

ESSEX WALKER



TOP POSITIONS FOR ESSEX FOLK

The Race Walking Association AGM at a somewhat bleak Alexander Stadium in Brum, saw Loughton AC 2nd claimer, Centurion and former international PAM FICKEN accept our coveted President's chain-of-office. RWA Southern Area Chairman, Essex County Past President, former Essex champion and Southend-on-Sea stalwart RAY PEARCE is the new Vice-President. Pam attended her first walking race in 1946 and stated "Race walking is not in decline. There's so much enthusiasm out there".

Pam celebrated her elevation to the top post by inviting all for a complementary drink at a nearby hostelry. GLYN JONES, who had been a highly active President during his 2 years, was presented with a commemorative plaque to mark his efforts. As our last issue reported how poorly the RWA Southern Area President's Appeal had been supported, it's a pleasure to announce a thumping success for our National President's Appeal – indeed notes were still coming in right into Glyn's final hour with his chain! BILL WRIGHT, well known to Essex Walker readers, was re-elected Honorary Treasurer for the umpteenth year. He was able to report that an important fundraiser (the RWA 200 Club) now had more members...and was seeking even more!

OPPORTUNITY

RWA Honorary General Secretary PETER CASSIDY remarked that, for more than a quarter of his 70 years of life, he had held his position. He gave notice that he intended to step down in a couple of years. This gives plenty of time for those, who desire one of the top administrative posts in British athletics, to get their campaigns going.

OTHER RWA POSTS

The AGM didn't see any contested posts, so all remained in their officer. "As you were" as drill sergeants used to bark. PETER MARKHAM (Chairman), PETER MARLOW (Championships Secretary), CHRIS FLINT (Minutes Secretary), JOHN CONSTANDINOU (Press & Publicity), CHRIS BERWICK and TERRY MORRIS (Hon. Auditors).

LIFER

Congratulations to Centurion KEN MUNRO on being unanimously elected as the Race Walking Association's 12th life member. The sub-21 hours Centurion qualified in the 1965 Metropolitan Police 100 Miles race at Chigwell. Representing Cambridge Harriers he became No. 370. He's now a leading light in Northern walking circles. The 1965 race saw 13 new Centurions from 30 finishes (from 54 starters). Only 5 newcomers were UK based. It was a race that brought DOUG FOTHERHAM into the Brotherhood (no sisters prior to 1977) as he clocked 21.31.09. At the head of the field HEW NEILSON recorded his 3rd win (2 road and 1 track) on his 16th successful UK 100 Miles completion...at a time when no other walker had even hit double figures. Further down the order, in just over 23 hours, HENDRICK DOORNEKAMP from Holland raced the entire distance in clogs! He went on to complete the feat a further 5 times, and always in clogs. 'Clever clogs'.



RESOLUTION FAILS

Enfield & Harringey's resolution to move more towards 'B' races failed with 19 for the cause and 24 against – well short of the required $\frac{2}{3}$ rds majority required to bring about a change in competition rules. It was proposed by RON WALLWORK and seconded by MICK GRAHAM. The main opposing speaker was PETER CASSIDY, who showed a posed picture of double 1908 Olympic gold medallist GEORGE LARNER to support his case. There was no shortage of hearsay comments, including quotes for 2 unnamed juniors. The 2 leading speakers 'for' and 'against' the motion were invited to sum-up after floor speakers had been heard. After Peter summed-up the case for rejection the Chairman said that, as many had already made up their minds, voting could commence and a plastic carrier bag was produced and started being passed around the room, into which voting slips were put. The proposer was then invited to sum-up, after which the Chairman exercised his prerogative to sum-up. You couldn't make it up...though in truth it probably made little difference to the outcome. It had been argued that UK race walking would be dead in under a decade if the motion were not to be carried. The clock is ticking. 'Enfield Walker' will tell you more. However having this on the agenda brought about the best attended RWA AGM in many years and a full car park!

LOST PROPERTY REUNITED

On alighting at Wimbledon, on route to the latest 'last ever' Bels Open 7. Double Olympian ERIC HALL left his bag on the train. Eric is a trustee and key holder of Belgrave's Drill Hall, and the hall's keys were among the bag's items. On the homeward journey Eric enquired if it had been handed in, and after being shuffled around lost property and left luggage departments, was finally directed to the platform where his original train had arrived back in London. The bag was there – all smiles! Another Belgravian, CARL LAWTON, was unable to present prizes at the Bels Open as they were not brought to the meeting. So Carl, who gets to most events (he once missed out on being the UK's most prolific walker by a single appearance) has been handing out these awards (Sainsbury's vouchers) at subsequent meetings. He shifted a few at December's Cambridge Winter League 5K. While walking from the course to Bexley Station the un-presented vouchers fell out of his bag. By sheer good fortune MICK BARNBROOK walked the same route a short while later and spotted envelopes on the pavement by the Bexley War Memorial. His 'copper's nous' caused him to look closely...where he spotted walkers names on the envelopes. Mick took possession and made arrangements for delivery to Carl. Incidentally DAVE SHARPE got his £15 voucher (2nd team prize) at Bexley and spent it on his way home! Hey Big Spender!

RETURNED TO HIGH OFFICE

DAVE SHARPE was unanimously voted back in for another year as Honorary Walking Secretary at December's AGM of the Southern Counties Veterans Athletic Club.

EMAILS MIKE HINTON

Hello Dave,

I would like to make a few points with regard to Barry Ingarfield's comments 'time for change' in your last publication. Talk about 'the pot calling the kettle black'. Barry is acting just the same as 'we know who he is', whom he calls an egotistical man acting like a megalomaniac, and to come out and make a statement about a number of individuals having to voluntarily resign their positions or simply be replaced is ridiculous. Who does he think will then keep our sport going? Where is the money going to come from for his grand ideas. No one so far has come up with a solution to stop the rot, so at least 'we know who he is' is trying to do something positively about it.

Regards MIKE.



CHARITY APPEAL FROM KEVIN MARSHALL

Hello

Sorry to hassle you BUT I am looking for your help!!!!

I know that you are all recovering from Christmas and that you get loads of requests for sponsorship but....

Inspired by doing something different and an opportunity to raise money for an important charity, myself and 4 colleagues at work decided to take on the Vertical Rush event organised by Shelter on 25th Feb 2010. This challenge involves running up 920 steps to the top of Tower 42 in Canary Wharf! Living in Suffolk we don't have too many hills so preparing for this challenge is going to be interesting! West Suffolk House where we work has only 72 steps to the top so it is going to be like running up the three floors 13 times!! We are all determined to succeed and raise loads of money for the important work of Shelter!

I would be most grateful if you could please sponsor me in taking on this challenge, donations can be made at the following web page <http://www.justgiving.com/st-eds-high-fliers>

Donating through JustGiving is simple, fast and totally secure. Your details are safe with JustGiving – they'll never sell them on or send unwanted emails. Once you donate, they'll send your money directly to the charity and make sure Gift Aid is reclaimed on every eligible donation by a UK taxpayer. So it's the most efficient way to donate – we raise more, whilst saving time and cutting costs for the charity.

Really Grateful, Kevin.

Re: BARRY INGARFIELD'S CONTRIBUTION (last issue)

Dave,

As for B.I's comments, I think that you ought to have a comic supplement to E.W!

Best wishes, Peter Cassidy.

WRITES DAVE SHARPE

Dear Sir,

Earlier this year a new walker with a great potential appeared on the walking scene and did very well at a Victoria Park race. Just as she finished and was talking to her coach and family, a race walking official ran over and said that he would have carded her out of the event. Well when you have just given your all, it is not the time to receive these sort of remarks. You should let the dust settle, then ask if you can speak to a person and give some constructive advice and help. Well the upshot of this was that the young female walker is no longer in race walking. Well the Official should have used his little grey cells, if any, and tried to engage the brain – not put his foot into his big mouth.

Yours in Sport,

D.W. Sharpe, Centurion 578, IAC & SCVAC

THOUGHTS OF DAVE HOBEN

Dave,

Still appears that race walking is in danger of treading a twilight path to obscurity, as the map of England where it is carried out does not have many red spots on it and turnouts can be very low despite valiant efforts of the organisers so time for a change. A pyramid with a much larger base would give RWA the scope for more prospects at international level as there won't be enough right now coming into the sport in the first place.

Regards, Dave.

Btw, hope this provokes lots of correspondence!

WRITES CANVEY ISLANDER GEOFF BANTHORPE

Dear Dave,

Re: the letter from Dave Sharpe on the annual Postman's Walk at Mount Pleasant, everything Dave writes is true.

The Postman's Walk at the Mount has run for 48 years and Steve Wynn is adamant he wants to reach the 50th race. The Post Office always gave the London Postal Region a grant each year to help run our events; which included road runs, track & field, cross country and both the yacht handicap races and the Blackheath Festival of Walking, as well as the Postman's Walk. We don't get any Post Office funds now. Our Committee only has one event left, so the Postman's Walk in 2011 will be our last event as the Committee will disband and Steve will retire from the Post Office the year after. Everyone who knows Steve admires his dedication to walking, Millwall and his love of a few pints, so hopefully we can get a huge field for 2011 for a fitting send-off to a fantastic bloke.

Geoff Banthorpe, London Postal Athletics Committee

EMAIL FROM STEVE KING

Hi there Dave,

I certainly hope all is going well in your life. Really appreciate all the race reports you do as it is something you have now done for a long time and thank goodness for the mainstays in the sport such as yourself and Tony Perkins. In case anyone is interested in checking what I'm up to my website address is <http://www2.vip.net/~stking/> I would hope that it might be possible to attend the Centurions Centenary – do you know if any other Ilford guys are going? However it will likely depend on how my Father is doing as he's been going through a very rough patch and if I have to go over between now and then it's very unlikely that I would return so quickly as I get limited holiday time. The Olympic torch is coming through here next Monday and I have the honour of being MC for the event so I'm looking forward to that and then being at the Games for a week. Truly hope all goes well and please extend my best wishes to all.

TRI to keep FIT, Steve.



FIXTURES

Sat 7 Feb	Essex/Kent/Open Indoor 1 Mile Championship	Lee Valley	1.45
Sat 13 Feb	Cambridge H. Winter League 5K	Bexley	2 pm
Sun 14 Feb	SCVAC 3,000 Metres Indoor Championship (+ Open)	Lee Valley	
Sat 20 Feb	RWA National/Essex & Enf Lges/Essex 10 Miles Championship	Lee Valley	2 pm
Sat 27 Feb	SWC 10 Miles	Monks Hill	2 pm
Sat 6 Mar	Molly Barnet Walks (+ Inter Counties 10K)	Coventry	
Wed 10 Mar	Met. Police Walking Club Annual Dinner/Reunion	New Scotland Yard	6.30 pm
Sat 13 Mar	Pat Furey Trophies Mtg 5 Miles (+ Enf Lge double points)	Lee Valley	2 pm
Sat 20 Mar	Cambridge H. Winter Lge 5K (+ Series Presentation)	Bexley	2 pm
Sat 27/Sun 28 Mar	BMAF Indoor Championships	Lee Valley	

STRONG NEW YEAR START AT LEE VALLEY

The 2010 race walking calendar got off to a good start at the Lee Valley Stadium on a sunny but wickedly cold Saturday afternoon where an Enfield League 5 Miles race was the main event. Over 5 twisting circuits with a short sharp climb on each, it was STEPHEN CRANE who showed best at the head of the field where he doggedly trailed pre-race favourite NICK SILVESTER (Aldershot) until finding that bit extra to forge ahead over the final lap. Stephen crossed the line 1st but as his back slappers were congratulating him, word came in that he had fallen foul of the judges in the closing stages and was expunged from the result sheet, so leaving Nick to claim victory in 39 minutes and 23 seconds. Undaunted Stephen went out on a 'warming down' training session and now looks forward to his next appearance. Also in the shake-up throughout was PHIL BARNARD who emulated his 2nd place on the same course, but over 7 miles, just 2 months ago. He was delighted with his rapid 39.57 timing and looks set for a good 2010. Enfield League regular PETER RYAN held his pace well to claim 4th in 42.17 with FRANCISCO REIS 5th in 42.38. Francisco recently made his comeback and showed his confidence by settling in with the leading bunch early on. He also is one tipped for a good 2010. Despite suffering a painful hamstring STEVE UTTLEY made it a great Ilford day by taking 6th spot in 43.29, and stalwart DAVE KATES occupied 13th position with a sound 46.14.

Further down the order DAVE SHARPE was 20th in 48.40 and sprightly veterans OLLIE BROWNE and ALAN O'RAWE both passed the line in 55.04 with the former just getting the verdict on his dip-finish to fill 37th and 38th places respectively. Despite freezing temperatures both wore only singlets...but as they'd recently had athletics related tattoos on their upper arms, they didn't want them covered up! Ilford easily won the team race.

Thanks also to Ron and all his team of enthusiastic officials and helpers. All helpers were rewarded by the gift of a woolly hat – very useful for more cold days such as this! And what about our Clerk-of-the-Course? BERNIE HERCOCK was up-and-about early in the morning to personally brush off an overnight dusting to snow flakes from the course's hilly part so as we could race safely. Thanks Bernie!

The next Enfield League race is also the RWA National 10 Miles/Essex 10 Miles/Essex League 10 Miles all rolled into one. It's on Saturday 20th February, at the Lee Valley Stadium (2 pm) using the same course.

On the undercard HELEN CROFT won the Youths 2 miles with a creditable personal best time of 25.49. Dave Sharpe advises that it was a whopping 2 minutes faster than previous! Well done!

ROCKY ROAD AHEAD – EDITORIAL

Walkers in the elite class find themselves instructed not to support domestic walks below National Championship status. Indeed our top walkers are so 'off the scene' that you're lucky if you see them 2-or-3 times a year. RON WALLWORK recently said, "A top walker used to change at the next peg to a clubman. You knew them and when they raced abroad, they raced for you". Nowadays overseas trips are "Hush Hush" in that the walking world don't know they're coming up and rarely get a report afterwards. Indeed in the 60s/70s/80s Team Managers of GB teams competing overseas used to have to put a report in Race Walking Record on their return.

Those supervising the elite have succeeded in driving a wedge between the few top walkers we have and our sports 'rank-and-file'. Truth is that few of us really care what the elite get up to. At the RWA AGM we were told, from the top table, that a simple request asking who had been selected for an International trip had been responded to with, "We can't tell you". Hmmm! It's been decided to give a seat on the RWA General Committee to 'The National Coach, Mentor or Whoever'. Perhaps that night flush out a bit of info from this secret society? We only see top walkers at major Nationals, if we're lucky, and then as a rule we see them standing in the gutter unpinning their numbers and handing them to a judge. The National Coach even intentionally staged a Squad Coaching Session on the very day set aside for Counties 3,000 metres track championships, so preventing leading lights racing with clubmen and also showing our event's best in front of crowds.

So does keeping top walkers away from domestic races, or even training with club walkers work? Let's look at greater past days. Said PAUL NIHILL MBE, "I completed 55 races in 1964 – the year I won an Olympic silver medal". RON WALLWORK won a Commonwealth Games gold medal and many National Championships as well as setting records. He did all the Open 7s (being a past winner at the Leicester and Met. Police Open) as well as the Leicester Mercury, Bradford 50K and Chippenham-to-Calne (incidentally being a past winner of all 3). Regular competition did him no harm. Only last month ROGER MILLS recollected those regular Thursday evening training sessions from Cricklefields either over 10 Miles (up Tomswood Hill) or 10K past the graveyard at Upney (where GEOFF HUNWICKS once worked). Roger joined in every week and proved to be a very hard taskmaster as he urged on the Clubmen, such as Hon. Ed. TONY PERKINS, NOEL MOONEY, TERRY RILEY etc etc. In 1974 Roger earned a European bronze medal over 20K, yet he'd regularly trained with Club athletes. Hon. Ed. still reckons that Roger's 'driving' helped him towards a 100 Miles finish that same year. Let's not forget the late PHIL EMBLETON who, like Roger, also made Olympic status. Once a week he used to do a 'slow 20K' for style practice, which was on a course from his home in Hurst Road, WALTHAMSTOW. He went at 2 hours pace and invited any Club athlete to join with him if they wished. Regular training and racing with 'the many' worked for our star performers in the 60s/70s/80s....but nowadays its taboo. Many believe that those training the elite are just helping race walking into the knackers' yard quicker than it's going already. The javelin (before Fatima, Tessa & Steve) and the Hop, Step & Jump (to give it a traditional name) pre Jonathan were 'dead events'. Then along came 'shop window/showcase' exponents and revival ensued. As race walkers we have to give this 'don't compete/don't train' with the rank-and-file method a chance. We can evaluate these methods in late 2012 – by seeing how many major Games appearances and medals we have!

CEREMONY

The ceremonial scattering of LAURENCE DORDOY's ashes went ahead as planned, on Sunday 20th December. They were scattered at Chigwell Row near the finish line of Ilford's long-established pre-Christmas 10K race on the edge of Hainault Forest. This location meant much to Lawrence as he'd finished many races at that spot and also frequently trained past it. As Ilford's pre-Christmas race fell victim to severe weather, few walkers were present. As well as family members, the walking world were represented by DAVE SHARPE.

SAD DEATH

RICHARD MANN has died in a motorcycle accident. Who was he? I'm sure many readers will be asking this question. Richard was Manager of the Shrewsbury Leisure Centre and one who did so much to ensure a successful staging of April's RWA National 20K Championship which was held there. We express sorrow at such sad news.

The month after that we lost LAURENCE DORDOY, also a motorcycle accident. After December's Winter League 5K, MICK BARNBROOK invited a number of walkers into the hallowed surroundings of Bexley's Ex-Servicemen's Club – where he's a well established member. When drinks were got in, the first toast was to LAURENCE DORDOY R.I.P.

OCTOGENARIAN TERRY SIMONS R.I.P.

Not one with Essex connections, but one admired by our readers for all he did while coaching youngsters. Terry had a large and successful youth/junior squad when at Bromsgrove & Redditch AC. Terry was a former Welsh 7 Miles Champion (52.20 in 1952). His funeral eulogist was our 1967 RWA National 20 Miles Champion the Rev. Roy Lodge MBE.

CONDOLENCE

All round sportsman, former race walker and man of many Clubs JOHN PERKINS sadly lost his 96 year old mother on the Friday before Christmas. The good lady had been a patient suffering influenza, at Romford's Queen's Hospital. We express our profound condolence to John on his sad loss.

Centurion OLLY BROWNE and charity walk organiser JOE have sadly lost their brother PAT, a cancer sufferer, who himself was a talented sportsman. We express our profound condolence to Oly and Joe and their other family members.

BERT FOSTER R.I.P.

Thanks to the Centurions Christmas Newsletter we now that BERT FOSTER of Woodford Green with Essex Ladies AC has passed on. In July 1955 he competed in the London-to-Brighton-and-Back and reached the 100 Miles point in 22.01.29 to become Centurion No. 248. This was another ultra-distance race won by the late and great HEW NEILSON – also of Woodford Green. 92 had entered, 79 started, 47 got to 100 Miles of whom 31 did so for their first time. At the time it was the greatest influx of new blood that the Centurions had ever had. Their badges were presented by Sir Seymour Howard (Lord Mayor of London) at the Mansion House in September. Another new Woodford Green Centurion that day was the late BILL LAWRENCE who reached 100 Miles in 21.41.22 to claim No. 244. Also reaching 100 Miles were ARCHIE BROWN and FRED DUFF, in step, clocking 22.12.07. St. Dunstan's walker Archie became the 1st blind walker to become a Centurion (253) and had been guided by Fred (254). Other Essex walkers completing 100 Miles for a 1st time that day were Beagles duo J. O. CULVER in 18.31.55 and J. H. COMBER in 19.26.55 who were allocated numbers 229 and 231 respectively. Among new 100 Miles finishers, in 19.52.15, was KARL ABOLINS (233) of Royal Sutton Coldfield – he repeated this feat on another 6 occasions including a hat-trick of Leicester-to-Skegness victories (1964/66/68). Karl also competed in that memorable 2001 JOHN HEDGETHORNE MEMORIAL RACE at Springfield. We extend condolence to Bert's family.

DENIS WITHERS R.I.P

Many of our readers will be sorry to hear that popular Midlands veteran DENIS passed-on over the recent festive season, after an illness. We express condolence to wife Yvonne and the family. In competition Denis won World and European age group medals and supported many domestic races. As illness prevented him from racing he chose to put much back into the sport by officiating.

ESSEX LEAGUE 5K – BEXLEY 5 DEC **(Essex positions only)**

1	S. Crane	SWC/Ilf	24.21
3	S. Uttley	Ilf	26.09
4	F. Reis	Ilf	26.30
8	D. Kates	Ilf	28.40
11	D. Sharpe	Ilf	30.20
12	S. Pender	EH/Ltn	30.31
14	A. O'Rawe	Ilf	32.23
15	O. Browne	Ilf	32.23
16	P. Cassidy	Ltn	33.21

Ladies race: There was only 1 Essex competitor – Liz Stocker – who clocked 31.53.

This was the final race of the 2009 Essex League campaign, and was held in conjunction with the Cambridge Harriers Winter League series.

TRAVELLING MAN

Much travelled TONY BELL, who now lives and works in Germany points out (ref. Our Paula article) that IAAF World Championships now come with money as well as medals. We wish Tony well in his new surroundings and hope he can unearth a few walking fixtures in Germany.

4 X PRESIDENTS

In the USA, 4 Presidents faces are carved in a South Dakota mountain side. What will they do at Loughton AC, where Club stalwart PETER CASSIDY is our Essex County President and 2nd claimers PAM FICKEN and JOHN HALL are respectively, Presidents of the RWA and the RWA Southern Area. Now another 2nd claimer – Centurion SEAN PENDER – is being proposed as Middlesex County's President at their AGM in February.

MONKS HILL MILESTONES

Regular attendee KEN LIVERMORE celebrated his 77th birthday by completing the SWC Christmas Cup over 5K. His efforts were rewarded with a bottle of wine. Another regular attendee PETER CRANE was a finisher in the same race, which marked his 1,000th appearance. His efforts were rewarded with a round of applause. Another finisher was PAM FICKEN who was just 6 days into her term of office as RWA President, so proving that the good lady will be an active President. Popular NOLAN SIMMONS returned after a very long injury lay off and reported that he should now be OK for further appearances. At the head of the field STEPHEN CRANE won by some distance taking both scratch and handicap awards.

MODEST READERS

Our last issue reported that ERIC HALL had beaten both SUE CLEMENTS and DAVE HOBEN in an LDWA Marathon. Sue never corrected us, but ERIC pointed out that the good lady reached the finishing line before him. We also reported that KEVIN MARSHALL clocked 4 hours something in the tough 6 Dales event. Kevin points out that it was 5 hours and 33 minutes. So Essex Walker's info is now corrected....the erroneous gen having come from information suppliers.



Walking Captain

Joined the Club in 1929 and was a keen track and cross-country member. Served overseas during the war with the Essex Regiment during which time he acquired both the Fez and the Mule (sounds rather like a foreign Order, doesn't it?). He was, unfortunately, taken prisoner at El Alamein, and remained in captivity for 3 years. When the Walking Section of the Valentine's Sporting Club amalgamated with the I.A.C., he became interested in walking, and in his first year succeeded in winning the 'Max George' Trophy, being the first club man to finish in the Essex County 30 miles road Championship. Our walking section has no keener nor more popular member.



Press Secretary

Came to I.A.C. with the Walking Section of Valentine's Sporting Club with whom he had been on the active list since 1925. He competed in 369 walking races (up to the time of going to press). His successes include two inter-bank championships, 2nd in the Bradford Open Walk in 1927, and 2nd in the Sunderland to Darlington race, also in 1927. He also holds nine first-class standards in the National 20 Miles Championships. It is interesting to note that his present times are as good as ever. Was Walking Secretary, 1946-7. Well known to editors of all sporting columns. Strength – enthusiasm. Weakness – pork pies.

NEWS FROM STEVE KING

I will in fact be commentating on the 10kms race-walk in the upcoming World Masters non-stadia event in Kamloops in March and asked Colin Young if he knew of anyone coming over to Canada for the event, but sadly he said no as many would be going to the Europeans in Hungary. I will certainly be considering coming over for the dinner and appreciate all the work that you do for the sport and wish you and all Centurions all for the best for the upcoming Olympic year.

TRI to keep FIT
Steve King C.492

Adds Hon. Ed. Steve (Ilford AC & Stock Exchange AC) is one of 2 Canadian-based Centurions expressing interest in coming over for The Centurions Centenary Dinner in May 2011, the other being Brighton & Hove AC member RICHARD VLOTMAN (C529) who qualified in 1974, 2 years after Steve on the same Leicester-to-Skegness course.

INFO FROM DAVE HOBEN

Dave,

A new event for 2009 was the Surrey Stumble, organised by the Walking Association of Surrey Police. With no advertising of any kind and no website details they got up to 250 entries, not bad, and very well organised. Next year's one will be on Sunday 21 March, 4 distances up to 40K, start near Guildford, way-marked in full and off road. This might be the future substitute for Tanners Marathon which finishes next July.

Entry forms available from 9721@surrey.pnn.police.uk
BW, Dave.

ATHLETE GOING NOWHERE

Eagle-eyed BBC TV News viewer DAVE SHARPE was following Eurostar's fiasco when he spotted former Loughton athlete THALITA HUMAN, who enjoyed a successful – but somewhat brief – spell as a race walker. Miss Human once attended Ilford AC's Annual Dinner & Dance at the now demolished Chigwell Manor Hall...after which she was never to be seen again at any walking races. Perhaps she didn't like the disco?

HO! HO! HO!

Devout Dave Sharpe, who's a pillar at St. Vincent de Paul's Church in Becontree, was rostered to act as a sidesman on Christmas Day. Before that he filled a more prominent role, for he was Santa Claus at the Church Bazaar. He'd done that a few years back, so he was recalled by popular acclaim. Dave's not the only race walker to excel in the red coat and long white beard...for STEVE WYNN was noted for his ability to perform that role at Mount Pleasant's Children's Party. According to the Mount Pleasant Social Club Magazine, one kid asked, "Mummy, why does Santa smell of beer?", and another kid asked his Mum, "Why does Santa have tattoos?" Ho! Ho! Ho!

BOOK EARLY & AVOID DISAPPOINTMENT

Many readers will have had Centurions Christmas Newsletters, giving details of their Centenary Dinner at the House of Commons on Saturday 14th May 2011. That newsletter came with a provisional booking slip. Already bookings are coming in thick-and-fast, so please don't dwell....or put the form behind the clock...as you'll end up on a reserve list. As they say, "Book early to avoid disappointment".

COMING OF BUS PASS AGE

We wish a happy birthday to popular PETER DUHIG who is well known as a competitive runner, occasional race walker, coach, official, one-time long serving Eastern Vets Chairman, supplier of both trophies and competitors numbers and also a talented stage performer. He's hit 60 and we wish him well.

CHAMPAGNE PERFORMANCE

Former Essex League champion and Essex County Champion walker PETER CASSIDY completed the testing Belgrave Harriers Open 7 Miles on his 70th birthday. Peter was rewarded with a bottle of champagne. Peter said that it was about the fifth or sixth time that he had officiated at or competed in 'possibly the last Belgrave 7' and that he hoped that Carl would ensure that he could go on doing so.



Said Peter, "Had I been able to remember his name on the spur of the moment, I'd have mentioned the old music hall performer who kept making farewell appearances, I think that it may have been G. H. Elliott, 'the Chocolate-coloured Ahem', so perhaps it's just as well that I couldn't recall the facts!"

MAN WITH AMBITION

When you've been in race walking for a while and become both a National Champion and an International, what goals do you seek?

Well PETER RYAN aims to do races in events at which he has never previously appeared. He unearthed December's Isle of Man Peel-to-Douglas 10 Miles from a fixtures list and headed for the start line. Peter found a quality field, which was headed by a still fast STEVE PARTINGTON – one with major Games experience. Former Parish Walk winners and others of note graced the start line and in such company Peter came 5th in 88.59 after battling it out throughout with another former ultra-distance Champion and International in SEAN HANDS (who we remember well from King's Lynn in 2005) who came 4th. Point-to-point racing was once popular in athletics, but has more-or-less died out. But here was such a race which also offered traditional road racing on a highway to boot. Peter was very active in 2009 and we wonder which event he'll head to next?

BOOK REVIEW

'OUT ON YOUR FEET: THE HALLUCINATORY WORLD OF HUNDRED-MILE WALKING' by JULIE WELCH (Aurum, price £16.99). Members of the Long Distance Walking Association, a mixed bunch ranging from dogged, sensibly shod Septuagenarians to reckless teenagers wearing trainers, take their activity seriously, working themselves up for the big event, which is to walk The Hundred (100 miles, non-stop, in 48 hours or less). Sports journalist Julie Welsh trained, ached, wept and hyperventilated with them and then wrote this wonderfully hilarious and cheerfully generous book about their obsessive ambition. Julie became Fleet Street's first female soccer reporter (for The Guardian). Note: The Centurions require the same feet to be completed in under 24 hours.

BOOK THIEF

In this issue is a book review from Saga Magazine, about 'Out On Your Feet :The Hallucinatory World Of Hundred Mile Walking' by Julie Welch (Aurum, £16.99). I asked in my local Public Library if they had a copy? Havering has an arrangement with several other of London's 33 Local Councils to obtain and supply books as requested by temporary transfer. In several Councils, only 1 had that book available on their shelves. That was the London Borough of Ealing...and their sole copy has already been stolen! There is a demand out there somewhere!



Perhaps as many as possible should ask their local library to obtain this book. Havering Library Services are getting it in for me. It's a way of getting this subject onto the bookshelves. D.A.

SPAN OF TIME

It's been pointed out that Hon. Ed. earned an Essex County AAA individual silver medal in the 1979 50K Championship at Basildon. At Lee Valley in 2009 he earned an individual bronze medal in the Indoor 1 Mile Championship. Excluding Veteran awards, is this the longest span between individual Essex County AAA senior medals?

OOPS!

Our last issue contained a hard-hitting article about National Squad coaching from BARRY INGARFIELD. This issue contains a couple of responses in objection to what was written. However Barry's article was referred to the 'high-ups' at ENGLAND ATHLETICS and they didn't like what they read. It was felt that the words used were somewhat abrasive, and as written, Essex Walker should not have published it. Indeed a number of our readers stated as much, although it must be also stated that most agreed with Barry's view – if not with the manner in which it was expressed. England Athletics have stated that they will "not take the matter any further" if an apology for including the contribution in the form it was written, is forthcoming. So we're sorry if the harshness of the published article upset anybody. Perhaps on reflection the author should have been asked to modify his contribution. Barry has been invited to join in with this apology. He declines and emphatically states that he stands by every word and points out that nobody is identified 'by name' even if many readers were able to work out who was in the pillory.

THESE BOOTS ARE MADE FOR WALKIN'

So sang Nancy Sinatra in 1966. Well it could apply to recently retired PETER HODKINSON who arrived at December's Winter League 5K in boots. On unpacking his kit bag he realised that he'd not brought along any racing pumps. So, undaunted, he sped around the course in boots. That's the spirit!



CLASH

Folly. The organisers of that little old London Marathon (now sponsored by Virgin) have decided to risk all by running their event – for a 2nd successive year – up against a long established National athletics Championship (to wit the RWA National 50K at Stockton-on-Tees). The date is Sunday 25th April. A pity really, as every year distance walkers manage to get accepted into the London Marathon, and having got in, would never forfeit their place for a 50K walk. Stockton is proving a popular location though this year, we hope the local hobbledehoys in the park will have grown up a bit.

SNOW ON

Ilford's Pre-Christmas 5 Miles at Redbridge Cycle Circuit was 'off' on Sunday 20th December, as was the Alf Palmer Memorial meeting on Horsham's all-weather track a day earlier. The cycle circuit was closed over the weekend, and for days both before and after that weekend. Freezing temperatures made a dangerous surface for those on saddles and on foot. A good communication network saw that info got to the right people. Travelling conditions were poor over that weekend, especially when venturing away from main highways.

NOT ENLISTING

Our last issue reported that an invitation to join the RWA Southern Area Committee had been sent to Think Tank supremo GEORGE NIBRE. We can report that former International George has declined, but nevertheless remains committed to turning around the fortunes of UK race walking.

BOXING DAY TRADITION MAINTAINED

A small but nevertheless band of enthusiastic walkers assembled in earnest at Lee Valley Stadium for this long-established race. The field was numerically 2 up on 2008. A buckshee entry and a different course - 2½ Kilometres 'out-and-back' alongside the canal – ensured a pleasant morning in mild weather. The only drawback was a whiff from the sewage works. FRANCISCO REIS (26.15) was a clear victor with Barnet's STEVE ALLEN 2nd in 27.38 and HELEN MIDDLETON 3rd in 27.54. We shared the course with runners, who had CHRISTINE OHURUOGU among their number.

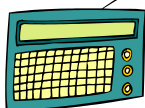
LOUGHTON LINES DERAILED

Editors are used to shouting "Hold the front page". Well at one Essex club the Editor's shout is "Front page on hold" as 'LOUGHTON LINES' recently ceased publication, and is now 'off the streets' until such time as a new Editor steps forward.

For a dozen years PETER CASSIDY wore the shirt rings and eye-shades and produced a highly readable informative booklet. Indeed 'Essex Walker' often lifted articles from it (always acknowledging the source of course). Man of many posts PETER gave a year's notice that he would step down as Editor. Nobody came forward, so Loughton Lines has now folded...for the time being at least. Can you volunteer for this now vacant position?

WALKING ON THE RADIO

CATH DUHIG was a guest of BBC Radio Norfolk in their Kings Lynn studio, where race walking was discussed. The interviewer asked Cath to demonstrate our discipline by walking around the studio. Walking on the radio? Not such a bad idea as it's amazing what can be done on the wireless. For years we had a ventriloquist on the radio. Yes it's true, as Archie Andrews was operated by Peter Brough. On radio, when asked "Where do you come from?" the dummy would answer "Wolverhampton". When on TV the same question brought a response of "Leeds".



RWA NATIONAL 20K IN METROPOLITAN ESSEX

The annual Championship will be staged in Hackney's Victoria Park on Sunday 11th April, along with England's Commonwealth Games Trial. The venue will be the austere Victoria Park Harriers HQ, but the course will be different from that usually raced on – it'll be out-and-back. Also on that day, using the regular circuit, will be the annual RWA Younger Aged Group Championship. This year the RWA-YAG meeting will not feature the 3 and 5K races that are open to seniors and veterans.

WHAT A GAY DAY

The RWA AGM resolution about gays and whoever else taking part in our walking races did not get debated at that meeting. The Organisation placing that on the Agenda didn't have anybody present who was prepared to move the motion. Yet another for race walking's growing list of 'you couldn't make it up' items.

STRATFORD-TO-STRATFORD

On Saturday May 1st at noon our 1967 RWA National 20 Miles Champion the Reverend Roy Lodge MBE will cycle for charity from outside the Olympic Stadium in Stratford, London E15 to Stratford-on-Avon (where he lives and was recently the town's Mayor). Roy will stop overnight at the Hemel Hemstead Premier Inn, before setting out at 9 am on Sunday 2nd May to complete his journey. Nearer the day we'll give you more specific details so that you may wish to come down and see him off on his journey.

NO MORE STRIDES

Another race walking club has folded..PENHOW STRIDERS, who were registered with the Athletics Association of Walkers of Wales. So what has this to do with 'Essex Walker'? Well 2 leading members were very much part of Essex walking history – RON DAVIES and JACK THOMAS. They were comprised of members living in different UK Countries, and often held Club Championships in Essex. Their 3,000 metres track Championship was sometimes held at evening Woodford meetings. Their 10K Championship was frequently at Chigwell Row just before Christmas. They used to support big races, such as the now defunct Chippenham-to-Calne, as well as turning out in Midlands fixtures. They've fallen foul of an AAW ruling requiring all affiliated Clubs to have a minimum of 10 members on their books. Let Jack Thomas have a proud last word, "As a Club we've never had a single member failing to complete a race. We've never had a disqualification or retirement in our entire history" recalled Jack.

ATHLETICS WEEKLY FOR FREE

Just Google 'Athletics Weekly + free offer + 5 issues' and you'll get AW's free offer website, where they are giving away 5 free issues for new readers to try it.

STOP PRESS

Fleet Street sports journalist JULIE WELCH, authoress of 'Out On Your Feet: The Hallucinatory World of Hundred Mile Walking', is guest speaker at the annual Metropolitan Police Walking Club Dinner & Reunion at Peelers Restaurant in New Scotland Yard on Wednesday 10th March. Booking details as per our last issue.

60 NOT OUT

Congratulations to EDDIE TROTTER who reached the big 6-0 in January and joins our every increasing number of bus-pass holders. Eddie is hoping to celebrate his new found status by completing the Virgin London Marathon in April. Eddie is 1 of only 4 Essex athletes to have completed over 100 marathons (he's on 103). Among the star quartet are 2 Essex Centurions, the very much still-active ANDREW WILMOTT and the late JERRY EVERETT (who got to 153). We wish Eddie well as he passes the 60 years barrier.

MENTOR

STEVE ALLEN (Barnet version) who appeared on the 2009 series of THE KRYPTON FACTOR has been retained by that programme – as a mentor for new contestants!



THE 'X' FACTOR

A while ago we reported that crooner BARRY INGARFIELD, who has sung professionally in both pubs and clubs, was auditioned for 'Britain's Got Talent'. Undaunted he's now had an audition for 'The 'X' Factor' – which we wish him well.

A FINAL FAREWELL

As this is our first edition of 2010, we recall that during 2009 we said our final farewells to BARBARA CROFT, LAURENCE DORDOY, BERT FOSTER, GARY KING, RICHARD MANN, VI McSWEENEY, ERICA OWLES, BOB PORTER, RON PURKISS, TERRY SYMONDS, J. R. TAYLOR-WALSH and DENIS WITHERS. We remember all with affection.

2009 ESSEX LEAGUE FINAL TABLE

		<u>Races</u>	<u>Pts</u>
1	S. Crane	9	351
2	S. Uttley	9	338
3	D. Sharpe	7	245
4	J. Hall	5	188
5	P. Barnard	4	158
6	L. Dordoy (RIP)	4	137
7	S. Davies	3	116
8	P. Cassidy	3	103
9	D. Ainsworth	3	102
10	P. King	3	101
11	C. Duhig (L)	3	98
12	J. Borgars	3	89
13	K. Livermore	3	83
14	L. Finch	2	78
15	D. Kates	2	74
16	L. Stocker (L)	2	71
17	C. Bent	2	70
18	O. Browne	2	69
19	R. Dobson	2	65
20	S. Pender	2	61
21	R. Powell	2	59
22	Dan King		40
23	Dom King		39
24	S. Allen		38
	F. Reis		38
26	B. Armstrong		37
27	C. O'Rawe-Hobbs (L)		35
	F. Fernandez (L)		35
29	M. Hinton		34
	A. O'Rawe		34
31	V. Mountford (L)		33
32	T. Kelly		31
33	J. Cox (L)		26

Notes: Positions 22-33 are 1 appearance. (L) denotes lady competitor.

Target: If our Essex League continues beyond its 500th race, let's all try to up our appearances this year!

ALEC MacFARLANE R.I.P

We're sorry to report that Metropolitan Police stalwart, protagonist and former Barking-to-Southend Walk winner Alec died on January 9th. A funeral service was held at Randalls Park Crematorium in Leatherhead with a function afterwards at the Metropolitan Police's Imber Court Sports Club – a venue where Alec had many times raced with distinction. We express condolence to his family.

EMAIL CHANGES

Roger Mills advises us that his new email address is roger@rogermills.plus.com

Mick Barnbrook advises that his new email address is sleazebuster@sky.com



FOR YOUR NOTES

PRESIDENTIAL APPEAL

Owl Cottage
101 Meldreth Road
Whaddon
Hertfordshire
SG8 5RS

Dear Friends,

2010 – the start of a new year, a new RWA President and a new appeal.

I was honoured to be elected your new president, joining a distinguished list of those who have served the RWA so well in the past. Most of you will know my background for I have been involved with race walking from a very young age, experiencing the highs and lows of our sport.

We all have our views on why our current walkers are fewer and less successful than in the 'glory years' but in recent times a new dawn has broken thanks to the dedicated coaches in various parts of the country who have committed countless hours to improving the talents of teenagers. Whilst they are giving of their time on the roads and tracks I appeal to all of you to give a little something to build a fund to finance the future development of those with aspiring talent.

The proceeds of previous Presidents appeals are beginning to bear fruit. We now have a young squad worthy of 'special development', but we need to keep the flow of new walkers coming through. There are gaps to be filled in our 'national Squad' and we should aim to double or even treble its size. To this end your support will hopefully encourage our next strata of potential internationals to aim high.

Any contributions will be gratefully received and acknowledged.

Please make cheques payable to 'RWA Presidents Appeal'

Best wishes to you all for a successful year.

Pam Ficken

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