

ESSEX WALKER

HISTORY IS MADE

Ilford AC contested the annual National 10 Kilometres Road Walking Championships over 6 twisting circuits at Pickets Lock on a downcast Saturday afternoon, going to post as defending Champions having won this team title 12 months earlier at Earls Colne in North Essex. Ilford entered 2 teams in the event and for the first time since National Walking Championships were inaugurated in 1907, the same Clubs teams came 1st and 2nd – so emphatically eliminating all opposition!

From the off, star Ilford performer SCOTT DAVIS tucked in within sight of the leading group, sensibly keeping plenty in reserve for the race's second half. Davis moved up a place when one of the favourites – Colchester Harrier DOMINIC KING was disqualified, but could not make an impact on the race leader – his twin brother DAN – who broke the tape in 43 minutes and 52 seconds to once again truly emphatically stamp his class on UK domestic walking. The next walker to finish, in 2nd place, was Irish guest competitor BRENDON BOYCE in 44.26. Needless to say he did not qualify for the UK awards, and with Redcar's BEN WEARS and Colchester's LUKE FINCH filing the UK top 3 positions it was Finch that Davis had to attack for the bronze medal. Davis had a game plan and that was to secure a place medal for all 4 UK 2008 National Road Championships, having won at 20K and 50K and been placed 2nd at 10 Miles. It was going to plan as Davis stormed around a final lap and bore down on Finch within sight of the finishing line. Finch was unaware of the fast-closing Davis until a team colleague on the sidelines shouted a warning; so stirring the Colchester Harrier to surge towards the line with his slim 4 seconds advantage. Finch clocked 46.23 to Davis's 46.27. Further down the field STEVE UTTLEY battled on gamely to fill 18th position 54.41 with STEVE ALLEN, who as always improved as the race wore on, in 19th with 55.38 on the stopwatch. This enabled Ilford AC to close in as first team. Of the team's 3 scoring members the latter 2 had been team gold medallists in 2007. Also on the road were an experienced Ilford AC 'B' team who were led home by Captain DAVE KATES in 24th spot clocking 58.12 with stalwart DAVE SHARPE 25th in 61.06. In 29th place came former English School Champion walker LAURENCE DORDOY who was still easing his way back to form after injury. He gritted his teeth to record 63.42.

Ilford's 'A' and 'B' teams had secured the gold and silver team medals with 261 and 225 points respectively with Colchester Harriers coming 3rd with 197 points. At the presentation the Chairman of the Race Walking Association PETER MARKHAM praised Ilford and stated that the same Club coming 1st and 2nd had not occurred before, though Ilford members did acknowledge that other Clubs disqualifications, retirements and unavailability had all worked in their favour. But it was truly a cause for celebration for the Cricklefields-based Club.

Other Essex walkers in contention were: 11th Phil Barnard CP 51.22, 13th Stephen Crane SWC/Ilf 52.47, 15th John Hall Bel/Ltn 53.48, 26th Chris Bent Pitsea 61.22, 28th Sean Pender EH/Ltn and 30th Ron Powell EH/Ilf 65.11.

Essex Walker readers were prominent in all aspects of the officiating duties, for which we thank them all.

TWO FOR THE PRICE OF ONE

Many readers have got the IAN RICHARDS mixed up. Well folks, both IAN RICHARDS were at Pickets Lock for the RWA National 10K, so you could see both at once!

HI HO SILVER

Among supporters at Pickets Lock was proud grandfather ALAN O'RAWE, who was there to cheer on CHELSEA O'RAWE-HOBBS. Chelsea came 2nd in the Senior Women's National 10K Walk, clocking 56.32, just 2 seconds ahead of DIANE BRADLEY and headed only by Beijing Olympian JO JACKSON. Well done to Chelsea for striking silver in such high class company.



ESSEX LEAGUE STATUS

As in previous years an Essex League race is to be held with the Cambridge Harriers Winter League Series at Bexley. It's on Saturday 18th October at 2 pm. Please note that (a) it's an 'A' race, (b) entries are taken on-the-day and (c) it's up to 10 minutes walk from the dressing rooms between No's 58 and 60 Glenhurst Avenue, to the start. Nearest Station is Bexley (10 minutes walk).



RWA SOUTHERN AREA AGM

This is to be held on Monday 10th November at 7.15 pm in the Civil Service Recreation Centre, Chadwick Street, SW1 (which is off Horseferry Road by the Channel 4 Headquarters Building). There is on-street parking and it's a 5 minutes walk from St. James Park Underground (Circle & District Lines). It's a chance to have your say.

It was mooted that such an AGM could be held before or after a walking race. But as we know, many walkers cut it fine making start times are they are, and then need to go warming-up. After a presentation most stream away on the quick (in fact a number don't stop for a Presentation, even when they've got something to come). But perhaps next year, if somebody could suggest a suitable hall with space for a meeting, it could be considered. But generally it is accepted that a separate AGM is best for business matters. Those who want to be there will get there – and hopefully that will be many. It is your chance to show support for your Officers and Committee and, of course, have your say.

CLASSIC PERFORMANCE

Also racing over the same weekend was Ilford 2nd claimer ED SHILLABEER who came 3rd in Guernsey Church-to-Church Classic. Held over an odd distance of 19.4 miles, the distance being made up as the route passes every church on this popular Channel Island, Shillabeer (a past course and distance winner) had enough strength for an impressive finish which saw him pass local walker Phil Lockwood to secure his frame finish in 3 hours 11 minutes and 27 seconds, just under 3 minutes adrift of 2nd placed local Jason LeNoury. Shillabeer, by coincidence a Vet by profession, also was presented with the 'Super Veterans Trophy'.



VETERANS AC NEW HON. WALKING SECRETARY

After nearly two years without anybody in this post, and expecting Officers from other Sections to look after race walking matters, Veterans AC finally have a new Office holder. It's CHRIS FLINT, who is already Hon. Sec of the RWA Southern Area, Hon. Sec of The Centurions, Minutes Secretary of the RWA, Chairman of the Metropolitan Police Walking Club and President of the London Vidarians. Her also works full-time for a living and is an active competitor at all distances from a few laps of the track to infinity! Do all those Vets AC members think it's fair that nobody from among their number can step forward for this post – bar a man who already has so many other Offices? Chris has ideas and wants to put some 'oomph' into the Tuesday evening Battersea Park Handicap series. Watch this space!

EMAILS CHRIS FLINT

Hi Dave,

I had attended the VAC AGM last Thursday (as exhorted in EW) and had expected a room full of keen walkers only to find I was the only one (apart from Cecil Gittins) and when elections to vacant posts came up on the Agenda they all looked at me and it was a fait accompli!!

Fortunately John Hall and Carl Lawton have offered to assist!

It doesn't make sense for me to take it on but I was really expecting others to do so. Frankly, it was just getting too embarrassing not to have a Walking Secretary as you rightly pointed out in the EW. Heigh Ho!

All the best,
Chris



EMAILS OLYMPIC JUDGE PIERCE O'CALLAGHAN

Dave,
My sister has lived in Witham and Purfleet in Essex and now lives in Great Notely so I hope this grants me at least Hon Essex Walker status...as I love your newsletter...and am as passionate about RW as your readers!

A few words for Peter Marlow who was due to be the Chief Judge for the 3 walks. A family death, followed by flight disruption from Heathrow, meant he was unable to make the Games. He was sorely missed by all the RW community. Chat soon I hope.
Pierce

POW WOW

Former international GEORGE NIBRE has suggested that 3 of race walking's 'thinkers' get around a table to plan how we get a full complement of walkers into Victoria Park to contest the 2012 Olympic Walks. The 3 are George plus BARRY INGARFIELD and BILL SUTHERLAND. This trio have all written articles in Essex Walker stating why it's all gone wrong and what the sport needs to do in order to get it right by 2012.

REPEATED CHARITY GESTURE

Last year a number of Essex Walker readers donated the money that they would have spent on sending other walkers Christmas cards to charity. This money was paid to The Gambian Home for Children With Learning Difficulties, based at Hart House in The Gambia and run by GEOFF & ROHEY HUNWICKS. The sum raised was sufficient to pay for 1 child's place at the Centre for an entire year. Due to this success it's being repeated this year. If readers wish to donate, please hand your money to Tony Perkins at meetings or mail it to him at Dean's Farmhouse, Tye Green, CRESSING, Essex. CM7 8HU. Please make cheques payable to A.F. Perkins. As last time, subscribers names will be acknowledged in Essex Walker.

ENQUIRY DESK



'Character' JOHN PERKINS, man of many Clubs, phoned up Hon. Ed. to ask how the British walkers got on in the Men's 20K and 50K walks – as John had experienced difficulty in finding such results in the newspapers and on TV. Hmmm! John obviously must have missed BARRY INGARFIELD's email on their omission in Essex Walker. Sorry John, but for the 2nd successive Olympics no UK male walkers faced the starter. And....we don't want to make it a hat-trick in 2012 on our own patch do we?

AND THEY GET PAID FOR IT

Hazel Irvine: "Let's have a look at some of the headlines about the headlines".

Hazel Irvine: "Ben Ainslie hasn't started too well. 3rd place. So not a bad start".

Adrian Moorhouse "Watch Michael Phelps, Kis, Beavers".

Paul Dickenson: "Majewski. It's not an unexpected victory, but it is a bit of a surprise".

Steve Cram: "Liu Xiang's just realised the inevitable might happen".

Kelly Holmes: "Michael Phelps achievements are incomprehensible".

John Motson: "I've no idea what to expect in the final. It'll be close and it wouldn't surprise me if it went to the penalties".

Brendan Foster: We keep being told that all these youngsters are coming through but they never arrive".



BE PREPARED

It is frustrating that so few youngsters are taking up race walking to replace those who are retiring from racing or, sadly, passing on. A recent survey reveals that 90% of youngsters don't do the recommended 1 hour's physical activity a day. The poll, conducted by the Scout Association polled 1,083 young persons aged from 7-to-18.

OFF THE RAILS

STEVE UTTLEY was in Brussels on Civil Service business when his Eurostar ticket was rendered worthless when the service was suspended after a fire. He only got home after 10 hours travelling – on a flight via Amsterdam – getting back just in time to contest the Hour at Pickets Lock.



WITH PROFOUND AND SINCERE THANKS

On Friday 22nd August I reached the age when my Elderly Persons Travel Pass arrived, together with Winter Fuel Payments! I was – for a change – feeling quite depressed at suddenly being in my 60s. But the gloom was lifted at a most pleasant lunchtime meal with walking friends from present and past days at The Camelot (most walkers have sped past this establishment while contesting Ilford's long established and testing Christmas 10K). To my complete surprise I was presented with a gift, after a testimonial speech, by Tony Perkins. I enjoy producing Essex Walker and I thank the team that so helps me (Eileen Allen, Tony Perkins etc). I also thank Tony for arranging this collection and presentation. Needless to say I hope that Essex Walker will continue and might even begin to record the 'turning around' of race walking's fortunes. Who knows? But seriously folks – many thanks for a great gesture. Below can be found a list of subscribers.
Sincerely yours,
Dave Ainsworth (Hon. Ed)

C. Duhig	P. Hodkinson	A. Tiffin
J. Thomas	M. Barnbrook	G. Mitchell
H. Nyman	J. Webb	D. Fortheringham
D. Sheppard	N. Silvester	D. Hoben
P. Warburton	S. Bennett	C. Flint
C. Foster	P. Selby	S. Wynn
V. Mountford	M. Hinton	C. Orme
R. Wells	G. Nibre	W. Sutherland
P. O'Callaghan	G. Hunwicks	A. Perkins
A. O'Rawe	J. Perkins	S. Clements
K. England	K. Turner	K.G. Tuson
ANON x 4		

A list of those who contributed to the appeal is above and they are acknowledged with profound thanks. Total was £305.

FROM OLIVER FLYNN

Dear Dave,

May I through your columns offer my condolences to the family of Mike Street, at what must be a very difficult time for them. He was a truly gifted photographer who could have graced the upper echelons of any sporting medium with his ability but he chose our sport, thankfully.

There are many Race Walkers of my generation who are indebted to Mike for his generosity in both capturing us all in the heat of battle and then gifting those photos to us. Some of the few mementoes that I have of my brief sojourn at the top table have been captured by Mike's lens, which I am eternally grateful for. Sincerely, Oliver T

GOLDEN OCCASION

Our congratulations go to top veteran race walker RON POWELL and his wife MARY on the celebration of their Golden Wedding Anniversary.



EMAILS LEN RUDDOCK

My lad Tom made his running debut in the Nike 10K at Wembley and managed 61 minutes. He was a bit crestfallen when I told him that my track PB (at about his age) is 50.17 – race walking!

MORE NEWS FROM LEN RUDDOCK

Len trains Ray Park FC at Ashtons Playing Fields on Tuesday nights (commencing 6.40 pm). Len's suffered a foot infection of late, so we wish him a swift return to full health. Pity he couldn't roll out a nippy WTW 3,000 metres to show his football team, before they commence their training in earnest.

MK100

Congratulations to prolific race walkers MARK WALL and SUE REY – and their many helpers including a number from hosting MILTON KEYNES AC – on pulling out all the stops to promote a truly memorable Track 100 Miles Walk, which saw both OPEN and NATIONAL awards at stake. A double pat-on-the-back for Sue and Mark as they managed to combine organising duties with participation; which is no easy thing! They showed the sort of determination that sees both exceed 50 races per year – to overcome severe criticism of their plans from various quarters including some of our more influential Officials. Sue and Mark got it right in the end and rightfully deserve praise. The limit on entrants was never reached – so nobody got turned away. Two Officials with Essex connections shared the Chief Judge's role – PETER CASSIDY and JACK THOMAS. Former Essex League champion MICK GRAHAM and Centurion PAULINE WILSON were on the Judges Panel, as was Loughton AC 2nd Claimer ERIC HORWILL. Eric appears in The Centurions statistical history, having the longest span between successful Sub-24 Hour 100 Miles races (1966 and 1997). The latter year saw him elevated to International status at Roubaix (64½ years old). Chelmsford-based JON MAY was again prominent in the Recorders marquee. Course measuring expert PETER CASSIDY altered the lap from 400 metres to 440 yards, by carefully placing bollards around a bend. That meant that those completing 100 Miles 'only' had to encircle the track 400 times. Just think, many athletes get bored going around 25 times for a 10,000 metres event. Athletics dignitaries GLYN JONES (RWA President), CARL LAWTON (Centurions President) and CHARLIE 'Mr. T.V.' WESTON (Centurions Captain) were all present for the duration, as was Centurions Past President JOHN EDDERSHAW. BRIAN & PAM FICKEN plus a full turnout from the O'RAWE family, saw that feeding tasks were well catered for. Back in 1960 Pam's late father HEW stormed through 100 Miles in 17.18.51 on route to a 24 hours record distance of 133 miles and 21 yards. That pace still remains in the record books as, again on a track, the standard fell well short of such a high spot.

Spare a thought for STEF LISOWSKI (Unattached) who entered in the belief that it was a running race. Having splashed his cash he gave it a go – for all of 2 laps then went home. In the van, as at Battersea Park a year ago, was MARCELINO SOB CZAK (A.V.UNITAS). The new UK Champion is, as in 2007, is a sexagenarian. This time it's 1980 Olympic 50K representative IAN RICHARDS who joins a distinguished list of established 'big names' to have joined The Centurions. Ian was 3rd overall. Essex were on the result sheet. OLLY BROWNE (Ilf) completed his 4th 100 Miles finish (3 track, 1 road) and smiled throughout. Olly always looked comfortable and finished with a flourish with a final 20 miles in 4 hours and 20 minutes. Before he'd even got his breath back Olly vowed to perform even better at Newmarket in 2009. Southend based MARTIN FISHER, urged on by his wife and supporters in promotional t-shirts, finished as usual – indeed he always finishes and has a most impressive sequence behind him with a promise of more to come. Loughton 2nd claimer SEAN PENDER was just inside the 24 hours cut-off time – you could call it excellent pace judgment! Sean also won the KEN SMITH TROPHY, awarded to the competitor showing exceptional endeavour. Sean, who digs deep into his pockets to travel from Dublin in order to race, has had previous 100 Miles failures – so he showed his determination to press on...and on... until success ensued! Sean is an example for all who have come away from a 100 Miles race disappointed. MICKY SUTTON was forced to scratch after being admitted to hospital with kidney stones a few days beforehand. Micky was disappointed but nevertheless vowed to race at Newmarket in 2009. Another to pledge a Newmarket start is International KEVIN MARSHALL, Micky's Ilford colleague. Kevin has experience of the Tooting Track Race, where the direction reverses every 6 hours. This was Kevin's debut at a one-way track 100 Miles, and at a time when his gallant Paris-to-Colmar performance was still 'in his legs'. Kevin lives to fight another day as do plucky Loughton 2nd Claimers PAUL KING and KEN WATTS who both also retired. Yet again the Ladies race resulted in another emphatic victory for SANDRA BROWN, who came 4th overall. Tracksiders were willing organisers SUE and MARK to do well, but they retired. Both had the Blackpool 50 Miles 'in their legs' and showed enough promise to indicate better times to come. And what about that great friend of Essex Walking HANS van der KNAPP, who finished and is now building an impressive sequence of 100 Miles successes.

Sadly the age profile was again immediately noticeable to any neutral entering the track area. Essex Walker published, some years ago a comparison table between in 1973 and 74 100 miles races (average age in the 30s) and 2000 and 2001 (average age in the late 50s). *One must seriously question how much longer this type of event can continue to be staged?*

Again the sequence of bad weather continued with a couple of hours of torrential downpour, and another setback was the failure of floodlights for part of the night. Both events made life harder for the teams of recorders/timekeepers. They all deserve praise, as did anybody who did anything. Plus we had several spectators popping-in, including Essex Walker readers, to give support. Hon. Ed. appeared in both those 73 & 74 100 Miles and saw not a droplet of rain – nowadays a downpour is par for the course. Climate change? Finally a word for the host Club's BOB AUSTIN who became 1 of 5 new Centurions. It's always nice to see success for a host, and Bob did it the hard way. He has 2 crosses on the board before 20 Miles – yet pressed on with determination and succeeded in covering the remaining 80 miles with the 'sword of Damocles' hanging over him! The 'Milton Keynes Citizen' (local rag) attended this epic contest.

Results 100 – Milton Keynes

Entries: 29		Started: 25		Finished: 17		
Pos	C-Nr	New C.	Name	Club	Time	
01.	1031		Marcelino Sobczak (Netherland)	A.V. Unitas Sittard	19.00.53	
02.		1063	Victor Mennen (Netherland)	A.V. Unitas Sittard	19.33.48	
03.		1064	Ian Richards	Steyning A.C.	19.37.11	
04.	735		Sandra Brown	Surrey W.C.	19.59.29	1 st lady
05.	993		Alf Short	Lancashire W.C.	20.58.10	
06.	938		Hans van der Knaap (Netherland)	R.W.V. Rotterdam	21.38.19	
07.	987		Dave Jones	Redcar W.C.	21.55.19	
10.	894		Chris Flint	London Vidarians	22.43.02	
11.	789		Oliver Browne	Ilford A.C.	22.45.21	
12.	788		Martin Fisher	Redcar W.C.	22.57.55	
16.		1066	Bob Austin	Milton Keynes A.C.	23.45.18	
17.		1067	Sean Pender	Enfield & Harringey	23.56.11	

Retired: Stef Lisowski (2 laps)

Annual Centurion Match

"Ko van der Kwaak Cup" - British Centurions versus Dutch Centurions (5 to score)

British Centurions = Sandra Brown (2), Alf Short (3), Dave Jones (5), Chris Flint (7), Oliver Browne (8)

Classified, but not 100 miles:

18.	Ken Watts	London Vidarians	14.09.07	61 miles
19.	Mark Wall	Leicetser W.C.	13.33.28	60 miles
20.	Sue Ray	Leicester W.C.	11.59.30	48 miles
21.	Richard Brown	Surrey W.C.	05.21.45	28 miles
22.	Paul King	Belgrave Harriers	05.19.33	27 miles
23.	Kevin Marshall	Ilford A.C.	04.26.02	23 miles
24.	Steve Arnold	Nuneaton Harriers	03.35.54	20miles

EMAILS CHRIS FLINT

Dave, Hollinghead's article is as negative as the John Inverdale interview, and it raises the question whether we should open our doors to these sceptics as they just portray our sport as weird. I think more could be done to raise their awareness and understanding of the technicalities of race walking, and that it is the rules which distinguish walking from other athletic sports such as running. This point seems to have been lost on both Hollingshead and Inverdale.

Cambridge Harriers Winter Race Walking League

Saturday 18th October 2008 (+Essex League)
Saturday 6th December 2008
Saturday 14th February 2009
Saturday 21st March 2009
5km: Seniors & Under 17's
2.5k: Under 15's
Entries on the day @
Cambridge Harriers Clubhouse
Glenhurst Avenue, Bexley, DA5 3QW
Races start at 2pm (10 mins walk to start line)

SITUATION VACANT

UK Performance Director DAVE COLLINS has got the heave-ho. Who wants this job for, it is a great opportunity or a poisoned chalice? There are a few known in walking who have big ideas? Steve Overt stated that there is no better candidate than old rival Seb Coe, though he already has much on his plate. Our new man is widely expected to be CHARLES van COMMENEE who is expected to change the job title to Head Coach. Said Dave, "There has been an emerging split between the professional ranks of coaching and the amateur ranks. If we don't have coaches to develop younger ones, we won't have elite athletes to turn into world champions. There has been too much focus on athletes and not enough on the coaches of those athletes".

STANDPOINT

Milton Keynes and Southend-on-Sea both have athletic tracks which lack even a basic stand for spectators. Both these areas are 'well heeled', with affluent catchment areas. Surely they can afford grandstands?

GOOD SEND OFF



GEORGE BROWN OBE

*You can shed tears that he is gone
Or you can smile because he has lived.*

Our last issue recorded the death of judge GEORGE BROWN OBE, who was a regular at Enfield League events and elsewhere. George's funeral at Enfield Crematorium (a very short walk from Donkey Lane) saw standing room only and was followed by a gathering at nearby Potters Bar Bowls Club where he had been a member. A former LPR, Civil Service and Highgate Harriers walker he had worked at the House of Commons and was an active Freemason. Walkers were well represented among a large congregation. A full obituary was published in Enfield Walker.

THOUGHT FOR THE DAY

Human beings are the only creatures on Earth that allow their children to come back home. Bill Cosby.

TRUE GENT

A number of readers wrote or emailed BBC Sports Presenter MIKE BUSHHELL in order to thank him for his part in the televised coverage of June's VAC 5 Miles race. Readers have been in touch to report that Mike took the trouble to acknowledge such correspondence and make responses. By the way, if you never saw the screening, you can see the lot via the Surrey Walking Club website link.

DEATH WISH ON THE CARDS

Essex born DAVE HOBEN likes to appear in the DEATH MARCH, and kindly sent Hon. Ed. a postcard from the event. Indeed this popular Continental event prints its own postcards which show interesting pictures of previous activity on route. If you fancy turning out in 2009 (it can be done in a weekend), then regular Essex visitor Dave will be happy to wise you up.

NON-JOB

Sir CLIVE WOODWARD was in China as the UK's 'Deputy Chef de Mission', a position rewarded by £300,000 per annum. Just think of that as UK race walking needs a 50p per head race levy in order to eke out its existence.

MEDDLING WITH OUR LANGUAGE

From where has this bizarre verb 'medal' come? As in 'She medalled in this event' and, 'He has a chance of medalling in this one'. Please stop meddling with our language. Even our fantastic Olympic team didn't represent Great Britain – it was the cringe worthy Team GB.

DONATIONS

Should readers wish to make donations in memory of GEORGE BROWN, the chosen charity is MACMILLAN CANCER SUPPORT (to whom cheques/postal orders should be made out to). Please send to: Chas A. Nethercolt Ltd, 150 Darkes Lane, POTTERS BAR, Herts. EN6 1AF.

WRITES BILL SUTHERLAND BEM

Dear Dave,

I would like to respond to a number of issues recently raised in Essex Walker. I'm not a pessimist, but a realist who eagerly wants to see G.B. walkers regain former glory in major games.

Great Britain Race Walking faces a rocky road to 2012

As an International walker, who was privileged to be part of our great sport in the golden years, I am utterly dismayed to witness what I can only describe as 'straight leg running' by so many exponents in Beijing – 20kms to 50K Men's – and other major races. How can the winner of the 10,000 metres run be moving at under 14mph with race walkers now reaching 10 mph i.e. 6 minute miling. There is a limit on how fast one can walk, I believe around 85 mins. No wonder John Inverdale, who reported so ably and informatively for Radio 5 Live, feels as do many others that our sport is ridiculous today. The judging rules we now have do little to nothing to control our progress and therefore make the sport have real credibility. The former top GB judges used to say, "If you don't disqualify those running at the front of the race the rest will only follow". In my day style was to be important i.e. Stan Vickers in the 60s, when was style ever mentioned by today's runners? The downside for GB walkers is that if the times get faster and faster, so do the standards 'A' to 'B', greatly reducing our chances of having GB walkers in 2012. Finally congratulations to Joanna Jackson, on a new P.B. and British record in the Women's 20 kms. How refreshing it was to see someone real race walking. Your performance was so important to GB Race Walking and your experiences in Australia needs to be passed on and practised by other Olympian walking aspirants for 2012! If there is a will, there is always a way.

Yours in Sport,
Bill Sutherland, B.E.M.
C.G. Bronze 1970 – Edinburgh

BOB IN BEIJING

I was privileged to be offered the opportunity to 'work my ticket' to my second Olympics in the role of tour manager to a party of 140 athletics supporters. Due to the late indisposition of the Company Director I was elevated to take his place and be assisted by a novice recruit. Thus my 3½ weeks in Beijing proved to be no holiday and my responsibilities severely restricted opportunities for sightseeing. Fortunately I'd seen many of the 'must sees' when on a 3 week tour of China two years ago for the World Junior Athletics Championship. I did get a ticket for most of the athletic evening sessions and ensured that I was off duty when it came to the three walks. Unlike Athens, and I guess every previous Olympics, one needed a ticket to watch the road element of the walks because the one kilometre stretch of carpeted course was contained within the high security Olympic Park. The sheer numbers of Chinese anxious to get just one opportunity to visit the Olympic Park and Birds Nest Stadium ensured good attendance for every session. Tickets for Opening and Closing Ceremonies, cycling, swimming and USA v China Basketball were touted at 10 to 12 times face value!

Both the 20kms walks started at 9 am whilst the 50kms was a 7.30 start. The first to kick off was the Men's 20kms. Arriving just as the gun fired for the opening laps on the track I, like the Irish supporters, decided to take up my position on the rails of the barriered course. Alas the over officious security dictated that spectators had to stand 2 metres back from the barriers and not drape flags over the rails. The Irish were vociferous in their protests but to no avail. Towards the very end of this race and the two subsequent walks this restriction was lifted. Somehow I managed to sneak in on one of the turns and stood throughout the race in a small enclosure with the television crew and Management Team of Ecuador. There were no programmes available for the general public for any sports. But they did exist, for VIPs and Media only. Nor were start lists available. Thus even the most knowledgeable walk supporters could not identify all the walkers and with some countries opting for a change to their normal strips half the field couldn't be identified. Ireland's Robbie Hefferman mixed it with the best. Always to the fore but missing out on a podium place when the eventual medallists went into overdrive in the last few kilometres. I will not expand on the results for they will be well documented in other publications and web sites.

Come the day of the women's 20kms the roads of Beijing were awash from continual torrential rain. Taxis had difficulty in getting through and on arrival at the Olympic Park the paths had become streams. Officials were frantically trying to sweep the course and replace the worst sections of the 4mm tartan carpet which was sodden, rucked up, bubbled and splitting in places. Inside the stadium dozens and dozens of officials worked furiously right up to the 'off' to sweep lakes of water from the 'all weather' track. Again identification of the walkers was extremely difficult and only the frequent announcements of the world record pace of the Russian leader (from start to finish) kept the public advised of the leading positions. In the stadium the giant scoreboard gave intermediate times and it was good to see Jo Jackson gradually moving up a place or two at each 5kms. In the conditions it was amazing that the times were so fast and both Ireland's Olive Loughnane (87.45) and Jo Jackson (91.33) were over the moon at their new P.B's. Olive was just short of beating Gillian O'Sullivan's Irish record but her seventh place beat the Athens Gold Medallist and several big names. Once more Jo Jackson beat her own GB record in finishing 22nd of 48 starters (43 finishers). Only 6 were younger than Jo. The two youngest being 18½ and both were d/q'd (Russia and China). The winner Kaniskina of Russia went through 14km in 59.51. Work that out in miles! In the Men's 20kms Brugnetti (Italy) led at 14 kms in 56.28 and at 16kms Borchin (Russia) in 64.05. The leaders were thus operating at around 9 miles in the hour. That deserves a really special badge!!

The men's 50kms was the day after the women's 20kms. The weather conditions could not have not been in greater contrast. Hot sun and getting hotter all the time from the 07.30 start. But there was no holding back as a relentless pace was set from the start, 44.39 at 10km, 87.38 at 20km, 2.10.38 at 30km, 2.54.36 at 40km, 3.37.09 at 50km. New Olympic Record. For the first time I met up with other GB walk fans – Pete Ryan, Fiona Bishop and Dave Turner. With 2 Irish and ex Tonbridge walkers Tim Berrett walking for Canada we had plenty to cheer. Not surprisingly I found the 50kms the most enthralling of the 3 walks and the outcome was in doubt until the last 2kms circuit. Again – amazing times – and surprising results with Australia's Jarred Tallent the most unexpected and successful (silver at 50kms, bronze at 20kms). 27 beat 4 hours. At 43½ years of age Tim Berrett finished 38th of 47 finishers (61 starters) in 4.08.18. If only he hadn't emigrated to Canada some 20 years ago! I wonder how much faster the walk times will get. Every major championship seems to produce new world bests, Olympic records, national records and P.B's. In my day we were in awe when 50kms was walked in 4 hours. Nowadays a 4 hours performance leaves you 2 to 3 miles behind the winner. On a purely comparative time basis our great Don Thompson would be 6 to 7 miles behind today's winner!

Clearly the techniques have changed – many will argue not for the better, but if this is now the accepted norm for international race walking then British walking needs to come to terms with it. Us old fogies were taught to walk like Harold Whitlock the epitome of correct style but we will never get anywhere near approaching the current qualifying time standards by walking like that. Jo Jackson has learnt the 'new technique' from her stint in Australia but our judges need to be given advice and practice in recognising what is now acceptable. Having earned my judging 'colours' under British standards I would have been hard pressed not to have filled in as many D/Q cards as the complete panel of judges acting in Beijing.

Bob Dobson.

TRIBUTES FROM BOB DOBSON

Due to my extended visit to 'Beijing' I was unable to attend the funerals of two of the nicest people I've had the pleasure of knowing in my many years of race-walking.

MIKE STREET

Mike Street's fantastic photos will be an everlasting reminder of a really great guy. We both came from the same neck of the woods – East Ham – and throughout our association would exchange typical East End humour and banter. I always enjoyed a laugh and joke at his expense and took it as a compliment when he would throw one back at me. Mike Street should have been up there with the great Sport Photographers and could have travelled the world with his cameras as others have done, such was the quality of his work. But he was more humbler and stuck closer to home with his Basildon based job at the Evening Echo. His association with the walkers was so close that he even married into the race-walking fraternity and his memory will last as long as the walkers who knew him.

"The Essex Boys" have lost one of their nearest and dearest, but we'll always remember you Mike.

GEORGE BROWN OBE

I got to know George Brown very early in my race walking career through Civil Service Championships and Representations. Throughout his long and distinguished career he retained an authoritative but gentlemanly manner, no doubt a rub-off from his Whitehall training. Believe he started as a teenage post-office messenger boy and rose to significant heights in his Civil Service career. Serving beyond normal retiring age he was ultimately summoned to the Prime Minister's Office to be personally congratulated by Margaret Thatcher when finally downing his pen.

He was respected as a most fair judge and well deserved his international status in that capacity. He belied his years and cast aside his health problems in order to continue judging, still smiling always approachable, right to the very end. A worthy candidate for RWA Life Membership which tragically did not come his way in time. But like all the other truly greats that have gone before we will always remember him.

Thank you George.

Bob Dobson

FIXTURES

Fri Oct 3	Ilford AC Dinner & Dance	Chigwell (Met Police)	7.30 pm
Sat Oct 4	Gazette Cup (4 Miles)	Monks Hill	2.30 pm
Sat Oct 11	Enfield League/VAC 5K	Donkey Lane	2 pm
Sat Oct 18	Cambridge Harriers Winter Lge 5K (+ Esx Lge)	Bexley	2 pm
Sun Oct 26	Steyning Open 10K	Steyning	2.30 pm
Sat Nov 1	Addington Vase (7 miles)	Monks Hill	2.30 pm
Sat Nov 8	Enfield Open 7 Miles (+LBH)	Donkey Lane	2 pm
Sat Nov 22	Belgrave Open 7 Miles	Wimbledon	2 pm
Sat Nov 29	Enfield League 5 Miles	Donkey Lane	2 pm
Sat Dec 6	Cambridge Harriers Winter League 5K	Bexley	2 pm
Sat Dec 13	Christmas Cup 5K	Monks Hill	2.30 pm
Sun Dec 21	Ilford Christmas 10K (+Essex League)	Chigwell Row	10.30 am
Fri Dec 26	Enfield Boxing Day 5K	Pickets Lock	11 am

ALL SYSTEMS GO

Essex Walker asked if it was now time to 'call it a day' on our participation in the London Inter Club Challenge Series, following 3 seasons of uphill struggle and a very poor last season? Readers were asked to pass on their opinion of such a course of action to either Hon. Ed. or CARL LAWTON – our link man with the LICC and who got walking involved at the start. We report that no readers have been in touch, so the idea of pulling out falls. It's pleasing to know that you don't want to quit the LICC – so hopefully you'll all be at 2009 LICC promotions.

WILLIAM (BILL) SUTHERLAND. B.E.M.

Bill's Race Walking career started, like so many others, when he joined the Metropolitan Police Cadet Corps in 1962. Under the tutelage of Inspector Tom Edwards, Bill was soon competing in many Cadet events for Mayne House up to 6 miles in distance including the Inter-House Race. His first representative vest was for Southern Counties Juniors against West German Juniors in 1963 over a one-mile course at Southend. In 1964 he was attested as a Constable and posted to N. Division where the infamous Inspector Charlie Fogg, BEM cultivated his interest and enthusiasm for Race Walking. Such was his commitment to the sport that he was soon racing for the Met most weekends at Club or representative matches. In time he would compete in over 1000 events at all distances from one mile to 100. Slowly but steadily the long hours of training started to reap rewards and his standard improved. In time he won 25 consecutive MPAA and PAA titles over 3km, 2 Mile and 10 Mile distances. Bill won 7 PAA 10 Mile Championships consecutively between 1966-1972. He won the Inter Services PAA v Civil Service RAF 10 Mile Event five times. Such was his form that he was selected to represent Great Britain on 8 occasions winning the 20km Race against France held in Battersea Park in August 1969. However, such was the strength of the British Race Walking Team over their opponents this was made a non-scoring event and this cost Bill his place in the following European Championships. At the time many believed that this cost Great Britain a medal at those Championships. Undeterred Bill resolved to train even harder and he set to with a passion to prepare for the forthcoming Commonwealth Games to be held in Scotland in 1970. Despite finishing 9th in the Race Walking Association (RWA) Championship Trial he trained hard and improved his form by 10 minutes in just 5 weeks and gained the Bronze Medal in Edinburgh. In the same year he won the AAA 10,000 Metre Walk in Battersea Park, came 13th in the 20km Walk at the European Athletic Championships in Helsinki and was then not selected for the Munich Olympics despite being 3rd in the RWA National Championships at Redditch. His personal bests are:- 3 kms 12.41.8, 5 Mls 35.19, 7 miles 50.19, 10 kms, 44.19, 8 Mls 565 yds in 1 hour; 10mls 72.38, 20 kms 91.10, 15 Mls 1.54.21, 20 Mls, 2.37.11 and 50 Kms, 4.38. Bill participated in other long distance events including the Nijmegen Marches in 1966, the Barking to Southend Walk, became Centurion No. 890 in 1991 at Ewhurst in Surrey with a time of 23hrs 49mins and 36 seconds and since retirement has completed 10 London marathons raising over £10,000 for various charities.

Although recognised as a stylish and determined competitor Bill has also given generously of his time to support Race Walking whether within our Club or in the wider world of Athletics. He was Secretary of the 'N' Division Athletics and Race Walking Section encouraging many others to take up the sport. He was elected to the Met's Race Walking Club Management Committee in 1969 and remained a member till his retirement in 1992. He was the Editor of the Club's monthly newsletter for 7 years. This was a much sought after and appreciated journal not only including the compulsory race results tables within its 6 pages but also photographs and anecdotes. All of course produced without the help of computers to a readership of over 160! In the early 80s he actually organised the Barking to Southend Race when the entry field numbered over 300 competitors. He was also the RWA Press and Publicity Officer for 5 years and fronted a successful campaign to 'Keep Walking in the Olympics March on Parliament' when it was announced that the 50 Km Walk would be dropped from the 1976 Games. He led the delegation to lobby Olympic Committee delegates meeting in Varna, Bulgaria and with our Minister of Sport, Rt Hon Denis Howell MP, successfully had the discipline reinstated in the 1980 Olympic Games. He was awarded the British Empire Medal for his services to sport and Police service to the community in Islington in 1983 and is a Serving Brother of the Order of St. John. Finally, in 1989 he organised the successful Hendon 100 Miles Walk, in the memory of the late Arthur Eddlestone, BEM which produced a record number of Police Centurions.

Bill retired from the Police Service in 1992. Bill has been a fine athlete performing at a high level for a long time. His passion for his sport and his pursuit of its development has been awe-inspiring. He has been an excellent ambassador for the Police Service in sport and at local, national and international level.

Report submitted by ANDREW BIGNOLD, Events Secretary of the Metropolitan Police Walking Club.

ONE MAN AND HIS BLOG

It's reported that the RWA Southern Area has its own website and that visitors can leave comments on it. So far no comments have been left. To find out how to access this, please ask TIM WATT when you see him at the meetings.

EMAILS ALEX ROSS

Dave,

I do keep in touch with race walking 'down south'. Was very pleased that your efforts with Mike Bushell paid off, well done, I know it must have been a lot of work – and I bet there were a few grumblers. Life here is still great – just back from the Thursday night 10k with Forres Harriers – lovely sunny night in the woods and paths round the town – smashing.

Regards to all,
Alex.

EMAILS ARTHUR THOMSON

Hi Dave,

Great to see Dave Kates's detailed report in the September Issue of the very enjoyable Euro Masters in Ljubljana. I have to say though that I cannot take any credit for Helen Middleton's great performance in getting a Bronze at the start of only her second year in the sport. 'Trained and coached by Arthur Thomson' is a great exaggeration! We had only trained together 2 or 3 times before Ljubljana and I think I benefited as much as her from having a training companion. I wouldn't dream of attempting to coach anybody with my training methods which are based on what was done 50 years ago modified with just a few new ideas picked up from Athletics Weekly etc in the last 2 or 3 years.

Keep up the good work with Essex Walker. I sometimes wish I had more Essex connections than just a small financial interest in a couple of Thames Barges in Maldon!

Best Regards, Arthur Thomson

ESSEX LEAGUE WOODFORD TUESDAY WALKS

16th September, 2008
Ashton Playing Fields
5000m

1	Philip Barnard	Castle Point	23:49.3
2	Stephen Crane	Surrey	25:30.4
3	Steve Uttley	Ilford	26:23.1
4	Steve Allen	Ilford	27:11.9
5	Dave Sharpe	Ilford	28:52.6
6	Helen Middleton (L)	Bedford	28:52.8
7	Alan O'Rawe	Ilford	31:57.2
8	Peter Cassidy	Loughton	33:00.6
9	Peter Howard	Enfield and Haringey	33:40.3
10	Mick Sweeney	Ilford	34:59.0
11	Kim Howard (L)	Southend	35:04.2
12	Dave Ainsworth	Ilford	35:45.5
13	Ken Livermore	Enfield and Haringey	37:19.8

Series Awards For top 3 Men and Ladies

1. P. Barnard 60pts, 2. S. Crane 57, 3. C.O'Rawe-Hobbs (L) 55, 4. H. Middleton (L) 50, 5. A.O'Rawe 47, The 3rd lady was A. Hales who came 11th overall with 29 points.

Ream result: 1st Ilford 'A' 182 pts, 2nd Castle Point 163 and 3rd Enfield & Haringey 144.

Overall: 26 individuals and 14 teams scored. Since the Series was 're-branded' in 2002, this is the 2nd highest amount of support, second only to 2005 when 29 individuals and 14 teams participated. Our thanks go to Loughton AC's officials for putting this on as part of Woodford Green's Graded Meeting, for all who have officiated at these races and for Margaret and Pam who kindly offered post race hospitality. Southern Area Past President Pam was the dignitary presenting our Series Awards. And a word for a pair of comeback athletes who completed the 5,000 metres – KIM HOWARD and MICK SWEENEY. Kim's not raced for a year since a health setback – indeed Kim had treatment on the morning of the race. Kim settled in well, was warmly welcomed back and looked happy with her efforts. MICK SWEENEY, a former Post Office and Civil Service Champion, quit the scene when he went to Hull in the late 80s and hadn't raced for 18 years. He looked stylish – indeed our County Walking Secretary was complimentary about his performance. Mick's now back on the scene, having recently married and moved back south. We're pleased to see both Kim and Mick back on our start lines.

BROLLY GOOD SHOW

Just as at Battersea a year ago, the MK100 also saw a competitor race walking under an umbrella!



DOUBLE CHECKING

Essex Walker, like other publications, welcomes contributions/articles from readers. Ever since a walker (who has requested that his name be no longer mentioned in EW) submitted details of another walker's retirement (when he hadn't – indeed he went on to add to his International appearances), we have appealed for contributors to DOUBLE-CHECK submissions before sending them in. We won't name the walker, but recently Essex Walker was informed of a death – it was decided to get this checked out from 2 other sources, both of which stated that this was not true. The same source requested that RON WALLWORK our Enfield League start line MC – should call for start line silence in memory. Fortunately Ron's nous caused him to get this notification verified – with the same outcome. An embarrassing situation was therefore avoided, both in print and on the start line. So please don't pass on tittle-tattle that another walker may have erroneously passed on to you, or that you might have made up. Just pass on quality pukka gen – please!

FROM NICK SILVESTER

Back in June, the notice below was passed around regarding a study into bone health at Leeds University. I have been in discussion with Emma Whatley (see end of message) regarding my suitability, but the investigation needs walkers who have not been running for a number of years, therefore she asked if I could pass this round again and anyone who feels they may be suitable to contact her, I understand expenses are available.

An Investigation of Bone Health in Distance Runners, Triathletes and Race Walkers

Are you interested to find out about your body composition and the health of your bones?

We are seeking volunteers to participate in unique research on the effects of genetics, training, diet, body composition, and hormones on bone density in distance runners, triathletes and race walkers.

Research has shown that some endurance athletes are at risk of osteoporosis and bone fractures. We aim to measure the effects of genetics, diet, exercise, and body composition on bone density to find out why. Our research can tell you whether you are at risk.

Tests are usually very expensive but this is a research study so there is no cost to you. If you choose to participate you will receive feedback on your bone health, diet, body composition, muscle strength and running/walking pattern.

Our team of experienced researchers are looking for men (aged 20-55 yrs) and women (aged 18-40 yrs)

Athletes that have been training in their event for 2-3 years and have averaged 30 miles/50 kilometres per week during training for the past 3 months.

For further information, please contact Emma Whatley at the Carnegie Research Institute at Leeds Metropolitan University:- Tel: 0113 2832600 Ext 23566 or Email: E.Whatley@leedsmet.ac.uk

SUCCESS – BUT WITH A HICCUP

Many descended on Pickets Lock for the 2nd celebration of the Enfield League One Hour. Probably too many – even in these times. Head honcho RON WALLWORK distributed entry forms and had planned 2 graded hour races (slow and medium/fast). When closing date arrived just 27 punters had thrown their hats into the ring, so it was decided to stage 1 race. Those organising track events do need to know in advance how many will appear, so as the correct number of recorders can be mustered. So... come the day... a number of additional entrants turned up expecting to take part in an event which they hadn't entered for. Ron is too nice a person to turn anybody away – so they all got offered a start, which put considerable strain on the recorders as 38 had to be catered for (and offered watering) on a most unexpected hot afternoon. Ron had appealed for more helpers but, in the end, it was the regular stalwarts who stepped forward. They were overloaded with work and a few distances were grumbled about – but when doesn't that happen at a multi-lap trace race? We only had 2 judges, so the usual system couldn't be implemented. And PAM FICKEN, who could not compete owing to injury following a fall, spent most of the hour trying to dispense water to 38 walkers by herself.

However it was good to see so many supporting the Enfield League Hour (considerably more than supported the RWA Southern Area Hour – which shows our Sport's officials that the majority prefer 'B' to 'A'). NICK SILVESTER, who didn't defend his SRWA Hour title this year still ends 2008 with an Hour victory on his record. PHIL BARNARD ended the hour with yet another PB. Full result in Enfield Walker/AW/Record/www.racewalkuk.com

As for the shortage of helpers, recently NOEL CARMODY expressed an opinion that more of our older walkers should 'step off the road and take up officiating'. Hon. Ed. pointed out to him that (a) if the more senior walkers had quit, race walking would have died by now and (b) these old boys are already stepping off the road – but they are also stepping completely out of the sport. Many of race walking's strongest critics are former walkers who have never offered to officiate but still like to pontificate about what's going wrong and our impending demise. We appeal to them to come and put something back into the sport!

CHIP OFF THE OLD BLOCK

Did you see Inspector PHIL MOCKETT interviewed on the local TV news about the fatal Croydon tram/bus crash? BILL SUTHERLAND was one of the several who noted this and observed that he looked like former race walker of note – Chief Inspector LEW MOCKETT; who won a National 10 Miles team gold medal in Ilford's colours and, among many successful races, shone in a wonderful European Games 20K trial race around Victoria Park's big circuit.

NOW IS NOT THE HOUR

We won't name this embarrassed competitor, but one Essex Walker reader turned up for Enfield's One Hour at Pickets Lock – in the morning! Realising his mistake, the early entrant did not return.

EMAILS GEOFF HUNWICKS

Dave

Greetings from The Gambia and here's our news, short and late covering this year so far. Thankfully we've been able to maintain an average of 8 residents and 5 day care throughout and not been in debt! This was due to some Essex Walker readers in place of sending Christmas cards, a volleyball competition in Holland, a Valentines Ball in Finland, and continuing support from the Dutch Liliane Foundation, the sale of our Land Rover (too expensive to repair), the sale of a vehicle driven here on the Antwerp to Banjul challenge and financial support from Alderwood Living and Learning with Autism in England. We also thank those who have also contributed one way or another including those who have sponsored 7 of our children. In January Geoff attended the local upper basic school (secondary) inter house athletics competition and in February watched a Sussex over 50's team play The Gambia at cricket (an easy win for The Gambia). In February we were delighted to see the Gibraltar Royal Regiment again who this time, along with The Gambia Armed Forces, plumbed the water from the tap at the gate into the house, did additional roof repairs as well as painting the children's dining room and kitchen. Geoff and Rohey attended 3 receptions (what a life we lead) in February, one to welcome the new U.S. Ambassador (who in April visited us with his wife) and 2 at the British High Commissioner's residence (both with Hoyan our long serving committee member and friend) firstly to say farewell to Jenny Fenton the outgoing De. B.H.C. and to welcome the incoming Graham Birse and secondly for the Gibraltar Royal Regiment. Staffing changes have been 2 domestic workers and cook over the past couple of months and that Geoff has been elevated to C.E.O. and Rohey comes in as Managing Director. We have been pleased to see new and old friends and look forward to the tourist season when we hope to see some more

Best Wishes, Geoff and Rohey

Gambian Home for Children with Learning Difficulties
(Hart House)

MEMBERS RECORD

PHILIP HOLLOBONE (M.P. for Kettering) appears in the all-time list of appearances at LPR Blackheath 9K handicap races. Some readers have asked how good he was? His best scratch time was 50.03 in Race 123 (Dec 82), which saw him 9th finisher. In handicap terms he got off to a golden start – winning on his Blackheath debut, clocking 51.08 in Race 114 (March 82). In 1982 he came joint 4th (with the late BILL KING) in the overall League table. That year the 1-2-3 were Ken Turner (Woodford Green), Phil Joscelyne (Havering) and Matt Davitt (Cambridge H). Philip raced in many SWC events, Cambridge Harriers Winter League & Championships at Battersea Park. He narrowly missed out on success at the 2001 General Election when contesting Kettering – but won in 2005. He had hoped to attend our 'Mike Bushell' race in June, but a Parliamentary Division prevented his appearance.

EDITORIAL – A CALL FOR LESS

I was kindly sent a CD of the 2008 BMAF 5,000 Metres Championship in Birmingham. It was shot from a seat in the stand, where most spectators were assembled – so I saw what the crowds could see, and in real time from start-to-finish. I can see why folk use the walking race as the time when they can go and get a cup of tea and a snack. By the 2nd bend the 1-2-3 had been decided as MARK WILLIAMS, MARK WALL and ARTHUR THOMSON pulled away from the rest, and from each other. From the 'bang' there was nothing in dispute as to the final order in the frame. Nothing to enthuse the crowd. The same can be said for most other positions, which hardly altered, except when a red disk was waved.

I would imagine that the 5,000 metres walk at the UK Championships was equally boring to the general onlookers. How did we get landed with shoving a poorly supported 5,000 metres race into a major meeting and turning it into such a dull spectacle with little at stake – and then wondering why folk don't show interest?

For years the top track race of the season was the AAA 3,000 Metres Walk. As it's shorter, the 'procession appearance' was not so evident. The mid-field battles were closer with the spectacle over in 12-16 minutes, not 20-29 minutes. Let's go back to past days when we were on the track and soon off it – but commanding much interest while there. 5,000 Metres of walking in major track meets has been getting more dire as each year passes and walking continues to spiral downhill in general terms. Remember folks – when walking was welcomed by Major Sponsored Games Promoters – we staged Mile/1,500 metres events with great success and much interest. Look how cricket's 20/20 games have caught on – why? – because it offers crowds less with more excitement. Walking would do the same by ditching this dismal 5,000 Metres and returning to the glory days of the old AAA 3,000 Metres. Less is more! D.A.

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