holders and Committee members with a view to changing direction, making improvements and driving our athletics discipline forwards. Only 14 attended (on Zoom), most being existing Office holders and Committee. This clearly indicated an overwhelming majority of potential attendees were content with how our sport is being administered, and progressing, by those occupying positions which oversee activities.

The meeting opened with your President Mike Fox's comments. He reported that since last year's AGM we had welcomed both new athletes and officials and spoke highly of the successful Ray Hall Track Series, adding that we need more coaches and officials. Mike wished all a successful New Year. Long serving Honorary Secretary Chris Flint reported he'd sent AGM details to 36 Clubs/organisations with a request such information be forwarded to all their members. With only 14 present and a mere 6 apologies for absence he sighed, "*Makes you wonder?*" and said, "*An AGM gives an opportunity to express your wishes on how things are to progress. On the Committee we all do a lot of work yet responses are slow*".

The line-up of Officers again remains unchanged as no positions were contested, again signifying contentment with those in situ. President Mike Fox, Chairman and also Honorary Treasurer Mark

Easton, Honorary Secretary Chris Flint, Honorary Championships Secretary and Judges/Officials Secretary Noel Carmody, Honorary Auditor Trevor Jones, Scrutineer Ian Richards, Committee Members: Pam Ficken and George Wilkinson. *Where were you all?*

Looking ahead, your Committee are considering ways to make attendance more attractive. While Zoom enables attendance without having to travel, it's thought more may attend if AGMs were held after popular meetings. *Just an idea*. If readers have ideas, please let any of your Officers and Committee know. As they say, *"Watch this space"*.

BRIGHTON BOXING DAY WALKS

To be held over 1-to-4 circuits of a 1 mile course (your choice of distance) commencing 10.30am. Enter at the park's Chalet Cafe. This cafe is not expected to be open for business as its owner wishes to get home to be with his family. Toilets open 10am. Local parking restrictions won't be lifted - despite being Boxing Day (*"Skinflints"* - Ed). Entry: a suggested £5 donation to Sussex-based ["Whoopsadaisy"](#) charity which runs life-changing programmes for children with a wide range of physical disabilities. If not coming to Brighton, you can still donate via their website. So, you've a choice of Boxing Day races as another is at Southend - where parking charges won't be lifted, causing Club Secretary June Cork to also comment *"Skinflints"*.

FIXTURES

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

DEC 24	1	Ray Hall Winter Track League 1,500/2,000m/ 3,000m/5,000m	Ashford	12 noon
	15	Dublin Grand Prix of Walking 20k/10k/5k	Dublin	TBA
	21	Surrey Walking Club Christmas Cup (all welcome)	Tonbridge	11.30am (prov)
	26	70 th Southend City AC 'Boxing Day' Pier 2 Miles' Yacht Handicap	Southend Seafront	10.00am
	26	Brighton "Boxing Day" Walks (1 to 4 miles)	Preston Park	10.30am
JAN 25	10	Race Walking Association AGM	Zoom	7.00pm
	11	Enfield League 5,000m + 3,000m, 2,000m and 2024 Presentations	Queen Elizabeth II Stadium	11.00am
	12	Ray Hall Winter League	TBA	TBA
	18	England Athletics Indoor Walks	Sheffield	TBA
	25	Steyning AC Open 15k/10k/5k	Spithandle Lane*	2.00pm
	25	The Centurions AGM	Zoom	1.00pm
FEB 25	8	Ray Hall Winter Track League	Eltham	11.00am
	15	Enfield League 10k + opt-out distances	Donkey Lane	11.00am
	22 - 23	British Masters Athletic Federation Indoor Championships	Lee Valley	TBA
	22 - 23	UK Athletics Indoor Championships	Birmingham	TBA

* Allow time - as start line and changing rooms are some distance apart.

NOTES

- Regular distance training walks are held from Leigh-on-Sea's Belfairs Park – details from Centurion Steve Kemp on **07860 617899**.
- All **Enfield League** races now require online pre-entries to: www.fabian4.co.uk. Any problems, call 07532-397528.

OYEZ, OYEZ, OYEZ

Advance notice for your diaries. The 2025 100 miles is to be our hundredth 100 Miles race to be held in Britain, so let's all make it a special occasion with an increased turnout of competitors, officials, helpers and supporters. *Please keep this date free* - Saturday 16/Sunday 17 August. Venue: Lewes Track, Mountfield Road, Lewes, East Sussex. BN7 2XG. Make an early decision to appear and start your

training build-up soonest. Lewes is 10 miles from Brighton - indeed many of our more senior readers will vividly recall racing through Lewes town centre while entering the final stages of a now defunct 38 miles' Hastings-to-Brighton classic. Great days - and another memorable event in mid-August to come!

BRAINTREE DISTRICT SPORTS PERSONALITY AWARD FOR CENTURION



Two members of Halstead Road Runners received awards at the Braintree District Sports Volunteer and Activity Awards last week. Hayley Lamkin won the Adult Sports Personality of the year award and **Andrew Wilmot** was highly commended in the same category. Andrew is Centurion No 997 having qualified at Newmarket's Rowley Mile racecourse in July 2003 clocking 23:33.19. We've seen Andrew at our meetings, including July's Moulton Open 5 Miles, when he was one of 15 Centurions at this event. Below is Andrew's citation as read out on the night by the presenter of the awards Chairman Cllr Lynn Walters:

Andrew is a long-standing member of Halstead Road Runners Club and completed his 850th marathon this summer shortly after celebrating his 80th birthday. He is a member of the 100 Marathon Club and known across the country for his marathon achievements. At the end of 2023, Andrew was ranked 96th in the WORLD for the most amount of marathons completed. He has also run 29 London Marathons and all of the Halstead Marathons, bar one (due to injury). He has also finished the Barrow 10 (10 marathons in 10 days) on 5 occasions. Andrew inspires so many members of Halstead Road Runners with his achievements and dedication to running and many have completed a marathon after being inspired by his achievements.



ERNIE'S MILESTONE

We wish Ilford AC Chairman **Ernie Forsyth** a happy 70th birthday. Ernie was a promising race walker with Essex Beagles (as then called - now Newham & Essex Beagles). When Ernie moved to Ilford AC he switched to running, though has walked for Ilford in a now defunct Essex League. Ernie spent time in the Royal Navy, which included duty as a submariner and a spell in a Navy recruiting office in Swindon (a location nowhere near the brine). In the Services he continued his athletics and also excelled on the football scene. On return to "Civvy Street" he took up the whistle making senior status as a referee. All the time he continued his significant contribution to athletics - including as a successful coach and was recently interviewed on BBC's London television news about his good works in this role. Dagenham-based Ernie is shortly to take up residence on Canvey Island. Ilford AC organised an exceptionally well attended celebration to mark his 70th birthday - this at "The Eva Hart" Wetherspoon pub in Chadwell Heath. This pub is named in honour of local resident Eva Hart MBE, JP, the 7th longest survivor of the Titanic sinking before she died aged 91 in 1996. The picture shows Ernie with a special "Spurs 70th football shirt" presented by fellow Spurs fan - Essex County AA Chairman Andy Catton, Ilford's General Secretary, also photographed by Club stalwart Billy Green (*who makes it clear he isn't a Spurs follower*).

"BLUE IS THE COLOUR"

The Queen Elizabeth II Stadium in Donkey Lane home team is Enfield Town FC, with whom we share as a 6-lane athletics track is laid around their football pitch. Last season Enfield were promoted to National League South and now attract much higher gates - 746 showed up on Saturday 10 November to see an entertaining 1-1 draw with Salisbury FC, who equalised in the 96th minute. Enfield Town play

in blue and white - and "blue" is a fair description of this year's Enfield Open 7 Miles. What's this to do with race walking? Well, it meant race walkers couldn't have an upstairs function room, as they open it up early as fans like a beer before games - which brings in needed income. So, we profoundly thank Tracey Wilkinson and her team for relocating our 97th Enfield Open 7 to nearby Lee Valley Athletics Centre so we could retain this event's *traditional date* (second Saturday in November). At Lee Valley a well-used road course past the sewage works and along the River Lee Navigation Canal bank is now barricaded with heavy concrete chunks so barring progress - to deter travellers from entering this area. So, a 97th staging of this famous race (our only Open 7 Miles still going) was continued by hiring the Centre's track.

A full result is to be published in "Enfield Walker" and also "Race Walking Record, which most of our readers also receive - so we won't *"steal their thunder"* by listing names/times here. If we did, little space would be needed. How did our race walking world reward this initiative? Well 7 finished the Open 7 'A' race - with just 1 man among them (**Stuart Bennett**/Brentwood Beagles). Another 3 made an Open 7 'B' race making just 10 for a full 7 Miles. Three aimed for 7 miles but were *"timed-out"* before getting there. Five did opt-out distances (3 at 5,000m/2 at 3,000m). Just 18 across the board. These races are put on for you - Tracey deserved a better reward for keeping this long-established race (first held in 1920) going. In 1920 J W Dowse (Finchley AC) was fastest as C G Bolt (Belgrave H) lived up to his name by winning the handicap. Regular walking commentator, a frequent competitor at Enfield Open 7s for decades, Bill Sutherland, remarked before our RWA Southern Area AGM, "What has the Race Walking Association or Southern RWA got to offer?" Soon after the Enfield 7 turnout was known he added, *"Race Walking in the UK needs a complete overhaul"*.

Where were you all? However we thank the Organiser, all who competed, officiated, helped or supported in any way. Their efforts were all truly valued and appreciated.



LUNCHTIME GATHERING

A picture of an enjoyable Ilford AC walkers gathering at *"The Bull"* public house in Romford Market Place, an initiative of Tony Perkins, which went down very well. Tony identified an opportunity to meet up when he scheduled a trip to Romford to collect an Akroyd & Smithers glass, commemorating its centenary in 1975, awarded to all employees at that time.

L-to-R: **Dave Neagle** (Centurion 527), **Sandra Barnes** (sister of 1976 Olympian runner, Liz Barnes of Cambridge Harriers), **Dave Ainsworth** (C540), **Steve**

Allen (C1102), **Tony Perkins**/Organiser (C685), **Alan Barber** (C535), **Len Ruddock** (talented film maker) and **Brian Armstrong** (Club stalwart - Ilford's youngest President in 1977). A fact linking all walkers at the table was their successful completions in sadly now defunct 52 miles' classic London-to-Brighton Walks - Tony being way ahead having recorded 20 consecutive finishes (1973-92) with a 9:41.24 personal best in 1976 when 6th (from 34 finishers); a position behind Alan Barber when Adrian James broke the tape. Nice messages were received from 2 Ilford ex-Presidents: Roger Mills (abroad kayaking) and Bill Sutherland.

Readers' comments:

- Good to see you all together and would have recognised most. Hope you have a wonderful Christmas and New Year ahead. **Steve King** (C492)
- A brilliant picture and you all look as though you are having a good time. **Val Mountford**
- Great to see you all – you obviously had a great time. Bull pub brings back great memories as an old Rumfordian*. **Ray Pierce**
- What a great photo. Love your shirt (DA). **Hilary McDermott**
- A small but select band! **Andy Catton**
- What a fine bunch of athletes. Well done to Tony for organising the auspicious occasion. **Olly Flynn**

- It's encouraging to know there are still some walkers left with faithful connection to Ilford! **June Cork**
- Another impressive and significantly snazzy shirt, Mr A! **Cath Duhig**
- Thanks for the Ilford photo. I haven't seen Brian Armstrong for about 40 years! **Peter Marlow**
- Thanks for your news. I remember Tony - will you thank him for me, for always getting the right lane? **Liz Barnes** (Reference to Tony allocating lanes to runners as an official at Cricklefields, a long time ago!)

***Note:** Ray uses an old name for the town - that being **Rumford** which is still used today, for example by Rumford Morris Men and for years, a large Market Place shopping hall, opposite "The Bull" where Ilford's gathering was held, was called "Rumford Shopping Hall". Rumford goes back to Saxon times - in Middle English the word 'rum' meant "roomy" hence was used for the settlement when built around "a wide roomy ford" crossing a river. Now the River Rom, the town changed with time to Romford.



IN THE MONEY

Recent cash winners in your Race Walking Association's monthly "[200 Club Draw](#)" have been, in alphabetical order: Pam Ficken, Sharon Herbert, Peter Marlow, Neale Smith, Stuart Telling and Geoff Tranter. *Congratulations to the lucky six.* If you'd like to "*chip in*" a little something (£1 a month) into your Race Walking Association's coffers, then see our Association Honorary Treasurer Mark Easton at the meetings or email him for further details at: rwatreasurer@yahoo.co.uk

BONFIRE NIGHT CELEBRATION

We congratulate race walking stalwart Cambridge Harrier Peter Hodkinson on a '*milestone*' 80th birthday, as celebrated on 5 November. Peter's a former international who excelled in distance races. He was our Race Walking Association's first National Long Distance Championship winner, when breaking the tape in 9:46.36 at Birmingham in 1979 to become inaugural holder of a coveted Wilkinson Sword. That first event was over 100 kilometres as Leicester Walking Club won a team title. The first 6 Championship races were over 100 Kilometres - 5 on roads (Birmingham 79, Sutton Coldfield 80, Stoke Mandeville 81, Corby 82 and Boreham 83), no race was held in 1984, then a 6th at Colchester Garrison in 1985 when Ed Shillabeer (then Dawlish & South Devon WC) won in a UK track record time of 9:41.54 which still stands to this day. Since those days this Championship has been contested over 100 miles or 24 hours. Peter has a 100% record in the 52 miles London-to-Brighton classic: 2 starts and 2 victories: 1976 8:06.13 (from 36 starters) and 1983 8:28.17 (from 30 starters). In 1983 Peter "*warmed up*" with victory in an annual Police Barking-to-Southend Walk over 33 miles 6 furlongs and 50 yards, which started outside Barking Police Station (where it once was) and ended with a lap of Roots Hall football pitch, home of National League Southend United (*the "Shrimpers"*). Peter gave a good account of himself at all distances and was certainly committed. Once he came straight off a night shift and headed to the Midlands for a National 50k Championship which commenced at 12 noon - and did well! He takes credit for introducing many newcomers into race walking - how we could do with more of his sort now! One convert was fellow Centurion Mick Barnbrook RIP, a runner who was persuaded to '*make-up-the-numbers*' for a Police Barking-to-Southend team. Mick became a regular in that event and graced race walking for 49 years before illness ended his contribution. Peter joined The Centurions in July 1989 when completing "The Arthur Eddlestone Memorial 100 Miles" over 100 one-mile circuits around Hendon Police College in 19:48.00 to claim membership number 848 (77 started/42 finished) after enduring much bad weather. At that event Peter was the first of eight Metropolitan Police race walkers becoming Centurions - and 25 years' later in 2014, six of them reunited in New Scotland Yard (now demolished) at an annual Met Police Walking Club Dinner & Reunion. After completing Metropolitan Police Service as an Inspector, Peter became Superintendent of Romford's bustling Market - a location which saw 4 well supported walking races sponsored by Romford Brewery Company (said brewery now demolished and a shopping centre) in past times, with free beer for competitors/officials/helpers. **On behalf of all readers, we send Peter our belated birthday greetings.**

Peter writes: "Thanks for your birthday wishes. I can't believe I'm now eighty years old, as I feel I could still compete if it wasn't for my persistent lower back pain. Still when you consider the thousands of miles

my body has endured over the years, it's not surprising if things are starting to go wrong. Please give my greetings and best wishes to those who know me.

Peter Hodkinson

NEWS FROM NORMAN PARK

Located in 59 square miles of the London Borough of Bromley (Greater London's largest borough) is 56 acres of Norman Park, which over the years has become firmly established as a racewalking venue. It's home of Blackheath and Bromley Harriers AC with 266 on-site parking spaces. A close Council Committee vote has passed a motion to introduce parking charges (5 for, 4 against plus 1 abstention) which sounds similar to a famous football result once read out on BBC radio by the late James Alexander Gordon – "East Fife 4 Forfar 5". Councillor Nicholas Bennett stated, "Most local people walk there. People parking come from a further distance. Why should Bromley taxpayers pay for the maintenance of this car park?" adding, "It'll be less than that of a cup of coffee". Councillor Julie Ireland said, "Roads are chock-a-block for half-a-mile around Norman Park". Pricing will generate a yearly £35,000 for Bromley Council. Chair of Bromley & Blackheath Harriers AC stated, "It's a disaster. Charging would be disastrous for them as a Club". For those up on technology, proposed parking is to be paid by a "RingGo" app system.



THE ATTRACTION OF RACE WALKING

[Nick Ahad on BBC Radio Leeds - Alternative Sports Report - Race Walking - BBC Sounds](#)

Race walking coach Sam Dooley shares how Leeds and Sheffield share a link with race walking. "If attraction from sport comes from challenge, one of the challenges (in race walking) is to be able to maintain that style throughout the length of that race."

Adds Hon Ed: This is interesting and informative, and only 6 minutes 26 minutes of one's time to hear it all.

ILFORD AC STATEMENT

Ilford AC are delighted Redbridge Council Planning Office took the right and sensible decision to refuse the application to install an all-weather football pitch at Cricklefields **Athletics** Stadium. This ensures the future of Ilford AC being able to offer a full programme of all athletics to local young athletes of the area. The Club were fully supported by Sport England, England Athletics, Essex Athletic Association and several local Councillors in the considerable range of objections to the applications.

Adds Hon Ed: Also thanked are those readers who objected, following a request in Essex Walker (Edition 443).

WALKING WITH PURPOSE™

SPORT ENGLAND WALKING PROGRAMME

Walking with Purpose is an 8-week guided walking programme that will help people begin to move more and gain the benefits of being more active: feeling happier, healthier and stronger. It involves completing a short amount of activity each day, such as 15 minutes (or less) walking around the house, garden or local outdoor space, aiming to add just one

more minute of walking every day. Walking with Purpose is led by **Tom Bosworth**, GB Race Walker, who achieved multiple world and British records while competing successfully at Olympic, World, European and Commonwealth level. He is now inspiring others to use walking as form of every day accessible exercise.





Dear Dave ...



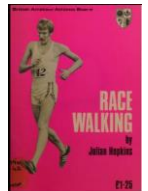
WRITES THE ONE-AND-ONLY CHRIS FOSTER

Pantomime has taken a back seat. I am getting my kicks out of being a Camden Tour Guide with regular walks and talks, see [Chris Foster – Camden Guides](#). Also, on a Saturday morning I can be found helping out and wearing a high-vis jacket at the weekly Barclay Park Run, and supporting 16-year old granddaughter Mia, who, unlike her grandfather, is built for speed. **Chris Foster**

Adds Hon Ed: Chris writes an interesting blog - **Ooooh, matron**, a story about nurses and policemen – on the Camden Guides website: camdenguides.com/ooooh-matron/

STROKE SUFFERER JULIAN HOPKINS

- I remember him coming to Plymouth once for a coaching session when we were Dawlish and South Devon RWC. Thanks to him and Eric we won the Sparta Trophy (not sure what year!). **Edbanger C590**
- I agree with Tony Taylor that Julian was an excellent coach and good walker who wrote a very good book but was lost to us through internal politics. My wife Jean had a massive stroke 10 years ago and hopefully Julian's wasn't so severe and will make a good recovery. **Alan Buchanan**
- Bad, bad! **Roger Mills**
- Very sad to learn of Julian's stroke ... he was dedicated to Race Walking (and all that goes with it. A true Race Walker). I wish him a speedy recovery. **Adrian James**



60th ANNIVERSARY OF PAUL NIHILL'S OLYMPIC SILVER MEDAL

- I hadn't realised but grateful. I have posted now on his [Facebook page](#). I noticed I have a page missing from his list of races. I will have to look this up. I still have more to add to his page at some point. Dad would have been very pleased with everyone in the race walking world keeping his memory alive. **Clare Denness**
- Good to see "crafty old Nihill", as Amos saw him. Only time we ever spoke was when he lapped me in a 10 miles at Battersea on a snowy January day, saying "Keep g'n" as he went past like some guy on a different form of transport. Wasn't surprised to hear he liked jazz - perhaps he was a musician? With that slim build and perfect co-ordination, he looked like who the theatrician in me would have cast as MacHeath, the original Mack the Knife. **Jack Rossiter**
- That's when race walking was race WALKING. **Bob Dobson**
- Those were the days ... **Ed Shillabeer**
- Fantastic footage! **Colin Harle**
- I don't know if it's my memory but I didn't recall the rainy weather for that race. Paul wrote to me on several occasions. Top man with quite a legacy. **Chris Maddocks**
- Good of you to share and a good view. **Len Ruddock**

WHAT HAS OUR SOUTHERN COUNTIES' CHAMPIONSHIP COME TO?

I actually did this race but got disqualified coming up the home straight with just over 3 laps to go. This was the Southern Counties Champs and there were 4 senior men starters out of 5 entrants and only 2 finishers as Martin Slevin also got DQd. The second walker also finished on 2 cards, so not a great day for the senior men. Nearly all of the women beat most of the men and they fared much better technically too, with only 2 or 3 cards in total. All in all, glad I went though. It was nice to catch up with old friends and colleagues. **Steve Uttley**

Adds Hon Ed: As well as what happened, equally important is why were so few at a Championship meeting staged for you all? Answers on a postcard.

TOM BOSWORTH INSPIRING THE NEXT GENERATION OF RACE WALKERS

- Well, it looks positive and if coaches are prepared to coach walking and channel athletes towards it, then fantastic. I've never been keen on too much concentration on the international side of things though. Only a handful can make it and our club scene of the 50s to 80s wasn't focused on that. Any successful event gives personal satisfaction and a sense of personal achievement. That's what drives parkrun and I'll wager that almost nobody goes into that thinking about how they can make the international team. With that caveat I hope Tom is successful. Participation has fallen drastically and so far nothing has seemed able to significantly reverse that. **Steve Uttley**
- Would love to see some follow-up on how Tom's efforts are faring in this. **Stu Cooper** Australian Centurion No 5
- I'm sharing with a coach we know in this area. Good luck to Tom in his mission. **Sandra Brown**
- Well, I hope so (*inspiring the next generation of race walkers*), despite the news that Callum Wilkinson has lost his funding which may mean a change to his dedicated routine. **Len Ruddock**

AWARD FOR Dr KITTY HUNG

Great news indeed! So well deserved. She is a 'beacon of hope' and shows true dedication in everything she partakes in with her partner John. Many congratulations! **Bill and Kath Sutherland**

ESSEX WALKER APPRECIATION

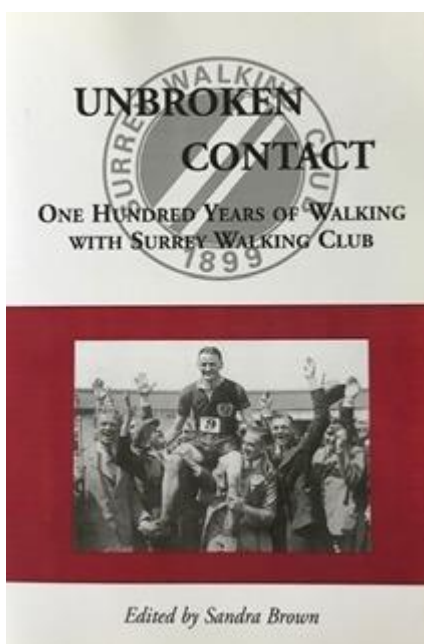
Issue 445 was well received last month, attracting comments from readers such as "Super" (**Adrian James**), "an excellent journal" (**Ron Wallwork**) and "Top Dog in race walking publications!" (**Bill Sutherland**).

- I am working my way through what is a bumper edition. All very readable stuff. I always think that you missed your vocation as a journalist. Your talent at stringing words together far exceeds many of those who make a living in the national media. **Steve Uttley**

INTERESTING NEWS

You may be interested in this comment from the Race Director at the Surrey Masters XC, who has a dry sense of humour: "*The winner of last year's W45 race is now the MP for Epsom & Ewell. But the job doesn't come with the medal!*" It's Helen Maguire, FYI. Estlé Viljoen was there too I saw. **Dave Hoben**

Adds Hon Ed: Helen Maguire MP BEM, a former Army Officer, is the Lib Dems Defence Spokesperson who runs for Epsom & Ewell Harriers.



ED SHILLABEER LOOKS BACK AND IGNITES MEMORIES

I finally got around to reading Sandra Brown's great effort in editing "*Unbroken Contact*". An absorbing read! One of the benefits of retirement (13 July was my last consultation). Unfortunately, it's not yet reflected in better training! Too many loose ends after the Practice sapping energy, brain, finances, but leaning on the Lord and supportive family keep my pecker up ... In particular the London to Brighton story etc was the most interesting to me and I appreciated your generosity in giving me a mention! Whilst I enjoyed the 52-mile challenge and joy of finishing (especially the hot brine bath in the early years), I always felt that I underperformed! Naturally I am in total awe of the record performances and the longevity of regular competitors - well known to and including Sandra and Richard Brown - and unearthed some names I had forgotten. These were Sid Clarke who tied with club colleague Andy Bainborough in 10:02:58 (1981) and another Dawlish & South Devon member Gareth Davies who did 11:11:28 in 1983. Bill Lawrence (Basingstoke, but our second claim) did 10:37:10 in 1984.

Apart from supporting the Stock Exchange Anniversary race of 2003 when Parminder Bhatti finished 21st by taking ten seconds out of me in the last 200yards to record 10:24:28, I chose to compete in

Guernsey's Church to Church on the Brighton weekend as with my demanding full-time work it was easier to cope with 19.4 miles than 52! Brighton also provided me with one of my favourite results - the start of the epic Quadrathon in 1983 when my motivation was to show people that us walkers should be regarded as genuine athletes! With Steve Till's and Arthur Eddlestone's performances I think we proved our point despite the media overlooking that fact! I still have a copy of a videotape of a Southern TV programme following the preparation and progress of the local man who came second (a cousin who lived in Bognor Regis had seen it). Happy days! So, what now? It's the 25th anniversary year of your publication ... Time for a contemporary follow up? I am confident that would be easy for Sandra to organise!! Happy walking.

Ed Shillabeer C590

Adds Hon Ed: Many readers, like Ed, will fondly recall those brine baths. The late Roger LeMoine got me a copy of this Centenary Handbook when published in 1999. It's 204 pages of compulsive reading packed with facts and wonderful accounts of past events and great pictures - including one of Surrey Walking Club members enjoying free beer after completing a Romford Brewery 3K around Romford Market Place. I got my copy autographed by authoress Sandra at our Race Walking Association's memorable 2012 Olympic Tribute Luncheon at the Tower Hotel. A sell-out, now out of print, but if you've not read it, it's worth asking a book owner to borrow a copy. **DA**

WILKINSON SWORD CENTREPIECE ... so must be 1989 after Hendon 100?

Delving into my iPhone to remove irrelevant stuff, this was a shop window display on Mutley Plain, Plymouth. Good picture of Dad (RIP). Happy days. I still see Ian Alford (white sweater) pounding the streets of Plymouth or having a coffee in Morrisons near my home! Richard Pannell moved to Tavistock; his son Greg took over as my attendant latterly but moved to Portugal recently. Chris is now in Tiverton working out in the gym and inspiring local schoolchildren. Forgotten the name of the man on Chris's right ... am I heading for dementia? Haha!

Ed Shillabeer C590



Photo captioned by 5-times' Olympian Chris Maddocks

L-to-R Eric Shillabeer (Ed's wonderful dad), Ed Shillabeer, Ian Alford, Peter Lee, Chris Maddocks and Richard Pannel.

Adds Hon Ed: Great publicity to display a major race walking trophy in a High Street shop window. In my day, the only times sport was seen in shop windows was when crowds gathered outside television shops to watch Saturday afternoon football results up on a "Grandstand" teleprinter! Thanks to Chris Maddocks we'll have more photographs soon - from the 1985 "BT 24 Hours" race on Colchester Garrison track. I got a Wilkinson Sword for the Race Walking Association when their Press & Publicity Officer - the Company ran a promotion to donate 100 Wilkinson Swords to sports organisations for presentation in endurance events so invited applications for consideration. I applied and got one.

SAD NEWS FROM AN ESSEX OLYMPIAN

I have still got sciatica after 16 weeks. Thank goodness for morphine.

Peter Marlow

Adds Hon Ed: We wish 1972 Munich Olympic 20 competitor Peter a return to good health as sciatica is a difficult medical condition to suffer. Peter was part of Southend-on-Sea AC's early/mid '70s all-star squad which was near unbeatable in team competition. After this squad's 1976 bust-up he continued race walking for "Mother Goose AC" as named after a Dulwich wine bar of which Peter was the proprietor.

Don Cox C787 writes: "Peter, get off your backside and get out there, good old days with Southend AC. I remember Essex winning the 10 Miles National Championship, my first win with Essex TEAM;

Phil first, John 6th, you 7th and me 10th. I remember you laughing at the Newmarket ultra and saying "what are you doing, you can't do 100 miles?" I came second in the Championship. You came to me after and said, "You surprised me, very well done". We also worked together in an International race at Royal Leamington Spa. Peter, I wish you well."



Season's Greetings ...



**The Essex Walker team
sends best wishes
to all readers and contributors**

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