

Essex Walker

Editor: Dave Ainsworth



ENGLAND ATHLETICS REGIONAL VOLUNTEER AWARDS 2025

[Regional Volunteer Awards 2025 - England Athletics](#)

Nominations for this year's England Athletics Regional Volunteer Awards need to be submitted by **9 June**. Last year **Peter Cassidy** was a worthy recipient of the East Region Services to Athletics and Running Award (see [Essex Walker 445](#)). There are several categories and the England Athletics website has useful tips on [how to make a good nomination](#).

ON THE DAY

Our last edition published a finishing time and position of Working AC's **Fiona Bishop** and enquired if readers knew of any others from our race walking world had appeared in the 2025 TCS London Marathon? Two more have come to light Marathon regular **Maureen Noel** 3:48.40 (1:53.02 halfway), 13,954th overall, 3,678 in gender and 27th in the W60-64 category. 1980 Olympian **Ian Richards** 4:38.20 (2:08.01 halfway), 29,701th overall, 19,802nd in gender and 11th in the M75-79 category. Yes, race walking participation was well down on many previous years - but our congratulations to those worthy walkers mentioned plus any others we've not been told about. The TCS London Marathon had the largest number of competitors - it was a Guinness World record - the number of people who applied for last year's ballot was also a record at 840,318 submissions ". [TCS London Marathon makes history as the biggest marathon ever](#)



RECORD-BREAKING WEEKEND FOR PARKWALK

[We did it! Biggest walking weekend ever | parkrun UK Blog](#)

Since the relaunched parkwalk over five weeks ago, 28,507 people have walked at a parkrun and for 4,486 of them it was their first parkrun ever! They were supported by 6,393 parkwalk volunteers and 6,222 tail walkers.



AT THE BIG PROBRADY MEETING

Unfortunately, popular **Callum Wilkinson** had to withdraw from the 20k owing to injury. In the 35k, our in-form **Cameron**

Corbishley was 12th, clocking 2:31.34 in high class company. In an U/23 10K, **Hannah Hopper** was an excellent 7th in 49.28. A Masters 5k saw much travelled **Steve Allen** (Barnet version) a commendable 9th in another quality field with 30.54 on the stopwatch. In the commentary box was now retired current media personality double-Olympian Tom Bosworth. Those wanting to have a word with Tom found entry into the media difficult. Among supporters was Len Ruddock, who bumped into Steve - here's a photo of the pair at the big meet. Said Len, "Really good to go on an enjoyable trip".



JACK THOMAS RIP

A sad message has been received. It referred to Gwent-based Jack Thomas RIP - Centurion 606 (21:57.19 at Bristol 1977) and an esteemed member of Woodford Green AC in his heyday, a former long serving Welsh Athletics Honorary Walking Secretary, author of the Walking Section in their

excellent Millennium Handbook, author of the Walking Section in our Race Walking Association's authoritative Centenary Handbook as compiled by Peter Cassidy, top class Judge of Walking, a former Welsh Championship Senior race walking gold medallist and Welsh Senior International Representative. "Essex Walker" [Issue 451 May/June](#) (pages 3 & 4) contains a lengthy article which marked his "milestone" 90th birthday last month. Jack was a giant in our race walking world, much of it in Essex. We extend our condolence to his wife Barbara and all the family on the passing of a long serving servant of race walking.

Message:

I would like to let you know that unfortunately on 17 May we lost my grandfather John 'Jack' Thomas at the age of 90. I know racing walking and the Centurions were important to him and he would often tell stories of his race walking achievements and the friends he made along the way to my brother and I for as long as we can remember. Unfortunately, as a family we don't have contacts in the walking community, if you could please share the news with anyone that may have known him that would be very much appreciated. Please feel free to pass along my details. Once we have details of funeral I'll be sure to share them.

Thank you for the 90th birthday tribute to Jack ("Essex Walker" Issue 451), it's nice to know that he was thought of so fondly in the race walking community. We will be starting to make the arrangements for the funeral in the coming days, all are welcome. We know how much it would mean to Jack to celebrate his life with his friends and family together sharing stories with a glass of wine.

Adam Teagle 07851-464982 adamteagle@hotmail.com

Readers commented:

- Very sad news about Jack Thomas, a long serving and dedicated official and a pillar of our race walking and Centurion families.
Sandra Brown C735
- Very sad indeed. Jack was always so enthusiastic and encouraging, and a very calming presence with his lovely calming lilt.
Cath Duhig
- Very sad news indeed. It was always a pleasure to be in Jack's company at many race walks when officiating. **Glyn Jones** (Chairman Race Walking Association)
- I had a brief phone chat with Jack Thomas's grandson, Adam. He appreciated mine and other condolences from the race walking community. His grandad was always pleasant to meet at races and added how grateful I was not only for his support but for the constructive technical advice. RIP Jack. **Chris Maddocks**
- This is sad news, and Jack was a wonderful and committed judge at so many events and especially as chief judge at Centurions events. I'll look out for the funeral date, and hope to show my respects for all he did for race walking as well as athletics. With condolences to Barbara and Adam and the family. **Chris Flint**

C750 Carl Lawton



Iain Presnell ▶ Kent School's Athletics

Iain Presnell · 29 March · 🌐

Calling all Race Walkers. The Kent Schools' Track and Field Champs at Medway Park on Saturday 14th June will include Race Walks over the ESAA distances. (U13 1500, JB/JG 2000m, IB/IG 3000m and Seniors Boys and Girls over 3000m). These races are open to athletes from outside of Kent and can be entered either via your school teacher (for Kent based athletes) or by emailing ijkl.presnell@btopenworld.com

CENTURIONS' STORIES: CARL LAWTON

In a build-up to our UK's "Hundredth 100 Miles Walk", to be held at Lewes Track on August 16/17 at which we hope you'll all be present at some time during the occasion, we've featured stories of great Centurions. This issue features the one-and-only Belgravian **Carl Lawton**, who qualified as Centurion

750 at his 2nd attempt in June 1983 at Surrey Walking Club's Ewhurst 100 Miles clocking 17:51.51, which placed him 10th on an all-time fastest qualifiers' list. This event saw 84 starters/54 finishers including 28 new Centurions. Another Belgrave Harrier was among new Centurions: C756 Ron Day 20:38.00. Others joining The Centurions were SWC's Richard Brown C760 in 21:03.49 (it must be

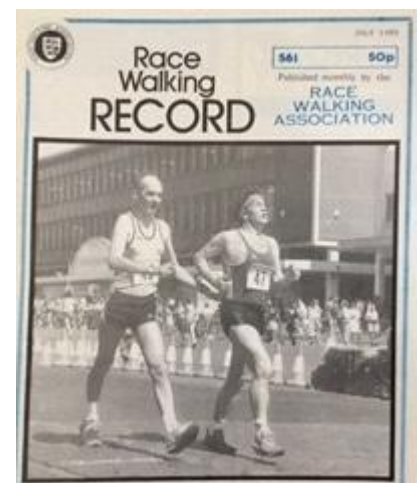
written that much more was to be seen of him in future decades), C761 Kevin Emsley of Corby AC in 21:26.36 and SWC's C768 Steve Till in 22:13.18. Carl was famed for mammoth 8 hours' long training sessions, which led to him winning many important events: National Championship victories (1979 20k Victoria Park/1983 35k Colchester University), London-to-Brightons, major distance classics such as London-to-Brighton, Hastings-to-Brighton plus numerous well-supported "open" races over distances from sprints to ultra distances. Carl has served as President of The Centurions and at their 95th Anniversary Dinner in the Piccadilly Royal Air Force Club, he welcomed a large contingent from The Netherlands by speaking in Dutch. At a memorable 2011 Centurions Centenary Dinner in the House of Commons, he introduced guest speaker Paul Nihill MBE - who commenced his speech by saying "This is the first time I've ever followed Carl Lawton". We give a direct link to an account by Carl, featured on the Centurions website, which makes enjoyable reading: [The making of a 100 miles](#).

Readers commented:

- So that's why Carl beat me – 8-hour training sessions!! Hats off to him! I remember passing him on a Plymouth to Dawlish down the steep hill about 2-to-3 miles from the finish. He was collapsing in the hedge so I asked if he was OK, and again asked my helper shortly afterwards who said he had given him sustenance and got him going again so the tough man finished! Great respect for him. My impression was that he either didn't travel well or didn't cope well with heat, from what I remember of his international races abroad. Happy days. **Ed Shillabeer**
- I remember 'Lawtonus' training for this. By the time he called for me at the flat I was living in at Teddington - he had already done 20 miles and it was 9am on a Sunday! Always thought 100 miles was about surviving rather than racing. Maybe, that's what it was racing to survive, LOL. **Paul Warburton**

HAPPY RETIREMENT

Mike Brace CBE, DL is to celebrate his 75th birthday on Thursday 19 June. As a Havering's Deputy Lieutenant Mike is now a "King's Representative" - however 75 is a compulsory retirement date for holders this office, upon reaching they must hand in their official Deputy Lieutenant's uniform. Mike competed in a now defunct Essex Walking League in the '80s. As a 10 year old Mike was blinded when a firework was thrown in his face by youngsters. This remarkable man became a Paralympic skier who rose to be British Paralympic Association Chairman. He was on London's 2012 Olympic and Paralympic Bid team and was in the room at Singapore when an announcement of London's winning bid was announced in July 2005. Mike then became a member of 2 important London Olympic Committees. He's much in demand as an after-dinner and function guest speaker - with any appearance fees being donated to charitable causes which promote disabled sports. Mike's been guest speaker at an Ilford AC annual Dinner & Dance and a Metropolitan Police Walking Club annual Dinner & Reunion. He twice ran London Marathons, with on one occasion former Ilford AC President Les Hislop (who has appeared as a race walker in the Essex League) being his guide. Mike gets about with a guide dog - firstly "Izzy" sadly no longer with us - having been replaced by "King". Mike's sorry his compulsory retirement is just 9 days before our County's "Armed Forces Day" on Saturday 28 June, as he's taken the salute on previous occasions at Havering's major parade in Romford town centre. As a then "Queen's Representative" Mike took precedence over the Borough's Mayor on a saluting dais outside Marks & Spencer. Indeed, the first time Hon Ed realised Mike was a Deputy Lieutenant was when marching in a flight of Royal Air Force veterans, when a Parade Marshall boomed out "Eyes Right" and he saw the chap who once walked in the Essex League taking the salute. Mike's a featured "Race Walking Record" front page race walker, together with guide - former Scottish International Alex Ross (who served as a Metropolitan Police Chief Inspector in Romford) - racing over Market Place cobbles outside "Debenhams" (now closed) in the Romford Brewery Open 3 kilometres. Incidentally the sponsoring Romford Brewery is also now closed, becoming shops and a car



Mike (right) in a 1989 Romford Brewery 3k walk - 5 times around Market Place cobbles - with Scottish International race walker Alex Ross (left) Chief Inspector at Romford Police Station guiding.

park. All finishers and officials at Romford Brewery sponsored races got free beer. That picture shows town centre race crowds - who included VIPs: snooker promotor Barry Hearn, green beige stars Steve Davis and Tony Meo and Britain's heaviest heavyweight champion Gary Mason, who after a 37-1 career died at Wallington aged 48 in 2011 when knocked off his bicycle by a van. Memory Lane can be visited by reading July 1989's "Race Walking Record" Issue 561. ***We salute a true public servant.***

FIXTURES and DIARY DATES

(June to August)

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

JUNE	3	Veterans AC 5k (all welcome)	Battersea Park Bandstand	6.50pm*
	8	SEAA Track Championships Sen/U20 5,000m & U17/U15 3,000m	Crystal Palace	TBA
	8	The Centurions' Social Walk (approx. 6.5 miles - all welcome)	Winchelsea, East Sussex	10.00am
	12	Aldershot, Farnham & District AC 1,000m	Aldershot	TBA
	18	Cambridge Harriers 3,000m U/15 +M/W	Sutcliffe Park	6.10pm
	21 - 22	Manx Telecom Parish Walk (85 miles)	Douglas, IOM	8.00am
	28	Eastern Masters T&F Championships	Biggleswade	TBA
	28 - 29	Welsh Senior & U15 Championships	Cardiff	TBA
JULY	2	Johnson Bowl 4 miles (+ Can you walk 4 miles in 40 minutes challenge?)	Norman Park	7.00pm
	5	Moulton Open 5 Miles (Enfield League) + supporting events	Moulton Village	1.00pm
	8	Veterans AC 5 Miles (all welcome)	Battersea Park Bandstand	6.50pm*
	19	SIAB Schools International	Derby	TBA
	25 - 27	England Athletics Championships	Birmingham	TBA
AUGUST	2 - 3	UK Athletics Outdoor Championships	Birmingham	TBA
	8 - 10	England Athletics Age Group Championships	Birmingham	TBA
	16 - 17	SWC 125th Anniversary/The Hundredth UK 100 Miles/National Championship	Lewes Track	12 noon
	25	City of Southend-on-Sea AC Open 1 Track Mile	Garon Park	10.00am

* Make time - as registration and start line are a distance apart.

NOTES

- 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.

UPDATE

Swaffham-based octogenarian **Dave Gulliver** was mentioned in our previous issue, including reference to his appearance on a "Race Walking Record" front cover (March 1969 edition). He's ex-London Vidarians, Anglia Striders and Royal Air Force and has appeared in the Enfield League. Dave reports he's keeping well and still enjoying golf, although as a concession to age, now restricts himself to 9 holes. Incidentally he's twice had a hole-in-one. Shrewd Dave had "hole-in-one" insurance both times, which forked out for payments of a traditionally expected "round for all" at the 19th hole. A retired Warrant Officer and Gulf War veteran, he helps out at RAF Marham's Heritage Centre (worth visiting - free entry & parking).



Dave served as an armourer at 2 Norfolk stations, Marham and Coltishall and represented Norfolk in Inter-Counties fixtures.



UK SPORT PARTICIPANTS NEEDED!

(CURRENT & FORMER)

Mental Health in Sport PhD Survey

What is the study?
A short (5-10 minute), anonymous, online survey on mental health experiences in sport.

Who can take part?
Anyone who has trained and competed in any sport at any level within the past 10 years, aged 18+, and living in the UK.

Why take part?

- Raise awareness and improve support in sport.
- Share your knowledge and experiences.
- Join the first study of its kind.

Happy to take part?
Scan the QR to take part



Questions?
Email the lead researcher (Aimee Parke):
aimee.parke@leedsbeckett.ac.uk



DAY TRIP FOR ALL

Social Walks - Centurions 1911

The latest in a long line of Centurions' Social Walks is coming to Sussex. All are welcome (whether or not Centurions), with friends and families. This isn't a race walk - but a highly enjoyable social walk: **CENTURIONS' SPRING SOCIAL WALK, Winchelsea, Sunday 8 June 2025**

The Centurions' spring social walk will explore the area around Winchelsea, an old cinque port located on the East Sussex coast between Hastings and Rye. Walkers are asked to meet at the Queen's Head public house, Parsonage Lane, Winchelsea TN36 4BL at 10am. **Kim Howard** C1020 will lead the walk. Distance approx. 6.5 miles. If travelling by train, pick-up can be arranged from Rye station or Winchelsea stations. Arrange with Steve Kemp. Please contact **Steve Kemp** on 07860 617899 if you have any questions, or your arrival is delayed.

THOUGHT FOR THE DAY

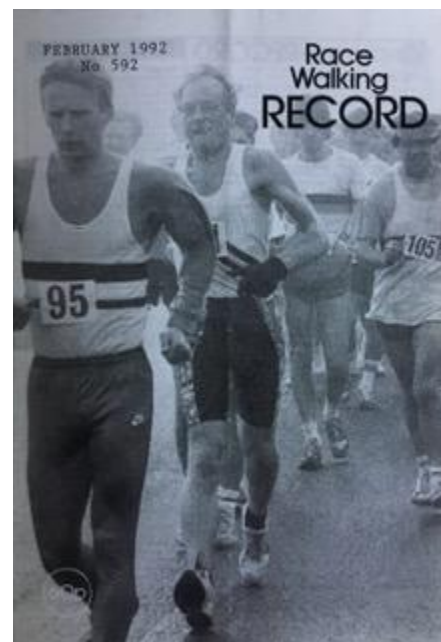
"Old people are just young people who have been around a lot longer! Just because people get old doesn't mean we are a different species".

Timothy Spall

One for our enthusiastic veterans and masters.

DAVID ("Dave") WILLIAM BAXTER RIP

Octogenarian Dave was a good friend of Essex race walking, as he made many journeys from his village of Ferring home, near Worthing (West Sussex), to compete in our events. His favourite was Ilford AC's now defunct Christmas 10 kilometres around lanes east of Chigwell Row village, in which he built up a sequence of appearances. He was often accompanied by his wife Avril, who was famed for giving Dave most thorough massages before the "off". When stretched out for this routine in a cramped Chigwell Row dressing room, many of Dave's rivals were so impressed with his treatment they wished they'd have been next up! Dave and Avril often took in Essex walking races with nearby dog shows, so getting two events on the same trip. Dave and Avril came from Sussex to support Eddie Trotter's grass track 3,000 Metres at the London Transport Buses sports ground near Fairlop Underground Station (now sold off). It showed the support for our discipline as this event drew a large field. Organiser Eddie always raced on grass tracks in bare feet (walking's version of [Bruce Tulloh](#)). The race is remembered for a row between two of race walking's "characters" - Dave Sharpe and John Perkins - who had a heated confrontation about the latter's style of progression as they sped along the home straight towards a finish, which required Chief Judge Reg Youldon to step in and calm things down. Eddie also staged a grass track 3,000m at London Transport Buses Beckenham sports ground. Today's newcomers have never experienced grass track racing. Dave's tactics were often to put in his best work early on, so giving rivals something to think about -



then hang on. It often paid dividends for him as he amassed many cups, plaques, trophies, certificates and prizes. In August '84 at Don Valley track he clocked 14:04.7 to become Civil Service Champion over 3,000 metres. He was regularly selected for Civil Service representative teams during periods when that organisation's standards were high. In December '91 at Chigwell Row for Ilford's hilly/testing Christmas 10K Dave was 2nd when Mark Easton clocked 42.49 to break a course record set by the host Club's protagonist Roger Mills. Dave made the front cover of a "Race Walking Record" (Issue No 592 February '92) which pictured that race. The photo isn't as good as you'd want - as it was taken in thick mist. Record Editor John Hedgethorne captioned it as *"Into the Valley of Death stuff"*. It was a terrible day for as well as thick mist, it was below freezing with piles of unthawed snow heaped on the roadside and ice on road surfaces in places. The race always attracted good fields of over 50, but dipped to 43 as many didn't travel thinking it'd be "off". Indeed, one regular from nearby Chadwell Heath didn't show up, saying, "I thought it couldn't possibly be on". Referee Albert Hart told walkers not to get change as he'd make a late decision - which he did with under half-an-hour to go. Albert thought long and hard, then gave an 'OK' and permitted tracksuit bottoms. That picture shows leaders a short way after the start - Mark Easton, with Dave Baxter on his shoulder, John Perkins 3rd with Peter Cassidy and Geoff Hunwicks in close attendance. John Perkins 3rd - he, like Dave Baxter, often started with a burst, though unlike Dave, John's pace never lasted. That day the lady who served teas and cakes didn't appear as she also thought it couldn't possibly be "on". Timekeeper Stan Hart (no relation to Albert) put a boiler on and dashed across the road to a general store to buy loads of cakes and snacks. Afterwards as folk were drifting off, Stan did the washing up - saying it was the first time he'd done that for decades! The last time some heard from Dave was at the time of a 2022 funeral of Sussex International walker Stuart Elms - when he said he'd a few medical appointments and his main hobby was then topiary. Sadly his wife Avril, a cancer sufferer, predeceased Dave. Like many who commence race walking events somewhat late in their athletics careers, Dave probably wished he'd been attracted earlier on. Dave gave meritorious service to Steyning AC, Sussex County AA and the Civil Service. Dave's funeral was at Worthing Crematorium on Friday 2 May - alas word never reached our walking world until 5 days' later. Had notification been given, without doubt walkers would have attended a service of such a popular competitor. Dave Baxter RIP. If you'd like to record your tribute, Worthing undertakers H D Tribe have [a tribute page](#) which you can visit, see a recent photograph of Dave and write your tribute on their website. *I'd be nice if readers were to consider doing so.*

Readers commented:

- Very sad news about Dave Baxter who I knew fairly well and remember as a very warm and friendly person as was his wife Avril. He was very talented and did some great performances despite being something of a late starter in race walking. I always remember him saying to me that he didn't go abroad (I'm not sure he even had a passport) and that was because he loved England so much and that there was always somewhere new and interesting to see in this country that he hadn't been to before. **Steve Uttley**
- Sad news indeed, but happy memories of our racing days. **Bob Dobson**
- Very sad news indeed. We knew him and his wife Avril well as they were regulars at the Ryan Cup at Chigwell. A class race walker. Rest in Peace. **Kath and Bill Sutherland**
- RIP Dave Baxter. It's an evocative picture, one showing a tough hardy group of athletes racing no matter the harsh weather conditions. Some good 'names' mentioned too. Mark Easton's winning time also shows the kind of top form he was in. 1992 was a quality year for Brit walkers. Many competed well with fast times throughout the season resulting in a total of seven men and women competing at the Barcelona Olympics. **Chris Maddocks**

FAREWELL TO AN OLYMPIC ATHLETE

Never a race walker, but always worth noting when a GB Olympic athlete departs. Such is the case as 88 year old [Thelma Hopkins](#) has died. The good lady from Northern Ireland was a 1956 (Melbourne) *joint* high jump silver medallist (with Mariya Pisareva of the Soviet Union) at 1.67 - far behind clear gold medallist Mildred McDaniel (USA) who'd soared to 1.76. Britain's 2 other 1956 high jumpers were Dorothy Tyler OBE who won silver medals in both '36 (Berlin) and '48 (London) being the only track & field athlete to win medals both sides of World War II, and Audrey Bennett. Mildred, Thelma and Audrey aren't forenames heard much nowadays. In 1956 Thelma was (for 2 months) a world record

holder with a leap of 1.74 in a small varsity meeting in Belfast. Thelma's height was just 5ft 5 inches! RIP.

Tom Bosworth: Stepping across into the world of coaching - England Athletics

Tom Bosworth, one of the fastest race walkers in British history with a Commonwealth silver medal and two Olympic appearances to his name, has embarked on a new chapter. Following his retirement as a professional athlete in 2022, he now channels his renewed passion for race walking into nurturing the next generation. England Athletics caught up with him to discover more about his transition to coaching and his plans for the next few years.

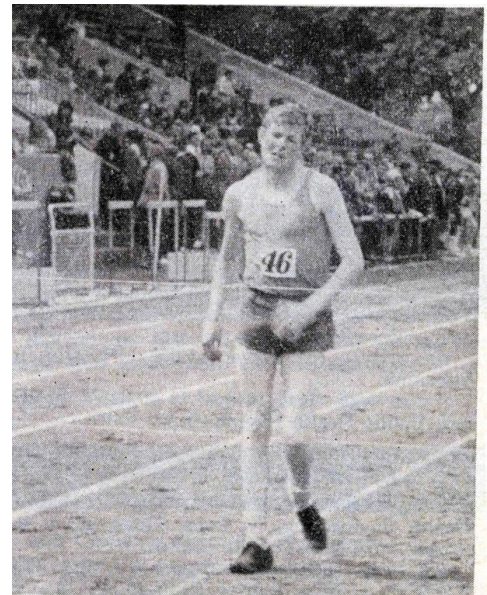


SPORTS CLOTHING RESEARCH

Sports bras 'trigger back pain by putting pressure on the spine' is a finding of a scientific study; indeed, they could be doing wearers more harm than good. Designed to reduce breast motion, they may unintentionally increase back pain during exercise say scientists. A Portsmouth University team used a first-of-its-kind musculoskeletal model to monitor the performance of more than 700 bras on 8,000 women. They found the garments 'bounce reduction' design puts extra strain on the spine. The findings could 'help ease loading on the spine' said study chief Dr Chris Mills. This article is for our increasing number of lady readers - and any furtive cross dressers!

IN THE PICTURE

If you're into old pictures here's one of now Peterborough-based **Brian Keegan** winning a 3rd consecutive 1 mile in a Greater London Council Annual Sports Day at Hurlingham Cinder Track. Brian points out it was a handicap race with starters scattered around the track and one competitor only having to walk 3 laps! Note how popular such occasions were - by that packed grandstand. Brian has a considerable collection of action photographs from now long ago decades and kindly supplied some for Essex Walker - sadly sometimes when we've sought good photographs to accompany race walkers' obituaries. He's supplied this one now featured. We've always credited photographers' names, but unaware of who held the camera at this meeting. [No connection with Brian, but Hurlingham was where Monty Python's memorable 1969 "Upper Class Twit-of-the-Year" sketch was filmed.] Brian raced with success at distances from 1 mile to a London-to-Brighton and has appeared in the Enfield League. He was a stalwart London Vidarians Walking Club member up to their disbandment. London Vidarians protagonist and talisman - now Northern Ireland based **Paul Maidment** - once paid Brian a compliment (*well of sorts*) when remarking, "If there were a UK 7 miles' Championship open only to those walkers who don't train, Brian would win".



Keegan wins the mile walk

A COUPLE OF GET WELLS

We're sorry to hear 2 former race walkers have been suffering. Hadleigh-based Centurion **Olly Browne**, who has his Centurion number 789 tattooed on arm, has been suffering from shingles. We hope it'll soon pass. Olly's a tough one, having completed a number of 100 miles walks on both roads and tracks. This included a 2009 Captain Barclay Bicentenary race at Newmarket's Rowley Mile Racecourse, when he closed-in Ilford AC's National 100 Miles' winning team, with Kevin Marshall and Micky Sutton the Club's other scorers. On that occasion Olly broke a bone in a foot fairly early on, then pressed on in pain to complete the distance. What a star! And news is that stalwart of London Transport athletics, **Eddie Trotter**, has sustained a bad leg injury. It was so troublesome he couldn't even get along to this year's TCS London Marathon. For over 2 decades Crays Hill resident Eddie ran a joint water/energy drinks station, mostly at Canary Wharf, with his jogging club - Collier Row Striders. That ceased a few years' ago, but still Eddie managed to get along for the atmosphere of the day - but not this year. Eddie built-up a sequence of Southend Mile appearances. **We wish both worthies swift recoveries.**

96th BIRTHDAY

Belated congratulations to Woodford Green AC stalwart **Ron Davies**, our Race Walking President in 1981/82. Ron, who raced well into Masters' age categories including appearances in Welsh Athletics Championships, is now based in Clevedon (North Somerset) not far from Bristol - once a hotbed of top class walking - though now long ago. In mid-May Ron celebrated his 96th birthday, for which we send our belated congratulations.

"NOISES OFF"

Len Ruddock reported difficulty in gaining access to the media area at a recent major meeting in Podebrady. It was likewise at our 2012 London Olympics where a Security Officer stood outside the Commentary box door to bar access during racing. Inside the commentary box on The Mall was Norwich-based Sound Designer Helen Atkinson, who has worked at the National Theatre, and masterminded sound for 3 race walks and both marathons. The good lady works around East Anglia, notably Ipswich's New Wolsey Theatre. A while ago she arranged sound for *"Much Ado About Nothing"* at Hornchurch's Queen's Theatre. Hon Ed, a 2012 Olympic commentator, kept in touch and knows her next appearance on sound at that theatre will be in late May/early June for a run of the *"Noises Off"* farce, when Hon Ed will again be in the audience.

RESULTS OF ENFIELD WALKING LEAGUE RACE

Fixture 4: SEAN PENDER WALKS, 3 May 2025, King George Playing Fields, Enfield

10km A race				
1	MSEN	George Wilkinson	Newmarket Joggers AC	56.59
2	W55	Grazia Manzotti	Ashford AC	58.03
3	M65	Stuart Bennett	Brentwood Beagles	65.13
4	M65	Colin Harle	Belgrave Harriers	65.21
5	W60	Maureen Noel	Belgrave Harriers	65.42
6	W60	Maraiker Wallace	Cambridge & Coleridge AC	66.23
7	WSEN	Jacqueline Benson	Ashford AC	67.36
8	M55	Mark Culshaw	Belgrave Harriers	68.31
9	W60	Suzanne Bailey	Newmarket Joggers AC	75.13
10km B race				
1	W75	Sue Barnett	Enfield & Haringey AC	74.16
2	W65	Fiona Bishop	Enfield & Haringey AC	78.01
8km B race				
1	M70	Paul Firmage	Ryston Runners	69.19
5km A race				
1	WU15	Lily-Ann Cooper	Newmarket Joggers AC	36.55
2	W45	Celia Cordran	Brentwood Beagles	38.25
5km B race				
1	M50	Taro Tyson	Cambridge & Coleridge AC	37.56
	M75	Ian Richards	Steyning AC	DQ

NOT GOING TO SEA

The one-and-only **Roger Mills** is a season ticket holder at Leyton Orient, who on Sunday 25 May contested an all-London League 1 Play-off Final at Wembley Stadium against Charlton Athletic. Roger had a holiday booked for that period, but couldn't miss out on his Club's Wembley appearance.

So writes Roger, *"Just cancelled a week's kayaking along the Pembrokeshire coast to watch 'em gain promotion. Happy days don't come that often, do they!"* It wasn't a happy day for Roger - nor for also present fellow former Ilford AC race walker Alan Barber, a member of both Stock Exchange AC and The Centurions.





BANK HOLIDAY ACTION

The Flower of Suffolk 100 Miles on 24th-to-26th May, organised by Norfolk & Suffolk Long Distance Walkers' Association (LDWA), attracted hundreds of entries (limited to 500), which was announced as "full". Proof there's a call for this type of challenge. The event takes place, mostly on public footpaths and other public rights of way, frequently across open fields or on forestry tracks, riverside paths, hills and moorland, avoiding tarmac as much as possible. The challenge is to the individual to walk 100 miles in less than 48 hours, and is NOT a race. Qualification for [The Hundred](#) requires participants to have previously completed a walk of more than 50 miles. **Bill Sutherland**

remarks that "it's not RACE WALKING and the slow pace would be off what is necessary to become an esteemed Centurion", but nevertheless LDWA events remain a worthy challenge for those with Centurion status, and for which they deservedly gain the admiration of others.

REPORT FROM EAST ANGLIA

A super LDWA 100 event around Suffolk's lovely countryside, very well organised by Norfolk & Suffolk LDWA Group (including Sue Clements who completed the group's marshals 100 three weeks ago). This makes 150 events of 100 miles or more for Richard, and 220 for me. Good day yesterday in Bury St Edmunds (more happy 100 memories) where we enjoyed an excellent recovery pint at the Old Cannon brewery.

Sandra and Richard Brown



Centurions1911

Frans Leijtens · Admin

👤 15,958 points · Yesterday at 06:30 · 🌐

The amazing Richard and Sandra Brown after completing the Flower of Suffolk 100.

This is Richard's 150th 100 mile (or more!) event and Sandra's 220th 100 mile (or more!) event. Both started their LDWA 100 career in 1982 and Sandra has completed 23 LDWA 100s and Richard slightly fewer than 20. It's fair to say, that's a lot of walking.

On today's walk, Sandra said "it was a brilliant event, the route description was excellent, the checkpoints were uniformly wonderful and it was a lovely walk", with Richard adding that "we didn't know the area, it's lovely to be here".

#ldwa #centurions1911

[Centurions1911 | The amazing Richard and Sandra Brown after completing the Flower of Suffolk 100 | Facebook](#)

Readers commented:

- Their quality, endurance and longevity defy understanding. A Centurion, Sue Clements, helped support the race. She said it took 4 years' planning. The Brown's published a book in the early 1990s "Long at the Top". **Richard Cole (Centurions Hon Treasurer)**
- Absolutely incredible! Soup or porridge post-walk meal? **Ed Shillabeer C590**
- I did see the Facebook post. Wonderful! **Tim Erickson**
- The Browns continue to amaze! **Tony Taylor**
- That is wonderful. Souper 😊 **Kim Howard**
- Nice photo of the remarkable Richard and Sandra. **Chris Maddocks**
- Great Pic! **Ian Garmston (Suffolk-based Centurion 899)**
- FAB. **Len Ruddock**
- Really admirable. **Bill Sutherland**

WALKER ON THE MOVE

Noted race walker of past decades, ace cameraman, talented film maker, key race walking supporter and committed enthusiast **Len Ruddock** is soon to relocate from his Hainault residence to settle on West Mersea Island - a location once an end stop of a defunct Colchester-to-Mersea Island 9 miles' walking race. On 13 December 1913 Chas Prigg walked around the Mersea Island perimeter in 2 hours 39 minutes. His record stood for a century until 13 December 2013 when local author Veronique Eckstein promoted a challenge to rewrite the record book. In drizzly conditions Colchester's International King twins, Dan and Dominic, sped around in 1 hour and 59 minutes. This event ignited much interest and many turned out to walk to the Island's perimeter. [Colchester: Olympic brothers break historic](#)

[Mersea record | East Anglian Daily Times](#). Among them teenagers Tom Crossley and Hamish Eckstein clocked 3 hours 7 minutes and 8 year old Alex Thompson got round in 3 hours 59 minutes. *We wish Len many happy years as an Islander.*



MONEY MONEY MONEY

Well-known names are our latest Race Walking Association 200 Club winners: **Arthur Thomson** (£25), **Bob Dobson** (£15) and **Jon May** (£10).

[200 Club - Race Walking Association](#)



Dear Dave ...

NEWS FROM ANDREW TWEED

Thank you again for the newsletter. It's always an enjoyable read but rather sobering when funerals appear in the fixture list. Ray Pearce (RIP) and what a shock it was to hear of George Nibre, a way back. I go to Frinton a lot and used to see him most mornings striding along the front, often in glorious conditions. It was joining him for a spin that got me back walking for a brief spell until my heart reminded me there are limits.

I'm writing this from my hospital bed, waiting to be picked up. A week ago I went to an early morning HIIT (high-intensity interval training) class. It was pouring with rain. No-one noticed in the gym, water had dripped through into a puddle on which I stepped, slipped and ended up with a fractured femur. The moral of the tale is not related to the sports club, it was because I was so fit for my age (indeed this week we should be walking the North Downs Way) rather than a quick fix, or a partial replacement (most likely at 77) they gave me a full new hip and predict another 25 years and a full recovery to where I was before the accident.

My race walking evolved into running Marathons, then cycling and now exercise classes with a long distances trail hikes each spring, all of which has certainly stood me in good stead. It seems to be infectious as my family are so active with Marathons, triathlons and continental bike journeys. It all started with being challenged to do the Stock Exchange London to Brighton at the age of 23. I was never athletic at school. Whatever activity I've done there's been no replacement for Race Walking in the 1970/1980s. The regular races, the competition, the fitness, the camaraderie and now, so much to look back on and think, did I really do that? I'm sure all the readers of Essex Walker can share those feelings. I don't understand why in this world of ultra sport challenges, race walking has not made a comeback. 50k has to be the ultimate, 1 mile demonstration events are not how the sport evolved or what it was designed for.

The London Marathon has a wheelchair event, why not an elite walk? It would certainly bring attention to the sport and could be judged. Other walkers could join the mass event and if they don't strictly adhere to the rules, so what? Maybe, many runners may feel intimidated by just how fast the best of the best are? As an aside, the cardiologist for the 2012 Olympics said the race walkers were the fittest. Says it all.

Andrew Tweed



PARKWALK INITIATIVE

- Marion and I volunteer every Saturday and we often get people race walking it. Marion even gave a training session to a group of runners who were entering a marathon but were not sure if they could run the whole distance without stopping. The session encouraged them to race walk when running became too hard rather than stop. A number of athletes have taken the advice and due to Marion's demonstrations, have found it beneficial. **Peter Fawkes**

- I highly recommend this. I racewalk my local [Millhouses parkrun](#) in Sheffield every now and then, I often combine this with being a "parkwalk" volunteer. I start at the back and work my way through at racewalk speed, encouraging anyone else who is walking (and passing lots of runners). This gives me another parkrun and a volunteer credit on the same day. **Tony Bell** (Scientist, runner, race walker and cat-lover)

PROGRESS REPORT

centurions1911.org.uk/next-events/100-miles/

The arrangements for the **100 miles at Lewes** seem so be coming along steadily, and we hope that many Centurions will come to the event and celebrate the 100th 100 miles since its inception. On the Friday before the start there is a walk up the infamous hill through the centre of Lewes which was always the killer before one came into Brighton to finish the Hastings Classic. The London Vidarians did well, and Paul Maidment was involved. He telephoned me the other day and he sounds in very good form. He must be 90 now.

Chris Flint

SURREY WALKING CLUB

FOUNDED 1899

**125TH Anniversary
100 Miles**

Track Race Walk

Hosted by LEWES A.C.
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And commemorating
THE CENTURIONS 1911
100th 100 miles in 24 hours

Incorporating

**UK National 100 Mile Race Walk
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**SATURDAY/SUNDAY
16/17 AUGUST 2025**

START AT NOON

By kind permission of Wave Leisure

Further information: 07721 747999
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READERS' OPINIONS

- I feel the same way about the half marathon Olympic walk being an encouragement for potential racewalkers. Parkruns around here are mostly unsuitable terrain for recognisable race walking but same principle applies. I've walked countless halves and marathons to showcase our event (and of course get some miles in!). I've printed off an earlier comprehensive listing of Sandra Brown's incredible achievements. She should be made a Dame! **Ed Shillabeer C590**
- Salud, salut and salute to Ed Shillabeer for his formidable career and achievements! **Sandra Brown**
- Thanks for the mention in Essex Walker, and as always for your kind words. **Keith Palmer**
- The news about the walk in Los Angeles is disappointing. **Chris Flint**

AN OLYMPIAN's PRAISE

Thank you to all of your team, including Tony and Christine (Perkins) for doing a wonderful job on producing such a unique and much appreciated publication the Essex Walker (EW). It not only allows us all to keep abreast of what is happening in our sport - its achievements and its heartaches. Just as importantly it is a point of social interaction between us all, whether passive or active, to all our friends near and far - their successes and tribulations. The contributors also play a crucial part in the EW's sharing with us which gives us all a glimpse of what is happening to our friends and former competitors. Hopefully you will all continue to do what you are doing or a long time come. You should all take a bow for the wonderful work you are doing.

Oliver Flynn

NEWS FROM A RESPECTED DISTANCE ATHLETE

100 miles? I am afraid that particular 'pain cave' ended at my last and failed attempt at Middlesbrough. I just don't want to put myself through it all again. The pain 'during' is doable but recovering from sleep deprivation is what I find hardest. Having said that I am still very active and currently training for an Ironman distance triathlon amongst other endurance challenges. At least I won't miss out on a night's sleep! At 65 I'm now in the throes of 'retiring', gradually closing my business down. In September I'm taking a whole month off and we are walking the South West Coastal Path!

Kevin Marshall

AN OLYMPIAN STEPS FORWARD

I have just been reappointed as an International judge at 84! Please put forward my name forward for the vacant Essex Race Walking Secretary.

Peter Marlow

- Claire Levey** (Essex County AA Chair) writes: "Congratulations on being reappointed as an international judge - that is great news."

1994 CENTURION 100 MILES RACE REVISITED

Saw the Essex Walking article. Very accurate, thanks. Further background for info: The 1994 race was hot and lots of midges. The fewest finishers, fewest new Centurions and lowest percentage of finishers. All since 1911 and nearly every race since. The Dutch race was 34 degrees. Contributed to

only 13 finishers. I took early retirement from the Crown Prosecution Service to train. I was fit and found the race relatively easy. The only Brit man from the mainland to finish - at age 60. I went too fast on a training session 3 weeks before. Got bad blisters for the first time. Patched them up for the race. When they got hot, I slowed down. Kept repeating. Finished ok. Travelling on my own from York by train with all my gear was a lot of hassle.

Richard Cole (Centurions Hon Treasurer)

NEWS FROM JIM BALL

Please pass on our very best wishes to Dave Kates, I've just read about his health issues in EW. It's a bit of a shock when you get to catch up on bad news, I'm hoping his previous good fitness will lead to a full recovery.

I've been wearing a mechanical knee unloader brace during the day for last 9 months whilst still working a 3-day week at Southampton General Hospital. I had my right partial knee replacement 4 weeks ago, all good so far. Off work for another couple of weeks. My surgery went well and was a positive experience, so I'll be happy to have the left done when my surgeon is content with my recovery progress. After my replacement disc spinal surgery in 2006, I came back positively but not so sure this time. Even as a relatively light trainer, I calculate about 50,000 miles in training and nearly 800 races since mid-1970's. Both Nick and Chris are regular runners for keeping fit only, not competition.

Jim Ball

STU RECALLS SANDRA'S BROWN'S AUSTRALIAN CENTURION RACE

I was trackside at Coburg when Sandra did her Australian Centurion qualifier, and like most I was almost mesmerised by her metronomic cadence, the efficiency of her technique and the power it generated, which became even more evident as the wearying small hours descended on the field.

Stu Cooper Australian Centurion C5

WORDS FROM A POTENTIAL NEW RECRUIT

Hello I'm looking at giving race walking a go. I see there is an event in Moulton in July, is that right?

Tommy Careless

Adds Hon Ed Chelmer Village-based Tommy came close to making a walking debut a decade-and-a-half ago, but never quite made a start line. He's been prominent in parkruns around Chelmsford, winning some. We hope to give him a warm welcome.

WRITES MIKE SWEENEY

You are also a stern, long-time, well-known veteran. **Question?** What was Bob Dobson's best well-known victory in the sport? What was he best remembered for? I'm curious to know. I also did a lot of sports in my Army years, from biathlon skiing (skiing and shooting), trained by Malcolm Hurst, the British team manager and Olympic Games silver medallist in his days. I was lucky to have Roger Mills train and practise with me at times also, and learn from Bob Dobson (European Championships and Commonwealth Games walker). I also remember getting some AAA's recognition for my time in the 3000 metres track race at the London Annual London Region Post Office Athletics Meeting later in my Post Office days. I may have also won an Annual 7 km walking race - maybe at Southend? I can't quite remember now. And I also did the Dawlish to Plymouth Race 40 miles, with Olly Browne, and Bob Dobson - he was a retired, blonde-haired, great, renowned retired Race walker.

Mike Sweeney



Adds Hon Ed Mike's a former London Region Post Office Winner and a National Post Office winner. He won the London title *5 times in succession* (1984-to-88) - and in 1984 also won the National National 6 Miles-in-Uniform clocking 51.21. In 1987 he won the National in 44.25. **WOW!** That day saw several "*big names*" on the result sheet - and his time that day was the 4th fastest in the long history of this event. On all occasions result sheets showed Mike racing for King's Cross Royal Mail Depot. Great memories of Mike's wonderful heyday in athletics. He works in China. *Thanks for igniting*

memories. For information and insights about Bob Dobson see the Ilford AC article (published 2020): <https://ilfordathleticclub.co.uk/2020/10/05/robert-dobson/>.

ILFORD's CHRISTMAS CHIGWELL ROW 10K REMEMBERED

Real men, real race walking, I always enjoyed the Ilford (Chigwell) Christmas 10k. The location and history of the 'winter base' only added to the occasion. You will remember the year I nipped up there from my duties supervising Romford Market Christmas chaos. Got my knuckles rapped one year for telling local radio that the town centre (and the A12) were best avoided because of traffic congestion. Was told "we mustn't deter the shoppers!!!"

Alex Ross

Adds Hon Ed For newer readers who haven't met Alex, he was a key figure on our race walking scene while representing Scotland, Highgate Harriers, Cambridge Harriers, Metropolitan Police Walking Club and The Centurions with distinction. When becoming a Centurion in appalling weather in the 1989 Arthur Eddlestone BEM Memorial 100 Miles (100 x 1 mile circuit at Hendon Police Training School) he was one of 8 from Metropolitan Police WC recording finishes - in his case clocking 21:51:01. He's Centurion 854 and serves the organisation as its Honorary Auditor.



A READER WRITES

Firstly, thanks for the good read that is, Essex Walker. The May/June 25 edition packed with lots of news and memories. Too many to mention all, but good to see - Callum Wilkinson producing another top result, the Brown family, Jack Thomas's 90th remembered - always a fair and interesting man to talk with in my day; Ed's comment about the London marathon being too big now - watching on TV it brought a wry smile when I saw the leaders in the men and women's races finishing whilst many others hadn't yet reached the start line!

Aside of the above, I thought I'd share another memory with you. I think it was at the 2012 Olympic luncheon (it may have been the later Commonwealth Games bash in London) when I was seated at a table next to Roger Mills. Fairly sure you were our MC. During that convivial time, I recalled two occasions in 1982 when we were in competition. Unsurprisingly, Roger had no clear recollection of either memory. I didn't take any offence, after all, he was a star man and I was still trying to make my mark in the racing world. The first occasion was at Yeovil Olympiads track which I describe in my book. The photo (right) depicts us waiting to get our post-race medals. The second occasion was at the Commonwealth Games 30km trials. We were battling a top 3 place and unknown to me, he saw me as a threat and had a plan. Using his greater experience, and probably suspecting my naivety, he made concerted surges when we were passing judges. I tried to cover those moves by 'jolting' into action and it was only a matter of time before halfway when I would see red. Down on my haunches and feeling distraught, I also recall my club coach reminding me there were people dying in the Falklands and worse off than me. It didn't make me feel any better but in time I knew what dear old Sid Clarke meant.



Chris Maddocks

PODEBRADY

Awesome times. I have happy memories of that place! Warming up with Mrazek, post-race dancing with aptly named (Champion) Olympianova! I think my 35k PB was 2:56 something in the National at Plymouth, a mere 20 minutes slower than Cameron! Early 80s because Dad and Richard Pannell were organisers and Peter Marlow added a track international senior women's 10k the day before. That race saw the debut of the future Norwegian Olympic champion Kirsty Tysse - 14yo at the time! Happy memories of the event and place (and not just the races!).

Ed Shillabeer C590

RAY PEARCE's FUNERAL

Ray deserved a good send off for all he has done for our sport, he was one of many unsung heroes of our sport.

Oliver Flynn

**CHARITABLE CORRESPONDENCE**

A lovely email from [Kidney Research](#) (sent to daughter Loretta) in response to the donations kindly made by attendees at Ray's funeral.

June Cork**Subject: The late Raymond William Pearce, 8.8.36 - 21.2.25**

Thank you for your kind donation of £290.00 in memory of your late father, Raymond William Pearce. I am writing to express our heartfelt thanks for the donations. These generous contributions are a testament to the love and respect your father inspired in those around him, and we are truly honoured to have been chosen as the beneficiary of these gifts. Your support helps us continue our vital work, providing support, guidance, information, and advocacy for kidney patients and their families. It allows us to make a meaningful difference in the lives of so many, and we are deeply grateful. Thank you again for your kindness and generosity during this difficult time.

Fiona Broomhead, Senior Office Administrator, National Kidney Federation

**WILMA PEARCE RIP**

Just in case the news has not already reached you - Wilma succumbed to her failing kidneys on Sunday. She and Ray had been married for 61 years - a good 'innings' in anyone's book. Re-united. Funeral arrangements are as follows: **Thursday 26 June, 12 noon, Emmanuel Church, Hawkwell.**

June Cork**SOUTHERN VETS AC T&F LEAGUE 2,000 METRES REPORT**

Nightmare journey to Lea Valley with partial M25 closures. Finally got there at 6.05 after 2 hour 20 minutes sitting in stationery traffic and crawling through half the side streets in Enfield. I genuinely thought I wouldn't make it. Anyway, got there to find the team manager hadn't arrived yet - stuck in traffic so had a number created on a piece of card with a felt pen. I finished 2nd 11-50 (1st in age group M55). Steve Crane won the M35s in 11-35 but Melanie Peddle was way ahead of us both in 10-51. It was pretty much a procession after the first lap with the gaps gradually widening, the only change being Helen Middleton who set off alongside Steve but faded after lap 1. A fairly small field, around a dozen I think combined men and women. Overall, I was pleased with the time, quickest since my cancer treatment but I don't fancy that journey again!

Steve Uttley**JOHN CONSTANDINOU ON PARADE**

In Liverpool I was high level security, walking the full route on foot next to the football team. 16km starting in the police training academy private grounds before coming out of their exit onto the streets which were thronged with 500,000 people. It was an incredible but hellish experience - a cross between a ticker tape parade and the Vietnam war. I've been burned across my face by some of the flares. I'll return to Liverpool FC on Wednesday to show my support, as security for Bruce Springsteen who is performing a concert at Anfield.

John Constandinou**ROUND ROBIN**

To avoid "*Chinese whispers*" I am taking the opportunity of an update on my health status in précis form: Tuesday June 3rd I will be fitted with a pacemaker. Lifestyle changes for 4 weeks will result. An unknown amount of time afterwards it is intended by the cardiology team to implant a prosthetic aortic valve to ease the effects of aortic stenosis. Both procedures are planned to be performed under local anaesthetic. I am looking forward to the expected benefits! In the meantime, I ask for your understanding, and prayers for a successful and speedy recovery. No flowers or chocolates, just send money. Ha ha ha 🎉

Edbanger C590 (aka Dr Edmund H Shillabeer!)**ESSEX WALKER**

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