

Essex Walker

Editor: Dave Ainsworth

RWA NATIONAL (& ESSEX) 10 MILES CHAMPIONSHIP

This race looked grim before the day ... as a programme showed record low entries. And this in the South where numerically are most competitors. And with just 3 Essex-qualified entries at a venue more-or-less "on our patch". I arrived 45 minutes into the event owing to another commitment. The overall impression I had on approaching the course was very quickly one of horror. I've always been interested in the publicity side of our sport ... and what I saw was a few mostly elderly people walking slowly. Hardly any "competition" as there were long gaps between individual competitors. It didn't even look like a race walking event. I'm often asked how Geoff Wightman and I kept our Olympic 50K commentary going for over 4-and-quarter hours? - because so much was going on with umpteen middle-order battles and ever-changing fortunes.

George Nibre was "mentoring" the King twins. George once did 71 minutes in a National 10 Miles and didn't even get a medal. Here gold and silver were claimed in 78.17 (Dom) and 79.04 (Dan). The 3rd placed medal astounded me ... a 66 year old finisher in 89.30 - though Ian Richards is congratulated as he can only beat those whom he races against! But as an event, the 10 Miles now suffers that same lack of credibility as our National 50K. To be fair, times may well have been slowed owing to a crowded Park as sun brought out many pedestrians, dog walkers, cyclists, skate boarders etc who added congestion on our race route.

The team race was unbelievable ... only 1 team capable of finishing 3 members (the winning team were all over 70 years of age, one being nearer 80). Only 2 teams even started a full 3! For a National 10 Miles, once our most popular National, to see 2nd and 3rd team awards going to "pairs" was so disappointing. Essex Championship: 1. Dominic King, 2. Daniel King and 3. Steve Uttley (overall 6th/93.29). No teams and no ladies.

The Presentation: With so few racing a result was quickly made available so attenders didn't wait long for a declaration. Yet only 1 of 3 individual men medallists was present. In the men's team, 2 of 3 teams were absent. When over 250 raced this Championship, I can never (ever) remember award winners (team and individuals) making quick getaways as they were proud to be called forward for presentation. Perhaps this whole Championship is now devalued? Certainly in my own Club few showed interest. The most common noise at our Presentation wasn't applause but cries of "gone".

Future: At least one reader remembers our articles as I was told, "You predicted this day over 5 years ago". I believe this National (and Essex) Championship should be discontinued (as once before) and our National 10K should assume that role as our most popular Championship (which it is, as it now has our Inter-Counties included). The cost of staging this 10 Miles event for so few isn't viable. So many officials and helpers turned out ... for what? This event has passed its "Tipping Point" and further years will only see less participants as an ultra-high average age takes its toll. Far better concentrate on our 10K. Throughout the UK races have reduced distances as shorter ones are whatever older competitors want. Time to call it a day ... we don't, and can't have any more days like the 2014 RWA National 10 Miles' Championship.

ONLY FOOLS ON COURSES

A couple of hobbledehoys shouted insults on the course inside King George's Playing Fields ... nothing new, as we've it all before. But this duo were silenced when Ilford's STEVE ALLEN asked if they could do any better and called them "A Couple of Tossers" to their face. QED.

MARLENE!

Latest stars riding in Steve Allen's back cab were John Challis and Sue Holderness (Boycie and Marlene from "Only Fools and Horses") who hailed him after Trigger's funeral (aka Roger Lloyd Pack). On alighting, impressionist Steve said to Sue, "M A R L E N E" in a good Boycie "take off". Sue said sweetly, "I bet you've been waiting to do that".

NATIONAL CHAMPION

Congratulations to FRANCISCO REIS on winning the Portuguese National 10 Kilometres at Quarteira on The Algarve, clocking 50.18.

ESSEX & EASTERN COUNTIES' INDOOR 1 MILE CHAMPIONSHIP

LEE VALLEY ARENA - Sunday 9 February

Race 1 MEN's 1 MILE

1	Callum Wilkinson	E&H	6.38.86
2	Francisco Reis (guest)	Ilf	7.31.79
3	Steve Uttley	Ilf	7.57.54
4	Steve Allen	Bar	8.13.54
5	Stuart Bennett	Ilf	8.45.02
6	Steve Kemp	EVAC	9.39.87
7	Keith Parker	S/End	10.00.95
8	John Brock	S/End	10.25.72
9	Peter Cassidy	Lou	11.04.09
10	Dave Ainsworth	Ilf	11.58.71

10 started/finished

Essex 1-2-3 Steve Uttley/Stuart Bennett/Steve Kemp

Race 2 WOMEN's 1 MILE

1	Pamela Abbott	E&H	10.48.75
2	Lauren Kemp (U/17)	Cornelius	13.53.62

2 started/finished

Note: an Under-15 girl booked-in but failed to show for the start: Shae Dubois Boyce of Newham & Essex Beagles

Both races were held before a large crowd, and were well commentated by former Southend-on-Sea race walker June Cork, who informed all of the technique on display. June's best comments included a talk about Callum as he impressively

sped away from the start ... then saying, "At the other end of the field is Dave Ainsworth" We were told, "John Brock will go far", and twice reminded of our event's big failing as June observed "Every Senior man in this race is a Veteran". June attempted to address this concern by inviting all onlookers with interest in taking up race walking to contact her afterwards - whereupon June offered to introduce them "to the right people". June, a former race walker of note herself, certainly tries to spread the word ... so thanks!

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22 Mar	Enfield League 5 Miles	Donkey Lane	1.00 pm
22 Mar	Centurions Social Walk	Benfleet Station	9.30 am
29 Mar	RWA Southern Area 10K Championships + YAG	Sutcliffe Park	1.00 pm
5 Apr	RWA National 20K Championship	Sheffield	1.30 pm
21 Apr	LICC/Enfield League 5,000m +YAG	Lee Valley	12.00 noon
26 Apr	Crawley Track 12 hours	Crawley	7.00 am
26 Apr	Crawley Track 6 hours	Crawley	10.00 am
5 May	Pednor Open 5 Miles/Enfield League	Chesham	5.00 pm
13 May	Woodford Tuesday Walk 3,000m +YAG	Ashtons Track	TBA
17 May	Inter-Area Championship	Enfield	TBA
24 May	Essex County AA 3,000m Championship	Melbourne Park	TBA
31 May	Moulton Open 5 Miles/Enfield League	Moulton	1.00 pm
8 Jun	European Championship Trials	York	TBA
10 Jun	Woodford Tuesday Walk 3,000m +YAG	Ashtons Track	TBA
22 Jun	Small Nations Representative Match	Belgium	TBA
28 Jun	LICC/Enfield League 5,000m + YAG	Allianz Park	12.00 noon

FAREWELL TO A FRIEND OF RACE WALKERS

1972 Olympian Andy Holden (Tipton Harriers) has died aged 65. He claimed he could run 100 miles and drink 100 pints in 1 week - and did. A dentist with 2 West Midlands' surgeries 10 miles' apart, he often ran between them! He enjoyed his drink and an occasional smoke ... and "The Times" claimed he occasionally let a lesser athlete cross the line ahead of him - as he'd won many races and felt others were due a share of the prizes! His race philosophy was "to beat the guy who beat me last week ... but not at any cost". The night before winning the 1979 Bermuda Marathon he drank 10 pints before beating a world class field. He sometimes had a drink when running ... and his "party piece" was a post-race victory celebration of drinking a pint while standing on his head! In his time international athletes had more fun! In "The Times" tribute it's written that he could have won more medals and achieved faster times if his schedule had contained "more structure". Ron Wallwork remembers him at major Games as a genial man who'd be seen at roadsides encouraging GB race walkers. Paul Nihill and Colin Young can recall him race walking one lap of a track 1.55! He'll be missed!

JOHN HENRY RIP

Most readers won't know him, but John Henry has passed on. He completed the Stock Exchange London-to-Brighton Walk and had Ilford AC connections as he'd attended prominent London-to-Brighton competitor Dave Neagle on that event. We express condolence to his family.

AWARDS - WELL DONE TO BOTH

Two great friends of race walking were recognised in the New Year's Honours' List. Olympian and former London Marathon supremo DAVID BEDFORD, guest speaker at our Race Walking Olympians' Tribute Luncheon, received an OBE. Top athletics photographer MARK SHEARMAN is an MBE.

SOUTHERN DISCOMFORT

After 2 years with single figures the RWA Southern Area have ended their annual 1 Hour Track Championship after 13 years. This was the initiative of then RWA Southern Area President PAM FICKEN and enthusiastically promoted by Southern Area Championships Hon Secretary NOEL CARMODY, firstly at Dartford Track and then Sutcliffe Park. Early days saw 2 Sections plus enough entries for good Younger Aged Groups supporting races. This initiative saw 1 Hour races return to the South after an absence ... indeed such races had once been a regular feature of our racing programmes. In its history only 2 winners have bettered 12K - SCOTT DAVIS and ALEX WRIGHT, now both not active on the UK mainland scene. Sadly numbers dwindled and in YAG categories, more often than not, races were combined as numbers also dropped. The race also earned a reputation for seeing well-meaning back markers being carded-out under its 'A' Laws ... so deterring more folk to stay away. One can't expect your Southern Area to fork-out expensive track hire fees for single-figure support. However this race did reignite interest in 1 Hour racing and other such events are now promoted. The annual Enfield League 1 Hour pulls in over 40 with 2 Sections are needed to satisfy all. Of course we all know why that's successful don't we? To 'B' or not to 'B' is the answer!

The RWA Southern Area 10K started well but numbers nosedived after what "Enfield Walker" termed "The Monk's Hill Massacre" some years ago. To reverse fortunes an initiative was tried in 2013 so allowing 'B' walkers to participate, permitting each Club to include 1 of them in scoring teams. On entry forms walkers ticked a box to indicate under which code they wished to be judged ... 'A' or 'B'? The result was a massive 66% increase in male entries alone. What a success ... "We can't have that" said high-ups in the proverbial "smoke-filled room" - so this format isn't to be repeated in 2014. This Championship is down for Saturday 29th March at traffic-free Sutcliffe Park (1 pm). But hey ... there's a clash as it's the World Masters' Championships in Budapest, which will see most of the South's top veteran walkers racing at a popular location well served by budget airlines (Easyjet and Ryanair). Bearing in mind veteran walkers form around 90% of the field - whether you like it or not - then this Championship will lack class at the head of its field; and with reduced numbers comes reduced income for the Southern Area and less RWA levy money.

This clash should have been avoided. Essex Walker doesn't blame our hard working RWA Southern Area Honorary Championships Secretary as he's not involved in the Masters/Veterans' scene ... having numerous other commitments - including coaching Younger Aged Group walkers and, of course, his International Judging commitments. But these dates don't come from thin air - they're discussed in Committee before deciding to go ahead. We've Committee members who are well connected with our Masters/Veterans' scene, so why didn't they speak up about a major World fixture which we now learn had its date fixed as far back as 2010? This World Championship cuts across the well-sponsored Pat Furey 5 Miles at Donkey Lane on Saturday 22nd March (1.00 pm). Missing this could have been a "double whammy" for those seeking to do well in the Enfield League as "double points" had been on offer. It's now a single points' race, so those at other clashing events won't suffer a double penalty.

Other events (plural)? Oh yes ... it's the popular Centurions' Social Walk on the same day for a nice stroll around Canvey Island and South Essex with optional visits to historic Hadleigh Castle and Leigh-on-Sea Cockle Sheds. Meet Benfleet station 9.30 am. Good train service on the C2C Fenchurch Street/Shoeburyness line and there's a free car park close by. Local organiser is Centurion STEVE KEMP and all are welcome (plus families and guests), not just Centurions.

How did we get into this situation? That old British Telecom advertising slogan of "It's Good to Talk" might be worth repeating in race walking circles?

Finally our ill-fated RWA Southern Area 20K will have another airing. In 2011 it went ahead with 9 ... in Olympic year (yes Olympic year) we couldn't get that many to enter and it was cancelled. Last year it barely got enough to go ahead. A possible date might be Saturday 5 July. Your Southern Area can't keep making losses ... so this year it'll go ahead only if a minimum of 20 entrants support it! As the late Dr Beeching (of railway branch line fame) said, "Use it or lose it".

GOING DOWN WELL

Essex Club members were represented at Enfield Walking League's Race 2, which was 5 X 1 mile around a traffic-free circuit inside King George V Playing Fields. The contest didn't commence well for Ilford's STEVE UTTLEY as he slipped on a tight spiral staircase at the Clubhouse on route to the start. Changing rooms at this location are a listed building and those wearing anoraks actually make pilgrimages to admire said wrought iron spiral staircase ... Steve's opinion of it isn't printable! After a sit down, during which he contemplated scratching, he limped to the start line and hoped his discomfort would wear off as he progressed. From the "off" a good-sized field saw 16 year old true prospect CALLUM WILKINSON (1st

38.29) of the host Club disappear into the distance leaving the rest challenging for 2nd spot. Ilford's FRANCISCO REIS took a firm hold on 2nd place and secured it by powering his way to a 40.35 completion. FABIAN DEUTER (Hillingdon AC) was 3rd in 42.09. In 4th came PETE RYAN who was in top form as he put some good "scalps" in his wake. He took a tumble during the closing stages, cutting his face, an arm and a hand. He quickly rose saying that as he was going so well, and had some good names chasing him, he just had to finish - which he did in an excellent 43.35. After treatment and a night's sleep, come Sunday morning this hardy athlete was back on his feet training! Finishing in 6th spot with a 44.09 timing, was Steve Uttley who'd experienced another tumble on his 4th lap before continuing unscathed. Pride of place went to Ilford Club runner IAIN KNIGHT who switched codes to make a sound race walking debut. Completing the race in 53.31 saw him gain 27th place and draw praise from both colleagues and rivals.

This race saw 4 take tumbles ... at a venue where so many have fallen over many years. The tarmac surface was bad ... speed humps aren't much concern as they stand out, but it's large cracks/tripping hazards which bring race walkers down. Fortunately local resident JOHN HALL is Chairman of The Friends of King George Playing Fields ... and he'll talk with the Head Groundsman about our concerns.

Back to racing: we'd 61 on the road ... which proves it's what punters want. 49 finished (including 10 from Ilford) the main race, 2 did 4 miles, 3 each did 3 miles, 2 miles and 1 mile. One (Alan Flavell) didn't record a finish after a heavy fall on the opening circuit.

NICE TOUCH

Congratulations to Essex-based Centurion PAULINE WILSON on her award as Enfield League's "Official-of-the-Year". Pauline was on duty for 9 of 12 races in the League's busy 2013 programme.

WOODFORD TUESDAY WALKS - DIARY DATES FOR ASHTONS TRACK

All are 'A' races over 3,000 metres with YAG events in conjunction (enter-on-the-night) and times to be advised: 13 May, 10 June, 8 July and 19 August.

HIS UKULELE IS SILENT

Readers will be saddened to hear that Warrington-based CLIFF ROYLE of Lancashire WC has passed on. His death was a peaceful one ... and for years his Centurion No148 (gained in the 1949 Yorkshire 24 Hours at Bradford in 21.41.23) was the lowest of any still-living member. He was a "George Formby Appreciation Society" protagonist (indeed a Branch Secretary) and who'll ever forget him entertaining diners at Centurions functions! To widow Margaret, who he was married to for 62 years, we express condolence.

DUDINCE 50km WALK TEAM - SELECTIONS ANNOUNCED

England Athletics have selected DAN and DOM KING for the Dudince 50km Walk International to be held on 22 March 2014. Dan King walked 4:05.36 in December 2013 in a performance that would have seen him qualify for the World Cup except for the lack of requisite officials. Both athletes walked sub-90mins for 20km in 2013 and of course Dom was GB's sole male representative in the Men's 50Km walk at the London Olympics. Dudince is the official trial for the European Championships in Zurich and both athletes will be looking to achieve that qualifying mark. We are

also pleased to announce the selection of George Nibre as Team Coach and Raph Rinaldi as Team Physio for the event.

REGISTRATION MONEY IS NEEDED

According to National newspaper reports Minister for Sport HELEN GRANT MP has revealed that UK Athletics Chief Executive NIELS de VOS enjoyed a £93,788 pay hike last year to add to his £254,994. Said Ms Grant, "This is a matter for UK Athletics. However I want all sports governing bodies who receive public funding to be transparent and for good governance to be high on their agenda." Makes you realise just how dedicated are our RWA National and Area office holders - who give up their time in honorary capacity.

GRAND START

The 2014 Enfield League campaign got off to a cracking start with 46 on the road. It was a tight 5 Miles' race between winner CALLUM WILKINSON and experienced FRANCISCO REIS - the only 2 bettering 40 minutes, with Olympian IAN RICHARDS completing the frame. This event was transferred from Donkey Lane-to-Lee Valley at short notice, as a football match was rearranged at the QE Stadium - "Sod's Law" saw it postponed (waterlogged pitch) during the morning! It was good to see Centurion PETER EMERY at our meeting after a lengthy period of ill-health. **This turnout showed what punters want!**

"HE IS RISEN"

The quote from Mark 16:6 could apply locally! Over 3 years ago we reported the death of former GB Junior International walker BRIAN LAVER (ex-Essex Beagles and Ilford AC who last raced in 2005) after notification from an information supplier. JOHN JONES (ex-Newham AC who was 2nd in the 1969 2,000 Metres Championship at Crystal Palace) has reported a recent sighting of

him in Hornchurch, where John resides. We're looking into this. John runs marathons and gets a London entry most years (he's accepted for 2014). Now aged 60 he's been at walking training sessions at Cricklefields Stadium and shows interest in returning to pedestrianism!

MERITED AWARDS

In a glittering Presentation Evening at King's Lynn Corn Exchange, CATH DUHIG received the "West Norfolk Senior Sportsman-of-the-Year Award" for excellent performances throughout 2013. Cath's received a number of sporting awards in her locality ... and rightly so! Another glittering evening, in the presence of His Worshipful the Mayor of Colchester at The Weston Homes Community Centre (Colchester United's home ground), saw MARGARET WILLIAMS of

Colchester Harriers presented with the ERIC CHAPMAN AWARD for "Meritorious Long Service to Sport by a Volunteer" at Colchester's Annual awards. Margaret is the wife of Essex Police race walker LANCE ... and both are well known to the walking world as leading lights at those successful 100 Miles races we've staged around the town's Lower Castle Park. We applaud both ladies on their recognition.

SOCIAL FUNCTION

Following the huge success of our 2012 Olympians' Tribute Luncheon at London's Tower Hotel, which saw 29 GB Olympic walkers attend, a similar England Commonwealth Games Tribute Luncheon at the same venue is being considered ... possibly in October. The 2012 function was sold-out with a long waiting list.

CHARITY APPEAL

Iford's STEVE ALLEN informs that his appearance in the 2014 Virgin London Marathon will be in support Diabetes UK, so please "dig deep" as the day nears. Steve's had another "big name" in his cab ... ex-politician and former star of the tabloids David Mellor.



NEW PRESIDENT

Surrey WC's new President is popular Stock Exchange stalwart TREVOR SLIWERSKI. He's actively racing and we wish him a memorable time with his Club's Chain of Office.

NEWS FROM A FRIEND - ABOUT A FRIEND!

Essex Walker has received a letter from a good friend of RWA Life Member Reg Wells, now aged 81. It was written on his behalf as Reg is in a bad way and cannot write letters. This letter explains that he cannot remember anything: addresses etc, and even his own name. Reg suffers from a number of complaints, such as Parkinson's Disease, diabetes, dementia and vascular concerns ... and spends most of his time each day in bed. His friend writes that Reg wishes to send his regards to everyone, and asks to you accept these comments via his good friend ... as Reg cannot any longer write letters himself, and hopes that all will understand. This note acknowledges the many letters Reg has received from fellow race walkers.



ATHLETAU CYMRU (Welsh Athletics)

Former Essex resident OLIVE DOBSON (now Cardiff-based) has been elected to serve on 2 important and influential Welsh Athletics' Committees. With Olive's knowledge of the game and commitment to the cause, our race walking world can be pleased that her voice will be heard inside these Committee rooms!

QUIZ NIGHT

Iford's MATT MAPLE, who appeared in the Enfield League some years' ago at Lee Valley, was recently on BBC2's "Eggheads" where he was up against Daphne, narrowly losing in sudden death. His team didn't pull it off in the final round ... but quizzing is in the family as his father will soon sit in the Mastermind Chair.

GAMBLER'S LAST THROW

After 2 years of slow winning times and single figures finishing, it's announced our RWA National 50K Championship is to be held in October at Hillingdon Cycle Circuit as a 'B' race. In 2013 only 4 UK men finished & 2 ladies. What's are choices as ending it is an obvious solution (it's come close to that) or trying again under 'A' laws ... or trying to extend its life by attracting 'B' walkers. Sadly a 'B' initiative will probably only "kick the can a bit further down the road" before its inevitable demise ... but it could buy more time during which perhaps fortunes might change? Your Southern Area 50K Championship is to be held in conjunction under these terms. Criticism is rife ... but many making "noises off" aren't even 50K competitors nor promoting any initiative to boost/reinvigorate this Championship under 'A' Laws. The lesser of two evils is the way forward ... but at least it retains a UK Championship over an internationally recognised distance. What Essex AA will do (their 50K is held in conjunction) is an awaited decision?

DEATH OF WORLD-ACCLAIMED COACH

JERZY HAUSLEBER has passed away aged 83 as a result of heart problems. He arrived in Mexico from his native Poland in 1966 and became known as "the father of Mexican walking". He coached Mexicans to 9 Olympic medals (3 gold/4 silver/2 bronze) and a total of 118 medals in major International competitions. He was known to most of our leading Essex walkers of the time. Condolences are expressed to his family.



Dear Dave ...

BULLER HALF-MARATHON

Set in the beautiful surroundings of the Buller Gorge on the south island New Zealand I recorded 2-02-00 for the course on undulating hills that bring you up from the Gorge to Westport, my fastest time in all the half marathons I have done here in recent years.

Pete Ryan

RACE WALKING RECORD EMAIL NOTIFICATIONS

Due to technical difficulties we can no longer issue email notifications when the RWR is available. This is because we cannot protect the individual email addresses and due to prolonged cyber attacks on the account we are concerned about the security of the address list. As such please spread the word that each month's issue will be ready on 5th of each month to be downloaded.

www.racewalkingrecord.co.uk

Catharine Telling

WRITES ENFIELD WALKER'S FORMER EDITOR

You always did a lot to promote the Enfield Boxing Day race, so I'm sorry to hear that it's in trouble. As you know, as I have to rely on public transport, I always had problems getting to Enfield from Shenfield on Boxing Day, with no trains or buses. Turnouts never were high, even in the 1970s - the Boxing Day walk only attracted tiny fields: 13 in 1970, as low as 8 in 1972, I seem to recall, though 4 is certainly a record! If it wasn't for you, I think Race Walking in this country would have died out years ago. Good on you, old son!

Martin Oliver

THE LATE GREAT DAVID COLEMAN

When David Coleman did the commentary at the end of the 20 miles walk at the Edinburgh Commonwealth Games in 1970 he did not know my name initially, but referred to me 'as a tall London Policeman'. His unique style of Sports Report is greatly missed today where they only go for the sensational story with little knowledge of the individual top sports stars and what makes them tick.

Bill Sutherland

Adds Hon Ed: David was truly a friend of race walking!

VIEWS OF MICK BARNBROOK

(as sent to Ron Wallwork)

The following comments are not a criticism, but an observation of your decision to make the Pat Furey race a single points race. I appreciate that you have and will continue to do more for race walking than I ever have, but nevertheless I consider I am

entitled to offer constructive advice, having been in the sport for 43 years. The whole concept of making any race a double pointer is apparently to encourage more walkers to turn up for what are considered to be the more important races.

I consider that concept to be flawed. Are you telling me that fewer walkers would turn out at Moulton or the Enfield 7 if they were only single point races? I don't think so. An example of how unfair it is to make any race a double pointer is that Francisco Reis could turn out for only the four double point races and still get more points than me, I having turned out for eight races, none of them double pointers. What is also blatantly unfair is the decision to change the status of a race from a double pointer to a single pointer because some elite walkers or Centurions have made a choice, for whatever reason, to be elsewhere.

How does that decision reward the loyalty of walkers like Dave Ainsworth and myself, who, always at the rear of the field, still turn up at races and choose to support the Pat Furey race, unlike others? What price loyalty? I consider that the walkers who chose to be loyal to the Pat Furey race have now been discriminated against because of the decision of other walkers to do other things. You already know my thoughts on changing the goalposts after the programme has been announced and this most recent decision only endorses those thoughts. If the likes of Dave Ainsworth and myself were only going to do the Pat Furey race because it would get us a few extra points, we couldn't be criticised if we now chose to go to the Centurions Social Walk instead, the Pat Furey race being degraded.

The only way forward in the opinion of myself and many other walkers is not to have ANY double point races. We don't need to be bribed with double points to encourage us to turn up for specific races. We would attend them anyway. The current system is unfair for all sorts of reasons, for example, Francisco having to fly home to Portugal at short notice because his father was very ill, meaning that he had to miss a double pointer that could have made a difference to both his individual and Ilford's league position. I would therefore urge you, in the interest of fairness and clarity, to make all races single point races.

Kindest regards.

Mick Barnbrook C661

VIEWPOINT

Our best walker in the UK Belgravian Alex Wright is applying for Irish Nationality as well as moving to Ireland and training under Rob Hefferman. Although I don't blame him after how he was treated by UKA at the World Athletics Championships at Moscow this year (having to

appeal to gain entry to the Team Britain having achieved the 'A' Standard) it is another hammer blow for GB Race Walking on top of the omission from the 2014 Commonwealth Games in Glasgow. Will we have any GB Race Walkers of sufficient standard left by the Brisbane C G in 2018? I have tried to express the seriousness of the present situation to Peter Marlow and Catharine Telling, the New RWA General Secretary. Surely an extraordinary General Meeting of the RWA needs to be called to clarify where we stand on International Selection in the future and the future development of our great Sport before it is too late!

Bill Sutherland

THANKS FROM CENTURION GLEN ROBERTSON

Thank you for sending me some editions of Essex Walker. They were a good read and it was good to catch up with the Essex race walking scene, and it made me think that I should get my walking shoes out again. I will look out for 2014 fixture lists to see what's on and what events I could do and catch up with some old friends.

Glen Robertson

ANNOUNCEMENT FROM OLYMPIAN NERINGA AIDIETYTE

I have an announcement to make: I'm going back to Lithuania and full time training. I've decided to pursue my passion, and in London I can't do this anymore with working full time. Thank you for your assistance and hopefully we will meet again.

Neringa Aidietyte

Adds Hon Ed: Neringa's recently been warm weather training in Israel and is soon to train in Spain. Neringa has retained membership of Ilford AC and renewed her England Athletics Foreign Registration number, so she can get in a few races when visiting the UK from time-to-time.

CHRISTMAS APPEAL message to EW readers

Hope you are all well and as active as you can be! We've had a warmer than usual Gambian winter but of course have been following the news about the severe weather conditions in the south of England! We here at Hart House have really appreciated your efforts over the years in joining together via the Essex Walkers Christmas Appeal to raise a substantial amount of money to assist us in attempting to help our children reach their full potential, 50 weeks a year, in a clean, healthy and safe environment and to help the mothers who need a break from one of their many duties, which for some means petite trading in the form of fruit, vegetables etc. So please look us up on www.harthouse.gm and Facebook and remember that if Albert Hart had not seen the potential in me when starting to work under his management in 1975 then I may not have been here writing to you

now! So on behalf of the children, parents, staff and committee, thanks again.

Geoff Hunwicks

OLDEST SURVIVING CENTURIONS

Very sad to hear of Cliff Royle's death. Great character. You raise an interesting question re who now holds the lowest number. There are some early Centurions about whom I have no record whether they are still alive, such as:

182	J Hartley	Sheffield United Harriers
201	J Liddle	Surrey WC
212	B J Rawlings	Leicester
213	W S Young	Surrey WC
214	J M Price	Birmingham WC
219	G A Thwaites	Surrey WC
220	G J Birchall	Lancashire WC
221	T L M Dally	Lancashire WC
227	C J Woodhouse	Preston Harriers
242	S Shirley	Polytechnic Harriers
256	V Murray	Lancashire WC

If you have any news on any of the above, please let me know.

Chris Flint C849

EMAILS FORMER INTERNATIONAL DAVID BUCHANAN

I am just back from a day skiing in the alps. I am cycling John O'Groats to Lands End in May and so am building my bike miles up, and trying to avoid skiing injuries. With my increased fitness I will have a race walk at some stage.

David Buchanon

APPRECIATION

Great news of Cath's and Margaret's respective awards and we in the Centurions applaud them both for their commitment to athletics generally and race walking in particular, especially Centurionism. Well done.

Chris Flint

LONDON WALKS

Many thanks from Pauline and myself to those who competed, officiated, catered, spectated and otherwise supported this event. You will have heard that Tower Hamlets Borough Council proposes to raise the fee for the use of Victoria Park from nothing to £375 (or £750 for a large event), which would make our competition impossible. Please be assured that we are even now thinking about next year's venue and that, come what may, the London Open will be back in 2015.

Peter Cassidy

Adds Hon Ed: This year's event could have been better supported. From an Essex angle, DAN KING won the 10K after a hard training session beforehand, with STEVE UTTLEY as 2nd senior man home. Steve had a terrible journey by car, arriving less than 5 minutes before the "off". The frame was completed by man-of-many events

STEVE ALLEN (Barnet version) who raced 68 times in 2013. With 3 points separating the 3 leading teams it was Ilford who came 3rd (Steve Uttley/Stuart Bennett/Ed Shillabeer). STUART BENNETT was 1st Centurion gaining no other individual award. Time flies as Ilford's 5-man squad contained 3 over 70s! Sadly Younger Aged Group events lacked numbers with 2 such races attracting no starters.

NEWS FROM FORMER CHAMPION WALKER KEVIN PERRY IN FRANCE

I always read with interest any news from RW, and take delight in all who still get satisfaction from competing, more so the senior competitors. I have taken up the equestrian events as my new sport and I am so pleased that race walking has given me the leg strength to be able to progress so quickly in the saddle plus the spirit of RW that never gives up. My instructor seems so amazed when after asking "Are you tired" I am able to carry on long after those with more experience want to give up. I will always remember a race where we both took part and had to finish on a track and on the last 200 metres you passed me, I have always remembered how gracious you were in victory and defeat. I hope you will have a year where you can inspire someone as you inspired and encouraged me.

Kevin Perry C912

NO SURPRISE

I am not surprised by the demise of the Southern Area Championships. As long as they insist on 'A' rules the numbers will decline. It's time that all Area and County championships were 'B' rules with judges using discretion to d/q any who are abusing the leniency of those rules. By all means retain 'A' rules for National Championships.

Bob Dobson

ONE RUN FOR BOSTON

I'm still walking and have been doing some sessions with Brian Adams' training group in Sheffield. Our son Daniel who has walked one race at Enfield is organising a continuous cross country relay from LA to Boston to raise money for the victims of the Boston Marathon bombing 3,300 miles 1400 runners. When he organised it last year it raised \$91,000. This year with more than a week to go before the start it has already raised \$180,000. We are running 2 or 3 legs in Arizona before flying to Boston for the last few days of the relay in New York and New England. If any of your readers are interested they can follow the relay on <http://www.onerunforboston.org/> or they can follow

it on Facebook. They may also be interested in his book about last year's relay which comes out very soon entitled "Not all Superheroes Wear Capes".

Chris Bent

ED SHILLABEER's PLANS

Summer (June 28 - July 5) for ICC and to celebrate 50th anniversary of graduation, I intend to walk close to 250 miles. Plymouth - Taunton School - Langford Vet School - ICC HQ (Tisbury) - CEVA HQ (Amersham) - RCVS Belgrave Square. End up by driving to Bristol University Alumni Dinner Sat night!

Ed Shillabeer

DON'T SHOOT THE MESSENGER

After our last 2013 edition a reader wrote to accuse Essex Walker of reporting bad news. EW does no such thing ... it truthfully reports what's happened. For instance in Olympic year only 1 person was going to do our Essex 3,000 Metres Championship before a crowd - he scratched so saving race walking embarrassment. Only 3 entered the Essex 10,000 metres (others being guests). This past 12 months have seen just 2 in Essex 20K Championship and 3 in our long established Essex County 10 Miles - both all-time lows! No teams even started these events. The Essex YAG walking scene is barely visible. I could go on ... and have, as I've reported accurately and faithfully. Would sweeping this under the carpet have improved matters? Essex walking is in the "last chance saloon" but please "Don't Shoot the Messenger".

ESSEX WALKER FREQUENCY

Essex Walker is mainly for Essex walkers. But as so few now support County events - which are put on for YOU - the number of active Essex walkers reading it is few. Yet nearly 300 read it ... mostly ex-walkers or those from other parts of the UK (and World). John Hedgethorpe wanted monthly Newsletters as our Essex League (now defunct) had 12 races and he wanted all to go home with something to read ... to promote the next League race. When going bi-monthly one reader wrote a stiff email saying it could be less frequent and asked if we now even needed it at all? It'll be less frequent ... but Essex walker isn't democratic as nobody is elected Editor - it goes to whoever volunteers. If you want more frequent editions here's an advert for somebody with such views to come forward and take the task on. **Please apply.**

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