

# Essex Walker



Editor: Dave Ainsworth

## A HUGE VOTE OF CONFIDENCE

Your Race Walking Association (Southern Area) held their Annual General Meeting on Friday November 14th. Chairman Mark Easton opened proceedings at 7.30pm and they were done by 7.50pm. It was poorly attended with few outside of the Officers and Committee circles.

On "zoom" it saved walkers from all over the South from having to travel for this meeting. Those involved in race walking showed their entire satisfaction by the way it's been conducted in the South over the past year by not quickening their footsteps towards computer screens. No motions or suggestions were made from the floor - and so pleased were they with those who've conducted our discipline in the Southern area, that all office holders and Committee members were re-elected unopposed. No newcomers with new ideas and initiatives sought election. The same line-up will therefore take our sport forward for the next 12 months: Chairman **Mark Easton**, Secretary **Chris Flint**, Treasurer **Mark Easton**, Officials' Secretary **Noel Carmody**, Auditors **Trevor Jones** and **Ian Richards**, Coaching & Development South **Chris Hobbs**, Coaching & Development East **Dave Annetts**, Social Media Co-ordinator **Graham Chapman**, Committee Members **Pam Ficken** & **George Wilkinson**. An unfilled position remained so: no nominations again for Coaching & Development West - **do any readers know of someone who might be prepared to volunteer?** For your 2026 diaries - the next AGM is to be in November - at 7.30pm on Friday 13th (there's a date that's associated with doom). There were 14 apologies for absence (more than attended), which indicated some were sorry they couldn't make it this time. *Yes folks - a huge vote of confidence!*

A week earlier, on 7 November, the Race Walking Association held an **Extraordinary General Meeting** on "zoom" which unanimously passed a major Rules' Revision motion. Details had been widely circulated. In any case you'll hear more about this at your RWA AGM on Friday 23 January at 7pm - another date for those 2026 diaries!



## INVITATION TO WALK THE PLANKS - 71st ANNIVERSARY

Southend-on-Sea have staged their annual Boxing Day 2 Miles' Pier Walk since 1954, apart from 2020 when Covid-19 restrictions halted racing. It commences at 10am when slower entrants stir themselves into action. It's a *yacht handicap* as the World's longest pier is open to ambling members of our general public, who might be at risk if a large group of runners went flat out from the start - so they set off in ones-and-twos. *It's also more fun.* Yes, you read correctly it's a run - which is well supported and is for Southend Club members only. *So where do we*

*come in?* For decades race walkers have been invited as guests and made welcome - and have often showed-up to compete in past years. Sadly, recent times failed to see walkers lining up. It's a mile out-and-back along the pier's planks. Come ready changed. Your entry fee, by tradition, is a small wrapped gift (confectionery/toiletries/drinks etc) which is placed on a table. As each competitor finishes they pass this gifts' table and pick up something - so everybody gets a mystery prize - which is all part of the enjoyment. Afterwards several places are open for a warming coffee or something stronger. All entrants have to do is advise Southend-on-Sea Secretary (and former Essex County President) June Cork - an ex-race walker - of your intention to appear and give an anticipated 2 miles' time, so your yacht handicap mark can be assessed. Call June on 07702-649434 or email at: [june.urry.parris@gmail.com](mailto:june.urry.parris@gmail.com). Let's see a few walkers on the pier burning off those Christmas calories. **Please put Friday 26 December in your diaries. 10.00am start.**

Adds June: Re Parking - it's along the seafront, both sides of the road; unfortunately one has to pay - I'm not sure whether one can use actual money, since I no longer opt to park anywhere in Southend if I can avoid it, and will travel with my trusty Bus Pass. You should get change out of £10 to cover parking for up to 3 hours on the seafront near the pier. I rang the Council to ask but listened only to "if you want .... press 1" etc and the call ended without me having engaged with another human. Technology! Basically they'll need to take their card/iPhone or whatever. Last year someone paid for me with his card and I gave him the cash. If/when I get anything positive out of the Council, I'll notify anyone who contacts me to enter.

### YOUR ESSEX COUNTY AA AGM

Monday 1 December 7.30pm at Chelmsford AC,  
Melbourne Park, Salerno Way, Chelmsford CM1 2EH.

Good venue with plenty of parking. Last year 21 attended – of over 50 affiliated Clubs only 9 were represented. Can we do better this year to show support for **your** County Association.



## Essex Athletics

Road Running, Cross Country, Track & Field

### YOU CAN "ZOOM IN"

Prominent coach Andi Drake is staging Zoom meetings for race walking coaches, promoted by England Athletics - please give it your support. Dates are listed in Essex Walker's Fixtures & Diary Dates column below. After registration, a confirmation email will be sent with information about how to join the meeting. [Meeting Registration - Zoom](#)

## FIXTURES and DIARY DATES

(December to March)

*It is recommended that dates/start times of fixtures are verified directly with organisers.*

DEC	1	Race Walk Coaches catch-up meeting	Zoom	6.00pm
	1	Essex County AA Annual General Meeting	Melbourne Park	7.30pm
	5	Ilford AC Annual Christmas Curry Night	Collier Row (Darjeeling Tandoori)	7.30pm
	12	Geoff Tranter RIP funeral service	Rowley Regis Crematorium	10.00am
	26	Annual City of Southend Pier Race (out-and-back) 2 Miles	Southend Pierhead	10.00am
	26	Brighton Boxing Day Walks (1-to-4 Miles) Pay on Day	Preston Park	10.30am
JAN	5	Race Walk Coaches catch-up meeting	Zoom	6.00pm
	17	Enfield League Walks + 2025 Series Presentations	Donkey Lane	11.00am
	18	England Athletics Indoor Championships	Sheffield	TBA
	23	Race Walking Association Annual General Meeting	Zoom	7.00pm
	24	Steyning Open 5/10/15k 'B' races	Steyning (Spithandle Lane)**	2.00pm
	31	The Centurions Annual General Meeting	Zoom	11.00am
FEB	2	Race Walk Coaches catch-up meeting	Zoom	6.00pm
	14 - 15	UK Athletics Indoor Championships	Birmingham	TBA
	21	Enfield League 10K + supporting races	Donkey Lane	11.00am
	21 - 22	British Masters Indoor Championships	Lee Valley Arena	TBA
MAR	1	Essex & Eastern AA Indoor Championships	Lee Valley Arena*	TBA
	2	Race Walk Coaches catch-up meeting	Zoom	6.00pm

4	Metropolitan Police Walking Club Annual Dinner/Reunion	Civil Service Club SW1A 2HJ	TBA
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NOTES

- \* Depends on entries and availability of judges.
- \*\* Long walk to start line, leave changing rooms by 1.30pm.
- 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](http://www.fabian4.co.uk). Any problems, call 07532-397528.

**CENTURIONS FEATURE ARTICLES**

As 2025 saw our hundredth 100 Miles' walking race held in the UK, we've featured a series of articles about notable Centurions. This edition sees the remarkable efforts of Loughton AC stalwart John Borgars brought to your attention. It makes enjoyable, interesting reading. [C1170 J Borgars](#)

**AN IN-DEPTH INTERVIEW of ED SHILLABEER**

With pleasure we bring you an in-depth article and interview with the *one-and-only* **Ed Shillabeer** (London Vidarians/Dawlish & South Devon WC/Plymouth City Walkers/Ilford AC/Centurions) who is still our UK 100 Kilometres' record holder (a mark set in Essex/Colchester Garrison track) way back in September 1985. It's been complied by another "one-and-only" - **Chris Maddocks** BEM - our only male British athlete to have competed at 5 Olympic Games (1984/88/92/96/2000) - should have been 6 as in 1980 only one 50k walker was sent to the Moscow Games (Ian Richards) when we could have selected 3. That year Chris was UK record holder for this distance and at the end of 1980 was voted "*UK Walker-of-the-Year*" in Race Walking Record's then annual poll. Chris is a perfect author as his own book "*Money Walks*" sold well, and currently available on Amazon (£6.54 book/£5.98 Kindle) and at other book retailers.

**I've known Edmund Shillabeer for the best part of 50 years.** He was a positive influence throughout my 20-year Olympic racing career. I am proud to call him a close friend. Respected by all who know him; people smile and are most likely to use all manner of superlatives when describing him ... legend, superman, mad but fabulous. His positive attitude is infectious, his longevity, his consistency, his achievements, Edbanger is a doer blessed with innate determination. From dawn to dusk and beyond he spins so many plates. 60 years a veterinary surgeon, he finally retired in 2024. Throughout his life he has been a member of many organisations, patron of this, President of that, even a staunch political supporter. A family man with three grown up children, Diane, Andrew and Helen who, whilst being immensely proud, may sometimes have cringed at their dad's attire and wonderfully eccentric personality. Proudly British, any opportunity to wear red, white and blue and he will carry it off with a certain panache. He is synonymous for wearing union jack shorts whilst racing and undertaking numerous fundraising challenges. Three years ago, he thought nothing of travelling on his own to London, queue for 11 hours, pay brief respects to our late Queen lying in State, back to Plymouth ready for surgery work in his veterinary practice the next day. Ed has dedicated much of his life to helping people and animals often with the kind of physical challenges few other people would even contemplate. Taking all necessary precautions, at the height of the Covid pandemic and lockdown, he kept his practice open where others closed. Personal difficulties did not stop him thinking of those less fortunate. In March 2022 Rotary club activities included helping to organise a consignment of essentials delivered to the Devon Rotary hub for onward travel to a major warehouse in Poland from where the distribution to Ukraine was made. He continues to help facilitate mercy missions to the war-torn areas, instrumental in this is Maksym Litvinov, son of the late Ukrainian athletics coach, Nicolai who Edmund had known for decades during his competition travels. Maksym, his wife and teenage son now live with the Shillabeer family in Plymouth and credits Edmund with helping to save their lives. Undeterred, the brave young man has driven back several times to his

homeland with donated food and medical supplies. This charitable humanitarian effort is just the tip of the iceberg when it comes to Edmund's desire to help others. He's completed more Plymouth marathons than any other and, at the last count, he has completed 26 London marathons, each time raising funds for worthy causes, often in amusing fancy dress costume. London 1997 was so nearly different. The M5 road traffic accident could've been fatal. From their swerving motorhome vehicle Edmund was vigorously jolted out of his rear passenger seat through an open side window and tumbled 100 metres down the motorway. He was rescued and airlifted by helicopter to Bristol infirmary. Miraculously he toed the London marathon start line a few weeks later determined to fulfil a promise to raise funds for the Cats Protection League – Edmund attributes the full-bodied black and white catsuit to helping protect serious skin graft wounds to his arm and legs from that years' scorching sun. In race walking he is a proud Centurion C590. I have fond memories of being one of his attendants during his 100-mile 1989 national win at Hendon clocking 18 hours 11 minutes. Other regular helpers have included wife Barbara who he met as a Bristol university student and, Richard Pannell and his son Greg. A few years earlier in 1985 the UK national 24-hour track race at Colchester incorporated the 100km championships. Edmund set a track record of 9 hours 41 minutes 50 seconds, a mark that still stands today. With his 250 laps done, I recall him entering a large trackside marque and proceeding to dance to the music being played over the tannoy while Richard and I slumped to our knees exhausted. Edmund notoriously required a lot of attention to get his best ultra-distance results. The 1991 Bazencourt 200km / 24-hour road race saw him become the oldest British athletics debutant at 51 years. Whilst nighttime temperatures plummeted to -7C Ed wanted more sugar added to his porridge. It was around 2am and his preferred race fuel was already sweet. A few kilometres later and at the third time of asking I finally got it right, I was tired and agitated so shovelled an excess of sugar into the bowl of stodgy cereal. It was snatched from my grasp, our man, strode on proclaiming at the top of his voice, 'Perfect ... that's perfect!' It was disgusting, it was ghastly sweet, but it seemed to help and, after 23 hours 50 minutes, he became one of 13 walkers from 52 starters to reach the 200km distance. Edmund has since climbed on the podium of many European and World Masters race walking events, sometimes the top tier with medals won at numerous distances from 3kms to 30kms. He and his dad, Eric Shillabeer, were instrumental in helping to form Dawlish & South Devon racing club in the mid 1970's which would later evolve into Plymouth City Walkers, their key events being the annual Plymouth to Dawlish 42-mile road race with the extra inducement of a delicious free cream tea at the finish, with Ed tasting victory in 1983. When traffic became potentially hazardous, that popular point – point race switched to the picturesque 5.8km Burrator reservoir circuit up until the late 1990's, where distances varied from 10kms – 100kms. During the new millennium he joined Ilford AC for the next chapter of his racing life. Before that ...

**Q1. Chris: How did it all begin?** Ed: "As a City Of Plymouth Athletic Club member, I was competing in as many events as possible to get points. Most efforts were one point for last, but when I came third out of nine in the 3km walk it got me thinking."

**Q2. Chris: Who were the people in race walking that helped you develop as an athlete whilst acknowledging in the mid 1960's you were a newly qualified veterinary surgeon?** Ed: "Jim Hurley RIP saw me win in the next fixture and join me up into the London Vidarians walking club. The club captain none other than that race walking colossus, Dave Ainsworth made sure that we were entered and arrived at start lines in time for the races. My dad ERIC, organiser extraordinaire, was my biggest supporter and motivator. Then, as I moved into veteran athletics, Colin Young RIP who gave me valuable advice."

**Q3. Chris: Had you tried race walking earlier in your sports career what more might you have achieved?** Ed: "Speculation is difficult but if my peak had been my late 20s instead of late 40s, I am sure that I could have been operating at a higher level." Understandably modest. In my opinion...without doubt, an Olympian.

**Q4. Chris: Who were your racing rivals through the decades?** Ed: "Rivals were legion! In the mid-70s it was briefly Chris Maddocks but he was soon out of sight! In the 80s and 90s, British rivals included: Bob Dobson, Denis Jones, Geoff Tranter, Peter Worth, John Eddershaw, Derek



Harrison, Allan Callow, other Manxmen, Colin Bradley, Dave Stevens, Bob Gardner, Bob Care, Martyn Jones, Mike Smith, Daz Thorn, Alan King, Dave Ratcliffe, Dave Rowland, Steve Johnson, Chris Berwick, Adrian James, Martin Bell, Tony Geal, Graham Morris, Paul Nunn, Steve Till, Arthur Eddleston. In international racing, Dieter Zschiesche, Bernard Caudron, Romolo Pelicella, Ad Leermakers, Claudio Sterpin, the Gouveneaux twins (in the same race!) Zdenek Simon, Ferenc Danovsky, Harold van Beek. I've graced the start line with Alexander Potashov, Zoltan Czukor, Mrazek, Blazek, and beaten Mexico Olympic 50km gold medallist, Christoph Hohne.

**Q5. Chris: How did you balance all your various interest and commitments?** Ed: "With intensity and high tempo in every activity coupled with a strict routine. Training before breakfast. Sacrosanct hour for family tea, otherwise veterinary practice 9am to 7:30/8:00pm Monday to Friday, Saturday 9:00-1:00pm except when a locum covered it for race days etc. Sunday morning a longer training before a roast dinner and family time."

**Q6. Chris: What top 5 race results gave you the most satisfaction?**

Ed: "In no particular order: 1. National 35km 1986. 7th in a class field in 2:58:04 and Dawlish and South Devon RWC (with a certain Chris Maddocks leading the way!) won bronze for third club to close in four with teammates, Andy Bainborough and Gareth Davies excelling themselves as well. 2. European Masters 30km champion (20k in 2:22:22) in Portugal, beating the 1968 Olympic 50km Champion, Germany's Christoph Hohne.

3. World Masters 20km champion, Sacramento 2011.

4. Quadrathon bronze (81 starters, 64 finished, oldest competitor) in 1983.

5. Roubaix 28 hours' bronze (furthest distance of any British athlete ever).

6. GB 100km track record aided by Chris! *Six? Edmund can't count!*

**Q7. Chris: How have you overcome some significant health problems?** Ed: "Positive mental attitude aided by leaning on the Lord; superb skills of the NHS medical teams; comprehensive supplementation, unstinting support of family, friends, and Mary my Practice nurse/manager."

**Q8. Chris: What were your peak years and how did a typical training week pan out?** Ed: "Definitely the mid-eighties. All walking training was maximum intensity Monday through Saturday. Sunday varied; when Steve Hollier joined me, we would do a tough hilly big effort on the moorland lanes, sometimes an easier recovery outing. When Mad Max and I used the tough one-mile Central Park triangle around Plymouth Argyle's Home Park stadium it was eyeballs out in opposite directions – 5 laps to my 3!! Sneaking an hour off before teatime to use the local gym or have a second session blast was the icing on the cake!

The Sacramento success (6th in 5km track, 3rd in 10km, 1st in 20km) owes a lot to the extra sharpness of daily track workouts, a 15-minute walk from son, Andrew's home with about an hour of 400m flat out, 200m at recovery pace, straight into the next rep. Happy days!"

**Q9. Chris: Tell us your 3 favourite music choices? Your 3 favourite TV and 3 best film choices?**

Ed: "Music: Freddie Mercury and Montserrat Caballe's 'Barcelona' duet with the fountains and lights show on Montjuic hill in 1992. Andrea Bocelli 'Con te Partira' at the Birmingham NEC; and 'Elizabethan Serenade' attributed to King Henry VIII. TV favourites: Fawlty Towers. Morecambe and Wise. Strictly Come Dancing, when Bruce Forsyth compered it. Film favourites: Lawrence of Arabia. The Ladykillers. Dunkirk.

**Q10. Chris: Tell readers something most people won't know about you.** Ed: "I've become a sweet wine drinker with specific likes: Blandy's Madeira. Hungarian Tokaji (a name given to one of my past lurches) Cyprus Commandaria. Italian Occho di Perenice. Hungarian Feher Arany. Ice crystal, Mundana, Murdei. I also keep the ashes of only 'the special one,' Tippy the Jack Russell, of the many pets who have been close to my heart, in a wooden casket in my study." *That's two things; confirmation Ed can't count.* I can testify however, that Tippy had amazing football skills as seen on the pitch by thousands at half-time during an Argyle league match. 86 years young, Edbanger Shillabeer recently competed in Madeira at the European masters. It seems wearing red, white and blue is still in his plans.

**Chris Maddocks**

## PART OF ILFORD AC HISTORY REVIVED

For many years "The Cauliflower Pub" in High Road Ilford, a short distance west of Seven Kings Station was part of Club history - being directly opposite Ilford's Cricklefields Stadium base. After so many

athletics' meetings and training sessions participants and officials popped into this vast establishment for refreshments and socialising. Hon Ed made his first visit to an Ilford AC social function (*a Club disco*) in its large upstairs function room. Ilford leading light Steve Uttley used to play on stage at popular 'live' music nights. This historic pub was opened in 1900, as a "*Gin Palace*" on the site of a former pub of that same name. The original site was a market and cauliflower patch, hence its name. Earlier in its memorable history, in a nearby pit, mammoth fossils were unearthed. Over the years acts and turns who appeared 'live' included Dr Feelgood, Bad Manners, Small Faces, Ian Dury and The Blockheads, Chas 'n' Dave, comedian Mike Reid and rock group Inspiral Carpets. Some appeared "*on their way up*". Benjamin and Esther Hart with their only daughter Eva were present for a farewell party 2 weeks' before sailing on the Titanic's maiden voyage for a new life in America. What happened next is also part of history as in the giant ship's sinking Mr Hart lost his life. Mrs Hart and Eva escaped by lifeboat - the latter was its 8th longest living survivor of that disaster until her 1996 death aged 91. Eva was a pillar of the community becoming a JP and MBE recipient - a large Wetherspoon pub in Chadwell Heath "*The Eva Hart*" is now also a venue for Ilford AC social functions - this pub opened 2 years after Eva's death and displays memorabilia from her life. "*The Cauliflower*" was closed in 2013 and restored for a 2014 re-opening. It fell into disrepair and was boarded-up 7 years' ago sadly becoming an eyesore and location for fly-tipping, drug dealing, an unofficial public toilet and addicts' meeting place. It's now set to re-open as a luxury bar and lounge with a fine dining restaurant. So many of those involved in athletics will have ventured into "*The Cauliflower*": both Ilford AC members and from visiting Clubs.

- The Cauliflower, many good times after track races or training. **Don Cox**
- Memories of many a boozy night in the 70s. Had another look the other night and yes it does appear to be close to re-opening! PS I saw that the Cauliflower has re-opened. **Andy Catton**

### [Skip short strolls – a longer daily walk is better for your heart, says study](#)

A recent study suggests that taking longer daily walks significantly reduces the risk of cardiovascular disease compared to accumulating steps through multiple shorter strolls.

### **NEWS OF CENTURION 484 BAUKE te NIJENHUIS**

This now 90 year old gentleman qualified at Ewhurst 1n 1971 clocking 23:07.23 racing for Vetemen (Holland) and has completed 5 UK 100 miles walking races. This 1971 event is engraved into athletics history as Guernsey star John Moullin (Belgrave Harriers) finished in 16:55.44 - the fastest Centurions qualifying time. Still active Nonagenarian Bauke recently completed the Camino Groningen walk.

### **HONOURED GUEST**

Elm Park-based blind sportsman **Mike Brace** CBE, DL, said it was a privilege to be a guest at the 50th Anniversary Celebration of "Blind Sport" which Mike helped to set up in 1975. [50th Anniversary Awards | British Blind Sport](#) The November function was in Leamington Spa, a location well known to our race walking community who flocked to the town earlier this century for major meetings and functions. Mike appeared in a now defunct Essex League with Alex Ross as his guide and he's also successfully ran 2 London Marathons.



### **AWARD FOR A FRIEND OF ESSEX WALKING**

We don't normally feature Club news from the north east, but well worth a mention is **Chris Bolton**. This as Chris has a number of good Essex contacts, such as Ilford AC trio **Steve King**, **Roger Mills** and **Tony Perkins**. At their November AGM Chris was elected as an esteemed Life Member of the famous Lancashire Walking Club which he joined in 1958. His first yearly subscription was *10-shillings-and-6 pence* in old money (*52-and-half pence in today's currency*). Chris joined The Centurions as No 332 in the July 1962 Leicester-to-Skegness Walk clocking 22:09.27 when 45 started/26 finished including 13 new Centurions. What a race as 1960 Olympian Frank O'Reilly broke the tape in 16:58.16 (this his 2nd sub-17 hours timing in a great career). Others joining The Centurions that day were Wakefield's C325 John Hampshire, Jersey athlete C326 Dennis LeMarinel, legendary C327 Guy Goodair who still competes successfully as a M80 orienteer and popular Midlander C337 Brian Scrivens, who in 2006 sponsored an award to honour remarkable achievements by C735 Sandra Brown. A true stalwart,

octogenarian Chris made a long journey to assist at the Hundredth British Isles 100 Miles' Walk on Lewes Track when he took part in Friday evening's Lewes Town Centre Social Walk" organised (and led) by Peter Selby and donned shorts to participate in The Centurions 100 legs' relay on the track's outer lanes. He's both a star and a stalwart - and we **congratulate** Chris on his elevation to esteemed Life Membership status.

Comments Chris (C332): *"To be awarded life membership was not expected but certainly appreciated, as are your good wishes."*

### CLEAN SWEEP FOR ESSEX WALKERS

October's Race Walking Association 200 Club draw saw all 3 awards coming to Essex as **Peter Cassidy** won 1st prize (£25) with **Len Ruddock** "doing the double" with both 2nd and 3rd prizes (£15 and £10 respectively). Congratulations. November's draw saw **Arthur Thomson**, **John Sales** and **John Constandinou** receiving 1st/2nd/3rd prizes respectively. Congratulations.



All RWA 200 Club profits go towards assisting race walking, so it's vital this fund-raiser is well supported by our activists both past and present. The latest prize notification comes with worrying news that numbers participating have declined of late. One reason can be seen by reading your Essex Walker and other athletics' publications, as we've sadly seen walkers and ex-walkers pass on ... so reducing income for this worthy cause. It's only £1 per month (hence £12 per annum) and organised by your RWA Honorary Treasurer Mark Easton. It's a good way of making a contribution towards our sport with a chance of winning something. If you're one of those who've hung up your racing pumps, just think of how much you've saved by no longer travelling to races and functions - so how about "chipping-in" to your 200 Club? If interested please see Mark at the meetings or just send him an email and you'll receive details of how to easily get started: [rwatreasurer@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:rwatreasurer@yahoo.co.uk)

### TV MENTION FOR RACE WALKING

November's Scotland v Argentina Rugby Union International (Scotland 24 Argentina 33) was screened 'live' from "The Scottish Gas Murrayfield Stadium" (as comically now called) on the small screen. Hmmm! What's that to do with race walking? Well during transmission viewers were invited to submit comments, which if selected, were shown at the bottom of the screen. Keen rugby follower **Bill Sutherland** (who in earlier days followed the British Lions on far away trips) gave his opinion of the Scottish XV and also stated he was a Scottish international in another sport - athletics. Five minutes' later another viewer (whose name was unknown to the race walking world) sent a message pointing out Bill had been awarded a bronze medal in the 1970 Commonwealth Games Walk which had started/finished in another Edinburgh Stadium - Meadowbank (as also used for the 1986 Commonwealth Games). Hon Ed also has a link with Scottish rugby as his Corporal Physical Training Instructor while on a training course at RAF Henlow (Bedfordshire) in 1971 was Scottish (23 caps) and British Lions (9 appearances/2 test caps) wing three-quarter Billy Steele.

Nothing to do with that TV mention about race walking but there's recollection of Meadowbank Stadium, which Bill reminded us had sadly fallen into disrepair. By 2008 only 5,000 of its 16,000 seats were declared unfit for use. In December 2017 it closed. From 2019 onwards refurbishment progressed for a July 2022 re-opening. This is a concern at other locations. Cwmbran Stadium, a venue for international athletics in its heyday, has a 10,500 capacity - mainly due to a vast grandstand which goes back forever. It was condemned in 2012 with no athletics permitted. Cwmbran's certificate was re-issued in 2013 - but only permitted training. Hon Ed recalls racing a Welsh Championships there, when in a 3,000 Metres Walk star man Steve Barry tripped and fell over a torn track surface when leading on lap 2 - he rose to win in a track record and Welsh record time. Ground staff were immediately called and by mid-race also on this track repairing a gashed surface - we had to walk around them as they worked. The local newspaper's headline was "Running Repairs In Walking Race". All more publicity for race walking! Of course, the real sadness of rundown athletics stadia is close to home at Crystal Palace National Sports Centre, another to have lost its track certificate. A new track was opened last year by the MP for



Beckenham. More work on the famous stadium is ongoing. Why are athletics stadia allowed to go downhill?

## DO YOU REMEMBER?

In the year of the 2012 London Olympics your Race Walking Association paid tribute to our Olympian race walkers at a luncheon in the Tower Hotel overlooking the River Thames. Many were present - as an occasion it was so popular there was a wait list for places. This function had 2 esteemed guest speakers in Olympians Chris Maddocks and David Bedford - one of our event's greatest friends. Olympic 20K Gold medallist Ken Matthews was on the top table as RWA President. Chris has sent



picture for our Newsletter, showing just some of those big names present. Here it is - captioned. L-to-R Front row: Chris Maddocks, David Bedford, Ray Middleton and Shaun Lightman. L-to-R Back row: Ken Matthews, Brian Adams, Roger Mills, Olly Flynn, Paul Nihill and Howard Timms.



## PERSONAL WORST

Many of our readers attend parkruns, participants, officials, helpers and supporters/spectators. Bill Sutherland reports that on 15 November his local Finsbury Park event had a slowest ever time of 1 hour 46 minutes for 5 kilometres - clocked by an lady octogenarian. All had left the finish line except for a diligent timekeeper who gallantly waited.

## JULIAN HOPKINS - UPDATE

A number have enquired about Julian Hopkins, who'd been a long-term hospital patient after a stroke. Julian's now out of hospital and residing in a Care Home. Here's the address, courtesy of Tony Taylor, with an address for your "Get Well" wishes.

*Julian is in a Care Home - see address: Springfield Court Nursing Home, Springfield Road, Aughton. Lancashire. L39 6ST. **Tony Taylor***



## SHORT FILM TREAT

Writes Clare Denness, daughter of the great **Paul Nihill** MBE: "Very happy to have found this today. Just added it to dad's Facebook page. It's Helsinki European Championship 20km race walk - 10 August 1971."

## EUROPEI DI HELSINKI 1971 MARCIA 20 KM SMAGA

**Gold:** Nikolav Smada (URS) - 1h 27:20.2, **Silver:** Gerhard Sperling (GDR) - 1h 27:29.0, **Bronze:** **Paul Nihill** (GBR) - 1h 27:34.8, 6th **Phil Embleton** 1:29.31.6, 13th **Bill Sutherland** 1:34.15.0, 22 finished.

Adds film maker **Len Ruddock**: "It was nice to see a couple of shots of Phil (Embleton)."

## RACE WALKING AT PARKRUNS - INTERESTING CORRESPONDENCE

Writes **Stephen Cartwright**:

"I wondered if you may be interested in below. I have slightly edited it to make the thread shorter, remove names, and put it in a more readable order. It seems the very term 'Race Walk' is not acceptable to Parkrun philosophy. Potentially it would have been enjoyable, social, and could have been expanded to suitable Saturday 5km events too where the field wasn't so large the athletes couldn't be seen. Perhaps I should have used the term 'Speed Walk'."



Sir/Madam

I had the pleasure of being one of the marshals at the Colchester Harriers takeover recently, and wondered if I could tentatively ask about staging a more 'official' race walk in conjunction with your run/walk.

As you may know, racewalking has been in serious decline over a number of years, yet it would seem a shame to see it die. There are now far fewer events that people can go to as well.

My thought was to use the parkrun structure to include a development race walk, perhaps as a one off initially, then possibly every six weeks or so. I would set up a table near the start where people that were interested could register and collect a number/pins (If lots were interested perhaps it would be best to preregister somehow, but I think that may be unlikely). I'd try and source a few official judges (could possibly use marshals - judges in training!) who could check that those with numbers didn't skip or run. The children all finish as normal at the end. From the parkrun results I compile the race walk results for those with numbers, and forward for your Facebook page or other. I tend to think it would be workable. Obviously prior advertising may increase the participation. Please let me know what you think?

Regards and with thanks

Stephen Cartwright

Race walk judge/Coach with Colchester Harriers

Hi Stephen

It's (X) here, one of the core team. I just wanted to expand on (X's) declination for your own clarity.

1. I am not sure on your personal understanding of parkrun as a charity/organisation or whether you have run or volunteered at events, so please forgive me for my ignorance. However, parkrun is heavily governed by its own time trial model that has existed since its inception in 2004. As it is a time trial, participants are only trying to beat their own set time - not each other.
2. Due to corporate parkrun messaging and branding, we cannot endorse any form of racing under or associated with the parkrun remit. If we did, it sends out the wrong message to participants that we commend competitive racing in a parkrun environment. We have tried tirelessly for nearly 10 years to promote junior parkrun as a fun running inclusive event and not as a competitive race. We wish to remain steadfast in our clear message.
3. Several running and athletics clubs have tried to organise local running events through Colchester City Council.

I hope you appreciate our reasons for not supporting your venture, whilst it is a commendable idea. We really do not want to upset the great work we have achieved and deliver for nearly 10 years. We wish you every success in trying to achieve your racewalking concept.

Kind regards

Adds Hon Ed: An initiative which is food for thought - and thanks for Stephen for his efforts.

- I applaud your initiative, but can understand the response. Thank you for trying. **Ron Wallwork**
- I tend to agree with Ron. At the Ashford Parkrun we regularly have established or new race walkers joining in. As they tend to average 25 to 30 mins for the 5km they invariably get positive comments. They do endeavour to comply with the world athletics rules as opposed to walking fast. These days I go along as a coach and knowing the best places to observe them I can provide feedback. After 10 years there is an understanding of what this athletics discipline is about but no one wants to join in. There was one chap who strolled very fast. I approached him but he has no inclination of being competitive in any sport. Two others have become officials though! The best response is to be there to answer questions and point them to the local club to "have a go". Good luck and thanks for trying. **Chris Hobbs**
- Hopefully it was worth a try. **Stephen Cartwright**

## HIGH PROFILE FORMER RACE WALKER

**Tom Bosworth** MBE continues to be in the news with a number of high profile appearances at functions and ceremonies. Tom was recently among a number of celebs invited to present category awards during the 2025 Sports Business Awards evening at the Marriott Marquis Hotel in New York's Times Square. Said Tom, *"It was a pleasure to present an award. Thank you Sports Aid for the invitation"*. As well as his busy coaching schedule, Tom is keeping race walking in the spotlight - in high places!

## WALKER's OP WENT WELL

Good news from Centurion 590 **Ed Shillabeer** ("Edbanger") which speaks for itself:

*"Recovery with nice supper. New aortic valve inserted between 1pm and 2:15pm. Great cardiac team did an amazing job with modern technology. Deo volente (he has the last word) home tomorrow. Stella is the last of many who have tended to me. She's Greek from Cyprus and hubby also works here in Wellington hospital. Next to Lords cricket ground!"*

- Very glad to hear that Ed's procedure went well. **Sandra and Richard Brown C735, C760**
- Great hospital. We've had operations and visits there many times. Wellington Hospital is open 365 days a year at any time. Good luck to Ed and we wish him all the best with his recovery. Raise a glass to Ed! **Bill and Kath Sutherland**
- Good to know that you've come through this op without problems. Well done, and the nursing staff seem to be looking after you pretty well! Keep well and don't rush whilst in the recovery mode. Yours in Centurionism. **Chris Flint**
- Good to hear. **John Borgars**

## 55 YEARS' ON - WINNERS REUNITE

In 1970 a Norfolk-based RAF Coltishall quartet won the Royal Air Force 7 Miles' Race Walking Championship at RAF Colerne in Wiltshire, so retaining a title they'd won a year before at RAF Henlow in Bedfordshire. In 1969 Coltishall won by 1 point - in 1970 they triumphed in spectacular fashion, winning by a massive 44 points. Their team that day, in finishing order was: Dave Gulliver, Dave Ainsworth, Wally Waldron and David Guilfoyle. The 2 Dave's were then members of London Vidarians, with Dave G also appearing for Anglia Striders later in his successful athletics career. Wally had a spell with Essex Beagles and, after moving to the West Country, was *"2012 Veteran Athlete-of-the-Year"* at Cirencester AC and David was a former Somerset County AA 2 Miles' Walk champion. **55 years' on**, a reunion was held at RAF Marham Aviation Heritage Centre at a large operational airfield near Kings Lynn. Wally couldn't be contacted but the other 3 were *"on parade"* for a wonderful reunion at a great venue. Tales, indeed yarns, were recounted with pleasure as time flew by. The trio were made most welcome by Heritage Centre volunteers, providing refreshments and - to use Service terms, a complimentary Veterans' *"Butty Call"* which meant bacon or sausage rolls, was served up. A Centre volunteer kindly took a photograph to record the occasion. David Guilfoyle and Dave Gulliver are now 85, Dave A is a bit younger at 77. Entry to this Heritage is free, with a donation requested. Free parking. Visiting details/times are at [RAF Marham Aviation Heritage Centre](#)



L-to-R: Dave Ainsworth, Dave Gulliver, David Guilfoyle

- I remember racing for Vids. with Dave Gulliver, and the 50km at RAF Scampton but no idea whether I even finished the race! I know that Ray Flynn RIP was chopped in the starting bunch by Peter Marlow! Undeterred, underage Centurion Ray achieved his greatest fame as coach of the world 50km championship winner Rob Heffernan which Moscow staged. Happy days, but since Wednesday's successful op I'm looking forward to many more such! **Ed Shillabeer C590**

- I bet the Butty Call never tasted so good. Pleased to hear the RAF Heritage Centre rolled out the red carpet for you three Dave's. BFF as my teenage daughter will often write ... Best Friends Forever. **Chris Maddocks**
- Great photo. **Glyn Linder**
- Great history and achievement. Good to see. Racing 10k every week, in York, best 7 Miles 58 mins 59 secs. **Richard Cole**

### IN "THE BULL"

On 27 November Ilford AC's walkers had a pre-Christmas meet-up at "The Bull" public house in Romford Market Place - outside which in decades past, "*Romford Brewery 3,000 metres*" walking races were held (5 times around Market Place over cobbles). Len Ruddock, often rightly billed as a "talented film maker" is also a talented photographer - he brought along a selection of photographs from his considerable collection. We had the pleasure of having octogenarian Noel Mooney join us, who a number hadn't seen for a long while. In the '70s, Noel earned his Race Walking Association 7 Miles-in-an-Hour badge with ease. He also showed his distance ability with an impressive 3 hours 17 minutes in a once popular 20 miles' Chelmsford-to-Southend event and made an impact in Post Office races.



Organised by Tony Perkins it secured another good turnout. It was another most enjoyable luncheon.

L-to-R: Dave Neagle, Brian Armstrong, Len Ruddock, Noel Mooney, Tony Perkins, Steve Allen, Alan Barber and Dave Ainsworth. 5 attendees are Centurions and 7 have completed London-to-Brighton walks. (Picture taken kindly by a pub goer from another function.)

- Great to see. **Don Cox**

### THOUGHTFUL GESTURE

At November's gathering of Ilford Walkers from former days, popular **Noel Mooney** said he possessed a Race Walking Association "6 Miles-in-an-Hour" badge, but had mislaid his "7 Miles-in-an-Hour" star. Noel's former Royal Mail colleague, recently departed Terry Riley, had also mislaid his "7 Miles-in-an-Hour" star - which then saw Don Cox (an 8 miles-in-an-Hour award winner) answer an Essex Walker request for any reader to give Terry their own "7 Miles-in-an-Hour" star. Don obliged and his kind gesture was much appreciated by Terry. When Geoff Riley (Terry's son) heard Noel was in the same position, he kindly donated the late Terry's star to Noel. It'll truly have a good home where it'll be worn with pride and appreciated. These badges/stars were strived for in earlier times and recipients felt well rewarded when earning them. They could only be awarded in races of certified distances; officiated by Graded Judges, qualified timekeepers and competent recorders. Writes Geoff: ***"I have Terry's 7 mile medal but I think he would have liked Noel to have it."***

### RESULTS OF SOUTHERN RACE WALKING ASSOCIATION CHAMPIONSHIPS

Saturday 29 November 2025, hosted by Surrey AC, in Tonbridge.

[SRWA Championships November 2025](#)

### CONGRATULATIONS

... go to Upminster-based **Colin Harle** (Belgrave Harriers & Metropolitan Police Walking Club) on his overall individual 2025 Enfield Race Walking League victory. Colin was a successful runner for decades before switching codes to partake in pedestrianism, in which he has certainly made his mark, including a British Police 10K Championship title. *We salute him.* We also salute and congratulate Centurion 858 **Stuart Bennett** (Brentwood Beagles AC & Metropolitan Police Walking Club) for heading the Enfield League Centurions' category. Full League standings in all categories in Enfield Walker. Awards to be presented at January's opening 2026 League meeting at Donkey Lane.

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## Dear Dave ...



### TERRY RILEY's FUNERAL

Thanks to everyone who attended online and Don Cox who attended the funeral in person.

**Geoff Riley**

### NOT ZOOMING IN

I shall not be engaging in Zoom Meetings as I am very much old school and only have real belief in 'face to face' meetings of former years. The RWA is wound up in Red Tape and needs to completely change into the 21st Century if there is to be in any hope of us remaining in International Race Walking in the future. A good start would be having competitors from the UK on the starting line in the Glasgow Commonwealth Games Walks in 2026, but I can't see much beyond Callum Wilkinson, Cameron Corbishley or a comeback by the highly popular Tom Bosworth.

**Bill Sutherland**

Adds Hon Ed: Bill echoes Hon Ed's piece last month when stating a wish for full complements from Home Countries and Crown Dependencies in Glasgow.

### RESPECTED WALKER's NEWS

Not race fit any more but still like walking up in the hills, I live in the Peak District now so have lots of hills. Hope you are well.

**Rosemarie Crellin C1015**

Adds Hon Ed: Rosemarie qualified in the July 2005 Norfolk Challenge 100 Miles at King's Lynn clocking 21:33.59. In that race 69 started/38 finished/1 DQ. Among 16 new Centurions were 14 from off our mainland, of whom 6 (including Rosemarie) hailed from the Isle-of-Man as one of their number - Sean Hands won on his 100 miles' debut in 19:02.57. Sandra Brown completed this distance in the UK for a 20th time, so equalling Hew Neilson's record. Essex was represented among new Centurions as Benfleet-based Kim Howard earned badge No 1020 in 22:33.29. An experienced organising Committee included worthies Pete Duhig with Centurions Ron Wallwork C693 and Cath Duhig C986.

### FIXTURE LIST COMMENT

Fixtures are so few and far between which is very well known. We need to look at ways of encouraging new walkers outside the RWA stranglehold that it presently has over our future. In all honesty it is really worth Peter and Pauline publishing these fixtures lists which mean so little nowadays! **Bill Sutherland**

### ENFIELD OPEN 7 THANKS + 2026 DIARY DATES

I just wanted to thank everyone who attended - walkers and their families, officials, volunteers, Ron, Tony and George as you all contributed to making the event a success. I know that the Hercock Family appreciated your support in honouring Bernie's memory.

#### Dates for your Diary - ERWL 2026

- 17 January - Martin Oliver Walks and 2025 Presentations 11am Donkey Lane
- 21 February 10km Walk 11am Donkey Lane
- April date TBC Cambridge Walks
- 6 June Ken Livermore Relays 11am QE11 Stadium
- 4 July Moulton Walks

Hope to see you next year.

**Tracey Wilkinson**

### FULL SUPPORT PLEADED FOR AT LEE VALLEY

The indoor championships are over the weekend of Saturday 28 February - Sunday 1 March. At the Essex AA meeting in September it was agreed, following a request from Eastern AA, to endeavour to include a walk race. This was subject to being able to secure suitably qualified officials. Race distance and age groups also to be arranged. I will ask our County T & F Officer and meeting organiser if any progress has been made.

**Andy Catton**, Essex County AA Honorary Secretary

Adds Hon Ed: This demands full support from all, walkers and officials, to ensure we're kept in the programme. In past times we've been thrown out. So come on stayaways, please all return to keep us in the public eye.

### ESSEX POLICE CENTURION RECALLS 1973 BRISTOL 100

I particularly remember arriving in Bristol (ish) with John Hedgethorpe telling me we were going to have a protein rich meal before the race. I was and still am basically a vegetarian and John ordered me a whopping great beef steak. Oh no, what to do? Eat it of course. It was delicious and the last beef steak I ever ate. Was interested in photographs of you and fellow walkers. I think you all looked very well. I saw Amos Seddon on the Barking to Southend every year but sad to say only ever the rear view. It was always hairy but being bald myself I'm really jealous of his mane! I do admire the work you put into the Essex Walker, well done. Makes me feel guilty up here in Suffolk that I don't contribute in any way but it makes me smile and keeps me in touch in a distant way!

**Barry Daymond**

Adds Hon Ed: Barry clocked 20:13.42 on Bristol's testing 10 laps' difficult course to earn number 508. 53 started/36 finished including 20 new Centurions. Among non-finishers were Essex duo Geoff Hunwicks RIP of Ilford AC and Dave Ainsworth then London Vidarians. Len Ruddock assisted Geoff, who at times smoked cigars and drank Heineken. C464 Dave Boxall convincingly won for his second such 100 miles' triumph. Recently departed Geoff Tranter claimed Badge 507 in 19.15 - both he and Dave Boxall were to compete 12 UK 100s under 24 hours. Other qualifiers were C509 Bill Maxwell/Leyland Motors, Vidarians' duo C512 Ray Flynn and C513 Jim Hurley (both sadly no longer with us), now Leeds-based C517 Jack Rose of RAF Innsworth - who showed up in August at Lewes for a Centurions 100 legs' relay, host club duo C518 J Morgan and C519 J Morgan and Boundary Harrier C525 S G Gardner. Bristol RWC Organiser was legendary C356 Chas Shelley with ever enthusiastic Gloucester-based Chris Newman Chief Judge. Chief Timekeeper was that doyen of timekeepers, C116 Tom Reynolds (with his strong trademark pronunciation of *thirr-tie*) who'd qualified in the same 1937 London-to-Brighton-and-Back race as Ilford AC 1953/54 President and 1980 Essex County AA President C117 Bill Cockle. Race Referee was Stock Exchange protagonist Tod Slaughter who doubled as a timekeeper. A course went both over and under the M4 motorway, where headlights of speeding vehicles were welcome on a near pitch-dark lap. Such dark courses were commonplace and accepted without question by competitors and officials in earlier days! Great memories ignited by Barry, who was an Inspector in Essex and Southend-on-Sea Joint Constabulary (as then called in '73) and a key member of their strong race walking team, as managed (*and motivated*) by legendary C413 John Hedgethorpe. John won the previous Bristol100 in 1969, as fellow Essex Police member 447 P Cox closed-in that field - so you could say 30 finishers had a "Police Escort".

### NEWS OF CENTURION 557 KEN ROOST

I hope all is good with you. My Dad is still doing pretty well considering he was given a month to live in May! He spends a lot of the time asleep now and is most awake in the early evening. As usual he's doing everything his own way in his own time.

**Tony Roost**

Adds Hon Ed: Thanks for news from Ken's son. Sub-20 hours 100 miler Ken's 95th birthday is on Boxing Day.

### APPRECIATION

- Hope you are well. Ah brilliant. Thank you so much. Looks so good. Excellent write up. Much appreciated. Dad (Ollie) says "hi" too. Be good to get him back into walking soon, ha ha. Keep up the good work. *"Your Health Is Your Wealth"*. **Angus Browne**
- Race Walking Record - a good read. Question? Does the London Postman's Walk still exist today? **Mike Sweeney**

Adds Hon Ed: Alas No. We publish appreciation of another race walking publication to draw attention to it. It's well worth being on their distribution for additional informative reading.

- Do so much enjoy reading your reports and comments in the Essex Walker from my home in France, whilst I still can remember some of the names, it brings back so many happy memories. Keep that pen scribbling as I am sure others enjoy it as much as myself. **Ken Rodrigues**

**ANOTHER NEWSLETTER EDITOR'S COMMENT**

Thanks for another packed issue of Essex Walker. Ooh, Bill (Sutherland) certainly is a great contributor. Including, I see, "intel" on the Commonwealth Games walk being a 10,000m in the stadium. What's your thinking on that change?

**Peter**

Adds Hon Ed: Peter is Hon Ed of the excellent - and always packed - Highgate Harriers Newsletter

**FUNERAL SERVICE OF GEOFF TRANTER RIP**

I have been informed that the funeral arrangements for Geoff Tranter are to take place on Friday 12 December 2025 at 10am at Rowley Regis Crematorium, Powke Lane, Rowley Regis, West Midlands B65 0AD. I have no other details at present.

**Glyn Jones**

**HOW MANY 100 MILES' RACES HAVE THEY COMPLETED?**

My 200<sup>th</sup> 100+ miles event was a 107 miles road race [we walked of course] from the St James's Gate of Dublin's Guinness Brewery to Belfast [where we enjoyed a pint of the dark stuff at the historic Crown Bar there]. Our current tally of 100+ miles events, after four further events this year, is Richard 152 events, and Sandra 222 events.

**Sandra C735 and Richard C760**

Adds Hon Ed: Here's access to a most interesting and informative read. [Sandra Brown - 200 100-milers | Ultrarunning History](#)

**ERIC HORWILL RIP - Charity Donations**

The funeral service for Eric Horwill was held at Stourbridge Crematorium on Monday 17 November at 12.20pm. For those that were unable to attend the service but wish to make a donation in memory of Eric, it is to be shared between '[YHA Breaks Programme](#)' (for young people facing challenges in their life and who need additional support) and '[British Heart Foundation Action Teams](#)'. Any donations which would be warmly received can be sent to the home address: 'Pevensey', 79 Enville Road, Kingswindsford, West Midlands DY6 0JX. This was announced towards the end of the service.

**Glyn Jones** (Race Walking Association Chairman)

**EDITORIAL NOTICE**

As has been the case in earlier times, an aim is to drop an edition (January's); this as December is usually a quiet one in our race walking world. This edition has details of January activities. It also gives our hard-working distribution and layout/presentation team (Tony and Christine Perkins) a well-deserved break. Hopefully we'll be back in your inboxes next year with good news!



*Season's Greetings ...*



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

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