

ESSEX WALKER



RWA NATIONAL 10 MILS CHAMPIONSHIP – PICKETS LOCK – 16TH FEB

Promulgated are the top 3 Men's positions + Essex League positions:-

1	D. Stone	Sty	73.41
2	S. Davis	Ilf	76.01
3	M. Williams	Tam	76.39
6	P. Barnard	CP	81.46
9	J. Hall	Bel/Ltn	85.58
10	S. Crane	SWC/Ilf	86.07
14	S. Uttley	Ilf	88.00
18	D. Kates	Ilf	91.17
19	O. Browne	Ilf	93.08
20	S. Allen	Ilf	94.13
21	D. Sharpe	Ilf	94.18
26	A. Ellam	EH	97.47
27	P. King	Bel/Ltn	98.08
30	M. Hinton	Ilf	99.31
31	R. Dobson	Ilf	100.01
32	S. Pender	EH/Ltn	100.53
34	L. Dordoy	Ilf	102.12
35	J. May	EH	102.26
36	R. Powell	EH/Ilf	103.24
37	E. Saxby	Ilf	104.04
42	J. Borgars	Ltn	110.46
48	M. Sutton	Ilf	121.13
49	K. Livermore	EH/Ltn	126.27

ATTENTION PLEASE

Please ensure that all available Essex qualified walkers enter the Essex County AAA 3,000 Championship at Gloucester Park in Basildon on Sunday 11th May. After the 2007 debacle which saw just 6 racing, we really need to justify being kept in the Grand Finale/Day 3 programme. So let's see you all there. "Let's be 'aving you" as Delia Smith once boomed after she'd been at the cooking sherry.

Fears of mass disqualifications proved to be unfounded as just 3 saw the red disk, 2 of whom had Essex connections. Both covered their 10 Miles, or at least most of it. Essex resident AMOS SEDDON got almost to the finishing line while Ilford 2nd claimer ED SHILLABEER (AKA 'Edbanger') – having had his racing numbers impounded, then pounded-on at racing speed to clock up his 10 miles.

In conjunction was the Essex County Championship.

Awards: 1. S. Davis (retains trophy), 2. P. Barnard and 3. S. Crane

Teams: 1. Ilford 'A' (Messrs. Davis, Crane and Uttley)
2. Ilford 'B' (Messrs. Kates, Browne and Allen)
3. Ilford 'C' (Messrs. Sharpe, Hinton and Dobson)

Ilford certainly went 'nap' with 11 first claimers and 4 2nd claimers racing + 4 of their members helping out or supporting. MICK BARNBROOK did not feel up to racing 10 Miles and wisely sat it out, as it was a very cold afternoon. 1980 Olympic Games 50K man IAN RICHARDS set a fast pace from the 'off'. When they had settled down International DARYL STONE made his move and took charge; leaving a highly competitive phalanx to dispute the other place positions. From midway SCOTT DAVIS proved that he was both the fittest and fastest of this group as he pressed-on purposefully to confidently claim 2nd place and add another National medal to his growing collection, a little way ahead of reigning Welsh champion MARK WILLIAMS. MICKY SUTTON raced despite injury and even then 'kept his powder dry' for a distance run on the Sunday morning.

RWA NATIONAL LADIES CHAMPIONSHIP

Promulgated are the top 3 + the Essex finisher.

1	A. Bellchambers	Hill	97.37
2	H. Middleton	Leic	97.51
3	M. Noel	Bel	98.31
10	P. Ficken	SWC/Ltn	126.57

Not the finest hour for the Essex County AAA as no County awards were handed out. But full marks to PAM, who was the only lady in the Essex League, and who also took the top Hertfordshire honour.

DON'T TURN UP

Woodford Green with Essex Ladies AC are holding an official book launch on Saturday April 5th in the Clubhouse at Ashtons Stadium. The Centenary book is selling well with around 200 orders taken. However don't turn up at this book launch unless you have a ticket. Stated author and WG Past President TONY MAXWELL, "All 100 places have been taken and we now have 20 on a waiting list". We hope that all our readers who appreciate athletics history will have submitted their orders by now.

ENTER NOW

No entries-on-the-day will be accepted at the Nicola 5 Miles on Canvey Island (Sunday April 20th). Also an event limit of 500 is in force. 500 has been frequently exceeded on past occasions, so please don't put your entry form behind the clock – SEND IT IN NOW! Last year we got 48 walking and there's no reason why this popular 'along the seafront' race can't attract even more this time. It's 'bracing racing'.

VETERANS GAGGED?

When one remembers all the many annual walking races that have folded, it is sometimes hard to fathom a fixture clashing situation nowadays. But it's still difficult to please everybody – and quite a few veterans have observed that the big RWA Seminar is going head-to-head with the National BMAF Championships at Pickets Lock. "Don't they want to hear our views?" asked one in all seriousness. *Sometimes it's impossible to please all.*

IN GENERAL

This was the way to bring back the punters to NATIONAL events. A £4 entry, entries taken-on-the-day and all the friendliness and *esprit de corps* of the popular ENFIELD LEAGUE. Thanks to Enfield & Harringey Walking Secretary RON WALLWORK for making his Club's facilities available. PICKETTS LOCK has good public transport access and a huge buckshee car park. Indeed in February there were walking races at that venue on 3 successive weekends. Thanks to all officials, helpers and supporters. And... Brrrr! It got considerably colder as the afternoon progressed – so well done to those hardy tail-enders who stuck it out.

CONGRATULATIONS

To JO JACKSON on her new UK record 20K time of 91.40 in Australia – an Olympic qualifying time!

CENTURIONS NEW TREASURER

Taking over the ledgers from long-serving Bedford-based PAUL SARGENT is popular HANS RENNIE who now hails from Somerset. For many years Hans was Honorary Treasurer of the Metropolitan Police Walking Section. Hans qualified as Centurion No. 915 in the Met's own London 200 kilometres promotion at Battersea Park (jointly staged with Surrey Walking Club). Hans called it a day on reaching 100 Miles in 22.23.19.



EMAILS CATH DUHIG

During Saturday's sortie at Viccy Park, I was actually almost stopped mid-race by a woman spectator who was interested in the event and wanted to know about race walking clubs. I was obviously not going quickly enough for her to recognise me as a competitor...!

To give her her due, she did accept my puffed general comments advising her to go and talk to one of the officials, (and to give me my due, that was all I said!), and she was also there after I'd finished, when I was able to give her some info and introduce her to the Hon. Sec of the RWA who gave her his card! (He was, in fact, just completing his duties as Judges' Runner – in his car – at the time).

All in a day's work, eh?

Looking forward to the next issue, as ever. I hope it comes before I go to Spain – I can't wait will I get back for some light reading!!!

Cath.

A PLEDGE FROM MARK WALL

Dave,

You do make it sound like it is out of the ordinary or that it is not something others are not doing. In the other place, that will not be mentioned, walkers are part of the mainstream of athletics. I raced between 200 and 300 times for my club in Inter-club competition. This is of course apart from thrashing through various different events. I was not out of the ordinary. Many masters athletes of course compete outside walks in the various leagues.

Sue coaches at least two T & F clubs and shares responsibilities with me at others. She is the Secretary of the Northants AA Development committee as well as being a member of the Administrative committee and at a Regional England Athletics level she is looking to be involved in disability athletics. This of course, whilst finishing her Master's Thesis.

That other no hoper is chair of the committee, on the Administrative committee, on the EA East Midlands: Competition committee (covering all events). Endurance forum (again a wide brief) and a member of the Coaching Committee, (again across all event groups). As Flying Coach for Racewalking, I am trying to involve each of the 5 counties and the larger clubs, in my nefarious plans...

Where is this heading? We need to kill off insularity. I raised this in another forum and got lambasted. We are an event in the sport of athletics, one part of the whole. My message? Let's get FULLY involved in our event and sport. Ask and you shall receive! I will labour night and day to be a pilgrim.

So endeth the lesson. Mark.

A MESSAGE FROM OUR SPONSOR

Former Eire International walker PAT FUREY is again sponsoring the now-established 'PAT FUREY TROPHIES MEETING'. This year it's on Saturday 15th March at Donkey Lane (2 pm) and – what's more – this time it doesn't clash with the MOLLY BARNETT walks. The 5 Miles race is part of the Enfield League series and it offers **double points**. Pat's gesture sees a prize table which groans under the weight of the prizes heaped on it! Pat is one of Enfield's best-known members and he's also been associated with athletics promotions in the London Business Houses Association, British Industries Association, British Railways, London Transport and the Royal Mail (Pat walked for Potters Bar Post Office in the LPR 6 Miles-in-Uniform Race). Pat has a message, "There's been problems with trophy winners not returning them cleaned, engraved and ready for presentation again. I ask all who were awarded pots at last year's Pat Furey Trophies Meeting to return them on March 15th, as I don't want any of this year's winners to go home without their awards".



DO YOU WANT SOME MORE?

Local man JOHN HALL rounded-up some of the Picketts Lock indoor finishers and led them on a 'warm down' outdoors, where he supervised a reconnaissance walk on the designated National 10 Miles course.

BIN IT

Somehow the walk result sheet failed to be pinned-up with the others at Picketts Lock. Somehow it ended-up in a bin, and we don't quite know how? So a double thanks to the enterprise of both DAVE SHARPE and JOHN HALL who, again somehow, managed to obtain enough info from somewhere to each produce a result sheet. There were some discrepancies between these versions but, somehow, an official result list was formulated.



BIG NAME SIGNING AT SOUTHEND

Southend-based international walker MARTIN FISHER, who has yet to appear in our local Essex League, has signed for a new Club – REDCAR RWC. Martin came to Essex in 1985 to become Centurion No. 788 at the British Telecom 24 Hours Walk held around the Colchester Garrison track. His 100 Miles time was 22 hours 58 minutes and 45 seconds in the colours of YORKSHIRE RWC. We wish him well in his new Club's colours.

ALL CHANGE

The Enfield League race on Saturday 12th April is now not at Picketts Lock. It's going to the Queen Elizabeth Stadium at Donkey Lane, Enfield (2 pm). The event is billed as the 'Promote Walking 3,000 metres'. It is hoped that some triers will tackle the distance – alongside the regulars who will also be trying! Always double-check Enfield track fixtures as Enfield & Harringey AC have 3 stadiums at their disposal. The aforementioned 2 plus the 'Pay-and-Display' Parking Attendants paradise known as the New River Stadium.

HOT WALKING

The Southern Counties Veterans granted 'Open' status to their Indoor 3,000 metres Championship at Picketts Lock on February 9th, and extended a genuine welcome to guest competitors. More than a few wags commented about it being the hottest February day for many years – and there we all were indoors! In fact temperatures in London were higher than in Athens.

Two judges, PAULINE WILSON and PETER CASSIDY, officiated at 2 meetings that day. They sped around the M25 over to the Winter League 5K at Bexley where the latter was the appointed Chief. The afternoon belied the label of 'Winter League'. A late start at the Indoor Arena cut things a bit finer than they had anticipated. New Zealand resident ERIC SAXBY popped-in to Picketts Lock to help out with the officiating. An assembly of veterans walking 15 times around a steeply-banked 200 metres circuit under 'A' rules was always likely to trouble the 'naughty-board' writer, who had 7 out of the 12 competitors on display by the end of it all (some with more than 1 cross). Another appearing twice was inform NICK SILVESTER who won convincingly 'on the boards' and came 2nd on the tarmac. SCOTT DAVIS triumphed at Bexley after leading from gun-to-tape. Full results of both meetings in Record/AW and on www.racewalkuk.com

RON DAVIES HANGS UP HIS RACING SHOES

A leading light in Essex Walking, and a prominent member of Woodford Green AC (as it was then called), RON DAVIES has announced his decision to retire from competitive race walking. Sadly that's one less race walker in competition, but Ron will still keep fit by walking briskly – of that there can be no doubt. Ron was Honorary Secretary of his Club's successful Walking Section from 1956-to-63. Ron wore the RWA President's chain in 1981/82. In 1954 at Birmingham Ron was part of his Club's winning NIJMEGAN SHIELD (for the 1st club to close home its full declared 8-man squad). In 1959 he won the now defunct 18¼ Miles Croydon-to-Godstone-and-Back in 2.41.10. He gave a good account of himself at all distances making the National Rankings lists from 2 Miles to 50 Kilometres. When ESSEX won the Inter-Counties 10 Miles title in both 1957 (at Coventry) and 1958 (Victoria Park) Ron was our 3rd (of 4) team member. His enthusiasm for athletics continued well into veteran status and we remember one who was a leading light as both a noteworthy competitor and as a diligent official.



1966-1989 WALKERS AT THE TOP

A nostalgia item in tribute to a pair of Essex stalwarts who reach their 60th birthdays in 2008 – BRIAN ARMSTRONG and ROGER MILLS, both of whom are Past Presidents and Life Members of Ilford AC. Indeed at the age of 29, Brian was the Club's youngest ever President and when he held his Annual Dinner, JOHN WEBB was his chosen guest speaker.

A New beginning - National Junior Road Walking Champions

Brian Armstrong joined the Club aged 14 in 1962 and was an average cross country runner until Alec Tiffin persuaded him to take up walking in 1965. Brian was a 'natural' and became UK Junior 1 mile record holder in 1966, the year he took on the task of walking secretary which had remained vacant since Colin Williams had left to join Surrey AC. Brian's enthusiasm for the sport led to Ilford organising an inter-club walk at Chigwell Row in December 1966 where six clubs entered and Brian was joined by Roger Mills and John Blackeby, another former runner, to make up a team. Early in 1967 these three, supported by Colin Williams still eligible to walk for the Club in County events, finished 3rd team in the Essex 10 miles Championship at Southend, and from this Ilford began developing into one of the very best walking clubs in the UK. During that year Brian was selected to represent England at 10,000m in the match against France. Although he was just pipped for first place by the Frenchman, Brian set a UK junior record. Roger Mills also continued to improve and he and Brian were ranked 2nd and 3rd in the UK junior one mile rankings. The team's rapid improvement during that year was confirmed in November when Roger Mills and Brian Armstrong were joined by Geoff Hunwicks (in only his second race) and finished 3rd team in the National RWA Junior 5 mile Championship at Leicester.

1967 was an important year for walking in Essex with the formation of the Essex Walking League, the most successful of its kind in the Country. In the first year of the league, which ended in July 1968 with the Essex Long Distance Walk (then 28½ miles from Romford to Southend) twelve events were contested over distances from 3,000m to 50km including four County Championships. Ilford, competing with a virtually all junior team, were the inaugural league winners from 12 clubs. The Club organised one event in that first year, the Christmas 5 miles (later 10km) at Chigwell Row, an event that has remained on the fixture list to the present day, and from 1971 to 1976 added a one hour race (later the Summer 10km). The format of the league fixtures has changed very little from those early days although there are now events for women as well.

National RWA Junior 5 Mile Champions 1968. Geoff Hunwicks, (Lawrence Dordoy), Roger Mills, Brian Armstrong



The 1968 year started with the team improving to 2nd place in the Essex 10 mile Senior Championship with Roger Mills and Brian Armstrong both gaining Essex Vests for the Inter-Counties in which the Essex team placed 2nd. Essex senior titles were won for the first time by Roger Mills at 2 miles on the track and Brian Armstrong in the Long Distance Walk. The climax, however came in October that year when the Ilford trio of Roger Mills, (the individual winner), Brian Armstrong 5th and Geoff Hunwicks 7th won the National Junior 5 mile Championship held in Manchester. This was to be their last major race together as juniors but in February 1969 as first year seniors they were good enough to take the Essex 10 mile Championship and later in the year finished 5th in the National event over the same distance. The decade ended with Roger Mills winning his first National track title over 3,000m in August 1969 and gaining his first AAA selection. That summer Brian Armstrong continued to excel at the longer distances finishing 7th in the National 50km Championships and winning the Essex Walking League. Geoff Hunwicks

was selected for the Junior International against France over 10,000m, and finally mention should be made of 13 year old Lawrence Dordoy who finished 2nd in the National Schools Championships and went on to win the title in 1970.

County and National Champions UK record holders

Walking in Essex had always been dominated by Woodford Green and Essex Beagles but in the mid-sixties Southend, Basildon and the Essex Police began to show until Ilford came to the fore. Throughout the 1970s and into the 1980s Ilford was the best walking club in Essex at a time when Essex established itself as the top walking county in the Country. Between 1969 and 1976 Essex won the National/Inter-County RWA 10 mile Championship eight years in succession. In the Essex Walking League, a good measure of the strength of Essex walking clubs, Ilford followed four 2nd places and a 3rd by winning the league title every year from 1974 to 1980. Between 1981 and 1987 newly-formed Anglia Striders and the Colchester proved to be the top teams, although at times this had more to do with Ilford not getting their act together rather than being badly beaten. By 1988, however, Ilford were back in the driving seat. The two phases of Ilford's improvement are highlighted by the award of the 'Sparta Cup' in both 1971 and 1985 for the most improved walking club in England. Individuals to win the Essex League during this period included Brian Armstrong on four occasions, Lou Mockett, Steve Gower, Bob Dobson, John Llewellyn (2nd claim) and Stuart Phillips. In the Essex County Track Championships held over 3,000 and 10,000m, Roger Mills was the dominant Ilford walker with nine wins in the shorter race and seven wins over the longer distance. Other winners have included Stuart Phillips at 3,000m and Roy Shepherd and Bob Dobson at 10,000m.

On the road for the period up to 1989, Ilford's County Champions are almost too numerous to mention.

Long Distance Walk (50km from 1971) Bob Dobson 6 wins with Ilford, Brian Armstrong, Geoff Hunwicks and Roger Mills all twice and John Evans once with the team having 10 wins.

20km (first held in 1975) Roger Mills 9 wins, Stuart Phillips twice, John Llewellyn, Steve Uttley and Mike Sweeney all once with the team having 9 wins.

10 Miles Roger Mills 7 wins, Stuart Phillips twice with the team having 14 wins.

20 Miles Roger Mills 4 wins, Steve Gower, Bob Dobson, John Llewellyn all twice and Stuart Phillips once with the team having 9 wins.

At national level the list is no less impressive.

Ilford won the National 10 Mile Championship in 1975 and 1978 and were 2nd in 1977. The 1975 team consisted of Roger Mills 3rd, Steve Gower 9th, Lou Mockett 16th and Geoff Hunwicks 26th. Fortune shone on Ilford in the 1978 race held at Crystal Palace, where the nearby football team were at home generating heavy traffic. This traffic held up the clear favourites Sheffield United Harriers and race referee Len Mitchell, delayed the start by 20 minutes. Sheffield arrived 5 minutes after the start and were allowed to set off without their numbers, then the course measured with a wonky wheel was found to be short giving the latecomers less time to make up for their late arrival. The successful Ilford team consisted of Steve Gower 9th, George Nibre 12th, Geoff Hunwicks 22nd and Brian Armstrong 27th.CONTINUED



National RWA 10 MILE Senior Champions 1978. Steve Gower, Geoff Hunwicks, Brian Armstrong, George Nibre.

The team did well again in 1979 when they finished 2nd in the National 35km. Roger Mills won, and with George Nibre 15th, Brian Armstrong 22nd. Ilford beat the premier northern club Sheffield United Harriers once again. Another set of National medals came the Clubs way in 1988 when Stuart Phillips, Bob Dobson, Mike Sweeney and Steve Uttley finished 3rd team in the National 20km. Individual National titles have fallen to Roger Mills at his specialist 3,000m distance on the track on eight occasions and the 10,000m track in 1973. Roger has also won the Fowler Dixon medal for best style. On the road he won the National 20 miles in 1976 and the 10 miles in 1978. In 1979 he won the National 35km Championship at Leicester setting the inaugural UK record of 2hr.52min.08sec. Roger became UK record holder at 3,000m with a time of

11min 44.68sec in 1981, and in 1974 at Crystal Palace he broke the world one mile record but that is another story. Bob Dobson, already UK record holder at 50km when he joined Ilford from Southend, broke the record again in 1979 with a time of 4hr 07min 22.4sec walking in an international race in Austria.

Internationals, the Lugano Cup and major games.

The international career of Roger Mills began in 1970 when he was selected to walk for Great Britain against France where he won over the 20km distance. Roger, confident of his own potential, decided to move to Switzerland at the end of that year to gain training and racing experience among some of the world's elite with the 1972 Olympics very much in mind. Roger was unfortunate not to make the Olympic walking team in 1972 (one of a number of disappointments over the years due to selection policy or lack of it!) but his international walking achievements were to include 33 full Great Britain vests in the period 1972 to 1983 including representation in all the major games. In 1973 he made his first appearance for Great Britain in the Lugano Cup, a series of races held bi-annually over 20km and 50km, and considered by walkers to be the world championships for their discipline until the introduction of the IAAF World Championships in 1983. Roger was selected for Great Britain's 20km team for this event in 1973, 1975, 1977, 1979, 1981 and 1983, his best position being 8th in 1973. His participation in major games commenced in 1974 when after a slow start to the season due to injury he was 2nd in the 20km trial for the European Championships to be held in Rome in a fine 89min 04sec.

These were dramatic and headline grabbing times for Roger and the following is a report of his race in Rome from the Daily Telegraph.

The real excitement of the day came in the 20 kilometres walk, when Roger Mills from Basildon, who lost his £3,500 a year job by electing to represent Britain, almost 'did a Dorando'. Mills, 26, the British record holder, was in desperate trouble from the intense heat and humidity some kilometres from home, yet he entered the stadium in fourth place after an inspired performance. He wobbled round the track, wandering from lane 1 to lane 5 in the last 100 yards and then with five yards to go, and to the shocked gasps of the crowd almost keeled over. The memory of Dorando Pietri, who collapsed yards from the line in the 1908 Olympic marathon was uppermost in all minds, but somehow the ashen faced Mills staggered across the line, almost accidentally, and collapsed into the arms of an official. Happily he recovered.

And Roger's own words.

After three quarters of the race I worked through the field and thought I had a chance of the bronze but I couldn't catch the Russian. I knew he was too far in front and I was desperately looking forward to when it would all be over and the race finished. I was desperate to finish it all. I knew I was wobbling a bit as I had a bit of trouble negotiating the bend. I was about ten yards out from the line and everyone was shouting. It was funny, until that point, I hadn't been able to hear much. I tried turning round to see what they were shouting at – it was then that I lost concentration. I had been concentrating so hard I didn't realise what was happening. I must have spun round and then stretched for the line. I was over it and had finished. I thought I was okay, but they carried me off on a bloody stretcher and started giving me oxygen. Well I didn't want much of that. Anyway I thought I was fine again. I started walking down the corridor and was suddenly sick and my breathing was strange and I suddenly realised I couldn't feel anything. I was taken to the medical unit – I had fun trying to negotiate two steps on the way there – where an Italian doctor gave me more oxygen and got me to my feet again. In an hour I was right as rain.

Indeed he was and went on to walk a World Mile Record of 6min 08.9sec in the Coca Cola Meeting at Crystal Palace the following week to most tumultuous applause.

The final act to this incredible season, however, came 8 weeks later when a positive drug test on the 3rd place Russian meant that Roger had won the European bronze medal; this was presented to him just before Christmas on the BBC's 'Sportsview Personality of the Year' programme.

Roger Mills, AAA 3,000 Walk Champion eight times, AAA 10,000m Walk Champion 1973, RWA 10 Mile Champion 1978, 20 Miles 1976, 35km 1979, UK Record Holder 3,000m 1981, World Best One Mile 1974.

Roger's other Games appearances were:

European Championships, Prague 1978, where with a below form performance he was first British walker to finish in 21st position.

Olympic Games, Moscow 1980, a superb 10th in the 20km.

Commonwealth Games, Brisbane 1982, 7th in the 30km

World Championships, Helsinki 1983, not at his best.

International appearances while Club members have also been made by

Colin Williams, 1961 Lugano Cup 20km

Steve Gower, 1978 (ex Essex Beagles) v. WG v. EG v. Poland

Bob Dobson, 1981 (ex Southend and Basildon) Lugano Cup 50km

George Nibre, Lugano Cup 1979, 10km, 50km

Brian Armstrong, Junior 1967 v. France

Geoff Hunwicks, Junior 1969 v. France

Roy Shepherd, Junior 1978 v. WG

John Evans, represented Wales

Stuart Bennett, represented Scotland

Francisco Reis, represented Portugal.

Acknowledgement: Written by athletics author and historian WARREN ROE.

EMAILS MIKE HINTON

Hello Dave,

Had the Radio on this morning listening to Steve Scrutton's programme 'BBC ESSEX YEAR 1973'. He was mentioning the 'ESSEX POLICE CADET TRAINING SCHOOL'. An ex-Policeman rang in and said that when he was there in 1973, they had an instructor who was a Race Walker, a larger than life character with a handlebar moustache, couldn't remember his name. When they were made to do their training runs this instructor insisted on race walking the course with them, and leaving most of them in his wake. I presume he must have been talking about the late John Hedgethorne.

Regards Mike.



EMAILS CARL LAWTON

I reluctantly hold my hands up as one who failed to return a trophy to VP. Put it out and left it, remembered two miles down the road.

Finally in observation of the statue can I assume it was taken from a 'B' category event and not a major international as a) there is a definite bent knee on contact, and b) CONTACT with both feet and c) straight leg at the back. If that is acceptable to the IOC as a definition then is that what we all knew walking rules to be before they were jiggled about.

Contact Man.

EMAILS ED SHILLABEER

Great news about Joanna Jackson's 91:41 qualifying time in OZ. Any relation to Dennis and Graham?

God willing we in Plymouth will be celebrating Tom Daley as the youngest male Olympian as he has qualified and is apparently selected too for Beijing. Pity it's for diving and not walking!

Since my October 50k, where so importantly I was looked after by my No. 1 attendant Richard Pannell, I have invested a not inconsiderable amount of time and money to improve my posture/skeletal balance and hence ultimately, performance. The fact that first time out I was unwittingly unable to sustain satisfactory technique for all 10 miles means that work is not complete of course.

Whilst being very appreciative of Ron and his merry men for organising the National 10 at what was an impressive looking venue, on reflection I could not help but make some course comparisons. Tilburg, used also shortly after the Dutch national 50k for an international running event for which a local girl was selected, had a completely smooth tarmac lap with no humps, no potholes, no 180° turns, no traffic and no less judges! Hans van der Knaap would love to have a big contingent of Brits, especially youngsters, at this years event due to be held October 5th. It's closer to me than our own 2008 National 50k which I am planning to enter, so what about supporting Hans in numbers folk?

p.s. They also laid on perfect weather!!!

Yours in Sport, Edbanger

Adds Hon. Ed. The diver will not be the youngest GB Olympian, for many have failed to acknowledge KEN LESTER who was 13 years and 144 days when he completed as a cox in the 1960 Olympics. That made him 10 months younger than when the precocious diver is expected to make his splash later this year. However, he could become Britain's youngest ever medallist – a record held by another diver BRIAN PHELPS who was 16 years and 134 days when gaining bronze – also in Rome. D.A.

EMAILS KEVIN PERRY

Hi Dave,

Thanks again for keeping me in touch through the Essex Walker, I know I am biased but it was good to see Chelsea O'Rawe-Hobbs mentioned in dispatches. I know from experience how hard she trains and the sacrifices made to her social life to be competitive in her chosen sport. Kevin Perry.

EMAILS BARRY INGARFIELD

Dear Ron,

I think that your paper is an excellent piece of work, and will no doubt create, a solid foundation for an interesting in-depth discussion...in particular, your reference to the diminishing numbers of walkers. At this point, I would stress that the few walkers we have certainly need to seriously rethink their ideas about their commitment and fitness levels...and in addition, today there are many well qualified coaches/mentors, so there's absolutely no excuse, whatever the rules, for poor technique. As one who suffered during my RW career from lack of coaching, but am now qualified, I am certainly always available to offer my advice. I think that the recent, George Nibre initiative is excellent.

You can quote me on the following..."The world has become a place where money and celebrity are everything". I meet talented youngsters all the time...and they say to me, "Race Walking attracts no money and no fame". Whereas, other sports, particularly football promises unbelievable wealth...and more fame that they deserve. Today, Britain as a whole, has become a 'junk food, and beer/wine' culture, and as the obesity epidemic shows us...has almost no interest in sport or physical exercise.

As you know I never shy-away from controversy; in my opinion, British race walking needs some drastic Root-and-Branch changes...then and only then can we look forward to resurgence.

My best regards,

Yours in friendship and sport, Barry

ALL THOSE YEARS AGO

In 1953 at Luton COLIN YOUNG won the RWA Junior 5 Miles Championship clocking 39.49 in the colours of Essex Beagles. In 1960 at Mitcham a junior by the name of RON WALLWORK of Lancashire Walking Club won the title in 39.02. JOHN PADDICK of Royal Sutton Coldfield Walking Club won the title in 1961 at Enfield with 38.03 on the stopwatch. All 3 worthies went on to make their mark as seniors; and their high points have all been well-chronicled. And....all 3 have made their mark as sports journalists. For many years Colin penned the walking reports in Athletics Weekly when it was a small booklet known as 'The Bible'. Nowadays Ron edits ENFIELD WALKER and John the REDCAR RWC Newsletter – both publications being frequently issued and eagerly read.

In 1961 the RWA instituted a Youths 3 Miles Championship for the R.C. Mawbey Cup. The inaugural victor came from Essex: I.T. TAYLOR of ESSEX BEAGLES. One wonders what happened to him? And is this cup still competed for? R.C. Mawbey was RWA President in 1946/7.

EXCITING TIMES AHEAD

It's a good time to be a member of The Centurions for next year will see a bicentenary celebration of Captain Barclay's great endurance feat of walking 1,000 miles in 1,000 hours. Captain Barclay was a professional sportsman who walked for wagers, as seen by his accomplishment on Newmarket Heath in 1809. The highlight of the celebration is to be another ultra-distance walking race at Newmarket and heading the Organisation Committee will be RON WALLWORK who is a pillar in that town. In 2009 he's also due to be the Race Walking Association's President. And of course we can remember the excellent organisation that went into 2 previous ultra-distance races at Newmarket's famous Rowley Mile racecourse – especially his Millennium Challenge. Who can ever forget the sight of nearly a thousand folk walking up the famous home straight at that racecourse (including household names from 'the turf'), while the 'main event' participants toiled on? Ron has plans for similar arrangements in 2009, but we won't 'steal his thunder' now. As they say, "Watch this space".



The 2009 race could be the last really big ultra-distance spectacular to be held on the UK mainland as the average age of the regular participants is somewhat high, and the average age of the hard-working officials even higher (and officiating for 24 hours is hard work, especially as fewer-and-fewer folk are now coming forward to help out). Also the numbers of UK mainland-based race walkers seeking to qualify for Centurions membership is dramatically on the wane. As respected Centurion PETER MARKHAM pointed out recently, "If you can't get people to walk 50K, you can't get them to walk 100 Miles". Peter made his comment in the wake of 2 very poorly supported National 50K Championship races at Earls Colne. So let's all pull together to make the 2009 event at Newmarket a truly great one!

In 2011 The Centurions celebrate their centenary, and a gala dinner is in the process of being arranged as is a Centenary Handbook. Their last one, published in 1997, was truly a collector's item with exactly 100 fascinating pages to read through. Exciting times ahead and another case of "Watch this Space".

GOING UP

Just 6 non-veterans contested this year's RWA National 10 Miles, the field having an average age of 55. Clearly priority must be to attract younger newcomers to fill the shoes of our ever-aging current racers.

FIXTURES

Wed Mar 5	Metropolitan Police Dinner & Reunion	New Scotland Yard	6.45 pm
Sat Mar 8	Molly Barnet Meeting	Leamington	1 pm
Sat Mar 15	Pat Furey Trophies Meeting/5 Miles	Donkey Lane	2 pm
Sat Mar 29	Slater/Bryce 10,000 Metres	Horsham	11 am
Sat Apr 5	Woodford Green AC Centenary Book Launch	Ashtons	
Sat Apr 12	Promote Walking 3,000 metres (Enfield League) + Undercard	Q.E. Stadium	2 pm
Tue Apr 15	Veterans 5 Miles	Battersea Park	7 pm
Sat Apr 19	Jeff Ford Open Walks	Don Valley	
Sun Apr 20	Nicola 5 Miles	Canvey Island	10.15 am
Sat Apr 26	LICC 3,000 Metres	Cophthall Stadium	1 pm
Sun Apr 27	RWA 50K Championship (+Essex)	Stockton-on-Tees	11 am
Wed Apr 30	Veterans 10,000 Metres Championship	Battersea Park	6.30 pm
Sun May 4	RWA YAG	Victoria Park	
Sat May 10	Stock Exchange Reunion	Coppingham Arms	Noon
Sun May 11	Essex County AAA 3,000 Championship	Gloucester Park	
Mon May 12	Veterans 2,000 metres	Picketts Lock	7.10 pm

“PHUT PHUT PHUT PHUT PHUT”

Recently CATH DUHIG reported that her training had involved being paced by a narrow boat as it navigated the inland waters of The Fens. Well knowing Cath's ability as we do, the boat owner must have been breaking by-laws – for the maximum permitted speed on the Inland Waterways for Fenland is 5mph!



TRIBUTE FROM PAUL NIHILL MBE

When I was an up and coming race walker in the very early sixties the name of Eric Hall was a name to be reckoned with. In the 1961 SWC Banstead 11¼ mile walk I finished third in a class field in what was one of my early successes. The winner that day was Belgravian Eric Hall. The first race walker to represent Great Britain in the Olympics at 20km, and 50km. Today 47 years on Eric's name keeps cropping up in the 'Essex Walker' with reports of his 'Open' performances of half a century ago. He won the Enfield Open in 1957 and was a starter in the 2007 event.

A lot of our readers might not know too much about Eric who now resides in Colchester the town in which I was born. Eric commenced his long race walking career back in 1948 when he finished 140th out of 152 finishers in the Belgrave Open 7 with a time of 71m 29s. He served his race walking apprenticeship surrounded by top class performers and there were in those days many in the field of 200 plus that were available for all to enter. Once Eric got to Olympic level he had to contend with British world class walkers including the likes of Don Thompson, Stan Vickers, George Coleman and a young Ken Matthews etc. His personal bests included 7 miles in 50m 40s, 10 miles in 73m 34s, 20km in 93m 37s, 20 miles in 2h.39m.07s and 50km in 4h.31m.41s, when finishing second to Don Thompson in the 1956 RWA Championship at Enfield. His best performances in my opinion were the winning of the 1957 RWA 20 Mile Championship at Hendon and a record breaking 20 Miles in 2h.39m.07s over a tough Wimbledon course in 1960.

Eric like myself is not a fan of the present judging system and isn't afraid to say so. We both believe that the old rules were the fairest. Eric has been treasurer of 'The Olympians' for ten years now and I can vouch for the work he does for that organisation. When we Olympians meet at various get-togethers Eric is rarely seen because he and his wife Mavis are working on our behalves behind the scenes.

Eric, yeah he is a good un' and I am a fan.

Paul Nihill MBE.

POLITICIANS PROGRESS

Our last issue gave you details of a history book – 'The Star Walk, Reflections and Records' by MALCOLM AYTON. It records the history of one of Sheffield's best loved sporting traditions. The now defunct walk, from 1922 to its end in 2000 AD, was a launching pad for many a promising race walker. Two current MPs have race the 12 miles route, which drew vast crowds in the event's heyday. DENNIS SKINNER – The Beast of Bolsover – finished 2nd in 1956. He put his success down to preparation saying, "Even my father was proud, which was for him real praise in view of his remarks in the middle of my training when he came home to Clay Cross from the pit and said, "What's this I hear about you walking to Ashover every night waddling your arse?" I protested saying, "I'm in training for the Star Walk". "Don't be daft" he said, "How can you compete with proper walkers?" Mr. Skinner is not a well man nowadays having never fully recovered from a serious bicycle accident. He went 'Bolsover Colliery'.

AUSTIN MITCHELL didn't do at all well saying, "Too many people took my entry seriously so support quickly turned to derision when it emerged how flabby and unfit I was. Sheffield people don't put up with rubbish so easily".

The book was officially launched with a signing session at The Star Shop in Sheffield on January 26th. Great champions such as JAKE WARHURST, LES MORTON, BETTY SOWOWSKY and HELEN ELLEKER were participants (the ladies race commencing in 1978). The book looks to be a great read.

INFO FROM CARL LAWTON

Herewith fixtures for the LICC meetings. 3kms Walk probably 1 pm.

LICC 2008 Fixtures

26th April 2008	Barnett Cophthall
21st June 2008	Woodford Green
26th July 2008	Barnett Cophthall
9th August 2008	Parliament Hill



POSTCARDS FROM THE EDGE

Genial PAT FUREY has a number of hobbies and interests, one of which is collecting pre-1920 postcards. Pat's collection is now in excess of 10,000, so if you've a few old postcards at the back of a drawer, then pass them on to Pat – who will truly appreciate them.

KEVIN PERRY'S TEST FOR DEMENTIA

Below are 2 questions. You have to answer them **immediately**, OK

Let's find out just how clever you really are.....

First Question:

You are participating in a race. You overtake the second person. What position are you in?

Answer

If you answered that you are first, then you are absolutely wrong! If you overtake the second person, you take his place, so you are second!

Second Question

If you overtake the last person, then you are?

Answer

If you answered that you are second to last, then you are wrong again. Tell me, how can you overtake the LAST person?

WRITES PAUL BRIGGS

Dear Dave, (C540)

Many thanks for a copy of the Essex Walker which is a great read and entails a lot of local interest. It is very much an equal with the Race Walking Record which seems to spend too much time on overseas results rather than local interest. It was interesting to read about 1981. It also brought back memories of the 24 Hour Track Walk at Saffron Lane, Leicester. I Paul Briggs (431) went through the 100 Mile point before Paul Sargent (430) but Paul Sargent walked more miles thus walking further in the 24 Hours and showing a better position in the overall 24 Hours. Along with Eric Lee and John Grayson, both of Wakefield Harriers, becoming new Centurions was more important than the badge number. The race was held in August 1969. The presentation followed in October after the Leicester Seven when we were delighted to receive our badges.

I always enjoyed the race walking in the South and competed in the Hastings-to-Brighton, London-to-Brighton and the Plymouth-to-Dawlish. I once competed in a 35 Kilometres race from Slough getting 2nd handicap. Passing Pinewood Studios on the course and meeting Don Thompson were real highlights for me. The race was promoted by Metro Walking Club. A race that was put on near the Capital was the Highgate Hour where competitors were placed into sections to see how far they could go in One Hour. This was a very enjoyable race.

Getting nearer home (well the Midlands) I once only did the Leicester-to-Skegness, a number of times the Leicester Mercury 20 Miles and only once the Birmingham Outer Circle, the remainder of this race will certainly tingle the memory cells. In the North I walked regularly in the Bradford, the Manchester-to-Blackpool and the TT Walk.

Anyway, many thanks, and it's nice to know that stalwart Dave Sharpe is still competing. As for myself I retire in late March and maybe (just maybe) I might put on my race walking shoes after an absence of 20 years. Be good to yourself.

Yours in Sport
Paul Briggs, Centurion 431.

EMAILS BARRY INGARFIELD

Hi Tony,

Sorry, I didn't print my copy of EW, but I thoroughly enjoy reading it!

Best regards, Barry.

Ps. If any of your readers have questions/issues about the importance and benefits of regular strength and conditioning training, I would gladly be prepared to offer my professional advice.

PUT BACK

The provisional Milton Keynes Track 100 Miles is now pencilled in for Saturday/Sunday 16th/17th August.

PLENTY OF CHOICE

Saturday 9th February certainly offered plenty of choice for the ever-dwindling band of race walkers. As well as a race in the North, there was the Midlands Championship which saw Centurions stalwart JACK THOMAS officiating and Olympic Gold Medallist KEN MATTHEWS MBE in attendance. On 'our patch' we had a Championship race at Picketts Lock Indoor Arena and a League race at Bexley. Both drew reasonable numbers (or at least in contemporary terms) despite an information supplier informing folk that the latter had been cancelled owing to clashing. Bidding for attention among all this lot was The Centurions AGM in Central London. It was therefore no surprise that they received an avalanche of apologies for absence. But that shouldn't be seen as negativity, for it shows interest when members of any Organisation take the trouble to record such apologies.

GOBSMACKED

Sportsmen (though not sports ladies) are always gobbing-off as they throw themselves into their pursuit. Just watch 'Match-of-the-Day' and you really see the phlegm fly! Athletes are little different; indeed when they pound a track and let one go, a simultaneous swivel of their head towards the infield sees it land on the grass – from where it disappears into the earth. In indoor track at Picketts Lock, by its very nature, has no centre-field grass to aim at. So it was profoundly disappointing that an athlete let a 'large green gooseberry' go at the arena on SCVAC Championship Day. It rested bang in the middle of the inside lane of the home straight just 10 paces from the finishing line. Blimey, if a competitor has trodden on it he/she could have slipped over! But...was it a walker? Well the walking race was the first event on the 200 metres track, and before its delayed start, meeting stewards had been diligent in keeping folk off the track. If it was YOU then think of your fellow entrants next time. *Essex Walker tackles the issues that other publications dare not mention.*

BEWARE OF GREEKS BEARING GIFTS

OLLY BROWNE (Painting, Decorations and Home Renovations) used his works van to drive from his Leigh-on-Sea abode to Picketts Lock for the National 10 Miles. He broke down and needed a push start to get going again. Oly was at a standstill outside a Greek restaurant – so using his initiative he went inside and asked for a push. A trio of Greek waiters and a couple of chefs got him going again!



EMAILS ANN SMITH

May I take advantage of your Email to let everyone know that the Molly Barnett/Inter Counties race walks on 8th March 2008, will take place in VICTORIA PARK LEAMINGTON SPA. First race is 1 p.m.

Thank you very much, Ann Smith

IN THE HOT HOUSE

Both Ilford Daves (Kates and Sharpe) in the BMAF Indoor 3,000 Metres Championship Walk at Lea Valley Stadium complained about the heat. Apparently the heating had been left on all night; and all morning up to the start of the events, so resulting in high temperatures for those racing. Full result in AW/Record/www.racewalkuk.com

MIKE HINTON'S VIEW

Hello Dave,

It was good to see the two Essex youngsters Phil Barnard and Stephen Crane putting in good performances, especially Phil who must have been surprised with his time of 81.41. Showing more strength now, this effort should boost his confidence as a springboard to an outstanding year. As for Stephen, I think he was surprised how far Phil had got away from him, but should be pleased with his time of 86.07, which augers well for the Summer. I thought Scott Davis's walking looked so sound in clocking 76.01.

Regards, Mike.

PRAISE FROM DAVE KATES

I've just seen the result from the Australian Open 20k Championships. What a wonderful victory for Jo Jackson in a British record of 91:40 and just look at some of the 'names' finishing behind her. From everyone at Ilford A.C. congratulations to Jo and her family and also to the group of people, including those at UKA, that form her coaching and support team. This is such a terrific result that will provide a real lift to everyone involved with race walking in the U.K. Jo's performance in Australia must surely warrant Olympic selection and will hopefully serve to give impetus to the work being done to re-establish race walking as a top discipline within U.K. sport.

Best regards, Dave.

THANKS FROM GEOFF

Please pass on my sincere thanks to the following for their forgoing sending Christmas cards so that what they would have spent would benefit us. Bill Garrett, Dave Ainsworth, Alan O'Rawe, Mick Barnbrook, Ken Livermore, Kevin Marshall, George Towers, Tony Perkins and Ron and Joan Wallwork.

We are always struggling to maintain a full capacity of residents so donations like this are always necessary. So on behalf of the children, staff, parents, committee and my wife, I thank you all once again.

Geoff Hunwicks.

IN SESSION

The RWA's seminar at Birmingham's Alexander Stadium into the current state of race walking was not that well attended, but it was constructive enough for a suggestion that such events should be held more frequently. Essex connected walks/officials were numbered among attendees. The RWA will soon issue a resume of the points made.

CHANNEL SWIMMERS

Cabbie Steve Allen had a kindred spirit in his taxi recently – 'Little Britain's' David Walliams. They discussed their channel swims.

STILL A RECORD HOLDER

BRIAN ARMSTRONG thinks that he still holds the Senior UK Indoor 10,000 Metres Record, which he set in Cuxhaven Fish Hall many, many years ago. One can't remember when any Indoor 10,000 Metres Walk was last held. Cuxhaven Fish Hall was a cold building where they raced on concrete with huge ice blocks still in position after the day's trading of wet fish.

LATE BOOKINGS

Any late bookings for the Met. Police Annual Dinner & Reunion on Wed 5th March at 6 pm for 6.45 pm to Karen.bailey@met.police.uk Cost is £26 for a carvery meal. Sir Ian Blair & Lady Blair in attendance at the reception + raconteur CHRIS FOSTER as top of the bill after dinner guest speaker. Open to all walkers & guests.

PRESIDENT'S APPEAL

Dear Colleagues

May I take this opportunity to state, that I was very privileged to be selected RWA President at the AGM for 2007/2008.

Following in the footsteps of my predecessors, I would like to take the opportunity to continue with a President's Appeal.

In reality the London Olympic Games are now looming closer and I'm sure that all of us involved in Race Walking will wish that by 2012, we have walkers who will be considered for selection.

It is with this objective in mind, that I present my appeal to continue the help and support in the development of our 'Younger Age walkers'. With continued help and financial support we can introduce our younger athletes to the discipline needed to achieve international standard and attain performances of medal winning calibre.

May I therefore take the opportunity through this letter to all Clubs, to appeal for your support by way of donations no matter how small, so that we can continue to financially support and develop our younger athletes.

Any amount would be appreciated and donations should be made payable to 'RWA' with indication that it is for the President's Appeal.

Glyn Jones

President R.W.A.

Adds Hon. Ed. Please make your cheques payable to RWA and mail to the RWA Hon. Treasurer, Bill Wright at 212 Weddington Road, Nuneaton, Warwickshire. CV10 0ER. Or see Glyn at the meetings. D.A.

IN THE PRINCIPALITY

For our readers with Welsh connections:-

Sun June 15	Welsh Senior 3,000M Championship	Cardiff
Sat July 5	Welsh Schools Championship	Brecon
Sun July 13	Welsh Masters 3,000M Championship	Cardiff

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