

# Essex Walker

Editor: Dave Ainsworth

## ESSEX WALKER'S ANNUAL HART HOUSE CHRISTMAS CARD APPEAL

We're holding another Christmas Appeal for Hart House (The Gambian Home for Children With Learning Disabilities) where readers are invited to donate sums roughly equal to what might be spent on Christmas Cards to fellow walkers. It's been successful for many years, and we'll publish names of those donating ... so others realise why they never got a Christmas card from you! Tony Perkins has again kindly agreed to hold the purse strings, so please make cheques payable to A F Perkins. Please see Tony at the meetings or mail to him at: Deans Farmhouse, Tye Green, Cressing, Essex CM77 8HU. Geoff Hunwicks, who runs Hart House (named after late Grade 1 Essex Judge Albert Hart) with his wife Rohey, advises his new email address is: [geoffharthouse@yahoo.com](mailto:geoffharthouse@yahoo.com).

## ESSEX WALKERS NEAR-AND-FAR

Southend's well-supported Mile saw 2 comebacks, by ALAN O'RAWE after an operation and fast man PHIL BARNARD who was on top-form with an emphatic 7.47 victory followed by both STEVE ALLENs (Barnet and Ilford). Fourth was noted fast-starter JOHN BORGARS with local stalwart JOHN BROCK 5th. LINDA MOUNTFORD was first lady in 10.38. Commentator JUNE CORK said "Thank you all for continuing to support our race: you can consider it now to be the event to open our Open Meeting with for the foreseeable future - so please diarise this event for August Bank Holiday 2014". 3 Commonwealth Greats were present - June said "Our own Olympian MARY GREEN and I felt humbled in such illustrious surroundings".

Early September saw Guernsey's annual circular 19.4 Miles Church-to-Church (commenced 1936) which passes every island Parish Church. A start line safety lecture by ROB ELLIOTT was as good as anything ever heard. An opening hill out of St Peter Port makes Bradford's 50K look easy! 3 hrs wasn't broken this time - with victor JONATHAN HOBBS (3.01.49) having a distance debut, just ahead of talented local JASON LeNOURY (1-of-4 racing from this family). Former winner JIM BALL completed the frame. 6th was our winner's father CHRIS. The last mile along the front was busy as 3 cruise ships were in port and a Food Fayre was along the esplanade. Former winners ED SHILLABEER and PETE RYAN of Ilford AC were 9th and 10th with Loughton 2nd Claimer SEAN PENDER 11th. ANGELA and MALCOLM MARTIN were next, winning the a husband-and-wife prize ... Essex connection you ask? – well, Malcolm works in Dagenham. MICK BARNBROOK, Minister for Mainland Development, was 14th. A hot day saw 25 start and 22 make the trip with hosts SARNIA winning team honours. A truly wonderful weekend was made extra-special by an evening meal in a plush hotel where awards were presented by Sarnia WC's President - 1970 Commonwealth Games Representative DAVE DOREY. Also presented were certificates from the curtain-raiser - a Road 3K at Vale on Friday evening which also saw 22 finish. Centurion and former Loughton member COLIN BRADLEY judged both races. Edbanger had reason to remember his efforts, for on Friday he was walloped by a car's wing mirror and on Sunday a swinging left arm made contact with a thorny bush alongside a narrow road causing a deep gash ... neither dented Ed's enthusiasm by the way! 2014 is Sarnia's 50th Anniversary season, so let's hope they'll again have no clashing fixtures on C-to-C weekend!

A week later, Leicester hosted their annual JIM SHARLOTT Open 10K (4 scoring) with a BMAF Road 10K Championship in conjunction. No longer 6 times around scenic Abbey Park, it's now 14 times around the Park's cricket pitches ... repetitive - but dead flat! Former Colchester Harrier LUKE FINCH, our first UK walker home at the last Commonwealth Games, was an emphatic winner with Ilford's FRANCISCO REIS 2nd (and 1st Vet) after a battle with Olympian IAN RICHARDS. In the end, 3rd was many times former Welsh Champion MARK WILLIAMS with STEVE UTTLEY 4th. Ilford's STUART BENNETT and STEVE ALLEN did well, the latter appearing despite a heavy cold, to help Ilford to team honours. Loughton 2nd claimer SEAN PENDER and RON POWELL both acquitted themselves with distinction. Former Ilford 2nd Claimer GARY SMITH was first Centurion. Hon Ed "also walked". Scottish Veterans sent entrants!

Full results in Record and at [www.racewalkuk.com](http://www.racewalkuk.com).

## NOTHING DOING

For the first time in 24 years former Loughton AC 2nd claimer KEN WATTS won't line-up for the Roubaix 28 Hours Classic. Unwell Ken is a patient at King's College Hospital. Worried brother Bob reports, "He has not had a pint or a smoke for 6 days". We all wish him well.

## MILESTONES

A brace of Essex Walkers, both Centurions, became OAPs in August ... RAY PLATT of Southend-on-Sea AC, who ran 19 marathons and walked 2 X 100 miles' races in a successful athletics career ... and Hon Ed! Many times Essex Champion, and International representative ANDY O'RAWE hit 50 and was honoured by a surprise party at Canvey Island Golf Club. Now a successful businessman in the Southend area, Andy also represented his country at amateur boxing before turning professional in Frank Warren's stable. Indeed when re-instated as an amateur athlete, his former boxing trainer turned up to give extra encouragement.



## THE BLACK CHAIR

Essex-born PAUL NIHILL reminds us race walking recently featured on BBC Mastermind, as a specialised subject was '60s Olympics.

An answer was: the last UK walking medals were gained in 1964. Almost 50 years' ago - courtesy of KEN MATTHEWS(Au) and PAUL NIHILL(Ag).

## SAD FAREWELL

We're sorry to report a sad death, after long illness, of VAL - wife of Cambridge Harriers stalwart KEN MUNRO (a former Centurions Honorary Secretary

and Merchandising Officer). Condolence is expressed. Our race walking world was represented at her funeral service.

## TRAVEL ALERT/BE WARNED/INSURANCE ADVISED

A mainland competitor was forced to quit Guernsey's Church-to-Church Walk in its closing stages and needed hospital treatment. Guernsey hasn't reciprocal arrangements with our UK/NHS and isn't a European Union member ... meaning duty free goods are available, but also EHC cards aren't accepted on the Island. A medical bill of over £300 ensued!

## THANKS FOR YOUR GREAT CONTRIBUTIONS

The last thing Essex needs is 2 retirements ... but sadly late August saw Centurion CHRIS CATTANO who's gifted at both competitive running and race walking, announce he'd not contest his Southend 2012 Mile title as he'd hung up his shoes due to work commitments. Chris had a spirited stab at the 2011 Centenary 100 Miles at Lingfield Park. His last race saw victory in an EVAC meeting. Also quitting - owing to injuries - is JUNE CORK, a prominent walker in a talented and successful Southend squad of past years. June's last walk was also at an EVAC meeting. Both are Southend-on-Sea AC members. We thank both for their contributions and, of course, would love to see comebacks one day!

## VIEW FROM THE CROWD

The Southend Mile saw another big turnout. A well-known face in the crowd was former International OLLY FLYNN who said how good a 1 mile race was; as it kept the interest of a large gathering, whereas their keenness may have waned if over 3,000 or 5,000 metres. He makes a valid point!

## FIXTURES

28 Sep	Enfield League Graded 1 Hour Badge Races	Hemel Hempstead	12.00 noon
6 Oct	Gazette Cup 4 Miles	Addiscombe	2.00 pm
12 Oct	Enfield League 5 Miles Yacht Handicap	Lee Valley	1.00 pm
19 Oct	Steyning Open 10K	Steyning	2.30 pm
26 Oct	Cambridge Harriers Winter League 5K	Bexley	2.00 pm
9 Nov	Enfield Open 7 Miles	Lee Valley	1.00 pm
3 Nov	Addington Vase 7 Miles	Addiscombe	2.00 pm
11 Nov	RWA Southern Area AGM	C S Club SW1	7.15 pm
30 Nov	BMAF 20K Champs/Hillingdon Open 10K	Hillingdon	1.00 pm
7 Dec	Cambridge Harriers Winter League 5K	Bexley	2.00 pm
14 Dec	Alf Palmer Memorial Walks	Broadbridge Heath	11.00 am
15 Dec	Race Walking Association AGM	Alexander Stadium	1.00 pm

## THE GOOD DIE YOUNG

Not walkers ... but all involved with athletics will be sad to bid farewell to a trio with Olympic/Paralympic connections: TODD BENNETT, aged just 51, passed away after illness. He was a silver medallist in the 4 X 400 Metres 1984 Olympics at Los Angeles (with Phil Brown/Kriss Akabusi/Garry Cook). Then CHRIS HALLAM MBE took his leave of us aged 49 after winning a host of medals, for Team GB and also Wales in the Commonwealth Games. His colourful personality helped raise the profile of disabled sport. Then after a mishap in Switzerland, aged only 42, was MARK SUTTON who helped "steal the show" at the Olympic opening ceremony when parachuting into Stratford dressed as James Bond.

## THEY SEEK HIM THERE

Iford's Centurion MICKY SUTTON has been spotted: giving a good account of himself in a tough 10K run over the Downs near Coulsdon (42nd from 111 in 48.11). He also shows talent in Post Office events.

## CIVIL WALKERS

An Iford AC walker became Civil Service champion in their annual 3,000 metres walk. Iford's Walking Section Captain STEVE UTTLEY journeyed to his native north-west to contest the title at Manchester, and continued his current fine form. He led from the start to claim the title in 15.29. Silver medallist JOHN HALL, Loughton 2nd claimer, clocked 15.53.

## ILFORD AC MEMBER AT MAJOR IAAF MOSCOW MEETING

In the 20 Kilometres Walk, held on a multi-lap road circuit near the Stadium and finishing with a lap and three-quarters on the track, Iford AC's Bethnal Green based life-member NERINGA AIDIETYTE was 41st in 1 hour 34 minutes and 32 seconds, representing Lithuania. This was Neringa's 2nd World

## TOWER INSURANCE 100 MILES - ISLE OF MAN

Held on a half-mile multi-lap course at Douglas, Essex Estuary-based entrants OLLY BROWNE covered 82.5 miles in 20.18.04 and MARTIN FISHER accounted for 82 miles in 21.28.20. Both are experienced and respected Centurions with many successful completions over this distance, who we hope will be raring to go again next time. Advanced technology was to the fore with chip recording/timing - however with a large field, which was added to 10 hours into the event when a well-supported "20 Miles Starlight Stroll" commenced, a few snags then ensued. Some walkers couldn't get lap times or ascertain out how many circuits were still to come, so got demoralised. This event saw many finishers and a host of new Centurions.

## ILFORD HIT THE JACKPOT

August's Veterans AC 5 Miles around Battersea Park's Queen's Carriageway saw Iford members occupy the frame as FRANCISCO REIS, PETE RYAN and STUART BENNETT clocked 40.09, 43.37 and 48.21 respectively. Loughton 2nd Claimers SEAN PENDER and PAUL KING were in close order - 9th and 10th - being timed at 51.07 and 51.24. Penultimate finisher, stalwart MICK BARNBROOK (14th/56.44) just pipped keen Organiser DAVE HOBEN. Full results of these races are on <http://www.racewalkuk.com/> and published in **AW** and **Record**.

Championship appearance as she raced 2 years' ago in Daegu.

## JEAN PICKERING (nee Desforges) MBE, RIP

Not a walker, but known to many, the good lady has passed-on aged 83. For years walkers at May Bank Holiday Monday's 3,000 Metres at Stevenage's Ridlins End track were greeted at the numbers table by Jean. Widow of Ron, silvery-tongued maestro of the small screen, she founded a Memorial Fund (to help grass roots athletes) in his name when he passed away in 1991. Shot putter son Shaun is an Olympian, Commonwealth Games bronze medallist and former Welsh Champion. Jean won bronze medals at Olympic and Commonwealth Games levels. She became the only British athlete to win European gold in both track and field events (1954: 100m relay/long jump). In the latter event she became our first UK woman to exceed 20ft, and in 1953 held the UK Pentathlon record. Jean was in the Athletics Hall-of-Fame. Ridlins End track won't be the same now!

## KEN CARTER's OK

Many received emails stating Ken had suffered woes while overseas and needed money pronto. His family report all's well, so please don't be concerned - or send money. It was a scam!

## IAAF WORLD CHAMPIONSHIP MEN'S 20K WALK

31st ALEX WRIGHT 1.26.40. Well done Sir!

## "DEATH MARCH" 100K RESULTS - BELGIUM

Sean Pender	14:49
Steve Allen (If)	15:00 (pb)
Kathy Crilley	15:31 (pb)
David Hoben	17:54

## NEW MAN AT THE HELM

JOHN HALL's no longer Honorary BMAF Walks Secretary, his role passing to IAN RICHARDS

## ON TRACK

Despite providing a quality traffic-free circuit, and eliminating a hill so making life easier, a small turnout graced our annual **RWA National 10 Kilometres Championship** - despite the attraction of an Inter-Counties Championship in conjunction. The men's event saw 26 finish with 2 DQs. Essex, scoring the King twins and Steve Uttley, won the Counties title and we welcomed Counties Athletic Union protagonist LAURIE KELLY to oversee this aspect of competition. The Ilford scorer had raced despite carrying the after effects of a "dead-leg" picked up while contesting the Small Nations Meeting. Another Ilford member, FRANCISCO REIS (racing with toothache), assisted Middlesex to 3rd team place. On the Club scene Ilford won top honours for a 3rd successive year scoring FRANCISCO REIS, STEVE UTTLEY and STEVE ALLEN. The ladies provided 10 finishers with 2 each in the DQ and "DNF" columns. The ladies race lacked Essex interest - won by veteran MICHELLE JOHNSON of Northern AC.

## Selected results and Essex interest:

1	Tom Bosworth	Ton	41.56
2	Dan King	CH	43.35
3	Dom King	CH	46.55
4	Francisco Reis	Ilf	50.51
8	Steve Uttley	Ilf	55.52
12	David Crane	SWC	59.11
15	Steve Allen	Ilf	60.19
16	Stuart Bennett	Ilf	60.38
21	Paul King	Bel/Ltn	65.31

## A SPANIARD IN THE WALKS

On a multi-lap circuit (with incline) at Coventry's University of Warwick Spanish guest JULIAN IGLESIAS broke the tape in 5.05.58 - so again we lacked the credibility of a time commencing with 4. Next home was always impressive SANDRA BROWN of SWC, the Centurions' President, who was ahead of all UK men when timed-in at 5.29.04. This was an Age Group best by around half-an-hour and it was about that time that Sandra had in hand over 2nd lady - defending Championess MAUREEN NOEL of the Bels - who recorded 5.59.54. Leading an entire field is Sandra's speciality - readers remember her winning a Basildon 50K in the 80s ahead of all. 1st UK man was Lancashire's ADRIAN EDWARDS in 5.40.16 so winning his Club's 1st National 50K individual gold. He relieved Barnet's STEVE ALLEN (defending champion who retired) of the dubious honour of possessing the slowest UK National 50K winning time! 2nd UK man home was RICHARD BROWN, Club colleague and husband of ladies winner Sandra, in 5.55.18. Ilford's BOB DOBSON was 3rd in 6.04.18 - 43 years after winning the Championship at East Ewell (4.20.22). Like 1970 it was hot in the extreme ... by coincidence on 27 July, a bigger field assembled at Cophall Stadium (now Allianz Park) for an Enfield League 5,000 Metres - and in 1974 our National 50K was staged at Cophall using a 5K circuit in the grounds and around this site's perimeter, also on a baking day. Bob won that also (4.16.58). Bob saw his awards collection added to by 5 items: RWA bronze medal, BMAF Age Group gold medal (on route), RWA Southern Area 50K silver medal, Essex County AA individual trophy and Essex County AA gold medal. Bob's now aged 70 and space is still needed to find room for additions to his display! It was a remarkable display of resolve, as Bob received 2 cards by the hour ... so walking his next 5 hours under the proverbial Sword of Damocles! Only other finisher was consistent Belgrave Harrier PAUL KING (Loughton 2nd claimer) in 6.08.59. Men/5 finished - 8 dnf. Women/2 started and finished.

The 50K was held with the BMAF 30K Championship. Despite this, our National 50K Championship again made considerable losses. So applause for your RWA Officers, who for another year of few entries and little support, kept it going ... it's now your turn to keep it going! For a first time no teams closed in (even at a ridiculous 2-to-score). Yet again no Essex team finished in their County Championship (in conjunction). The Arthur Croft Memorial Trophy is for a winning Essex team. How about efforts being made next year to get teams from Essex home, so this trophy can be properly presented? That's of course, if there are any 50Ks on the UK mainland. Perhaps 35 year old Irishman JEFF HEFFERNAN's Moscow World Championship win (3.37.56) might re-ignite interest in this Olympic event ... one can but hope! Thanks to all officials/helpers and attendants who were there ... among them great and much respected veteran GEORGE CHAPLIN, once a leading light in Coventry athletics. Coming soon - a 1970 National 50K nostalgia article.

## BBC REGIONAL NEWS FEATURE

We've received so many readers' emails about a feature on Paul Nihill MBE's Tokyo silver medal performance, they can't all be published. Paul talked about the Games and Hon Ed was asked if walking was now a different game ... "Is **race walking** now a 'middle-ground' between running and walking?" All contributions were 100% in favour of this screening ... a sample appears below:







## Dear Dave ...

### **BBC FEATURE**

I saw the Tokyo piece and I thought it was great. Well done. It's a pity your PR skills are not employed on a sport that is more deserving!

*Steve Uttley*

### **FROM BBC SOUTH EAST**

It was a pleasure to meet you both and it is always nice to know that the contributors enjoyed the final article!

*Alex Beard Video Journalist  
BBC SOUTH EAST*

### **PAUL NIHILL by MIKE HINTON**

I have looked at the SE News item on Paul Nihill. You yourself made a very good contribution. It was very noticeable that the walking action bears no comparison with the internationals of today. Back then their strides were longer, and even the slow motion action of Paul shows one foot in contact with the ground at all times, unlike today's runners!!

*Mike Hinton*

### **RE BBC SOUTH EAST FEATURE**

Thanks a million! It was really wonderful to watch and Paul's and your input was excellent. Best piece of British PR for race walking for years. Great to see some of the familiar faces from yesteryear too. One thing that struck me was that Paul started after seeing an article in the local paper for a 5 miles walk and Rob Hefferman, recent 50 Kms Walk World Champion in Moscow started by doing a walk at Primary School so not much has changed. Really the early beginnings were not much different from those days in the 60s to today. From small acorns mighty oak trees grow!

*Bill Sutherland*

### **RE BBC FEATURE**

A great piece of PR work and well done to you both.

*Oliver T Flynn*

### **JOHN POWELL - PUBLIC SPEAKER**

I delivered a paper at the British Society of Sports History Conference on "100 years of the Race Walking Association and Walking's Place in British Athletics"

*John Powell*

### **COMMONWEALTH GAMES EXCLUSION by OLLY FLYNN**

The only way forward is for the RWA to appoint a sub committee to be given the full official backing to pursue this further. As I have demonstrated there are other Olympic Associations who would support the introduction of Race Walking in the CG. We cannot approach this as a bunch of interested supporters of Race Walking, such a venture can only succeed with official backing. If

our governing body, ie the RWA, does not sanction such a concept then the CGC will rightly say if your own body doesn't support you why should anyone else? The reason in the 70's you and everyone else were so successful in getting the 50km back into the Olympics was because the RWA gave it its full backing. I look forward to your comments.

*Oliver T Flynn*

### **NEW WALKERS by JOHN C**

For your interest, I have added a webpage to racewalkuk.com. It lists all walkers, in order of their very first race walk.

<http://www.racewalkuk.com/NewWalkers.asp>

By looking back through the list, you can see how many people have 'started' in 2013 (about 750). It also shows how many races each one has done, as most people only took part in one. Winner so far this year is Peter Beckerleg of Sarnia, who has already done 18 races. Going back further, you can see some popular names within the past few years, who started and went on to become very regular competitors. Going way back to when the website records started at the end of 2004, over 12,000 people have started walking since then, although a couple of hundred probably go back before then.

*John Constandinou*

### **NORTH OF THE BORDER**

Welcome to the brand-spanking new Scottish Race Walkers e-mail address:

[scottishracewalkers@outlook.com](mailto:scottishracewalkers@outlook.com) As the current central contact for Scottish Race Walking, I have created a new account to offer people a more professional face to Scottish Race Walking. From now on, I will use this as our main communication channel. (Eventually) a Scottish Race Walking Website will be published. I will make sure that my contact e-mail address in RaceWalkUK is changed:

<http://www.racewalkuk.com/Map/Edinburgh.asp>

You may still continue to use this mobile number as my contact: 07881-373060. Although I will manage this e-mail account initially, it means that future Scottish Race Walking Committee members could easily take over management of this e-mail account. Feel free to forward this message to all interested parties.

*Andrew Fraser (Edinburgh-based)*

### **ISLE OF MAN 100 MILES CHIPS by RICHARD BROWN**

The problem with the chip timing was that the programme chosen tried to give too much information ... such as fastest lap. This meant the system having to trawl through every lap for every walker each time. It slowly got behind and then the 20 milers delayed it even further when they joined in. So while the info was all safe inside, it could not easily be accessed. However eventually times were taken from it for each walker at a point in time

and hand recording of laps ensured that accurate finish times were provided. These were eventually confirmed by the system when it caught up with itself. A couple used this problem as an excuse for their dropping out; but don't be fooled ... as it was the same for everyone and if most could hack it then why not the others? There is a lesson though about choosing an appropriate programme that gives you what you want and no more. Here's hoping for Radley!!

*Richard Brown*

### **ABSENCE FROM RACE WALKING**

Unfortunately I was unable to compete for Essex Police this year due to a serious injury on duty. I was involved in an incident whereby a suspect made off from the scene seriously injuring me but, not stopping me from assisting in an area search whereby the suspect and stolen vehicle were recovered. I am delighted to let you know that I am now back at work and my rehabilitation is going well. In addition to receiving messages of thanks from the victims of the offence the judge sentencing the defendant praised my actions.

I am hoping to continue my rehabilitation and return to race walking when able to do so. After all, the next PSUK championships beckon as do the 2015 World Police and Fire Games and Essex events! If it would be of interest to readers, I would be happy to write or assist in the writing of an article covering the incident itself. After all, had it not been for my race walking perhaps I would not have been swift of foot enough to catch up with this vehicle and then organise resources to capture him and recover the stolen vehicle.

*Elizabeth Man Rey*

### **IF YOU NEED MOTIVATION TO RACE WALK**

Please encourage everyone who can to watch the BBC Sport tape with Robert Hefferman, World 50 Kms Walk Gold Medallist and his wife, also a top athlete. It touches on the reason why each and every one of us chooses to be a race walker.

Really great viewing too!

*Bill Sutherland*

### **THE REAL REASON COMMONWEALTH GAMES RACE WALKS WERE EXCLUDED IS PLAIN TO SEE!**

It is because the RWA in conjunction with other Nations' Walking Federations have done so little that we are where we are now. I am trying to put pressure on the RWA to form a working group to do something, but seem to be talking to deaf ears as our Sport lives so much in the past. In my job I mix with and see how other smaller Sports are developing yet we are still running our Sport like yesteryear. I live in hope! Perhaps if others in Race Walking tried to put some pressure on something might just happen.

Having now looked in depth into the exclusion of the race walks by the Scotland Organising Committee it is so plain to see why this happened. No longer is any organising country thinking of others when compiling their programme of events. All for one and one for all is their method nowadays! All Scotland was interested in besides cost of the CG was where their best chances of Medals would come from. Jane Saville of Australian Walking wrote a significant letter to the Commonwealth Games Federation in 2012, but there was little change of mind to us being an 'optional event' only. In Delhi, India in 2010 the 'Mountain Bike Racing' was not included in the programme as they apparently had insufficient knowledge of what was required. However Scotland is very strong at this event and definitely wanted it in in Glasgow in 2014. The cost of staging this would be substantial hence Race Walking was excluded from the Athletic Programme with the excuses being lack of entries (which just does not stand up) and the logistics of setting up the course and manning it. As Bob Dobson pointed out the laps are now short and not 'out and back' like 1970 and 1986 in Edinburgh. Another feeble excuse! As I found out recently Scotland have as expected a large very popular 'Mountain Bike Programme' where they will no doubt win Medals. Of course we cannot demand to an Organising Committee that our athletic discipline MUST be included, but we now need a much more united approach by Commonwealth Race Walking Federations to put forward our point of view with vigour. As we have witnessed no longer can we sit back and hope it will all happen to our favour. Just accepting that Australia will include the Race Walks in 2018 and hopefully London if chosen thereafter will not ensure its rightful place of the Race Walks in future Commonwealth Games. What are the RWA planning to do about this situation? I look forward to receiving your response.

*Bill Sutherland*

### **EMAILS CENTURIONS' PRESIDENT**

I had the pleasure of meeting up again with John Webb, Mexico 20kms Olympian, who very kindly set off the Centurions on our Bristol-Bath social walk in June and met us again en route. I was walking the old railway path [from Bath to Bristol this time] when I saw in the distance an apparition of a fine and business-like walking style coming towards me. I knew immediately it must be John, and in no time at all his training spin was interrupted as we greeted each other with hugs! I continued with my large back-pack to Bitton station on the heritage railway, and John continued training and then turned to meet me at the station cafe where we enjoyed a good chin wag and catch up about the walking world. John had been keenly

watching the world championship walks. He said that, at nearly 77 years, he wasn't inclined to don numbers again - then he reflected and said that, when he turns 80, he could be tempted out again, and would very much like to walk again with the likes of Paul Nihill and Bob Dobson. Wouldn't that be great? I'm sure there are many others, including many Centurions, who would like to be part of such a special occasion!

**Sandra Brown**

#### **ERIC HALL REMEMBERS A MOURNER AT JACK FITZGERALD'S FUNERAL**

The last time I spoke to Brian Hewson he was living in South Africa although he had a house in Surrey. He and I were Surrey Juniors and appeared together in an inter County match at the Eton Manor track - we were also the only pair from that team to make the Olympics - we also made the 50th reunion at the MCG in 2006. Brian was a brilliant 800 metre and 1,500 metre man who, as a

tailor on the staff of Simpsons Piccadilly, helped kit us out!

**Eric Hall**

#### **ESSEX WALKER READER ON TOUR IN SPAIN**

I walked myself into 2nd position in the W55 category of a local 5K road race last Friday, ahead of the third W55 runner, so I haven't totally lost it yet. Temps for the race at 9 pm were in the high 20s and humidity has been a bit of a killer the past few days so just completing it was good. 5 Euros to enter, a technical T shirt (proper size!) for all participants, and water, Coke and Aquarius, as much as you could slurp, at the finish. Trophies to first 3 in every category. The cynics would say "No wonder Spain's finances are in a mess." I would say - good for sport, health and tourism. But then I am slightly biased ... Nice to get support not ridicule en route as a walker though.

**Cath Duhig**

#### **STAR TRIO AT SOUTHEND AUGUST HOLIDAY MONDAY 1 MILE**



Guest-of-Honour as "Mr Starter" in the annual Southend-on-Sea 1 Mile on Bank Holiday Monday morning was

DAVID MOORCROFT OBE, who chatted with walkers before the "off" saying he kept regular contact with Midlands legend George Chaplin. He admitted he'd competed at race walking earlier in his career and expressed admiration and support for race walking! After racing was a photo-call in the home straight as three Commonwealth Games greats stood before cameras:

Judge **Ron Wallwork MBE**, **David Moorcroft OBE** and **Olly Flynn** (present as a supporter), as the Arena burst into prolonged loud applause for the medallists. David presented our medals on a proper 1-2-3 podium. David Moorcroft has important athletics appointments ... that's why he was in Southend - to meet and personally thank Olympic volunteers. With his support for walking, one hopes David is committed to Bill Sutherland's and Olly Flynn's ongoing campaign to retain Glasgow's Commonwealth Games walks.

#### **RACE WALKING ASSOCIATION (SOUTHERN AREA) AGM**

To be held Monday 11 November at the Civil Service Club, 13/15 Great Scotland Yard, London SW1A 2HJ commencing 7.15 pm. The RWA Southern Area Committee meets from 6.30 pm onwards, and there's a long tradition that folk arriving early for our AGM can sit-in on proceedings. The door is opened at 7.15 pm to admit all who haven't already taken their seats. Great Scotland Yard is between Whitehall-and-Northumberland Avenue and a short walk from Trafalgar Square. Charing X Station (Mainline and Underground) is close as is Embankment (Underground). Umpteen buses serve Whitehall and Northumberland Avenue.



It's a chance to have your say about the way walking is conducted in the South, and an opportunity to vote in those you wish to take our sport forward. There are opportunities to stand for positions if wishing to make your mark in sports administration! It's also time to vote for persons to represent the South on important National Sub-Committees. Hon Sec **CHRIS FLINT** urges all race walkers and Officials to quicken their footsteps to this important meeting. If arriving early, the Club has a range of reasonably priced hot meals/snacks/drinks.

## RACEWALKING – My Last Race - A Tale of Unknown Identity

In the summer of 1963, after ten years of successful race walking with Newport Harriers and Highgate Harriers I switched to basketball largely because I was attracted to the teamwork and a whole new range of skills to learn. Within three years I was playing for the RAF, Combined Services and Wales. I joined the RAF in January 1964 and was in training at the Officer Corps Training Unit (OCTU) at RAF Feltwell in East Anglia. The unit had one of the very few, for its time, 220 yds indoor tracks in one of the hangers. In March I was very surprised when told that I had been selected to represent The RAF in the one mile walk in a triangular indoor athletics match against Cambridge University and East Anglia AAAs. I protested that I had given up walking a year ago. They said we have checked your walking record and was reminded that I was still under assessment on the OCTU – you will do as you are told!

The great day arrived and there were eight or nine competitors on the starting line. I did not recognise anyone! I thought that I could win this. As a junior I was regularly under seven minutes and I was stronger and fitter on the OCTU than when I was race walking regularly. The gun went off and in fifty yards I was ten yards down. Who the hell is this guy? In seven dizzy laps I only got to within 3 yards of him. On the last lap I caught up to him the last bend and put an extreme effort in front of all the Directing Staff who were metaphorically marking my performance. I beat him by about a foot in a time which I think was well under seven minutes. I asked one of the East Anglian competitors who he was and he said and he said Norman Read – Olympic Champion! I did not recognise Norman as I had never raced against him as a junior, he was 7 years older than me, and he had emigrated to New Zealand in 1953.

The moral of this story is “if I had known who he was, I would have been proud to come second – so do not be intimidated by your competitors reputations” – but I also had the Directing Staff of the OCTU marking my card! That was my one and only RAF athletics performance and my last walking race - one which remains in the memory.

*Mike Shannon*

### WRITER'S DETAILS

We've published MIKE SHANNON's article and, as some may not know of him, here's a few details. In the colours of the Welsh AAA, Newport High School and Newport Harriers he won the AAA Junior Mile Championship in both 1956 at Bebbington and 1957 at Hurlingham clocking 7.07.4/6.55.3 respectively. 2nd placers in these 2 races respectively were R Bygrave of Highgate Harriers (7.17.8) and J Knifton of Belgrave Harriers (7.13.0). This event commenced in 1947 at Manchester, won by K Harding (unattached) in 7.30.2. Norman Read of Sussex Walkers (1956 Olympic Gold Medallist at 50K) won in 1950 at Port Sunlight clocking 7.04.8. Other notable winners included Peter Marlow of Southend-on-Sea AC (1972 Olympian/20K) in 1959 at Watford clocking 7.05.4, Ron Wallwork of Bolton United Harriers (1966 Commonwealth Games Gold Medallist) in 1960 at Hurlingham clocking 6.59.1, and Shaun Lightman (1968 Olympian/50K) of Hounslow College who triumphed in 1961 at Enfield (6.54.5) and 1962 at Welwyn Garden City (6.46.2). Shaun was followed home both times by Olympian John Paddick of Royal Sutton Coldfield WC (7.03.0 and 6.57.8), with Peter Selby of SWC 3rd in 1961 with 7.14.4 on the stopwatch. Peter Marlow was 2nd in 1960 (7.03.2) and fellow Southender Alec Banyard 4th in 1959 (7.36.8) and 1960 (7.32.1). On the latter occasion Dave Delaney/London Vidarians came 5th in 7.37.5. Ron made another visit to the frame in 1959 - 3rd in 7.13.4.

Back to Mike, who led home Highgate Harriers to a National 10 Miles team victory in 1962 at New Southgate (SWC and Bels 2nd/3rd). Mike was 9th with his Club's 3 other scorers being John Northcott 11th, John Elston (of Race Walking Record fame) 12th and J Leavoid 21st. The race was won by Ken Matthews/Royal Sutton Coldfield in 76.10 with the frame completed by Bob Clark/Polytechnic Harriers and Colin Williams/Ilford AC - both these 2 gentlemen are sadly no longer with us. The winning Club's Honorary Walking Secretary at the time was the legendary A D McSweeney of Finchley N3. Mike himself had great talents as a walker, as his record shows ... but was even better at basketball; and it was to that sport he turned his attentions to big-time, getting within an inch of Olympic selection. It's nice to hear from him again.

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