

Essex Walker



Editor: Dave Ainsworth

ANNUAL CHARITY APPEAL

Tony Perkins is coordinating the Essex Walker Christmas Card appeal in support of The Gambian Home for Children with Learning Difficulties, based at Hart House in the Gambia, run by Geoff Hunwicks and his wife, Rohey.



With thanks to:

Anonymous
 Dave Ainsworth
 Steve Allen (Barnet)
 Mick Barnbrook
 Ken Carter
 Chris Hobbs
 Ken & Margaret Livermore
 Hilda Nyman
 Alan O'Rawe
 Tony Perkins
 Jim Rooke
 Ann Smith
 John Webb

Since launching the appeal in the November Essex Walker, £500 has already been pledged to this cause. If you would like to make a donation in lieu of sending Christmas cards to friends in the walking fraternity, please send a cheque made payable to **A F Perkins** to: Deans Farmhouse, Tye Green, CRESSING, Essex CM77 8HU.

GOOD NEWS

We're pleased to tell you that Essex County AA Honorary Walking Secretary Ray Pearce has confirmed that our new Essex County AA 50 Kilometres Champion is our very own sprightly ALAN O'RAWE. Winning this individual Championship title offsets some of the disappointments we suffered in our RWA National 50K Championship at Colchester last month. Well done to Alan ... and may many more awards come his way.

WHIFF OF SUCCESS

We'll not devote much space, as we'd steal the thunder of "Enfield Walker" where a full report is to be published, but what a success was the 86th staging of Enfield's Open 7 Miles which drew 63 starters, where Essex Olympian PETER MARLOW was "Mr Starter". Centurion newcomers, DOMINIC & DANIEL KING, and Ilford's STEVE ALLEN (the only 3 UK new male Centurions - all from Essex - in this year's 100 Miles event) were afforded "Start Line VIP" mentions by Ron Wallwork, and were well applauded. Essex did well, with 1st (Dominic in 52.32) and 3rd (Daniel in 53.36), with the twins watched by their mentor, former International GEORGE NIBRE. An Essex team retained their team title - Ilford AC scored FRANCISCO REIS 4th, STEVE UTTLEY 7th and PETE RYAN 11th. Francisco and Pete are both former winners of this long established event. Steve Uttley carried an injury, only deciding to appear at the proverbial eleventh hour. Although a new Centurion, STEVE ALLEN (another former event winner) collected the "2nd Centurion Gaining No other Award" prize. Indeed Essex-connected athletes excelled as Southend resident MARTIN FISHER and Loughton AC 2nd Claimer PAUL KING were awarded 1st and 3rd prizes respectively in this category. Another Loughton 2nd claimer, JOHN HALL, won the London Business Houses Championship which was held in conjunction. Ilford AC had 10 starters and it was a red letter day for sprightly veteran ALAN O'RAWE, who after his efforts was presented with an Essex County AA Gold medal for his 50K Championship success in September at Colchester. County Walking Secretary RAY PEARCE made this presentation, and Ray was mentioned in an excellent programme which published 1962's Enfield Open 7 Miles result ... and Ray was listed as a handicap prize winner! What service to the sport ... 50 years later and still part of this wonderful event.

Many officials/helpers were Essex-based and one deserving of special mention is PETER CASSIDY, who judged by the Sewage Works, where what slight breeze there was blew in the direction of the course! Thanks to all at Enfield & Haringey, and all others who helped keep this great event going - and long may it continue! Full details: see your next Enfield Walker.

STUART BENNETT (1925-2012) R.I.P.

Sadly London Vidarians and Metropolitan Police stalwart Stuart Bennett has passed on. He was a WW2 Fleet Air Arm pilot (flying Swordfish and Barracuda aircraft from aircraft carriers), Police Chief Inspector, Lay Preacher, Nijmegen marcher, Church alter server and sidesman, hospital visitor, collector of paperweights, family man and prolific fund raiser for the Royal British Legion and RNLI. He annually visited Ypres and gave talks about Battlefields - never charging a fee, but accepting donations for his charities. "Character" Dave Sharpe (now retired) described him as a true gentleman and recalled how smartly dressed he always was. Dave recalled when a wag placed a parking ticket on his moped at Blackheath Park, and how Stuart had taken this joke in good spirit. Stuart finished 94 Blackheath 9K Handicap races and would certainly have joined that exclusive group who completed 100 of these events, but for a serious moped accident (when aged 75) which left him with one leg shorter than his other. He was a regular judge/timekeeper at events, and was on the stopwatch for our televised BBC Breakfast Time race in Battersea Park. In 2008 he appeared on ITN news talking about what Remembrance Day meant. Stuart had been involved in hockey and tug-of-war, indeed the latter pursuit brought him into walking ... yes! At a Bank's Sports ground in Norbury with his tug-of-war team, he saw some elderly men (our sport's image again) race walking, looked at the action and believed he could make his mark ... and, of course, did! His funeral service at St Oswald's in Norbury (he was a parishioner) was very well attended. Among many mourners were Metropolitan Police Walking Club colleagues, other retired Metropolitan Police Officers and those from our race walking world including Blackheath Park 9K regulars, among them 4 of those 6 to have completed 100 of these races. One such walker, Bob Watts, walked before the coffin with a Royal British Legion Standard and, at the Committal, spoke those powerful words from Laurence Binyon's poem "For the Fallen". The well composed Eulogy was spoken by Andy Bignold deservedly receiving applause. Donations may be sent to the Undertaker: Dowsett & Jenkins, 1,507 London Road, Norbury, London. SW16 4AE. Cheques payable to Royal British Legion or RNLI as you wish. His funeral service on Tuesday 13 November, was followed by cremation at Croydon Crematorium. Thanks to Chris Flint and Andy Bignold, current and immediate past MPWC Chairmen, for much of this information. To his daughter Sarah, who resides in Yately, and all other of his family members we send heartfelt condolence.

TRIBUTES TO STUART BENNETT (London Vidarians and Metropolitan Police WC)

Chris Foster: I remember Stuart very well from my early days in race walking as he always made a special point of offering me encouragement with a cheery smile. On the regular occasions when I was a back marker, if it was a cold day, if the rest of the field was disappearing over the horizon and if Stuart was judging somewhere on the course next to his moped, upon seeing me he would always beckon me over to share some of the contents of his flask. What a truly lovely gentleman and what an honour it has been for me to have known somebody like Stuart who has helped make the world a better place.

Hans Rennie: Sad news indeed, it is all Stuart's fault I went to Nijmegen the first time, which resulted in some of you going as well.

Steve Uttley: I remember him well, and he was a very nice man.

Brian Keegan: Thanks for letting me know, we are getting fewer!

Ed Shillabeer: Very sad. They don't make 'em like that anymore.

Bob Watts: Many thanks for the write up on Stuart Bennett, a remarkable man who was honoured on a special day. I was proud to carry a standard for

a fellow Legion member, P.A.O., standard bearer and most important, a true friend and an integral part of the Vids team that won the Blackheath team title so many times. We will remember him.

Martin Oliver: He was a very good friend to me and I will miss him. Obviously neither of us have been much involved with race walking recently, but Stuart did appear on a TV programme about people's reminiscences of the Second World War and I videoed the parts where Stuart had contributed! Stuart used to be part of the Met Police team that went to Nijmegen every year, along with my Uncle Bill. Somehow Stuart had got the idea that Bill was my dad! When I told Bill this he said, "Well I don't mind if you don't mind". On agreeing that, "I didn't mind either" - Bill winked at me and said, "Well, we won't tell him then will we?" I don't know if Stuart ever knew the truth!

At races Stuart and I were invariably the last ones out of the changing rooms, and I used to sit and chat and eat Stuart's bowl of fruit while the "presentation" was going on - which of course, in those days, neither of us had any reason to be present at. Stuart was a lovely man - one of the nicest I've ever known. It's increasingly becoming obvious to me that I have more friends in the next World that I have in this one! I must be getting old!

DEATH OF OLYMPIAN

After a long lung illness, Irish Olympic Walker JOHN KELLY has passed on aged 83 years. He emigrated to Australia in 1949. John once held the record for walking along Death Valley and he became a British, US and Continental Centurion. John has an Essex connection as he qualified as a Centurion (No 376) in the 1965 Metropolitan Police 100 Miles event at Chigwell, clocking 22 hours 53 minutes 7 seconds. That means The Centurions have 7 members who've achieved Olympian status; when we published a list in our last issue we erroneously omitted John who represented Ireland in the 1968 Mexico Olympic 50K Walk. To his wife Kati and family we express condolence.

GROUP CAPTAIN BILL RANDLE (CBE, AFC, DFM)

One of the great stalwarts of the Nijmegen Marches has passed on at the age of 91. Bill Randle led the RAF's teams throughout the 60's at this hugely popular annual event. Awarded a Distinguished Flying Medal for his 1st WW2 Operational Tour, his Air Force Cross was for an outstanding contribution to training Bomber crews later in the conflict. The CBE was for his role in the 60s Zambian Oil Lift. Before returning to "Civvy Street" he commanded RAF Odiam. During WW2 he was shot down in the Ardennes and made a successful "home run" with help from the Belgian and French Resistance, arriving back in Blightly after journeying though enemy-occupied Europe, neutral Spain and friendly Gibraltar. His wife and son predeceased him and he was survived by 2 daughters.

MILESTONES PASSED

Congratulations to 2 of our most dedicated readers who reached ages worth celebrating in early November. On Bonfire Night, Midlander GEORGE MITCHELL was 98 years old. George was in a select group of super-veterans who continued racing at pace despite advancing years ... like such worthies as Bob Roberts and Alf Poole. He became Centurion No 450 at the 1970 Leicester-to-Skegness in 21.10.57. Although a Birmingham Walking member he's a keen Essex Walker subscriber. George raced competitively in his 90s and we wish him well as he approaches 100 years ... he could well become the 2nd Centurion to actually become a Centenarian. Centurion No 12 Bill Brown of Polytechnic Harriers was aged 100 in 1979 and he died shortly after his 103rd birthday. Bill resided at Leigh-on-Sea and worked for Ford at Dagenham (their Pension Scheme made a big loss on his membership). George helped organise many Midlands events and helped others to success in long distance races by his enthusiastic services as an attendant. A day earlier, true star and still active BOB DOBSON attained Septuagenarian status. There's not much you can write about Bob which isn't already known as he's one of our all-time greats. Who else has completed over 100 Sub-5 hours 50 Kilometres events? His awards collection is one of the best around, and he gained many International selections - including for major Games (European/Commonwealth/Lugano). Bob became a Centurion in Essex at Colchester Garrison Track (1985) with 20.58.25 on the stopwatch. Bob's name is synonymous with our County for he's won 100 Miles races in Essex over both road and track. We hope both gentlemen enjoyed their birthday celebrations!

WALKER ALL AT SEA

A race walker's suffered sea sickness during his training. How can this be? ... well newly elected RWA Southern Area Coaching & Development Secretary CHRIS HOBBS was on an Alaskan cruise during which he kept up his fitness by pounding the Ship's gymnasium treadmill. Despite sailing into rough seas Chris continued his treadmill routine until the motion of the waves brought on sea sickness...so ending motion on his treadmill!

NEW UK HEAD COACH

It's 59 year old Swede PETER ERIKSSON, a former speed skater of note. As UKA Head Paralympic Coach, he got his team to 3rd place in the London medals table. We wish him success and hope he'll do well for race walking.

RWA WEBSITE

Peter Cassidy advises move of RWA website to: <http://racewalkingassociation.org.uk/>.

LOOKING GOOD

Those entrusted with the fortunes of Southern walking had a vote of confidence at our RWA Southern Area's AGM in November in the Civil Service Club, Great Scotland Yard. It was your opportunity to pass comment on what's been going on, elect Committee newcomers and make suggestions/promote ideas from the floor. From outside the Committee just 2 turned up, so most of you must be content with matters - a huge vote of confidence! Those 2 who attended were Barnet's STEVE ALLEN and Steyning's IAN RICHARDS. The latter, already an auditor of this Organisation, has joined the Committee.

ESSEX COUNTY ATHLETICS ASSOCIATION - AGM

Come and have your say ... it's on Monday 3rd December (7.30 pm) at Chelmsford AC's Clubhouse, Melbourne Park, Chelmsford. Ilford AC member, Claire Levy (nee Filmer) is to be proposed as our County President.



Charlie Fogg asks ...

Is this one of the **MAIN REASONS** for our **DISAPPOINTING RESULTS**?

The biggest cause for 'complaint', disagreement, dissent, disappointment etc in Race Walking is – **DISQUALIFICATION**. Why does this happen? Because the athlete does not lock his/her leg/legs at the vertical point or does not maintain contact and 'lifts'.

In the mountains of advice to be found on the internet, there is plenty of information on VO2 max's, lactate in the muscles, training schedules, leg action, how to identify if an athlete is transgressing the rules, diet, progressions, measurements, equations etc. However, I found nothing to assist in the most basic of all requirements – how to comply with the rules and avoid disqualification.

There is plenty of advice on technique: on the England Athletics Web Site (www.englandathletics.org) under 'Learn to Coach Race Walking', the author advises the following: **'Getting balanced driving arms, stand feet shoulder width apart, arms bent at right angles, drive arms backwards'**

Next, in an article entitled 'Race Walking lessons from Carnegie 27th – 28th March 2010' we find the following advice: Focus on driving elbows back with straight legs. It is followed by a series of further references to driving the arms backwards:

'encourage athletes to explore what happens when driving arms backwards and forwards at different paces..... Activity: Focus on arm action development. Repeat 4 laps with more emphasis on driving elbows at 90 degrees backwards and forwards.... The arm action in race walking depends on the walking speed. The faster an athlete walks, the more are the arms bent. The arms help to absorb the leg drive and the rotation of the trunk. The strong backward movement of the elbows also assist in an active movement of the pelvis along the vertical axis'

This is totally counter-productive! The centre of gravity, the core, is the main area concerned with forward movement. If the core moves forward, the whole body will. The arms and more significantly the elbows, are a powerful force for forward movement. Every part of the body should be mainly concerned with forward propulsion, the reverse swing of the arms merely acting as a counter balance to a powerful forward action. To maximise forward propulsion the arms must be held at an angle of roughly 90° with the forearm relaxed and not taking any part in the action. As the elbow is the nearest point to the body's centre of gravity, the drive must focus through the elbow. The effect of driving the arms backwards raises the Glutes (bum muscles) upwards and backwards which, amongst other things, can cause a forward lean, often only very slight. However, this backward action/pressure inhibits the leg's ability to swing forward with the danger of the leg landing in a bent position, the ball of the foot hitting the ground rather than the heel encouraging a running (lifting) action.

I believe that a fundamental reassessment of our current training methods, based on this simple proposition, will yield dramatic positive results. I await with anticipation any comments that that this article will bring, and that the debate I hope to spark will help all race walkers to compete with confidence with less chance of transgressing.

There are many ways in which the correct action can be achieved. I would welcome the opportunity to answer your questions and I will try and give you answers in simple, easy to understand terms.

Charlie Fogg, October 2012



SOCIAL FUNCTION

The Annual Metropolitan Police Walking Club Dinner and Reunion is to take place on Wednesday 6 March at Peelers Restaurant (New Scotland Yard). The evening will honour recently retired Police Sergeant Andy Bignold, the Club's Chairman, who completed every Nijmegen Walk throughout the length of his 31 years meritorious service. Andy, recently honoured by Metropolitan Police Athletic Association Life Membership, is a noted raconteur. Haley Mattinson is again taking bookings, and further details, including pricing, will be promulgated when available.

FIXTURES

1 Dec	Cambridge H Winter League 5K	Bexley	2.00 pm
3 Dec	Essex County AA AGM	Melbourne Park	7.30 pm
8 Dec	SWC Christmas Cup 5K	Monks Hill	2.30 pm
9 Dec	RWA AGM	Alexander Stadium	1.00 pm
15 Dec	Alf Palmer 5K and YAG	Broadbridge Heath	11.00 am
26 Dec	Enfield Boxing Day 5K	Lee Valley	10.45 am
26 Dec	Brighton Boxing Day Races	Preston Park	10.30 am
5 Jan	SWC/RWA Southern Area 10K	Monks Hill	2.00 pm
19 Jan	Enf League 5 Miles & Presentation	Donkey Lane	1.00 pm
26 Jan	The Centurions AGM	Union Jack Club SE1	1.00 pm
27 Jan	London Games 3,000 metres	Lee Valley (Indoor)	TBC
3 Feb	London Walks Meeting	Victoria Park	1.00 pm
9 Feb	Cambridge H Winter League 5K	Bexley	2.00 pm
10 Feb	Essex County/Eastern/Open 1M	Lee Valley (Indoor)	TBC
23 Feb	Enfield League 10K	Donkey Lane	1.00 pm
2 Mar	Cambridge H Winter League 5K	Bexley	2.00 pm
6 Mar	MPWC Annual Dinner & Reunion	New Scotland Yard	6.15 pm
10 Mar	RWA National 10 Miles	Victoria Park (prov)	TBC

ALL IN

The last Essex County AA Indoor 1 Mile Championship was a disaster as, from the whole County, only 3 entered: Messrs Steve Uttley, Peter Cassidy and Dave Ainsworth (who were rewarded with gold, silver and bronze respectively). Optimistic organisers are giving it another go! But events need income to hire such expensive tracks as Lee Valley ... so it'll now be an "Open race" and will welcome others from outside Essex. So please all mark Sunday 10 February into your diaries and ringfence this date, especially those with Essex qualifications. Further details on <http://www.essexathletics.org.uk/>.



The CENTURIONS AGM: Saturday 26 January, Union Jack Club, Sandell Street, London SE1 9UJ at 1pm (or 1300 hours in their terms). It's 2 minutes' walk (if that) from Waterloo Station. For Essex travellers, bus 26 (every 10 mins) takes you from Liverpool Street Station (Outside "Dirty Dicks" pub/Bishopsgate) to its terminus by the UJ Club. The venue was used last time and another booking's been requested by many members. There'll be the usual post-AGM meal (reasonably priced/subsidised). As last year, it's appropriate those with Veterans Service Badges wear them in such an establishment.

EVENT WORTHY OF SUPPORT

The RWA Southern Area 10K Road Championship comes to Monks Hill, Farnborough Avenue, South Croydon, CR2 8HD on Saturday 5 January at 2 pm. Entry forms are about (closes 2 Jan). There's something for everyone as you can race under A or B Laws ... but must declare on entry forms how you wish to be judged. Each team many include 1 B walker in their scoring trio. So there's an enjoyable afternoon's sport for all, and we hope it'll boost numbers. Some have already spotted drawbacks! For instance there are 2 separate boards, 1 for those in the B race and 1 for those in the A race. However the A board will also record all transgressors ... so as those in the B race are aware that, should they be viewed under A Laws, they would have been carded. However, walkers with 3 cards on the A board who've opted to compete only under B terms won't get disqualified. It's already been pointed out that some officials will tell B race finishers that, if you'd been racing under A terms, you would have been out! So B walkers (now the backbone of UK

race walking) will have the stress of seeing their numbers on a board and then possibly/probably getting unhelpful comments after finishing. Yes, teams can include 1 B walker in their scoring trio - but only if that B finisher has 2 cards or less on the A board (hopefully none). The aim is to try and get the "army" of B only walkers to "come-and-try" an A race without fear of disqualification. Then, again hopefully, they'll see they can complete an A race and have the confidence to start supporting Championship events. There's a market out there - witness 63 starters for the Enfield Open 7 Miles - a B race. Stage an A race over the same distance in the South and you'd just about get into double figures. Much thought has gone into this, which adds pressure to Officials when working out results - but they're trying something - so this initiative to involve everybody deserves your support. Monks Hill has a large free car park and is served by Croydon Tramlink Service 3 (every 10 minutes) - alight at Gravel Hill Tram Stop. It's 10 minutes' walk from changing rooms to start line, so don't cut it too fine.



ILFORD AC ANNUAL DINNER and DANCE

Ilford AC held their long established Dinner and Dance at Chigwell's Metropolitan Police Sports & Social Club (once a venue of many walking races). Guests included Ron Panting, Organiser of the Southend 10K road run, one of our County's most successful promotions, and one in which Ilford AC enjoy a good record, and prosperous Canvey Island businessman (now a millionaire) Ernie Barrett, a former Ilford AC Coach and one noted for generous sponsorship of athletics events in past years. From our pursuit were 3 tables of race walkers, with guests Ron Wallwork MBE (1966 Commonwealth Games 20 Miles Walk gold medallist) with his good lady Joan, and fellow Enfield stalwart Ken Livermore with his good lady Margaret.



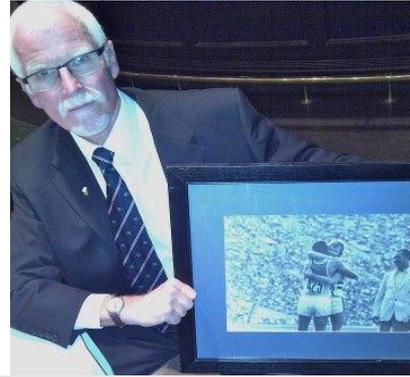
At Ilford's Annual Dinner and Dance - Walking Olympians Roger Mills and Neringa Aidietyte

The evening had a topical Olympic theme with Ilford Olympians Roger Mills (1980 Moscow 20 Kilometres Walk) and Neringa Aidietyte (2012 London 20 Kilometres Walk) among diners. Personal messages from 2 of Ilford's other Olympians were read out:- Phyllis Winger who as Phyllis Perkins had become Ilford's first Olympian when competing over 800 metres at Rome in 1960, and Fergus Murray - a 10,000 metres runner at the 1964 Tokyo Games, who now resides in Scotland. After-dinner speaker Mr Roger Mills gave a moving account of his progress through the ranks at Ilford AC from being a 16 year old beginner to Olympic selection in 1980 and of his experiences at those Games, and of his struggle to attain Olympian status.

President Ernie Forsyth spoke of his own athletics career which began as a junior race walker for 2 years at Essex Beagles, as then named. He'd enlisted in the Royal Navy and when returning to the area in "Civvy Street" had joined Ilford AC as a runner. Mr Forsyth spoke highly of the Club and of many wonderful times he'd enjoyed while a member. After speeches Club stalwart Gerry Pells

was Auctioneer for a successful fund-raising sale of Olympic souvenirs

Photographs: Len Ruddock



Len reports: "ROGER MILLS gave an inspirational talk on what motivated him to become an athlete with a goal to get to the Olympic Games, which he finally got to in Moscow 1980.

He's holding up a framed picture of himself (10th in 1:32:37) being congratulated by 20Km Walk Gold Medallist, Maurizio Damilano (1:23:35) in the Olympic Stadium as Roger finished. Just as he was inspired to take up athletics after watching the Tokyo Olympics in 1964 on his black and white TV (yes, I remember those too!) and was particularly touched by 20Km Walk winner, Ken Matthews being greeted after he finished by his missus (a la Mo Farah), this picture has pride of place on his wall at home."

Neringa is Ilford's latest Olympian, representing Lithuania and finishing 39th in 1:34:01 in the 20Km Walk, London 2012.

CLIVE ROBERT BENJAMIN DUNN OBE R.I.P.

The famous "Dad's Army" actor has passed on at the age of 92 years and he's still well remembered in the race walking world. He starred in a BBC1 TV Series called "Grandad" (1979-to-1984) in which he played Community Hall caretaker Charlie Quick. The Council wanted this character to retire as he was deemed past it, so he took up jogging to prove his fitness. In a scene filmed in an Ealing public park, he was jogging when bowled over by a group of 7 race walkers out training. He was knocked over before the scene was re-shot - this time his jersey had been replaced by one with large black footprints over it, and his spectacles replaced with a smashed pair. Those 2 takes were joined to make a most dramatic stunt. After this, he carried on jogging and was seemingly hit by a bicycle whose cyclist then lost control of his bike, hit a hedge and flew over it. He was an Equity approved stuntman, and he'd laid a mattress on the other side of this hedge before commencing his eye-catching stunt. The race walkers didn't professionalise themselves as a donation to our Governing body was made in lieu of appearance fees.



GEORGE NIBRE REPORTS FROM THE LEEDS CONFERENCE

November 2012

The Leeds Conference was first class, with great motivational speakers like MALCOLM BROWN, triathlon supremo and coach for the Brownlee brothers. The various speakers and experts are united in the way forward. A team environment, these are some of the 'cake ingredients' and views from the delegates.

1. Smarter nutrition/hydration. Repairing muscles/fibres after sessions, protein and carbohydrates.
2. Strength conditioning/drills specific.
3. Circuit training, weight training specific.
4. Mobility exercises for relaxation.
5. Monitoring heart rate.
6. Rest recovery, fun time, swimming and massage.
7. Technique, arms/shoulders correct and feet/foot forward, flight time wasted, power from quads, hips, glutes, calves and using feet for max propulsion, like motor racing car.
8. Medical, physiotherapy, doctor, blood tests, fatigue.
9. Speed/intervals and endurance specific, increasing training loads, peaking for performance 6/8 week cycles, periodization for year.
10. Fun and enjoyment.
11. Races and plan.
12. Good environment, vision, support team, coach, mentor adviser, using all coaches/walkers with knowledge, group training and warm weather training.
13. Learn from older/wiser athletes/walkers.
14. Biomechanics, step time and wasted contact time, rapid swing of action, wasted crossover of feet, pelvic rotation increase and more elastic.
15. Do the harder things to improve, not the easy things you are good at.
16. Getting most out of day, time wasted, managing time best to fit in smarter sessions.

These are 'some' of the principles to develop the walker to the next level of performance ... Do we agree?
REMEMBER, **NOT ALL** can do this regime.

George Nibre, Mentor and Adviser

HON SECRETARY'S REPORT from RWA (Southern Area) AGM – 12 November 2012

Since becoming Area Secretary in 2002 ... pundits have expressed strong views that race walking is in permanent decline and is rapidly losing credibility as a viable sport. There is much to support such views with the continuing demise of walking clubs and walking sections within athletic clubs, and a correspondingly high age profile of participants. However, contrast this with high or certainly reasonable turnouts at races hosted by Enfield & Haringey AC, Surrey WC, Steyning AC, Cambridge Harriers AC, Ilford AC and the through put of youngsters from Tonbridge, Belgrave Harriers, Ashford, Dartford and Medway and others areas and there is good reason to be cautiously positive about the state of race walking.

Recently, I discussed in Committee the need for a review of the structure of the Area committee and its relationship with other external bodies with whom it is affiliated, such as the South of England Athletic Association, and to examine the process for succession planning to ensure that walkers interested in the development and progression of walking as a sport are attracted to coming onto the committee. Whilst enthusiasm for such a review appears distinctly lukewarm I believe it is necessary and potentially helpful to have a discussion to reaffirm the committee's core role to manage race walking in the Area and develop and coach new recruits into race walking. Alternatively, such a review may help to assess whether it actually has any contemporary role. A small number will be asked to form an ad hoc group to report in the New Year.

Of course, it would not be sensible to ignore signs of decline. The lack of entrants for the Area 20 km resulted in its cancellation as not being a viable event to fund. However, such things need attention and the Chairman prompted a lively discussion in Committee about the future of race walking and a range of thoughts and ideas were expressed. These are being considered and acted upon.

This has been Olympic year and the selection of Dominic King as Team GB's sole representative in the 50 km event was a great success story for him, and also his brother Dan who narrowly missed selection despite reaching the 'B' standard. That they both went on to become Centurions in the 100 miles in 24 hours long distance championship was quite extraordinary, and we congratulate them both on their endeavours. The Committee was able to contribute financial support towards their warm weather training and they have expressed their appreciation.

The appointment of Noel Carmody as a judge in the Olympics race walks and the involvement of a number of the Area's leading personalities to act as officials is an indication of the high regard in which they are held in athletic circles and we congratulate them. One of the most inspired appointments was that of David Ainsworth as one of the two commentators for the walks, and his knowledge and humour brought him considerable praise from spectators, participants, officials and media people.

It is with regret that we record the deaths of Diane Corbett, nee Pegg, C807, Wally Parsons, and Stuart Bennett.

I thank the Officers and Committee for their continued support and involvement throughout the past 12 months and I trust we shall continue forwards and upwards.

Chris Flint



Dear Dave ...

RWA NATIONAL 50K RESULT

Thanks very much for the full report. I can see that it looks like a disappointing day but I have massive respect for all that finished and attempted to finish this race, and their fine efforts should be commended. I fear though that once again instead of recognising the athletes for their performances on the day, our governing body will again overshadow their walks with the 'never-again' negativity line. A major factor in my loss of motivation to compete this year was when a RWA official approached me shortly after I crossed the line to win the 2011 title and said how poor the standard of the race was, and that they probably wouldn't put it on again. There were no congratulations on my effort on a scorching hot day, or acknowledgement of the sterling performances still being put in out on the course by athletes many years older than myself and having a further hour and a half of suffering in the unseasonable conditions. I thought to myself, if an official of the governing body doesn't appreciate what just went on here, why do we bother? To be honest I still struggle to come up with an answer, hence perhaps why I haven't raced since. I think it's amazing that a 76 year old can compete so well in such a tough event, that he can is a credit to him and to our sport. If there aren't younger walkers in the event at the moment we need to look in to this and what, if anything, is being done to attract them. But this shouldn't in any way detract from the walkers who prepared for and raced so well on Saturday.

For me, and I'm sure many others, racing 50kms isn't a hobby, it's an entire lifestyle. Fitted in around full time work, it's getting up at 6 am in winter to go training before work, it's eating and sleeping and more solitary training whilst not having time to see friends and family. I enjoy it, I love racing, but how can I continue to commit to such a life when the sport's governing body have an apparent attitude of "we'll see if the race will go ahead a week before the event!"

The event was cancelled before on me in 2010 at a week's notice. Me and my family had taken time of work, arranged transport and accommodation. I suspect other competitors were caught out similarly. That wasn't going to happen to me again this year. Either the RWA respect the preparations of the athletes and confirm the event will go ahead next year, or they must cancel it so it can go the way of the 20M/35km and relay events as history. I don't think having a race 'in limbo' is good for

anybody involved. I appreciate that the RWA are all volunteers and have a love of the sport as deep as anyone's, but if we do away with all the races what will really become of the sport?

It's easy to make comparisons with the quality and quantity of the past, and indeed the number of people involved in walking has probably never been lower, in terms of athletes, officials, judges and marshals. I hear of what happened as a result, with athletes going off course and a controversial re-start. I think we may have reached a tipping point in our sport, and we all need to consider our next steps carefully.

Scott Davis

Adds Hon Ed: Above are thoughts from an athlete who dominated this National Championship for 7 years, so equalling the late Don Thompson's record of consecutive victories. A lack of acclaim for his Northampton victory was spoken about from the floor at the RWA Southern Area's AGM a month later. Essex Walker's Editor wasn't at Northampton (but still sent Scott post-race congratulations). Essex Walker reported comments of those who spoke at this AGM meeting (Hon Ed never participated in that discussion as he wasn't at the 2012 National 50K). Just reporting such contributions prompted a backwoodsman to email 3 pages of rant which weren't published (but made available to anybody wanting to read his tosh). Nobody asked to read it; perhaps because my offer stated who its author was. To be democratic, objections were forwarded to all who spoke on this issue at the RWA Southern Area Meeting. A National Coaching Supremo-type figure who'd left before Scott finished, so never was on hand to congratulate him, was much criticised at this AGM meeting ... his reaction was to cancel future editions of Essex Walker. Ostrich and sand spring to mind! The sad fact is that Scott hasn't raced since. Scott gave this Championship credibility by always finishing in a time commencing with a 4. The sport can ill-afford to lose such talent from a race walker who's both better than most and younger than most. We hope he'll return as our sports needs him ... for it's indeed passed a tipping point in the opinion of many. **DA**

PROPOSED NEW SCOTLAND YARD SALE - ANOTHER MPWC DINNER VENUE?

Maybe back to the Swan at Stockwell? I well remember being taken down by the Black Maria with all Police Trophies brilliantly polished and engraved! Those were the days eh! I actually won 22 Met and PAA Championships between 1967 to 1972, only missing out on 2 when I did not walk. For the record I had 5 wins too in the Ryan Cup Inter-Services Match. I have heard that all 4 Police Sports Clubs may be sold too. What a Club shame to lose all the History to boot!

Bill Sutherland



Dear Dave ...

CONTACT

I was given a copy of "The Greatest Show On Earth", a photo look at the Olympics. On p151 is a photo of the silver medallist from the 20K Walk. If the photo doesn't prove what many people have said in your magazine ...! The man is well off the ground and should never have reached the finish line. Apart from that, great photos. **Tony Challis**

OLYMPIC BOOKS featuring RACE WALKING

I have copies of two Olympic books featuring Race Walking. They are The Olympics Strangest Moments written by Geoff Tibballs and entitled 'Walk Don't Run', describing the Olympic Walks on 27 July 1952 at the Helsinki Olympics and the GB competitors Roland Hardy, Lol Allen and George Coleman. The writer is obviously not a great fan of Race Walking but the race was full of controversy from start to finish. The other book, the **LONDON 2012 Athletics – Track Events Training Guide**, is a very useful aid which has a large section on Race Walking and has a foreword by no less than Steve CRAM, MBE, to boot! So that's a first as he has always to my knowledge been anti-Race Walking. Unfortunately only 6 weeks after the end of the Games the 2012 LONDON OLYMPICS BOOKSHOP closed, but I feel sure one could obtain a copy through Amazon Books. They are priced at £8.99 and £9.99 respectively and are a great read!

Bill Sutherland

DAN MASKELL WRITES

Thank you very much for your interest and advice, together with your speedy posting of the Essex Walker. (I'm finding it very interesting already). Alas I think that my fledgling career has already crash landed, after being red-carded at the end of Saturday's race.

Dan

1968 MEXICO OLYMPIAN JOHN WEBB

I was training on the railway path when I passed an old lady of about 80. She looked at me and said "Are you walking or running?" I said "What do you think?" She said, "I think you're running". I went back home.

John

INTENTIONS ARE STATED

Fantastic Olympics have been and gone, back to the knife crime focus now. And of course our next big challenges ... I will be attempting to qualify for the longest footrace in the world, Paris-Colmar, next year by entering the Ronde des Ducs 24 hour race in Dijon (April 27/28). Dwayne's next ambition is to conquer the distaff Pole after his success in becoming the first British black man to walk to the North Pole.

Ed Shillabeer

MIDDLESEX RACE WALKING

Recently I drove around the old Middlesex 10 Miles Course at Highgate which was 3 times up Bishops Avenue after Highgate West Hill to start, and remembered the great battle I had with Arthur Thomson both clocking around 75 minutes! In those days one had to achieve 80 minutes to make the Middlesex Team of 8. Those were the days eh!

Bill Sutherland

INTERNATIONAL ULTRA-DISTANCE SELECTION

I recall that Don Thompson was over 60 when selected to race for GB, but I don't know what age exactly nor what others may have been when selected. At ultra-distance, as Don Cox's excellent performance showed, age is certainly no barrier!

Sandra Brown, C735, Centurions Captain

DIFFERENCE OF OPINION AND LOTS OF LAUGHTER

I think far too many modern day race walkers rely on gym work and working on their core strength as a substitute for hard work in all weathers on the road or track where they experience actual race conditions and race walking on courses with varied gradients. For me the necessary strength can be built up naturally through Race Walking training. I well remember Rome Olympic Gold Medallist the Late Great Don Thompson had difficulty doing a press up but boy he could race walk! Little seems to be said about style, striking rate and flexibility of ankles and hips. I well remember Stan Mantor placing an important emphasis on these parts of Race Walking training. On the more amusing side did anyone see the ITV Programme on Saturday 3 November 2012 on the Late Legend Eric Sykes (1923 – 2012) as he did a skit of a race walker in GB colours followed closely by Hattie Jacques in a Green Morris 1000? Great to see the past GB Vest and flag with year prominent! In one scene he had a knotted handkerchief on his head, which I well remember the Great Paul Nihill wearing in many races. Those were the days! Good walking.

Bill Sutherland

ALAN O'RAWE, C791, 2012 ESSEX 50K CHAMPION ... sounds good!

Thanks to everybody for their congratulations on my winning the Essex 50km at Colchester. **Alan**

BILL'S VIEW

Got an email from Terry Whitlock who received the late great Harold Whitlock's Award in Birmingham. He met many of the former Great Athletes and spread the word about the total lack of contact in today's International Race Walking with many in agreement and saying something must be done soon. The RWA need to face the music not keep sweeping it under the carpet. **Bill Sutherland**



Dear Dave ...

FROM ILFORD AC CENTURION STEVE KING

I have had a number of people ask me about the 16-song CD I put together with Bill Head as a surprise 'gift' for Jean, so I have made it available on CD Baby <http://cdbaby.com/cd/steveking1> and you can listen to parts of each song and download individual songs or the whole thing or get the actual CD. Links to the YouTube video/songs for Jean's recent very significant birthday are:
http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VlxuHD_Yhu4
http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9dmPfld_Gag

Steve

APPRECIATION IS EXPRESSED

I want to take this opportunity, on behalf of Tom and myself, to thank everyone for the tremendous wave of warmth and love that came our way following Maureen's death. We hear about the milk of human kindness and I can confirm it has been running to excess in this corner of Hainault. Letters, cards, emails, texts and Facebook messages are still coming in which are all gratefully received. Phone calls from old pals have also been particularly touching as I appreciate that it may have been more difficult to ring than to write a card. Messages have come in from near and far, as well as from people that we hadn't seen for years but of course always had a place in our hearts.

Many on the day of Maureen's funeral made a charitable donation. Other cheques were received by post and I shall be passing on these gifts soon to Arthritis Research and The Bible Society. The total amounted to nearly £1,000. Again many thanks for everyone's generosity. I hope that we can continue to stay in contact. **Len Ruddock**

EMAILS THE STILL ACTIVE CENTURION WITH THE LOWEST NUMBER

Just to let you know that I am still in the land of the living and still managing to walk, though with some difficulty. I have been attending the Doc for the last three years, and in spite of various tests and examinations no one has really told me what is the cause of the problem, which all sorts of medication have failed to cure. Up to about three years ago I was walking reasonably well, and I then found I was having real problems on the hills. Now find that even a six mile walk on the flat creates its own problems particularly when it involves a moderate uphill finish. However I keep going and am trying all sorts of dodges to see if I can improve things a bit ... even considering trying walking poles. I will be 90 in November so I suppose I should not grumble. I still have my wife Margaret, who is

slightly older than me, and although she struggles with her walking she still keeps going and smiling ... now married 61 years. So really I am lucky. When I was 70 I cycled 70 miles, ran 7 and walked 7 in just over 12 hours. At 80 I cycled 80 miles, and walked 8 in the same time period. Alas at 90 I do not know what will be possible, if anything, although I am told I do not look my age. Time alone will tell. Alas I do not get to any Lancashire W.C. events nowadays; public transport is not really suitable, and my driving is voluntarily restricted. Look after yourselves, and keep smiling and walking. The Motto of the Lancashire Walking Club was "Health the First Wealth". How true.

Cliff Royle, C148

THANKS

I would like to thank the editor or whoever puts the Essex Walker together for kindly reprinting an article that appeared in the Daily Mail on my behalf. I was trying to track down the 50's pole vaulter, Geoff Elliott, to return a trophy that he had won in the early 60's, and they included my appeal in their newsletter. We have had remarkable success from the item, a lot of people remembered my own father Johnny Downes, Geoff and his wife the athlete Pam Seabourne, several included an email address for Geoff and Pam and the trophy was reunited with its rightful owner. **Gina Cooper**

THANKS FROM SANDRA BROWN

Many thanks for a bumper number of Essex Walker, with such happy memories of the Colchester weekend. What a fantastic weekend of events that was. As ever, I felt incredibly fortunate and humbled that such wonderful people were willing to provide such excellent organisation and support, so that all we walkers had to do was to keep calm and carry on! The judges needn't have worried about the darkness on the circuit. It was so dark that we walkers didn't know where the judges were, and were unlikely to misbehave! I thought that John Eddershaw in particular had a very cunning habit of suddenly appearing out of the mist and gloom. While our Vicky looked after our needs for food and drink etc, our Guy discovered a new vocation for time-keeping and lap recording. He worked continuously at the time-keeping desk for nearly the whole 24h and was happy to do so - and has said that he'll be willing to help again. Congratulations to all Essex finishers in the 50kms and 100m. **Sandra, C735, Centurions Captain**

Adds Hon Ed: There were few street lights in Lower Castle Park and it was "Murphy's Law" that the one immediately over the Recorder's table was the one not working!

