

Essex Walker

Editor: Dave Ainsworth

RACE WALKING ASSOCIATION AGM

It was on Friday 10 January by *Zoom*, successfully repeating a previously used procedure, which enabled all to "attend" without venturing to travel in sub-zero temperatures. RWA President Chris Hobbs exercised his right to Chair this meeting, which he did so efficiently - managing to conclude all business in 1 hour 7 minutes.

Generally speaking, a small AGM turnout indicates folk are content with how an Organisation is being run. Attendance list was 20, and among them it was nice to see Essex stalwart of years' past, Kevin Perry (now Worcestershire-based) among them. Essex did well with 3 from Ilford attending plus one apology for absence from an Essex Club member. A special welcome was given to those attending for a first time. The President welcomed all and stated how he'd enjoyed the year in office. He singled out spending a week at the Paris Olympics during which he'd spectated all 3 walks, which included an inaugural Mixed Relay, commenting it was better than watching break dancing (*now also an Olympic "sport"*). He made positive remarks about our English Schools Championships continued staging of race walks. He called for silence in respect of walkers who'd passed-on since our previous AGM, and to be positive again, the number was thankfully much less this time. No nominations of likely candidates were received - yet again - for the posts of President and President-Elect, so Chris offered to again continue, having just completed extra time with our Chain of Office, as nobody stepped forward last year either. More senior readers (well, older ones) can vividly recall, decades' ago, how many walking officials used to engage in *heated* discussions as to who should next get our President's chain? *Tempus fugit.*



Honorary Secretary Colin Vesty informed the meeting he'd done as best as he could, with other commitments on his time. With no nominations received (for Secretary or Assistant Secretary), he was prepared to continue for the time being and would review his situation later in the year. Ideally, he'd like to see a new Secretary and he then offered to fulfil an Assistant Secretary role in order to give what assistance and advice he could to a new elected Secretary. From the floor, Len Ruddock suggested a salary might be considered for the Secretary role? Len was thanked for his suggestion, which is to be considered in Committee. *Watch this space.*

Mark Easton's annual Honorary Treasurer's report was - yet again - immaculate. Mark was thanked for such a well-presented annual report. Re-elected Hon Championship Secretary Noel Carmody reported that National Championships for seniors had attracted abysmal support with low take-ups and poor support. Come on readers, don't you want to support races which give opportunities to achieve National Champion medallist status? Have a rethink for 2025 - as these races are put on for you. Noel was complimented on how he'd so nicely summed up the situation and thanked for the amount of time he'd given to this task.

Long-serving Pam Ficken was re-elected as Honorary Trophies Secretary. Good news as 2 missing trophies had been located: The Edgar Horton Trophy and The Lancashire Trophy - so those seeking them can now call off searches. RWA Chairman Glyn Jones thanked Pam for her work in this role and stated this position is *"a thankless task"*. From the floor Len Ruddock suggested persons receiving trophies could have them long enough to have photographs taken - then handed back for safekeeping, so eliminating now annual cups and shields searches. It was confirmed all trophies taken away were signed for. An Officer stated that keeping all in one place would require *"a huge loft"* plus increased insurance premiums. Trophies were acknowledged as important as they've links with history.

With no nominations received for custody of the Chairman's gavel, Glyn Jones offered to continue, though suggested a younger newcomer should be considered at the next AGM. Another true stalwart John Eldrich, was thanked for volunteering to continue as the Association's Honorary Auditor.

Press/Publicity Officer: remains vacant. As for newcomers emerging, all positions were not opposed (so no elections) or unfilled. Over to you readers - can any spare time to put something back into race walking by offering your services? Some positions are ideal for anyone wishing to make their mark in athletics administration.

DEATHLY NEWS

Very good news. I was informed of photographer Mark Shearman's death by a reader - which prompted Essex Walker (previous issue) to publish a tribute as so much of his work involved race walkers. His lens was often pointed in the direction of many walkers. That same reader has been in touch to say he'd been misinformed, and octogenarian Mark hadn't died - but had **retired**. This news is joyfully communicated to Essex Walker's readers (with the online issue of [EW 447](#) amended accordingly). But still sad as his expertise will no longer be available to so many readers of athletics publications.

Also in this issue is an email from Philip Thorogood commenting on a picture and text supplied by a reader and published in Issue 431, in which Tim Thorogood RIP (Belgrave Harriers & Met Police) is reported as recently deceased. Deceased yes - but *recently*? Philip points out he left us 35 years' ago in March 1989 (see his email on page 11).

SOUTH COAST BOXING DAY REPORT

"Chris Carter" Boxing Day Races (organised by Brighton and Hove AC) on Boxing Day, 26 December 2024 in Preston Park, Brighton (East Sussex) - Category 'B' - Race Walk judge: Peter Selby.

[The Chris Carter Boxing Day Races — Brighton & Hove Athletic Club](#)

Participants complete up to 4 laps in the park depending on age. Each lap is around one mile long, so 4 miles maximum. (*Not accurately measured*).

Results:

Race no	Name	M/F	Running club	Age Group	Number of laps	Time
11	Seth Muddle	M	Lewes AC	U15B	2	00:21:32
12	Rainbow Love	M	Lewes AC	U15B	2	00:23:58
15	Trevor Jones	M	Steyning AC	MV65	4	00:39:27
16	David Kemp	M	Arena 80	MV65	4	00:39:48
14	Peter Gregoire	M	Steyning AC	MV50	4	00:40:14
13	Graeme Heaton	M	Heathfield Runners	MV65	4	00:48:37

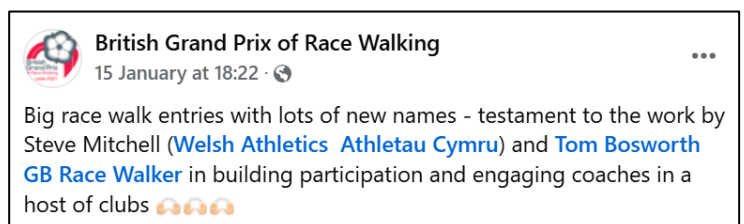
"This was the 93rd anniversary of a race which started in 1932 as a race walk only. A running race was added 20 years later and continues to this day - over a slightly different course, although sharing the majority of the route with the walkers. The walkers are given a clear start by setting off first. The two races are named after Brighton and Hove Athletic Club legend [Chris Carter](#) who acted as the starter. The weather was once again mild and kind. However, the turnout of race walkers was disappointing although always unpredictable on Boxing Day. It was good to see a couple of youngsters taking part. All profits go to [Whoopsadaisy](#) this year, a local charity helping children with physical disabilities."

Report by Judith Carder

NEW NAMES FEATURE AT SNR/U20 INDOOR RACE WALK CHAMPIONSHIPS

An earlier Essex Walker ([issue 445](#)) highlighted the efforts of Tom Bosworth in working with interested clubs to upskill coaches in race walking. Following some successful work in what Tom describes as "the growing race walk community in northwest England and North Wales", the recent indoor championships in Sheffield certainly managed to attract a number of new, young race walkers.

If you know of a local coach or athletics club that might be interested in race walk coaching/development, then please pass on information about this opportunity.



"WELCOME HOME"

This title of a 1973 Peters and Lee No1 hit certainly applies to Kevin Perry's return to Blighty after many years of residence in France. A popular race walker on our Essex scene, Kevin was part of a strong Southend-on-Sea AC (as then called) squad, based in the then town (now a City). Kevin relished the challenges of longer distances, joining The Centurions as No 912 in 1993 at Battersea Park when competing in the Surrey Walking Club/Metropolitan Police WC 'London 200 Kilometres' reaching 100 miles in 22:02.32. Big fields in such times as 105 started/58 finished/53 completed 100 miles/25 new Centurions. The famous "Southend Support Squad" were on hand to celebrate his achievement. Kevin became a long-distance regular with another 8 successful 100 Miles completions, including attaining 2002 National Champion status in Lancashire Walking Club's 24 hours race on Blackpool Track when covering 182.591k as London Vidarians claimed team honours. 35 started/23 finished/19 reached 100 miles/3 new Centurions - of whom, 2 were from the host Club - aptly named J Hardy and Hazel Fairhurst, the other new member being Manxman J Stubbs. Kevin is now to be found in Lyppard Hanford some 2 miles east of Worcester. Kevin was an attendee at our Race Walking Association AGM on Zoom.

Writes Kevin: *"I'm now residing in Worcestershire. My sister lives local and Kath my wife has family nearby. We are still finding our way around this area but so far we have only been met with kindness. I've been keeping active and out with regular walks with my dog but on the 16th of this month I will be meeting up with a group to train up for the park runs, I'll be walking ... I will talk further on this when I have more information because I understand the coach (female) is an international and has competed in ultra distance ... that's to be verified ... Thank you for keeping in touch Dave, I wish you well."*

Kevin O Perry C912 Continental 250

THE CENTURIONS HUNDRETH 100 MILES RACE

A hundredth 100 miles walking race to be staged in Britain is to be held on Lewes track (East Sussex) on 16/17 August, which it's hoped many readers will attend. There's talk of a function to celebrate this true milestone. To build up to this occasion Essex Walker delved into tales from some past races, to be featured in our editions. We start with Ilford's **Steve King** from a 1972 Leicester-to-Skegness, in which 65 started/41 finished and Steve became Centurion 492 in 21:29.17. That race was won by C464 Dave Boxall in 17:58.49 with C488 John Lees 2nd (18:15.34). Other finishers of note included Squadron Leader Mike Perkins (20:05:32) who retired to Woodbridge and came to support races such as our memorable 400th Essex League race at Chelmsford (Springfield) held in memory of C413 John Hedgethorne and at 100s in Colchester's Lower Castle

Park, future RWA President C491 Peter Worth (20:617), London Vidarian C500 Jim Williams (23:02.54) who proudly wore a blazer badge with C 'D' on it (*work it out*) and another RAF man Ron Boxell MBE, BEM (23:33.25) - yes 2 civil honours: an RAF Physical Training Officer based at Chivenor in Devon his BEM came as a Warrant Officer and when higher up the ladder as a Flight Lieutenant, received an MBE. Two milestone occasions saw finisher John Eddershaw record a 10th successful 100 miles and legendary Hew Neilson record his 20th and last over the distance - both were seen at many more events in future years. Steve King had two sub-9 hours' Stock Exchange London-to-Brighton finishes in his career (1973 8:48.56/1976 8:44.19 - both occasions 2nd, respectively to John Nye and Adrian James). On becoming a Centurion Steve received a congratulatory telegram from Ilford AC Chairman Bill Cockle (Centurion 117). Recently Essex Walker featured a current picture of Steve plus an interview he gave about his commentary work in Canada - which saw him honoured by induction into the British Columbia Athletics Hall-of-Fame. Steve and Jean have visited England a few times, one of which we feature in this article which Steve penned shortly after the event. [C492 Steve King Centurions Memory](#)

In 2014 Ilford AC celebrated a 40th anniversary of the first time they'd finished a full team of 3 (Dave Neagle/Alan Barber/Dave Ainsworth) in a 100-miles walk (no classified finishes those days - you only made result sheets if doing the lot) and a 40th anniversary of a European Championship 20K Walk in the heat of Rome when Roger Mills earned a coveted bronze medal. 33 walkers (including attendants

from the 1974 Leicester-to-Skegness) and their guests attended at "The Harrow" in Hornchurch, including 13 Centurions - it could have been more as 2 rescinded bookings as an RWA Commonwealth Games Tribute Luncheon was to be held 2 days' later at the Tower Hotel.

12 Centurions featured in a post-meal photograph (missing was C685 Tony Perkins who had to leave before the camera clicked).

L-to-R: C661 Mick Barnbrook RIP, C890 Bill Sutherland BEM, C317 Colin Young RIP, C849 Chris Flint, C540 Dave Ainsworth, C527 Dave Neagle, C936 Dave Kates, C492 Steve King, C 984 Pete Ryan RIP, C535 Alan Barber, C934 Pam Ficken and C950 Sue Clements.



HAPPY BIRTHDAY

We all wish **Alex Allen** a happy 98th birthday on Sunday 2 February. He's been part of our athletics scene for a long time, both as a competitive runner and also as a race walker. In respect of the latter he's supported Post Office walking races and has turned out for Ilford AC. Alex always enjoyed the atmosphere of an annual Moulton Open 5 Miles afternoon - and since hanging up his racing shoes, has often been along on-the-day to support and give encouragement. He also enjoyed annual New Year's Day meeting at Victoria Park before its demise. Alex is much travelled having been at a number of the World's top marathons along with son Steve and fellow "Postie" Dennis Jones (who used to score points for Loughton AC in a now defunct Essex Walking League). Back in time when Alex hit 90, son Steve arranged a celebratory weekend at one of Hon Ed's former places of employment - Butlins Holiday Camp at Bognor Regis! He won't have so far to travel for his 98th birthday revelling, as a special occasion is planned at Steve and Lisa Allen's Prittlewell home. **We all wish Alex the very best.**

MOTIVATION TO ACHIEVE CENTURION STATUS

This short video (6m 54s) illustrates one man's motivation (and struggle) to achieve Centurion status. Russell Young reports on his experience of the 2024 Gloucester track 100 miles.

[Centurions1911 | A very good race report by Russell Young on the 2024 Gloucester 100 miles Centurion event | Facebook](#)



2025 CURTAIN RAISER

The opening Enfield League fixture of 2025 saw a small field. This race was transferred from track to an adjacent King George V Playing Fields at short notice. In **zero** temperature the park was deserted with hardly any park users, and all football and rugby cancelled - the only sportsmen and women in action being race walkers. Most donned hats, gloves, long sleeves and double vests - and some still suffered. Race walkers plus those officiating/helping at such races are truly hardly individuals. Credit to all - some are octogenarians - who stood out there, static, in such cold - so as we could have a race. Their efforts were truly appreciated with a hearty round of applause at the presentation. Our presentations were made by Enfield & Haringey AC's popular Chairman Barry Cook. Pride of place at this presentation was a trophy for Chelmsford-based Jon May as "Enfield League Official-of-the-Year" for his efficient and appreciated work keeping our the League tables. Jon, an active participant who turns out for Enfield, got a special loud round of applause as it was his **74th** birthday. Such is the Enfield League's friendly nature, as started by Martin Oliver in 1998 (it was a "**Martin Oliver Tribute Race**") that Ron called for applause for our tea lady at the upstairs function room counter. No wonder an Ilford walker once wrote that the Enfield League "*is the total package*". **Well said.** Among those few in the park was former

Ilford and Post Office walker George Wood, once an Essex resident, now living in nearby Chingford. An early League participant, he instantly recognised Dave Ainsworth and Steve Allen - who in turn recognised him. George intends coming along as a spectator at future events.

A treat for Enfield League regulars is that Ron Wallwork has edited and produced a 17-pages' booklet chronicling the 2024 Enfield League season. Please read as it's full of facts/figures/reports/and many pictures. Free hard copies are available at Enfield League races, to be collected in person. Full results will be published in "[Enfield Walker](#)" and "[Race Walking Record](#)" so we won't promulgate here as we don't want to *steal the thunder* of those worthy publications.

And - "**Enfield League on Tour**" - as it was announced there's a prospect of staging a race around the Cambridge area as we have increased interest from that location. "*Watch this space*" as they say.

A "MILESTONE" 60th

Belated best birthday wishes to Hilary McDermott BSc, PhD & SFHEA (Senior Fellowship of the Higher Education Academy), who reached that "*milestone*" occasion on 4 January. Now a Professor at Loughborough University, Hilary first appeared on our race walking scene in the 1970s when attending races, with her brother Philip - who joined the Met reaching Inspector rank - in which her much-missed father Lew Mockett was a leading competitor (for Woodford Green AC, Ilford AC and Metropolitan Police Race Walking Club, where he'd served as Honorary Secretary). Hilary belongs to *4Life-Tri-Club* and in recent times Hilary's name has been on result sheets for *Charnwood AC* in evening Masters track races and at Midlands League events. Hilary and Philip organised a wonderful memorial event to the late Lew and Brenda Mockett at a Littlehampton Bowls Club at which both had played to a high standard and held offices. During this occasion, attended by a number of race walkers, a bench with their names on was unveiled. In a past decade Ilford AC entered a team in a National 100 x 1 mile track run. For any Club finding 100 different athletes on one afternoon requires some effort and when Lew (who'd volunteered to appear) was called into work at short notice for an emergency, rather than let the side down he handed his Ilford AC vest to Hilary and asked her to represent his name by running a mile at Ashton's Playing Fields track (Ilford & Woodford Green AC jointly stage their efforts, to economise on track hire fees).

Writes Hilary:

"By all means let the community know I have reached this massive age ... catching you all up!!! Remember so vividly watching you all race walk in the 1970's. Happy Days!! Thank you for the birthday wishes."



Photo: Hilary (with "*Wilfie*") at a 2021 Littlehampton seafront parkrun with former Scottish International Alan Buchanan - both were again on good form that morning.

FIXTURES

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

FEB	8	Cambridge H Open Track Walks/Ray Hall Winter Track League + Presentation	Sutcliffe Park Track	11.00am
	15	Enfield League 10k + opt-out distances	Donkey Lane	11.00am
	22 - 23	British Masters Athletic Federation Indoor Championships	Lee Valley	TBA
	23	UK Athletics Indoor Championships	Birmingham	TBA
MAR	2	UK 20km Championships (Men/Women) + supporting events	Douglas, IOM	9.30am
	5	Metropolitan Police Walking Club Annual Buffet & Reunion	Civil Service Club SW1A 2HJ	5.00pm to 10.00pm

APR	27 - 30	World Masters Indoor Championships 3,000m Track/5k Road	Florida	TBA
	5	Enfield League Walk	Cambridge	Early pm
	8	Veterans AC 5k (all welcome)	Battersea Park Bandstand	6.50pm*
	12	England Athletics 10,000m Championship	Northamptonshire	TBA
	27	TCS London Marathon	Greenwich/Blackheath	10.00am (mass start)

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

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

FOR YOUR 2025 DIARIES

Veterans AC summer series - 'B' road races, all welcome (irrespective of age or membership of VAC):

Battersea Park (Bandstand), London SW11 4NJ; 6:50pm

Footnote: allow 5 – 10 minutes from registration to start.

It's important to keep this long-established series of evening road walks going. Please give your support.

Dates/events (*all Tuesdays*): 8 April 5k road, 13 May 5 mile road, 3 June 5k road and 8 July 5k road

Notification from Dave Hoben

LEN BRETTEL RIP

We're sorry to learn of Len's death - he visited Essex to participate in a wonderful European Friendship Walks meeting staged in Chelmsford. We express condolence to his family and friends. Here is notification from Sarnia WC stalwart **Rob Elliott**:

“Some of you may remember **Len Bretel** from his Guernsey race walking days in the 60s and 70s. Member of Sarnia Walking Club that raced in Chelmsford in 1977 for Euro Friendship walks and provided a bit of evening entertainment. Often walked in Chippenham races as well as against visiting teams to Guernsey. Guernsey lost another old race walker late last year, Eddie Robins from the 1960s/early 70s. Some may remember him from Sarnia WC days at the Garnet trophy. My tributes of both walkers at <https://sarnia.wordpress.com/>.



L-to-R: Dave Dorey, Len Bretel, Rob Elliott and Mick Perrio. Photo taken by Guernsey Press in May 1977 after team's return home from the Friendship Walks weekend. *Captioned by Rob Elliott.*

Any readers who wish to find out more about the 1977 Essex Friendship Walks at Chelmsford, Rob has posted a report on his website:

<https://walkguernsey.wordpress.com/1st-european-friendship-20kms-chelmsford-1977/>

Readers' comments:

- Can't picture Len but remember racing with him! **Ed Shillabeer C590**
- Len Bretel RIP. Great Guy full of Sarnia Walking Club spirit. Always remembered! **Bill Sutherland**



"ATHLETICS WEEKLY" TO REACH 80 YEARS

Later in the year this publication is to celebrate 80 years. In December 1945 a pocket-sized 24-page publication, started by ex-Royal Air Force man Jimmy Green, arrived on the scene. By the end of 1949 5,000 copies per edition were being sold. Its title was "*Athletics*" before changing its name to "*Athletics Weekly*" on 7 January 1950 when it cost *sixpence* for 16 pages. It's still going - so let's see plenty of excellent race walking results in their pages!

MONEY GOES TO WORTHY RECIPIENTS

Congratulations to the latest prize winners in your Race Walking Association 200 Club Draw, who are Chris Flint, Steve Wynn and Lancashire Walking Club. All 3 are noted for considerable contributions to our chosen discipline. Chris had been RWA Southern Area Honorary Secretary for nearly 3 decades, he's had 2 spells as The Centurions Honorary Secretary, served long terms as a Metropolitan Police Walking Club Chairman, RWA Minutes Secretary and - for good measure - a term as Veterans AC Walking Secretary. He stepped forward at a Veterans AC AGM when a new Walking Secretary was needed - as he felt embarrassed when not one had walker offered to fill the post, expecting others to do the job for us. Chris was the last President of a now defunct London Vidarians and has worn a President's Chain at Surrey Walking Club with distinction. RWA Life Member Chris has also twice been RWA Long Distance Champion (1997/2007) and twice Isle of Man 85 Miles Parish Walk winner (1997/99). Steve, also a current SWC member is forever linked with the Post Office. He won the Post Office-in-Uniform Walk 5 years in succession (1987-to-82) including a year it was covered by television. Steve organised many 9k yacht handicap races around hilly upmarket Blackheath Park. He has a good London-to-Brighton finish on his record: 1980 13th (from 39) in 9:45.24 when just pipped by Leicester's Chris Bent in a race won by the host Club's Peter Selby. Steve's also on a Battersea Park 100 miles programme - but scratched owing to a work commitment. Lancashire Walking Club have a wonderful history with individual members winning and highly placed in so many Championships and Open races, with among them many Centurions. Nowadays, despite race walking fields struggling to maintain numbers, Lancashire WC enthusiastically continue staging frequent events for North West participants with those from elsewhere always made welcome. To support race walking for just £12 per year, contact RWA Honorary Treasurer Mark Easton: rwatreasurer@yahoo.co.uk or visit the Race Walking Association's [website](#) for details.



A GREAT FRIEND OF ESSEX WALKING TO REACH 80

International distance race walker of note **John Lees** is to reach this "*milestone*" on **Sunday 23 February**, and we all wish him well. When a '70's European Friendship Walk weekend was staged, 3 events were for teams from various countries and the Isle-of-Man Crown Dependency. Saturday afternoon saw a 20k walk along quiet lanes north of Springfield - starting/finishing at Chelmer Village ASDA Superstore. Later all assembled at a hotel in Chelmsford's centre for an evening dinner - ending with a Sunday morning track meeting at Cricklefields Stadium in downtown Ilford, followed by drinks in "The Cauliflower" opposite the track (*now boarded up*). Gifted commentator for competitive races was [John Lees](#) of Brighton and Hove AC. John had a way with words and became a full-time sports reporter and presenter with BBC Radio Brighton, then BBC Radio Sussex. John covered all sports, and when Essex County cricket team visited Sussex, Essex Radio's Sports Editor Roger Buxton (who attended our memorable 2012 Olympian walkers' tribute luncheon at the Tower Hotel) booked John as a match broadcaster. In 1972 John walked across America setting a new coast-to-coast record of 53-and-a-half days. [Big Walk 72 - 2,891 miles - John Lees](#). His build-up to that epic feat included walking 1,189 miles from John O'Groats-to-Land's End. In July '72 John entered the Leicester-to-Skegness 100 miles and led most of the way, until overtaken in the latter stages by clubmate Dave Boxall. Dave and John were the 1-2, John being the first new Centurion qualifier. Another long distance feat was televised on Esther Rantzen's popular "*That's Life*" show. A viewer purchased a faulty pram - when complained about, a manufacturer asked her to return it to their factory - which was over 70 miles' away. John was contacted to walk this pram (at pace) to the manufacturer, and return it after repair. *Great stuff!*

The '70s saw Olympic race walking problems, as after terrible events at Munich in '72 it was decided to trim the Games, and a number of events across the board were removed. Race walking saw a removal of a 1976 50K plus a statement that the 20K at those Games would be a last and therefore no race walking would appear in 1980. Many top walkers combined to lead a campaign, which was wholeheartedly supported by clubmen, ex-race walkers and officials (plus many from other athletics events). It must be said John was one of the *"leading lights"* in our successful campaign for scrapping such proposals - and was to the fore in our top publicity stunt - a *"March on Parliament"* by race walkers in kit, where on arrival a House of Commons room was booked for The Minister for Sport, Right Honourable Denis Howell PC, MP, to make a speech. It was in National newspapers - and featured on main BBC1 National News bulletins. **Victory** - a dropped 50K was reinstated in 1980 and an expected 20K demise didn't happen.

John's love of Essex was shown when travelling from Brighton to Chelmsford (Springfield) for our 400th Essex League race and memorial event for the great John Hedgethorpe RIP. Being an established distance walker, 3 miles was hardly John's favourite event - but he came from afar. **183** (yes 183) finished with John 79th in 30.30 followed closely (in order) by Victor Spain (Essex Police), Ken Carley, Ron Dawson, Bob Watts, Julie Robery, Lucy Bradley (Essex Police), Gary Smith, Ian Garmston, Paul Nihill, S Kavanagh, Pam Ficken, Peter Emery and Sue Clements. Up front a 1-2 Dan and Dom King showed their class with Andrew Parker (Wolverhampton & Bilston) 3rd, followed closely by Andy O'Rawe, Scott Davis, Alan Ellam, Mark Williams Steve Allen (Ilf), Steve Uttley, Pete Ryan, Roy Sheppard, Neil Loader and Keith Phillips. Nicola Phillips of Dartford Harriers was the ladies' winner,



John Lees - down the hide

followed by Sophie Hales and M Heathcote. Top 3 Police were Pete Ryan, Denis Sheppard and Steve King. Ilford went on to win the John Hedgethorpe Memorial Trophy, awarded to the Club with most participants (19). Everyone enjoyed a buckshee buffet and went home with a pen and special "John Hedgethorpe mug" in Police colours. *What a great event which John vividly remembers to this day.* Last year John travelled to Tonbridge track to attend Tom Bosworth's final competitive race. Nowadays his main [interest](#) is birdwatching. [John-Lees-the-gentleman-of-sport-thanks-for-bringing-such-enjoyment-and-heartache/](#) **We all wish popular John well on the celebration of his 80th birthday.**

- Interesting. I know John Lees. Thank you for the information. **Judith Carder**

SAD DEATH OF MIDLANDS CENTURION

At the Race Walking Association AGM (10 January) it was announced that earlier in this week, **C422 Dave Trigg**, aged 89 of Leicester Walking Club, had passed on. He qualified as a Centurion at the classic 1968 Leicester-to-Skegness 100 Miles in 22:40.42. The winner was Karl Abolins (a 3rd successive 100 Miles victory) with John Hedgethorpe 2nd, by one second from Mark Kastelijns. 56 started/32 finished/15 new Centurions. It was remembered for the cold, as temperatures never rose above 50 degrees F. Dave's eldest son Andy, also Leicester WC, became Centurion 1076 at Newmarket's 2009 Barclay Bicentenary Event clocking 23:21.41.

- Sad to see Centurion Dave Trigg has passed on. Great stalwart of Leicester Walking Club over many years. May he rest in peace. With sincere condolences. **Bill Sutherland**
- So saddened to receive news of Dave Trigg's passing. A loyal and dependable Leicester club member who always gave of his best as a team member. In the Leicester / Skegness we walked together for a number of miles and was so pleased to hear later that, unlike myself he went on to complete 100 miles and become a Centurion. My sincere condolences to his family. May he now rest in peace. **Rev Dr Roy Lodge**
- Sad news, and he will be remembered at the Centurions AGM. **Chris Flint**
- I well remember that Andy won the 1991 Manchester to Blackpool in fine style. I held on to him most of the way, but Andy pulled away in the last couple of miles to win by a few minutes. We were both under 8 hours. Andy was then a GB international at 50kms from a fine Leicestershire WC group, and

it's great that he went on to become a Centurion, like his father. RIP Dave Trigg, C422. **Sandra Brown**

NEWS FROM AFAR

Spanish based **Cath Duhig** is a true asset to her Club - Ryston Runners AC. Despite now despite residing far off - the good lady is still the one who sends in the Club's reports to local newspapers. It's those who go that proverbial extra mile who keep amateur sports going. Well done Cath.



BOWING OUT AS WINNERS

Three-quarters of Ilford's 2024 Enfield League winning team (not present was **Phil Barnard**, who'll get his medal later) with a trophy presented by Enfield & Haringey AC Chairman Barry Cook at the Queen Elizabeth II Stadium function room.

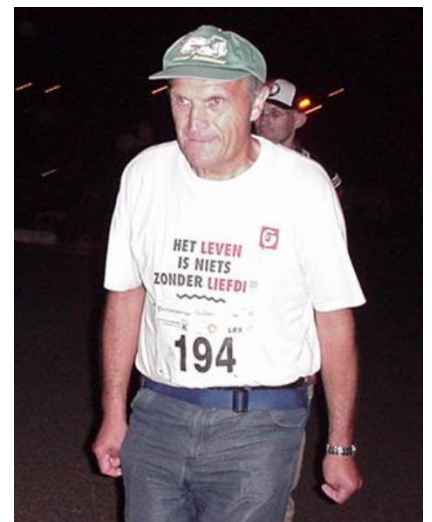
Despite losing 3/4 of the previous year's winning team, Ilford defied all odds to retain their trophy with one last hurrah! L-to-R **Steve Allen, Simon Morgan, Dave Ainsworth** (all in Ilford AC centenary year tops) with Barry Cook.

Simon, the League's 3rd man, has now left Ilford on transfer to Brentwood Beagles. Ilford's 2023 winning team, John Arthur, Simon Morgan, Shaheda Arthur and Stuart Bennett - are now all with other Clubs. As Esther Rantzen said, *"That's Life"*. Photographer Andy Cooper (Lily Ann's father).

CENTURION'S SAD DEATH WHILE IN ACTION

We're sorry to learn that **Centurion 996 Jos Van Gorp** tragically died when struck by a vehicle whilst participating in the Open Borders Walking event at Postel (Belgium). A member of Rotterdam Walking Club, Jos was killed instantly. Jos qualified in a joint SWC/London Vidarians 100 Miles race at Newmarket's Rowley Mile racecourse in July 2003 when clocking 22:58.46. [Resume Jos van Gorp](#)

The race saw 72 starters/31 finishers/1 DQ/17 new Centurions. For Essex Walker readers it's forever remembered as that great occasion when Peter Ryan won in 19:57.35, less than a minute ahead of fast closing C927 Willem Mutze who clocked 19:58.30. Peter suffered fatigue in the closing stages and leaned to one side - yet showed all his grit and *"Sheffield Steel"* to "dig deep" over a dramatic last circuit in order to break the tape. Among new Centurions were **C986 Cath Duhig** (Ryston Runners), current Centurions President **Dave Jones C987** (Yorkshire WC), **C997 Andrew Wilmot** (Halstead Road Runners) who we saw racing at July's Moulton 5, **C998 Dave Evans** (Lancashire WC), **C999 John Searson** (Spartan AC of Jersey) who's also an Atlantic rower - and wait for it - the lady who earned that coveted No 1000 membership badge **Wendy Watson** of the Long Distance Walkers' Association. For statistical *'nerds'*, Wendy, despite proudly wearing badge No 1000, isn't their thousandth member - as numbers 99 and 454 were never issued (it's a long story fully covered in Centurions Handbooks). The thousandth member came a year later in Essex, at the London Vidarians 100 Miles around Colchester's Lower Castle Park, when Badge No 1002 was claimed by Gerrit van Haandel of RWV (Holland) in 21:40.08. That day 48 started/24 finished/1DQ/13 new Centurions. Ilford AC's C1001 Kevin Marshall was the first of those new Centurions clocking 21:01.27.



Jos, who was also Continental Centurion 319, died in harness. A full account of his departure, submitted by Frans Leitjens, is posted on Facebook:

www.facebook.com/groups/778229588872966/permalink/9898406613521839/

We extend condolences to his family on his so sad passing.

OUT-AND-ABOUT

A date has been set for a now long-established programme of [Centurions' Social Walks](#) - Saturday 31 May. The chosen delightful location is to be Winchelsea in East Sussex, where Benfleet-based Centurion 1020 Kim Howard is to lead our walk. All are welcomed; families and friends (whether Centurions or not). A date for your diaries - with more information to be published nearer the day.

CENTURIONS AGM

This was held on Saturday 25 January on "Zoom" with 21 computers logging-in and 22 attending (one computer had 2 Centurions on screen). A new Office holder was elected - former Southend-on-Sea resident Martin Fisher (who qualified as a Centurion in Essex on Colchester's Garrison track in 1985) volunteered his services. Other office holders were all re-elected unopposed: President Dave Jones, Secretary Christ Flint, Treasurer Richard Cole, Captain Roger Michell, Vice Captain Frans Leijtens, Website Sue Clements, Merchandising Officer Chris Flint, Social Walks Secretary Steve Kemp and Examiner of Accounts Alex Ross. Elder statesman John Eddershaw proposed that Chris Flint be elected as a Vice President, which was approved. A number of apologies were received, which in itself shows interest. A most constructive and enjoyable meeting as The Centurions look forward to staging the hundredth 100 miles' race in the United Kingdom - on Saturday 16/Sunday 17 August on Lewes track. Another date for diaries with more information coming your way as we near this event.



[100 Miles - Centurions 1911](#)

CONGRATULATIONS ...

... to talented race walker **Jonathan Hobbs**, who made a name for himself by winning 2 British 100 miles titles in recent years - on the road at Middlesbrough in atrocious weather and on Gloucester City track. Jonathan is soon to be married. May a memorable day be coming to both and happiness ever after.

KING CHARLES III SURPRISES SANDRINGHAM 5K PARTICIPANTS

King Charles turned up for a surprise visit to Sandringham's Saturday parkrun on 25 January, and was an interested spectator. He met and chatted to runners and walkers. He had been invited by a member of Sandringham staff to meet members of [Move Against Cancer's 5K Your Way](#) group, who participate once a month in the regular parkrun event at Sandringham. The organisers said they'd no prior warning of his appearance. They added "a special 1" to their attendance figure. Many of our readers support parkruns and perhaps they'll let us know if notables are seen at their own events.



www.bbc.com/news/articles/King-Charles-surprises-Sandringham-5K-participants



Dear Dave ...

TURN BACK TIME

I had a good chat today to [Lachie Stewart](#) who won the gold medal for Scotland in the 10,000 metres in the evening after my bronze in the 20 miles Walk in the morning on Saturday 18 July 1970. He is 81 now and still hale and hearty and still loves to chat about the great day for Scottish Athletics. He still talks often with Jim Alder who took silver in the Marathon after presenting the baton to Prince Phillip at the Opening Ceremony. I was honoured to have shared a room with him during the games. Great memories indeed! Thanks for a wonderful Essex Walker with so many vivid memories of the past and present. Congrats to you and all involved in its production!

Bill Sutherland

HENDON HAPPENINGS

Ed Shillabeer wore number 43 during his fantastic 100 miles at Hendon in 1989. Just for the record, I teased a few folk at Hendon by borrowing Ed's spare number suggesting that I was about to toe the 100

mile start line. As I'd not long since competed at the 1989 World Cup in Spain, 20kms 82.35 for 15th, most people thought I was nuts - well, at least more than usual. Nice pic of Ed with Reg and Fred Denny.

Chris Maddocks



WRITES ONE WITH BELGRAVE AND MET POLICE CONNECTIONS

I'm just getting in touch – long story short, the subject of race walking at the Paris Games had come up in our running club WhatsApp chat – my contribution was to say that my father had done it in his youth for Belgrave Harriers. In some Googling for some evidence of this (other than the little Belgrave medals we have at home) I stumbled upon these editions of the Essex Walker newsletter ([EW 420](#) and [EW 421](#)).

BACK IN TIME



This 1975 picture shows a successful Hendon-based Metropolitan Police Cadets race walking team, with a trophy won in a race staged by a now defunct Midlands-based Greyfriars Walking Club. Standing on the left of the back row is recently departed **Tim Thorogood**, who went on to race for Belgrave Harriers. On the right is our picture supplier **George Nibbs** who achieved international status and is still prominent in our sport today. Can any readers suggest names for those 3 cadets in the middle? Served as legendary coach, mentor and motivator **John Bromley RIP** whose enthusiasm for race walking tempted so many Police personnel to try it - and then stick with it! On his sad death a "John Bromley Memorial Clock" was unveiled at a now closed Hendon Training College athletics track.

Gary Smith writes: "I should have tried to save that clock!!!! Probably ended up in a skip - shame. My father (surveyor at Hendon at the time) organised putting it up at the athletics track. John was diamond - took me to a couple of races in his camper van ☺"

This is the first time seeing this photo! I showed the article to our mother and Tim's wife Yvonne, who knew George (and was sad to find that he had passed away earlier this year) but couldn't offer up who the others were. She had met Tim while they were both recruits at Hendon in the 70's. They both served with the Met through to 1989 in the Richmond/Barnes area and Tim was part of the dog handling unit. We still get plenty of stories from their time on the force.

I do want to clear up that the part about Tim being recently departed as this is a little incorrect, as he unfortunately passed away some 35 years ago, a few months after my brother and I were born in March 1989. However, I appreciate that the source in the newsletter may have found out much later. Carl Lawton was correct in that we still live in Claygate. Thank you again for publishing this as it gave us a chance to look down memory lane.

Philip Thorogood

- I remember the name well although it is many years ago now. *Bill Sutherland*

"BRIEF ENCOUNTER"

I was out doing a very light training session in our Playing Fields yesterday when an elderly chap (quite a bit older than I am!) hailed me. He said he used to do some race walking and mentioned a couple of names - Martin Oliver was the first, then Amos and Ray Middleton. I asked what club he had belonged to and he said Ilford. I think he mentioned being involved with the Post Office. I told him about the Enfield League race scheduled for 11 January and he thought he would try to get along to see that. I will look out for him on the day. He said his name is George Wood. You may have some recollection of him.

John Hall

Adds Hon Ed: George resided in Essex, when joining Ilford AC (signed up by 'character' Dave Sharpe). He featured in the Enfield League's earlier years (when organised by Martin Oliver). In later years he moved to the Enfield area. George was well into Veteran status when racing - we're pleased to learn he still enjoys recreational walks in Enfield's King George V Playing Fields (where John's Chairman of the "Friends of the Park" organisation).

MORE OF MARK SHEARMAN's WORK from Chris Maddocks

A couple more memories ...



A video screenshot from my 50km finish at the Sydney Olympics - not especially clear - but you can see Mark Shearman in the background looking on - no doubt being ear bashed by the Proclaimers belting out, "I'm Gonna be - 500 miles" over the Tannoy.

Me taking a few snaps in Auckland 1990 including Mark taking a pic of Ian McCombie. For context, we were spectators at a pre-Commonwealth Games cross-country event, won jointly by Carl Thackery and my room mate for the Games, marathoner, Geoff Wightman. (Ed: Geoff was also a commentator at London's 2012 Olympic walks).

Chris Maddocks

ED'S TRAVEL INTENTIONS

Trying to arrange a trip to Jewel of the Channel in May/June for a catch up/training/memory lane!!!!
Flight prices incredibly varied!!

Ed Shillabeer C590

BBC RADIO LEEDS ALTERNATIVE SPORTS BROADCAST

- An excellent little interview. **Ian Statter**
- Great listening Dave, but it raises the same problems I have raised countless times before. We do not have an established racing programme to encourage newcomers to stay in our great Sport and develop to International Standard. We treat our Sport through the RWA as an 'add on' to mainstream Athletics when it is not. We have got to radically change our attitude and sell ourselves big time! **Bill Sutherland**

WRITES AN ALL-TIME GREAT

As always, thank you for the Essex Newsletter. Amid all the positive news it is a sad fact of life that you'll report on those either departed or ill. My best wishes go out to those struggling including, Julian Hopkins, once our national coach and all-round good guy.

It was a shock to learn of Paul Dickenson's passing. I met him on several occasions. Reference Mark Shearman's retirement, in 2000 Mark came to my home in Plymouth (a flat above Ed Shillabeer's veterinary surgery) from where a day-long photo-shoot started and resulted in a 4-page Athletics Weekly spread prior to the Sydney Olympics. Paul was well acknowledged by you, Dave, together with notable memories recalled by Peter and Marion Fawkes. Paul was indeed a good friend to those in race walking; I believe he and Paul Blagg were close as club mates. I had an opportunity to fondly refer to Paul Dickenson a number of times in the closing stages of my autobiography. He was an excellent MC at a posh British athletics awards

Few people were surprised when Jonathan Edwards received the award for male athlete of the year. Mark Lewis-Francis was an outstanding favourite for the junior male award. Winning the 100 metre sprint in Cuba was a great achievement. He had been given a generous round of applause when Dickenson announced his name. Tongue-tied, the black teenager had managed a few customary thank-you acknowledgements before strutting off stage.

Denise Lewis looked both beautiful and sexy in her gold dress. Her whoop of delight and beaming smile when accepting her award for top female matched the radiance displayed so prominently on advertising posters since her win in Sydney.

Paul Dickenson cast an eye across the ballroom. The five junior girls were returning to their seats. He cleared his throat with a light cough. He had one other special award to announce. To present the award he invited up onto the stage Jean Pickering, and her son Sean. Both were warmly applauded as the spotlight followed them to the front of the ballroom. Jean was the widow of the great television sports commentator, Ron Pickering, who died in 1991. Their son, Sean, was an international hammer thrower and a successful businessman. Dickenson waited for the noise to subside. He began by speaking about a man who had been around for a long time. *Twenty-three years on the international athletic scene. In spite of that longevity had seldom received the recognition that he deserved. Until, in the twilight of his career, he walked into the limelight.*

Smiling eyes suddenly turned towards our table. I started to sink into my chair. The realisation that it was me to whom Dickenson was referring was almost too much. I barely heard the remainder of the tribute, until, 'and in appreciation of his services to British athletics, the Ron Pickering Memorial Award goes to...' I felt the heat of the spotlight descend upon me. I did not clearly hear my name amid the back slapping and cheering. Dumbstruck, I remained rooted to my chair.

I heard Katie's voice. 'Go on Chris. It's you!' I looked at her. She had tears in her eyes. In a state of shock, I rose to my feet, and from the back of the ballroom I began to weave my way past the tables, shaking outstretched hands as I went. Two months had passed since my legs had felt so weak.

ceremony in London where I was an invited guest. Aside of social conversation I had absolutely no anticipation of him publicly mentioning me during his announcement of the final 'special' award of the night; an extract from my book is attached for your amusement.

Chris Maddocks

APPRECIATION

- Reference picture of Mary Worth and Phyllis Perkins racing: Wonderful, many thanks for a great read. **Sandra Brown**
- Thanks for the latest Essex Walker - as usual interesting and topical. **Ron Wallwork**
- Reference Paul Nihill front cover: Unmistakeable image of a great athlete. Well-deserved acclaim for Paul Nihill. **Chris Maddocks**
- I've cut back a lot of late so don't get to many meetings. Your reports are therefore a great help. **Laurie Kelly**

EX-SOUTHEND WALKER AND RESPECTED JOURNALIST'S WORDS

Have to confess I was unaware of Athletics Weekly reverting back to monthly five years ago! Its heyday has to be the 80s when it seemed to me there was a marathon about every week! No, really ... I wonder how many active athletes are there in the UK? As in club members and those who compete. Willing to bet it's half or even fewer than four decades back.

Paul Warburton

LOOKING AHEAD

One looks forward to the Lewes Centurion 100 Miles Walk with concern as to where competitors are to come from in the UK besides a large contingent from overseas again! It is such a shame that Race Walking as we knew it in the past seems to have lost its appeal at a time when fitness is such a buzz in the Park Run and beyond. We have the channels to spread the word far and wide yet the foundations are so weak and need addressing. Could my views please be brought to attention.

Bill Sutherland (C890)

TOM'S APPEAL (courtesy of LinkedIn)

WALKING WITH PURPOSE

2025 is the year *Walking with Purpose* gets moving! After several incredibly successful pilots I am now looking to take the programme nationwide! With the help of some of the partnerships I've built we are looking to have the programme within GPs evaluated before presenting it to the Department of Health later this year. I want to change how we look at treatment, health and community, using

preventive care as a priority. Our health system is on its knees, it's time to get the country walking together. *Walking with Purpose* can change people's health and ultimately their lives, as well as save our health system, councils, GPs and communities when it comes to spending on treatment.

I am also starting to roll this out commercially, with the first close to being agreed. Please get in touch if you think you could be involved, whether that be at community level, government level or for your company or staff.

Tom Bosworth

[Walking with Purpose: Tom Bosworth motivating the community to get walking - England Athletics](#)

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