

Essex Walker

Editor: Dave Ainsworth

LET'S KEEP THE BALL ROLLING



For over a decade-and-a-half our best supported Essex has been an annual August Bank Holiday Southend Track Mile at Garon Park. This year's edition on 31 August again commences at 10am. An early start gets you into this popular day-trip seaside resort before most of traffic, and secures a place in a large free car park. A sizeable crowd is present so we can showcase our discipline before enthusiastic spectators. It's open to all from the young to Masters. There are many age group/category/gender awards plus *"The George Woods Trophy"* - donated by the sporting O'Rawe family and awarded to the 1st Essex resident Centurion. This in memory of the late George Woods - a true Southend-on-Sea AC (*as then called*) stalwart and Centurion No 683, who qualified in the June 1979 Ewhurst 100 Miles clocking 23:43.42 when a record 107 (yes 107) started with 78 finishers (including 37 new Centurions). British race walking was clearly in a better place back then. This meeting is a friendly one: the sort of atmosphere experienced at events like

Moulton and now defunct Ilford Christmas Walks at Chigwell Row. A feature is that, often, former walkers turn up just to sample a family occasion. Meeting organiser Keith Palmer has his hands full with up to 500 competitors of all ages and both genders filling an entire day's programme - what a star as he finds time (*somehow*) to participate in our walk and then act as presentation awards' announcer. Well established commentator/announcer June Cork is always on form - as also so often in a commentary box at Essex County Athletic Association meetings. So please - yet again - let's see as many of you as possible on track. If you've not raced for a while - don't worry about competing as nobody is badly detached over just 4 laps! In fact, a back marker usually gets more applause and acclaim than a winner - such is June's ability to whip up crowd reaction with her words over the Tannoy! Excellent changing facilities in a trackside Garon Park Leisure Centre, which is off Eastern Avenue, Southend-on-Sea. SS2 4FA. See you all there!

A favour please: this meeting is only open for online entries - except for our Walk which has a concession as granted by Keith Palmer. That said, please try (hard) to pre-enter online so making Keith's mammoth task easier - with up to 500 entries he's a tough job on his hands.

Entries: <http://www.southend-on-sea-athletic-club.co.uk/annual-club-events>

An early start gives the rest of Bank Holiday Monday to enjoy Southend-on-Sea and its surrounds - which could include a walk along the World's longest pier. It's a venue for a long established Southend Pier Boxing Day 2 Miles' Yacht Handicap on 26 December, to which race walkers are always warmly welcome to race as guests

EUROPEAN CHAMPIONSHIPS RACE WALKS: Saturday 15 August 2026

Apologies if this was already known to some but on the BBC Website (England - Local News: Birmingham & Black Country) the route for Race Walks at the European Championships was announced. It will start in Colmore Row, finishing in Victoria Square (close to Council House). The lap will comprise of Colmore Row, Waterloo Street and Temple Row West.

Glyn Jones

[Birmingham European Athletics Championships road race routes revealed - BBC News](#)

25th SILVER ANNIVERSARY at MOULTON

Saturday 4 July saw a 25th celebration of a truly popular race walk: the annual Moulton Open 5 Miles plus its usual shorter supporting events. The first in 2002 saw Belgravian John Hall and Estle Viljoen of Hercules Wimbledon as winners. Over the years a number of talented athletes have been multiple winners: Helen Middleton 5 times and 4-times' winners: alphabetically Dominic King, Grazia Manzotti, Francisco Reis, Estle Viljohn and Callum Wilkinson - the local star. In 2002 the Men's 1-2-3 were John Hall, Alan Ellam and Richard Emsley - Women's 1-2-3 were Estle Vilgoen, Ann Lewis and Fiona Bishop. Over a quarter-of-a-decade a feature of Moulton races were appearances by notables and dignitaries to act as celebrity Starters and also present prizes (*always many*). The 25th Starter was Mr David Almond, Chair of Moulton Parish Council. Post-race entertainment was provided by a much appreciated delightful "Strumsters Ukelele Band". A special programme had pictures of early winners, also of the band and those wonderful ladies who'd provided our refreshments - so much extra appreciated on such a hot day. Racing through Suffolk countryside was in 29 degrees. It's now organised by the prominent Wilkinson family who were all present in various capacities to ensure an enjoyable afternoon for all. It was good to see some persons present who'd travelled not to race, but to support an Anniversary occasion and enjoy this special occasion - while others sent congratulatory messages. This Anniversary race was part of the 2026 Enfield League schedule - as with previous League fixtures - we won't "Steal the Thunder" of "Enfield Walker" (which most of you receive) by publishing a full result. But we'll mention our 2 winners: **Phil Barnard** and **Grazia Manzotti** - the same winning duo as in 2025. As for Ilford's Phil it was his 3rd win - and in all races - his 3rd successive victory. Two competitors had raced in earlier parkruns - Pamela Abbott and Fiona Bishop. Races at Moulton and nearby Newmarket are noted for participation awards - this time a commemorative 25th Anniversary fridge magnet.



Among attenders were 7 Centurions: (L-to-R) Centurion Number 890 Bill Sutherland BEM, C934 Pam Ficken, C893, Ron Wallwork MBE, C950 Sue Clements, C540 Dave Ainsworth, C1167 Colin Vesty and C1176 Hardeep Minhas.

Photographer: Linda Spinks

Bill's a 1970 Commonwealth Games 20 Miles bronze medallist - Ron's a 1966 Commonwealth Games 20 Miles gold medallist - both now

sprightly *octogenarians*. A Centurion is one who's completed a 100 Miles walking race in under 24 hours. Taken in Moulton Village Hall after the 25th Anniversary Moulton Open 5 Miles on Saturday 4 July 2026.

- Brilliant! ... I have kept thinking about you all today! ... And thanks Linda for such a great pic - which I have now archived! Stay Cool Y'all. 🤖 **Ian Garmston**
- Nice photo. Always nice to capture these kind of special reunions and common bonds. **Chris Maddocks**
- You did 100 miles? Wow I'm impressed! Well done all of you! **Liz Laban** (nee Barnes)
- A classic photo fit for the archives. **Chris Flint**
- I'm glad it was a successful event, and I love the photo. It's great to see the oldies, haha. Never get tired of looking at them. You are still looking well. **Mike Sweeney**

- Thanks for sharing the photo. Paul Firmage is something of a lone wolf so it's nice to see him continuing to carry the Ryston flag at some of these events. I submitted a time for the virtual race. **Cath Duhig**



IN THE MONEY

Your latest Race Walking Association 200 Club cash prize winners are: talented film maker **Len Ruddock**, now based in Mersea Island (£25), **Janice Wright** (£15) and **Lancashire Walking Club** (£10). If you can please spare £12 it'll get you 12 monthly draws with cash prizes. All profits go towards race walking. Details from organiser Colin Vesty - see him at our meetings and functions or email: rwasecretary@yahoo.co.uk

IN THE PRINCIPALITY

Over decades a number of Essex-based walkers have featured in Welsh Championships. Not so this year, but for interest here's a result of the 5,000 Metres at Cardiff on Sunday 28 June.

1. Guy Thomas SM1 Tonbridge 21:56.62, 2. Sebastian Richards SM2 Southern AC Run Club 22:06.57, 3. Bethan Davies SW1 Cardiff 23:49.71, 4. Fraser Higginson SM3 27:41.83, 5. Megan Chantell U18W1 35:15.14 and 5. Stephen Walker SM4 Wrexham Amateur AC 35:33.31.

FIXTURES and DIARY DATES (August to end October 2026)

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

AUGUST	15	European Championships Marathon & Half-Marathon Walks (M/F)	Birmingham (road course)	7.30am
	31	City of Southend AC Open 1 Mile	Garon Park Track	10.00am
SEPTEMBER	3	Ilford AC Walkers' Pub Lunch	The Bull, Romford Market Place	1.00pm
	4	RWA Southern Area Committee Meeting	Zoom	6.30pm
	5	Enfield League 5K Handicap	Donkey Lane	11.00am
	8	Veterans AC 5 Kilometres Road (all welcome)	Battersea Park Bandstand	7.00pm*
	9	Biggleswade Open 3,000 Metres	Sandy	TBA
	11-13	British Masters Outdoor Championships	Derby	TBA
	19	English Schools Race Walking Championships	Bedford	TBA
	26	Biggleswade Open 3,000 Metres	Sandy	TBA
OCTOBER	26	Southern Veterans T&F League Final	Linford Christie Stadium, East Acton	TBA
	3	Enfield League 1 hour	Cambridge Uni/Wilberforce Road	1.30pm
	4	Cambridge Town-and-Gown Run (race walking permitted)	Cambridge Midsummer Common	10.00am
	17	Combined Counties (incl Essex) 10,000 Metres Championships (TBC)	Norman Park (Bromley)	1.15pm

NOTES

* A walk to start line from bandstand - allow 10 minutes+.

- 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.

A LONG, LONG TRAIL A-WINDING

On Friday 3 July at 9pm the annual Essex Way Ultra commenced outside Epping Underground Station. This race takes in a full length of the 82 Miles Essex Way ending at Harwich Lighthouse with a 24 hours cut-off. Well done to Harlow AC's **Claire Rosser**, daughter of GB International Dave Rosser of Southend-on-Sea AC fame (as then called). The good lady clocked 20:50.15 to finish 18th and come home as **1st** lady and head her FV40 category. Claire's athletics participation has been mentioned in this publication before - when recording parkrun successes. Dave, now Spanish based, was a key figure on our Essex scene when living in South Woodham Ferrers in the late '60s/early '70s. During that time Southend were a strong force in race walking. Dave has 4 Welsh Senior Championship titles: at 3,000m (13.54.2) in 1970 and a hat trick of 10,000 metres' golds ('69/73/74). In 1970 he was a Welsh Commonwealth Games 20 Miles' Walk Representative at Edinburgh. Recently Dave's picture graced Essex Walker's pages when taken in an annual Boxing Day Southend Pier 2 Miles (mile-out-and-back on the planks). Well done to Claire on her ultra distance success.

MEMORY LANE

Essex Walker recently published articles from former Ilford AC and Post Office leading light **Mike**



Sweeney, who was a successful competitor in his time. On leaving the Post Office he enjoyed a successful period as a professional photographer (indeed this Newsletter published some of his work). Mike then moved to China to teach English Language and having retired, now resides in Thailand. Here's a picture to remind you of Mike in his heyday.

WHY WALK?

Two 10-minute walks a day will make a difference to your physical and mental wellbeing. A daily stroll can significantly reduce your risk of Type 2 Diabetes, heart disease, depression and Alzheimer's. A single step uses up to 200 muscles so you're doing a little cardio and toning yourself up. Increasing your steps can help you to relax and may improve sleep. This advice from a medical article. But our committed readers already know this!

The NHS is launching a walking initiative (led by Brendan Foster) whereby they will issue rewards to those who participate.

[NHS to reward people who walk 30 minutes a day](#)

COMPETITIVE OUTINGS

Spotted an advert for the Cambridge 10K run to be held on Sunday 4 October, starting at Cambridge's Midsummer Common. It's one of the best supported events, for both serious and fun runners. Could be a good opportunity for race walkers looking for a 10K and a chance to showcase our athletics discipline. Go for it! in.townandgown10k.co.uk/bidwells-cambridge-10k-2026

- Adds **Dave Annetts**. This is the day after the Enfield Race Walking League 1 Hour race at the University Track, Cambridge, so you can get your 10k in 2 successive days.

Essex Walker asked its readers to consider entering the April 2027 TCS London Marathon - another chance to display our event before over a million spectators along its route and on BBC television. Entries closed with 1,338,544 received, so chances of a start are slim. **Please let EW know if you've been successful.**

HISTORY WAS MADE BY AINSWORTH and WALLWORK

First 2 British servicemen to set foot in Normandy on D-Day - just minutes after midnight, on June 6th 1944 were Staff Sergeants Jim Wallwork DFM and John Ainsworth MM., who were Pilot & Co-Pilot respectively of the first glider to land just 50 yards from Pegasus Bridge. Pegasus Bridge was to be secured as it was an important river crossing point. Their heavily loaded glider stopped when it rammed into a bridge defence. This collision and dead stop saw Messrs Ainsworth & Wallwork propelled through a glass cockpit window to land on French soil - the first of our D-Day force to set foot in France. The former hailed from Stourbridge - the latter from Salford. Both were to achieve nonagenarian status.

ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATED

Bill Sutherland, one of many EW readers involved in parkruns, switched his weekly role from volunteer marshal to participant on Saturday 18 July at the Highbury Fields event. Explains Bill: **"I decided to take part on Saturday 18 July as it will be exactly 56 years to the day on which I won Scotland's first medal a Bronze in the 20 Miles' Walk at the 1970**

Commonwealth Games at Edinburgh. Scotland finished 3rd in the Team Medal Table behind England and Australia, but in front of Kenya in 4th place. We won 4 Gold 2 Silver and 2 Bronze Medals numbering 8 medals whereas Kenya had 9 medals. We finished in front of their great Team of 18 athletes to our 57 as their medal haul was 4 Gold 1 Silver and 4 Bronze but we had 1 more Silver than them on the countback! Very technical in those great days of International Athletics.

Pleased to say I had a really pleasing Highbury Fields Park Run in much cooler conditions over a 5 lap course. Felt good from the off and had quite a few supporters cheering me on from Finsbury Park. No fuss at the start, but great gathering to welcome me at the finish in time of 57.58 2 mins improvement on last time. A lovely photo was taken of a group of us which I hope will be sent on soon as I might just be mentioned in the News Report. 715 took part with one golden oldie with a stick who was around 5 minutes back from me. I was accompanied by my good Aussie friend Steve to half way, who then encouraged a Black bouncer from his local Pub who he had suggested might give it a go only the previous night. He was a person you would not like an argument with and could definitely run fast too! Another plus was I linked with a speedy lady Race Walking after I finished and hope to see her again on Saturday 25 July coming. Onwards and upwards at my end as the saying goes, eh!"

Official parkrun result:

POSITION	PARKRUNNER	GENDER	AGE GROUP	GROUP	TIME
712	William SUTHERLAND	Male	VM80-84	Highgate Harriers	57:56

- "Good to see Bill hasn't lost the competitive spirit and always up for a challenge."

Jack Lord



WEDDING ANNIVERSARY

Congratulations to Stratford-on-Avon based Reverend Dr **Roy Lodge** MBE and Gina on their 'milestone' 60th wedding anniversary on 25 July 2026. May many more come their way. Former GB International Roy was Race Walking Association 1967 National 20 Miles Champion - when a field contained many big names of the time. Over many years Roy's been a frequent and welcome contributor to "Essex Walker" on a number of topical issues.

On behalf of our readers we send our best wishes to Roy and Gina.

HAPPY 85th BIRTHDAY

One of Essex walking's best known stalwarts is to celebrate his 85th birthday on Friday 21 August: the one-and-only **Alan O'Rawe**, frequently known as "*Grandad*". From the early '70s onwards Alan's been part of our County scene - and still is. Last year he presented "*The George Woods*" trophy to Shoeburyness-based C963 Chris Cattano, awarded to the 1st Essex resident Centurion at an annual well-supported City-of-Southend AC Mile (see photo right). Alan himself is a former many times' winner of this trophy - he joined The Centurions as Member 791 in Essex (as you'd expect) on Colchester Garrison track when clocking 23:26.12 on route to a 24 hours' race conclusion. It was a good day for Essex as also becoming Centurions that day were C786 Bob Dobson, C787 Don Cox C789 Olly Browne and C788 Martin Fisher who from Yorkshire later became a Southend resident. Martin went on to complete 28 UK sub-24 hours' 100s - at last year's "*Hundredth 100*" on Lewes Track was still giving his all. Alan and Olly are only 2 Centurions known to have their Numbers tattooed on arms. Alan's part of a talented O'Rawe family who've excelled at several different sports - and often given their time to assist at distance races. Alan himself relished challenges of distance walking, always giving a good account of himself at a testing and challenging infamous Basildon 50K - 5 times around a deserted Basildon industrial estate - often on one of the year's hottest Saturdays. The circuit passed a betting shop where during the race in 1992 Alan asked someone to place a Grand National wager on "*Party Politics*" - which obliged at 14/1 - so Alan went home with a race medal and plenty in his pocket. Alan followed "*The Turf*" and often did well with his investments. He also enjoyed shorter ones and, with pride, is one of only 6 athletes (*all Centurions*) to complete 100 Blackheath Park 9 Kilometres events on a 5-laps course which is no billiard table; for which he received an award. We send our 85th birthday wishes to Alan - a true star.

**NATIONAL PUBLICITY FOR RACE WALKING**

In the Daily Mail's readers' letters column on Wednesday 22 July, in a high prominent position, is a contribution praising the late Don Thompson MBE for his still much remembered 1960 Rome Olympic 50 Kilometres gold medal. The author is one who can't be remembered. Thanks to Essex Walker readers who've spotted this and made it known. It's how things go nowadays - in that most British race walking favourable publicity concentrates on past deeds. *But really worth recalling!*



Dear Dave ...

IN SEARCH OF A KING

Saw the interest in Paul King. Bottom line first: I don't know, and neither does Carl (Lawton). I asked Carl a couple of times a while back, and like others suggested, Paul seemed to disappear into thin air. Of course, I knew Paul for maybe, 20 years. He would always make training sessions at Belgrave Hall, Tuesday and Thursday, and was always something of a character. He had the flexibility of an iron girder, and after trying to coach him, it became something of a running, sorry, walking joke to witness his rigid marching style no matter what advice to improve fluency. We once indulged in a stretching session at the Hall - I wished I'd recorded it! BUT he could keep going forever. Duracell bunny? The latter would peg out long before PK in a race - the longer the better. He once let slip that his mother, with whom he lived, was a Jehovah's Witness and disapproved of his walking. She also disapproved of him going to heavy metal concerts, citing it the 'devil's work.' Kingy gave up Iron Maiden & Co, reluctantly, realising/acquiescing/ being

brainwashed(?) into believing he was going to hell - but refused to give up race walking. I think he's around the same age, 74-75, so doubt he's too active in any other sport, but would love to know if anyone tracks him down, so I can let Lawtonus know too.

Paul Warburton

MOULTON 25TH ANNIVERSARY WALKS

What a wonderful day of Sport and Fun we all had at the 25th Anniversary Moulton Walks. What a warm day weatherwise, which provided an extra challenge for the competitors. Many had come from distant places, but may we mention particularly Fiona Bishop (Aldershot FD), who had taken part after an early start doing the Bury St Edmunds Park Run beforehand and then travelled onto Moulton with an impressive record being her 25th appearance dating back to 2001 in the 1st Moulton 5 Miles when she was 3rd Women to finish in 48.18. All in all it was a very special day which we thoroughly enjoyed with many thanks too to the Catering Team and the Musical Entertainment by the Strumsters.

Bill and Kath Sutherland

APPRECIATION

- Amazing work for Issue 464. What a great read. Well done. **Edbanger C590**
- I've looked through the Essex Walker and will do so again. As always, an excellent varied read. Cheers. **Chris Maddocks**
- I enjoyed the (Len Ruddock) interview. Especially hearing many of the top names in race walking in those days. Bill Sutherland was a great, dedicated walker in the sport. More like him are needed. **Mike Sweeney**

COMMONWEALTH GAMES

Peter Marlow writes: Sadly there are only 5 women and 6 men in the Championship.

Readers' comments:

- Awful, why do you think there were so few entries? **Olly Flynn**
- Why so few? Athletes should come first. **Ed Shillabeer**
- It's a farce to hold such an important championship with so few participants! and only 1 Brit to boot! Doesn't seem to be much interest in Race Walking in the numerous other Commonwealth Athletic Federations nowadays bar the few! Time standards haven't helped either. **Bill Sutherland**

Adds Hon Ed: Sadly our top athlete, double Olympian Callum Wilkinson, is recovering after medical treatment. Also the 2026 Commonwealth Games is promoted as a scaled-down event as Glasgow stepped-in at short notice to offer their City as a venue. Hence less events, smaller fields and resultant lower profile. Whatever you think about the size of these Games, thanks to Glasgow for keeping them going - even in reduced form. With optimism we hope for better next time!

SOUTH ESSEX CENTURIONS SOCIAL WALK

South Essex Centurions held a 10.5 mile walk around the East of Canvey Island on Tuesday 7 July, inviting members of local rambling groups to join them. The walk was a bit of a last minute arrangement as we realised on Saturday there was a gap in the local ramblers walk programme, so we thought we would fill it. Three local ramblers came along, we had an excellent cafe lunch, a later ice cream stop, and kept fully hydrated in the 32 degrees heat. The route took in the best parts of the eastern end of the island which is now included in the Kings coastal footpath, then the central lake area, which is often missed by those sticking to the sea wall path. Photo shows Centurions 1102 Steve Allen (L) and 1075 Steve Kemp (R) having lunch at Canvey Point.



Steve Kemp (Centurions Social Walks Secretary)

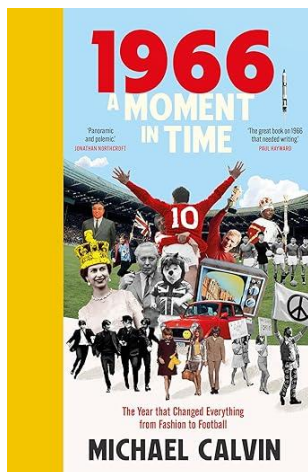
- Nice picture from Canvey Island! **Ed Shillabeer**

AN EVENT RECORD

I think my third in the Welsh Senior Men's makes me the 'oldest' winner' of a Senior Men's medal at 68. My heart says "carry on", my head says "being silly now!!" 😊

Dr Stephen Walker, Wrexham AAC

Adds Hon Ed: I hold the record age for a Men's Welsh Senior Championship 3,000 Metres Walk **Gold** Medal when 6 days' short of my 68th birthday (on 16 August 2015 at Newport's Spyttty Stadium - only 1 entrant). In the Welsh Women's 3,000 Metres Championship at a now condemned Cwmbran Stadium in 2000, Phillipa Reilly (*age unknown*) won Gold in 26:37.2. Wonder where she is now?

RECOMMENDED BOOK READING

This is the book I mentioned on Saturday. [1966 – A Moment in Time: The Year that Changed Everything from Politic | Soccer Books Limited](#). A perfect diamond jubilee celebration, I romped through this book. But really drawing your attention as Julie Welch, the Met Police Dinner speaker, gets mentioned twice at least. Now wish I had gone on one of her football walks!

Dave Hoben

Adds Hon Ed: Former Long Distance Walkers Association President Julie has completed their 100 Miles' Walk (allows 48 hours). In 2009 Julie penned, "Out On Your Feet: The Hallucinatory World of 100 Miles Walking". Her book is still available on [Amazon's website](#) - among race walkers mentioned are the Browns, the Watts, and Jill Green. You might be able to borrow a copy from your local Library - which is where Hon Ed acquired a copy on loan.

NOTIFICATION OF HOSPITAL ADMITTANCE

Have you seen that Martin Slevin is in hospital again? There's a full account on his Facebook page. I know Martin quite well and this all happened after a race. I've sent my best wishes to him. He does seem to be on the mend, thank goodness.

Steve Uttley

Adds Hon Ed: Veteran athlete Martin is a key figure on our Oxfordshire scene. Readers will wish him well.

RWA SOUTHERN AREA NEXT "Zoom" COMMITTEE MEETING

Next meeting is on **Friday 4 September at 6.30 pm**. Please advise EW readers to forward to the Hon Secretary (bettychrisrf@hotmail.com) any race walking related issue they would wish the committee to discuss. Thanks.

Chris Flint

ANOTHER CONGRATULATORY MESSAGE FOR ED

Many congratulations on your Award of the British Empire Medal from King Charles. A wonderful Award for a Lifetime of Service and your great achievements in Athletics - Race Walking. Could not have happened to a nicer bloke and so well deserved. Enjoy the Presentation when it comes and the whole experience of your very special day!

Kath and Bill Sutherland BEM

NIJMEGEN MARCH NEWS

This year is my 46th. I've just met up with Hans Rennie and Peter Addison as well as others from the past. Hans must be on his 49th now and Peter is supporting the Met and Sussex teams. All to play for.

Andy Blgnold

ESSEX WALKER

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



Telephone:

01708-377382



Email:

dave_ainsworth@yahoo.co.uk
essex.walker@btinternet.com

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