

ESSEX WALKER



AFTER DINNER

After delivering his speech at the Metropolitan Police's Annual Dinner 'at the Yard' Race Walking Association President PAUL NIHILL MBE handed his notes to Essex Walker's Hon. Ed. and uttered, "You can publish that". Well...we'll publish some of it.

"I believe the RWA are the oldest race walking association in the world. 100 years is a fantastic achievement. England is the home of race walking and it is also the home of football and cricket and, at all 3 sports, we have slipped behind. I've read Pete Markham's comments in Leicester Walker under the heading of "What's Wrong?" In his article Pete compares the RWA Championship entries of the past 40 years and concludes that numbers are well down. I will add to this – not only are they down but so is the quality of the competition. At 50K the quality is dismal. This isn't encouraging for 2012 when London hosts the Olympic Games. At Club level I am pleased to see entries increase, though the fields are mainly made up from veterans. It's a pity we haven't got more walkers in the 20-29 category competing on a regular basis. That's it – no more moaning from me. Instead I'll tell you some personal stories.

My 1st race walk was on Saturday 29th September 1956 on the day Seb Coe was born. Back in the 80s Seb was attempting a world record somewhere on the continent and I was watching the race on TV. Seb went too fast early on and struggled in the latter stages. When interviewed he stated to the nation, "I was going so slow I thought I was Paul Nihill". I was gobsmacked. *(At this stage our raconteur regaled humorous anecdotes, which are probably better consumed by a 'live' audience than readers).*

You are my people and I am one of you. I've won a few races – 366 to be precise; and have been decorated by The Queen for services to sport, and have attended Buckingham Palace 8 times. Next year on 23rd June will be my 60th anniversary as an athlete and I aim to celebrate it as a competitor".

ENDING UNCERTAINTY

The Sat/Sun question about the Sat or Sun for the RWA 20K, and continuous '?' beside the Molly Barnet event on fixture lists are examples of fixtures uncertainty, and more could be quoted. We have excellent fixture lists and info issued by PAULINE WILSON – complemented by website availability. But information channels are only as good as what gets fed into them by info providers. We can learn from past days, for in the 70s/80s, all the Nationals had fixed dates which were 'set in stone'. The RWA General Committee met quarterly and their meeting which was always on the 2nd Saturday in December, always decided the venues, dates and times for the following year's National programme. Then everybody knew what was fact! A good idea that perhaps should be revived?

WRITES THE EUROPEAN VET OF THE YEAR

The question remains, where can any young walker with international ambitions get acceptable qualifying times, or even racing experience, in the absence of any 50km A races in the UK on a fast course? They can't all afford to go abroad for the experience. It's not just a bit of a nuisance for daft record-chasing geriatrics. Arthur Thomson.

PAT ON THE BACK

Our profound thanks go to likeable rogue PAT FUREY for his highly generous sponsorship of the St. Patrick's Day Enfield League race, which merited a much better turnout. Full results in Record/AW/Enfield Walker Extra. While reminiscing we recalled the time when Pat got a judge's warning at the Enfield Open 7 – it was during his warm-up!

WELCOME BACK

Centurion 492 STEVE KING enjoyed his first race in Britain since emigrating to Canada in the late 70s. So keen was Steve, and wife Jean, that they turned up at March's PAT FUREY meeting some 2½ hours before the 'off' as he wanted to make time to see everybody again. Steve had come via a holiday in Morocco and hit the UK with an 'iffy tummy', which cast his racing appearance into doubt. But with pluck he gave it a go and even won a handicap prize. Steve also presented the Men's awards. He spoke highly of the Enfield course saying, "It really involves everybody as you can always see what's going on". It was sad that a number of Steve's old colleagues from the 70s were unable to meet up with him again. We also welcomed back LEN RUDDOCK and EDDIE TROTTER after long absences from the Donkey Lane action.

THE KEN EASLEA TROPHY

Another rare but always welcome attendee at Donkey Lane is Enfield & Harringey life member and former Ilford AC President KEN EASLEA. He came along to present the new trophy which bears his name, which is awarded to the E&H member racing most times in the year. Inaugural holder is 74 year old Loughton AC 2nd claimer KEN LIVERMORE, who set a fine example to his clubmates by turning out the most. Ken Easlea now uses a wheelchair but nevertheless remains cheerful and he thoroughly enjoyed the Pat Furey meeting.

"NEVER ON A SUNDAY"

For months the RWA has been billed as being staged on both/either Saturday 14th or Sunday 15th April. One issue of Record had an advert for the 14th, yet published 15th in its fixtures column! March's Essex Walker published Sunday 15th, after acting on information received. Well folks – it's now been advised as **Saturday 14th April**. Venue is at the home of Coventry Godiva Harriers in Kirkby Corner Road, COVENTRY. Junior 10K is at 1 pm with the headline 20K race at 2.15 pm.

CONCRETE POSITION

The latest (of many) fallers on the twisting Enfield League course was popular ALAN O'RAWE in March. He stumbled early on and was clearly heading for a meeting with the concrete as he lost his footing. But...almost as dramatic as a visit from the caped-crusader came Canvey Island's own version of Superman – in the form of STEVE KEMP. In an instant he reached out with both hands and grabbed the Ilford man in mid-fall, so preventing injury. However Alan was still shook up and it took him a while to get back into his stride. We salute Steve Kemp – saviour!

ESSEX COUNTY AAA 10 MILES ROAD WALKING CHAMPIONSHIP

SUNDAY 18 FEBRUARY AT CHIGWELL (INCL. HERTS & MIDDX)

1	S. Davis	If	79.50	15	R. Dobson	If	102.39
2	P. Williams	EH	88.06	16	A. Belchambers (L)	Hill	102.47
3	S. Uttley	If	90.48	17	R. Powell	EH/If	103.00
4	A. Thomson	HP	90.52	18	M. Harran	SWC	103.26
5	D. Kates	If	91.10	19	J. May	EH	107.00
6	J. Hall	Bel/Ltn	93.02	20	K. Howard (L)	Sth	109.00
7	P. Barnard	CP	94.05	21	B. Sturt	EH	109.23
8	A. Cox	Hill	94.52	22	M. Barnbrook	If	109.43
9	M. Culshaw	Bel	96.47	23	B. Hercoc	EH	115.10
10	S. Crane	SWC/If	97.33	24	D. Hoben	SWC	115.49
11	A. Seddon	EH	97.51	25	J. Borgars	Ltn	117.12
12	L. Dordoy	If	98.04	26	F. Fernandez (L)	Ltn	119.43
13	D. Sharpe	If	100.55	27	K. Livermore	EH/Ltn	122.32
14	M. Noel (L)	Bel	101.05	28	P. Ficken (L)	SWC/Ltn	125.05

Conditions – Mild. Started – 28

Essex: 1. S. Davis, 2. St. Uttley, 3. D. Kates
 Herts: 1. P. Williams, 2. A. Thomson, 3. J. Borgars
 Middx: 1. J. Hall, 2. A. Cox, 3. M. Culshaw
 Essex Ladies: 1. K. Howard, 2. F. Fernandez
 Herts Ladies: 1. P. Ficken
 Middx Ladies: 1. M. Noel, 2. A. Belchambers
 Essex Team Race: 1. Ilford AC 6 pts, 2. Ilford AC 'B' 24 pts

Our thanks to the Essex County President Mrs. JEAN TIERNEY of Havering/Mayesbrook AC who spent the morning with us and kindly presented the awards for all 3 counties. We clashed with the Essex County AAA 20 Miles run (which had been altered by a week at short notice) – but Jean chose the walkers, while our County President-elect RON DAWSON went to the big run. Defending champion SCOTT DAVIS took charge from the 'off' and – spurred-on by his always enthusiastic family supporters – was never troubled. Only welcome Essex visitor PHIL WILLIAMS (Herts No. 1) remained in sight during the early stages and therefore only he gave the race leader something to think about. In the Middlesex stakes, TONY COX looked like getting his name on the trophy, especially as their County Secretary JOHN HALL was carrying an injury. He overcame pain to overtake his main rival and earn his County title. We welcomed back Canvey Island prospect PHIL BARNARD after injury. As for the standard of walking, the 'wally board' contained many numbers as the slips were continually gathered by Judges runners TONY PERKINS and ALAN O'RAWE. But... nobody got three crosses! Thanks to chief marshal JIMMY ROOKE (who always gets along to the Essex 10), chief recorder PAULINE KATES, timekeeper SHARON HERBERT and a numerically good panel of experienced judges. At the post race presentation former champion walker GEORGE NIBRE was applauded for obtaining such good facilities at the Metropolitan Police Sports & Social Club. Later that day DAVE SHARPE phoned-up to discuss the race, and spoke well of the good turnout. Dave's correct – but don't forget we amalgamated 3 Counties + a couple of guests. So as we know where we're going, ESSEX paraded 10 men and 2 ladies, of whom just 3 were below veteran (or masters if you like) age.

FIXTURES

Sat Apr 7	Enfield League 5 Miles	Donkey Lane	2.30 pm
Mon Apr 9	Easter Monday Walks	Steyning	
Sat Apr 14	Lee Valley Open Meeting 3,000 metres	Picketts Lock	10.40 am
“ “ “	RWA Junior 10K/Senior 20K	Coventry	1 pm/2.15 pm
Sun Apr 15	LPR Open 9K Yacht Handicap	Blackheath Park	11.30 am
Wed Apr 18	Entries close for Essex County 3,000 metres		
Wed Apr 25	Veterans 10,000 metres	Battersea Park	6.30 pm
Sat Apr 28	LICC 3,000 metres + YAG 1K	Copthall Stadium	1 pm
Sun Apr 29	Nicola 5 Miles	Canvey Island	10.15 am
Mon Apr 30	Southern Counties T & F League Vets 2,000 metres	Picketts Lock	7.10 pm
Sun May 6	Inter-Area Representative Meeting	Dartford	noon
Mon May 7	3,000 metres Track Walk	Stevenage	12.30 pm
Mon May 7	Pednor Open 5 Miles	Chesham	5 pm
Sat May 12	Stock Exchange Reunion (A23)	Coppingham Arms	noon
Sun May 13	Essex County AAA 3,000m Championship	Melbourne Stadium	2.20
Tue May 15	Vets 5 Miles	Battersea Park	7 pm
Sat May 19	Playtex Moon Walk	Hyde Park	
Sat May 19	Scrubbers 3K	Leamington Spa	5 pm
Sun May 20	European Cup of Race Walking	Leamington Spa	all day
Sat May 26	LICC and Enfield League 3,000 metres + YAG 1K	Picketts Lock	1 pm
Sun May 27	LPR Open 9K Yacht Handicap	Blackheath Park	9.30 am
Sun May 28	Inter Counties Track Championship	Bedford	
“ “ “	Bradford & County Open 50K	Bradford	9.30 am

YES PLEASE

For 2 months, Essex Walker readers were asked a simple question. That being, "If a 2007 Essex County 20 Miles Championship were to be staged, would you be likely to support it?" The response was 1 solitary positive reply. After appallingly low fields in 2004 and 2005, a commitment from just one potential entrant was not seen as a positive response. So the 2007 event was cancelled and the decision ratified by the Essex County AAA. Now – after the decision making – a couple here-and-there have come forward to state that they would be prepared to race the event. Too late! Why do people sit back and do nothing when asked such a simple question? Another suggestion has been floated reference the 2008 Essex 20 Miles Championship, that being to stage it on the same day and on the same course as the Essex 20 Miles run. This was tried once by the late JOHN HEDGETHORNE – we started before the runners, no serious concerns arose and it was deemed successful. So we could try that in 2008 though it must be stressed that it would mean racing 20 miles somewhat earlier in the calendar year than would normally be the case. Any other ideas reference the 2008 Essex 20 Miles should be forwarded to your County Walking Secretary RAY PEARCE. *But please – if you're asked for your opinions – GIVE THEM! Don't wait until after a decision has been made!*

ONE MAN AND HIS BLOG

Don't forget that race walking opinions can be read, and submitted, on TIM WATT's Race Walking Record blog site.

www.racewalkingrecord.com

ST PATRICK'S DAY CELEBRATION



One man who wanted to get along to Donkey Lane on March 17th was 70s Post Officer walker NOEL MOONEY, who resides in Romford. Noel won place medals in the Post Office Uniform 6 Miles event and was a good sub-7 miles-in-an-hour man, who could also 'give it some wellie' over 20 Miles where he had a 3 hours and 17 minutes best time. Reproduce that nowadays and you've a County medal! But Noel can't make it. Said Noel, "For the first time in many years I'll be spending St. Patrick's Day in my home city of Cork, which is a trip that I'd booked long before I knew of Steve King's return". We're truly sorry that Noel missed the 70s reunion, but hope he enjoyed his break in Cork. Noel was one of a trio of talented Post Office walkers who all worked at Ilford Sorting Office and raced for Ilford AC in the 70s/80s. They were Noel plus TERRY RILEY and BRIAN BARNARD. Terry, who now lives in Suffolk, was forced out of athletics through injuries sustained after a nasty road accident in Dagenham, while Brian quit walking to pursue his darts career. On the oche he was a top man, competing in the famous News-of-the-World tournament and also appearing on 'Bullseye'. "You can't beat a bit of Bully" prattled legendary presenter Jim Bowen – and in Brian's view you couldn't so he quit walking for the oche. He was good – as were all 3 of Ilford's talented Post Office walkers of the 70s and 80s. We've seen Terry at meetings in Colchester and Earl's Colne in recent times, and we hope to see Noel along soon. We've lost touch with Brian...anybody know where he is nowadays?

UP NORTH

Our Sheffield colleagues have been in touch to remind us that the JEFF FORD MEMORIAL OPEN RACE WALKS are to be held on Saturday 21st April. The meeting starts at 12.30 with the final event at 14.15. The distances range from 1K-to-10K, age ranges are from Under 11's-to-infinity and there are events for both sexes. In fact – something for everyone, just as Jeff would have liked it! Entry forms are being passed around and can be downloaded.

"AGE SHALL NOT WEARY THEM"

This quote from 'For the Fallen' by Laurence Binyon could well apply to dynamic Herts duo ARTHUR THOMSON and KEN LIVERMORE who, despite being a year older in 2007, recorded the exact same times (to the second) on the testing Chigwell 10 Miles course as they had done in 2006. Thanks to keen amateur statistician BOB DOBSON for the info.

THE COST OF SPORT



A survey has revealed that sporting injuries cost the nation £504 million a year in lost working time. Four million people are in sick every year after playing sport. Nearly 40% blame themselves, and many are joggers who wore incorrect footwear. So get your feet into suitable sporting shoes – AMOS SEDDON will oblige!

ADVISES DAVE KATES

We have finally managed to sort out our new e-mail address, so could you please update your records: dave.kates@ntlworld.com

NOTIFICATION FROM TONY PERKINS

SEAC A23 Reunion on Saturday 12th May at Coppingham Arms from Noon.

EMAILS OUR JACK

Re: Commonwealth Walks



My first reaction was unprintable. My Second reaction was to wonder just who was making the decision. Is it the Indian? Or is it the Commonwealth as a whole? If it is the Indians I would suggest that it was totally inappropriate to remove events after they had been granted the Games. I have downloaded the Indian Bid document, and the Walks are definitely included. The relevant clause is:

"Walks"

It is proposed that the three walks events (10km, 20km and 50km) be contested on a road circuit around the Jawaharlal Nehru Sports Complex. This course is used regularly for National, Inter-State and International events.

It is reasonable to assume that when voting on the choice of venue the various countries made their decisions based on what was in the various Bids. In that case I think that the Indians are obliged to include the Walks in their programme. (They will obviously have to bring themselves up-to-date with the distances to be raced).

If it was the Commonwealth as a whole, then it might be just a little different. The question then has to be asked as to why the Commonwealth would interfere with the plans already proposed by the Indians?

Incidentally anyone considering downloading the Bid document from the Indian Commonwealth Games site should note that the Bid document is 'only' 35mb, not the 47mb mentioned on the website. The relevant page is <http://www.thecgf.com/games/intro.asp?yr+2010>

The Evaluation Report is much smaller (600kb)

I suspect that very few Commonwealth Countries could give a damn about whether or not the walks are included. That makes me think that it may be pointless relying on any sympathy. Tackling the matter from a legalistic angle may be the only way that the right result can be obtained.

Jack Tregurtha.

WALKERS PULLED



Two walkers were pulled over by the Police as they made an illegal turn off the A12 at the Barley Lane junction, as they were heading towards the Essex 10 Miles Championship. One car made the error and the second car followed it! A patrol car driver observed it all. On being told that they were on route to the Metropolitan Police Sports & Social Club at Chigwell, perhaps the officer thought they were in 'The Job'. Perhaps that influenced his decision to send the walking duo on their way with nothing more than a bollocking?

WRITES SQUADRON LEADER MIKE PERKINS

Dear Dave,
There I was, with the TV on during breakfast on Saturday and I found I was watching 'The Dave Ainsworth Show' – investigative reporting from the real world, followed by in-studio defence from those responsible!!! I enjoyed every moment.
Mike P. (Centurion 490)

UNBILLED BILL IS ON THE STUMP

BILL SUTHERLAND truly has the 'Gift of the Gab' for – at very short notice – he's now got onto the 'after dinner speakers circuit' at Leamington Spa Town Hall, the Royal Air Force Club in Piccadilly and now at New Scotland Yard. Bill gets to his feet at short notice and then entertains punters with impromptu speeches. It was really late in Leamington and diners were rising from their chairs after several mainly (though not quite all) soporific speeches and heading for the doors when Bill grabbed the microphone and started talking – and he stole the show, with his utterances gaining top billing in the 'Record's' write-up of the occasion. We salute Bill Sutherland – man of words!

ESSEX 20K CHAMPIONSHIP BEXLEY – 24TH FEBRUARY

1	S. Uttley	l/f	2.00.04
2	L. Dordoy	l/f	2.00.37
3	S. Crane	SWC/l/f	2.01.14
4	P. Barnard	CP	2.01.20
5	P. King	Bel/Ltn	2.03.06
6	D. Sharpe	l/f	2.07.14
7	J. May	EH	2.11.23
8	R. Powell	EH/l/f	2.13.46
9	P. Crane	SWC	2.16.05
10	K. Howard (L)	Sth	2.17.11
11	M. Barnbrook	l/f	2.19.12
12	S. Kemp	Sth	2.22.25

DNF - Dom King CH
DQ - Dan King CH

Essex Championship: 1. S. Uttley, 2. L. Dordoy, 3. S. Crane
Essex Ladies: 1. K. Howard
Essex Team: Ilford AC (S. Uttley, L. Dordoy and S. Crane)

Comment: To borrow words from a military drill instructor, it was a case of "As you Were" for the Essex men's, ladies and team trophies all remained with their 2006 holders. A number of competitors could have changed things, but both King twins again failed to complete the full distance and well placed Canvey prospect PHIL BARNARD was hampered with leg cramps from lap 14 onwards. LAURENCE DORDOY, STEPHEN CRANE (in his 20K debut) and last year's bronze medallist DAVE SHARPE all headed the eventual Essex champion STEVE UTTLEY at some point. Sharpie produced a number of 'bursts' – a tactic which has paid off for him in past races. Laurence was within sight of gold at the finish, and it was a finishing line which all competitors were mighty relieved to reach! It meant completing 16 circuits of the Bexley course, with its long hill. As Steve pointed out, "We started at the bottom of the hill before completing 16 full circuits, so making 17 hill climbs". He added, "The course was very hard for a 20K – madness really". The Essex Championship was held in conjunction with the RWA Southern Area Championship – the full result is promulgated in the Record and AW. In this event, 26 men started (2 DNF, 1DQ) and 23 finished while 4 ladies started and finished. The Bels won the team race, with a solitary point advantage over Ilford, with Surrey coming 3rd. Loughton 2nd claimer PAUL KING closed home the Bels, while a pair of Essex residents – PETER & STEPHEN CRANE (father and son) – were in the SWC team. Ilford had 3 'big guns' unavailable in Messrs. STEVE ALLEN, SCOTT DAVIS and DAVE KATES, but still got 2nd team courtesy of STEVE UTTLEY, LAURENCE DORDOY and ever dependable DAVE SHARPE. We only print those with Essex affiliations and/or Essex residence (after all this is Essex Walker) but for interest the top 3 were NICK SILVESTER, CHRIS HOBBS and MARK CULSHAW who clocked 1.52.16, 1.56.26 and 1.58.09 respectively. Leading lady was MAUREEN NOEL in 2.06.22. Most of our readers will probably have looked at the Southern and Essex winning times of 1.52.16 and 2.00.04 respectively and remarked, "I've beaten that in my time". Very true, but please take in account the course severity. DAVE SHARPE is a bastion! A bastion for fair play, and he's a stickler for upholding the rules. After the race he handed in a protest about a competitor being aided by 'pacing'. The complaint was not upheld.

In conclusion we thank the RWA Southern Area, their Championship Secretary NOEL CARMODY and our hosts CAMBRIDGE HARRIERS for permitting the Essex Championship to be held in conjunction with their major event.

CLOSE OF PLAY

The latest Cambridge Harriers Winter League series of 4 meeting ended on March 10th at Bexley on a gloriously sunny afternoon which belied the title of the competition. Full result in Record/AW. DAVE SHARPE phoned-up a couple of times to discuss the race and he, like all of us, was pleased to see a good rise in numbers. Fields barely above single-figures have been superseded by fields in the twenties. The decision to stage a race in conjunction (i.e. The Essex League) certainly helped to 'Kick-start' the series. Dave expressed disappointment that no series team award was announced and he said, "The team race attracts entrants, and with no team event I may not appear in the next series". But come the next Winter League series we need Dave and all who can be mustered!

CONGRATULATIONS TO "THE EASTERN VET"

The highly readable EASTERN VET produced its 100th edition when the March issue hit the streets. No. 1 appeared in December 1978, written by DICK HUGHES. The next 2 Editors were IAN VAUGHN-ARBUCKLE and DOUG LINTON. The current editor – TONY CHALLIS – took over in June 1995. Tony was a sub 80-minute 10 Miles walker in his heyday for Trowbridge AC and the Royal Air Force, and he still attends race walking events. Well done to all of them. Let's give Tony the last word for he's written, "Who will be the Editor for issue number 200? Not me as I will be 102 years old!"

ARTHUR IN PRINT

It's worth getting a copy of the 100th issue of The Eastern Vet, for there's an in-depth interview by TONY CHALLIS with ARTHUR THOMSON – recently described in Essex Walker as 'the Duracell bunny of the race walking world'. It covers everything – Arthur's beginning, his disappointment at Welsh Commonwealth Games non-selection, his 30 year hiatus from walking, what prompted his comeback and his wonderful feats as a super-vet.

WALKERS ARE UP

The Record has published the 2006 list of appearances. In 2001, 792 completed at least 1 race. In 2006 that figure has risen by 92% to 1,891. In that period the total number of performances has risen 43% from 5,255 to 7,502. The figures are boosted by huge fields in events such as the Isle of Man Parish Walk, but 2006 did see significant growth. So if you are thinking of packing in, please don't. Stay and help turn things around even more. In one year, from 2005 to 2006, those completing 20 or more races went up from 39 to 50.

Hooray for SUE REY and MARK WALL. The Leicester duo recorded 49 finishes each and therefore jointly top the table. If a 'penalty kick decider' is needed, Sue's 49 races saw her cover 431.021km while Mark's tally was 418.420km. MARK WILLIAMS was 3rd on 42. Best placed Essex athlete was STEVE UTTLEY who was joint 4th (with CARL LAWTON) on 41. Frequent Essex visitor is enthusiastic DAVE HOBAN – was 6th with 39. Last year's victor – DAVE SHARPE – was joint 9th (with NICK SILVESTER) on 34. LAURENCE DORDOY and ARTHUR THOMSON are joint 12th with 32. The full list of all the top 100 finishers can be found in January's Record. In total during 2006, 2,781 UK walkers completed 7,502 races totalling 155,434.76 kilometres – nearly 4 times around the equator!

These fascinating (and welcome) facts were number-crunched from Race Walking data by Birchfield Harrier JOHN CONSTANDINO, a database programmer by profession and who fills 7th place with 38 completions.

FULL FRONTAL

Noted wit MICK BARNBROOK is pictured head-on in January's Record, on page 12. That should boost sales.



EMAIL CONTRIBUTION FROM JOHN HALL

Dear Dave,
Thanks for the latest ESSEX WALKER. A good read, as ever.

There are so many items on which I could comment, but I will limit myself to just a couple:

1. Very sad about the eviction of the walks from Commonwealth Games. Too many countries not bothering to send representative – what happened to the Olympic spirit of taking part? Too many elitist standards around. In the past no-hopers have been cheered to the echo for having a go. And as has been pointed out – what about low turn-outs in several other events?

2. Dave Sharpe's recollection of the 100 x1 Mile relay at Chelmsford stirs the memory, so I looked out my diary for the period. Quite revealing how little I wrote about the event. We lived in Brighton at the time but stayed with my in-laws in Enfield for the weekend. John Keown and I were picked up at Liverpool Street station by Bob Picton, Carl and Barbara Lawton for the journey by car to Chelmsford. The diary goes on to say that "Belgrave were highly organised – 2 caravanettes and 4 tents". I rested in a sleeping bag in Ray Middleton's super-sized tent, fuelled between stints by honey sandwiches and tea. The diary goes on "very hard work – getting out of the warmth of sleeping bag to warm-up and then race, flat out all the way". My mile times started at 7.11 and drifted out to 7.29 before extra effort at the end improved them a bit again. My average was 7.19. One calf was sore by the end and troubled me for over a week, although it didn't stop me getting out for a bit of light training next day. The calf didn't settle down until I saw the great Alf Palmer at home in Brighton for a bit of massage.

Keep up the good work Dave
Yours in Walking,
John.

ILFORD'S SQUAD AT CHELMSFORD – 1977 100 X 1 MILES

Missing is Hon. Ed. who was strutting his stuff when the shutter clicked.

IN BEIJING

The danger if the Commonwealth Games gets away with ditching walking races is that a 'domino effect' may see other major Games attempting to do likewise. Therefore we hope that Beijing next year will see good walking and no-controversy. Olympic Chief Judge PETER MARLOW will be in charge. We certainly hope there won't be a ding dong do! Mind you, isn't Ding Dong Do the Chinese No. 1?

HECKLING

SHAUN LIGHTMAN, in his role as an Olympian, was selected to present the prizes to those having the courtesy to remain after the Enfield League race on March 3rd. When introduced as an Olympian by the MC, a well known 'character' shouted out that Shaun's Olympics was at Munich. It was 'duff-gen', Shaun goes back to the 1968 Mexico Games where he lined up with BRIAN ELEY (Bristol) and PAUL NIHILL in the 50K. For the record, our 20K trio were ARTHUR JONES (Brighton), BOB HUGHES (RSC) and JOHN WEBB (Basildon). In those days we sent full complements, though ladies walking had yet to gain Olympic recognition.

CAN YOU ASSIST ANNETTE?

The delightful ANNETTE FORKIN won the ladies title in the 1985 Essex League, in the colours of Southend-on-Sea AC. The good lady now runs the annual Southend Festival of Music and Dance, and in that capacity is seeking volunteers as marshals and stewards. If you can help please call Annette on 01702-341195.

RETURN OF 'ERIC THE RED'

Strict judge ERIC SAXBY is returning to the UK in September for at least 3 months, during which time the super fit septuagenarian will be both racing and adjudicating. A few years ago, while officiating in a 10,000 metres walk at Cricklefields Stadium, he put in so many cautions – that he ran out of cards! So all be warned and you won't see red cards being waved under your noses.

BIG-HEARTED DINERS

Former Metropolitan Police representative walkers and retired Inspectors MICK BARNBROOK and PETER HODKINSON got their raffle tickets mixed-up at the annual dinner in New Scotland Yard. Between them they generously purchased wads of tickets and won 3 or 4 prizes, but only accepted 1 (Mick selected a vacuum flask) and kindly donated the rest back for re-drawing. We salute Mick and Peter – true benefactors!

NICE TO SEE YOU

Serving Met. Police officer and walker GARY SMITH was a diner at the annual Met. Police 'Do'. Gary has walked with distinction for the Met, Stock Exchange, Ilford and, of course, Enfield. We'd love to see him back on our start lines!

TREADING THE BOARDS

Congratulations to GEORGE BROWN on his appointment as Chief Judge for the British Open Masters Indoor 3,000 metres Championship at Picketts Lock in March. It was the inaugural walk at this new venue, and appreciation is expressed to a most experienced panel comprising of some who travelled great distances to adjudicate: PETER CASSIDY, GLYN JONES, ALBERT STOKES, JACK THOMAS and PAULINE WILSON. Full result in Record/AW. One walker really did his homework, for nearby resident JOHN HALL put down his £3.70p for a pre-event training session on the boards!

MEETING OF THE GREATS

National Coach ANDI DRAKE is staging a TEAM G.B. TRAINING CAMP over the weekend 28/29th April at Royal Leamington Spa. On the 28th, a welcome will also be extended to athletes individual coaches, parents and all recently licensed race walking coaches.

A COUPLE OF DEATHS

Race Walking lost a great friend when Fleet Street legend IAN WOOLDRIDGE died at the age of 75 after illness. He wrote some really interesting and constructive articles about our pursuit, most recently a most moving and detailed obituary after Don Thompson's death last year. Also passing-on was entertainment legend FRANKIE LAINE at the age of 93. What did he have to do with walking you ask? Well he had a long term friendship with PAUL NIHILL, and on occasions when Paul was at the Olympics and at other Games, Frankie used to send him good luck messages.



HELP WANTED

HELP- WANTED

In nearly all sports the people who keep things going, and form the core of officials and helpers, are ex-sports participants who upon ceasing to be active, then return 'to put something back into the sport that has given them their enjoyment'. Yet race walking, with some notable and highly appreciated exceptions, tends to see its

activists just vanish. Essex Walker now taken by circa 300 readers, has about 95% of that readership 'non-active'. There is great interest from past walkers, hence the popularity of nostalgia articles. Yet how many do we see offering to perform any of the tasks that are needed to stage races for the dwindling number of contemporary participants? Under the politically correct requirements of 'risk-assessment' we're supposed to have a marshal/steward on each turn. Yet we didn't at Chigwell for the Combined Counties 10 Miles. Again – yet again – we're relying on the same small band of folk to double-up in order to fill the tasks that need doing. For that race, DAVE SHARPE phoned-up a number of potential helpers and got a very poor return for his efforts. I personally contacted 8 people by email or phone... and the result? By a coincidence 4 had something else 'on' that particular morning, 1 stated that "not enough notice had been given" (the date had been published since October), 1 stated that he'd let me know if he couldn't make it (he never let me know, but never turned-up, so obviously he couldn't make it) and 2 stated that they'd "get there if I can", of whom 1 did and did sterling work. However you look at it, for both Daves, it was a piss-poor return on the amount of effort and time expended in trying to muster helpers. To quote Southern Area Honorary Secretary CHRIS FLINT's recent statement, "I AM CONCERNED THAT THERE IS A GROWLING RELUCTANCE WITHIN RACE WALKING TO GET INVOLVED IN THE RUNNING OF THE SPORT, WHICH STRANGELY DOESN'T RUN ITSELF UNLESS SOMEONE IS WILLING TO DO IT" D.A.

GET WELL GREETINGS

One helper missing from Chigwell was recording stalwart MARGARET LIVERMORE. The good lady has recently been into hospital for an operation and a 'get well card' was passed around and signed by one-and-all. Here's hoping the card cheered Margaret up and that all has gone well!

PETROL BILL

Former international BILL SUTHERLAND, who shops at Morrisons in Enfield, spluttered to a standstill with duff petrol in his car. Bill shrugged his shoulders and declared, "I'm a founder member of the petrol victims club".



WEBSITE RECOMMENDED

TONY PERKINS advises that it's worth visiting www.racewalkuk.com

ON THE DOG AND BONE

Most evenings before walking races, Hon. Ed's phone gets well used by callers asking the obvious such as: what time it starts, where it is etc., etc. Those ringing are probably aware of the usual answer – they get referred to the issue and page number of Essex Walker where such info can be found. So please read what you are sent. Reference phone calls, seemingly numerous, could callers please not phone after 10 pm, before 8.30 am and not while Coronation Street is on!

CONGRATULATIONS TO LAURENCE

We've been getting a steady stream of 'Grandparent' announcements of late; but that is what can be expected from a sport in which most of its participants are in the upper quartile. Latest to be blessed with such good news is form man LAURENCE DORDOY who has just become a grandfather for the 2nd time.

AT A PACE

The March Blackheath 9K saw a judge's warning issued for alleged pacing, reports newshound DAVE SHARPE.

GET WELL SOON

Essex Walker readers send best wishes to Enfield Centurion PETER EMERY who was admitted to hospital for treatment during March.

CHANGE OF ADDRESS

STEVE & EILEEN ALLEN now reside at 15, Cromwell Road, SOUTHEND-ON-SEA, Essex. SS2 5NG. 01702-304528



MAKE MINE A DOUBLE

On Monday May 7th the Pednor 5 Miles walk starts at 5 pm. Once you've got your breath back, there's a 5 Miles run at 7 pm. The organisers offer a discount for those entering both – with special awards for the best walk/run combined times.

STATEMENT FROM PETER MATTHEWS

The respected broadcaster, commentator, author, respected statistician and President of Enfield & Harringey AC has written the following – in respect of his 'appointment' as meeting commentator for the European Cup of Race Walking on May 20th:

"I noted with interest in a recent Race Walking Record that I was commentating on the European Cup (20th May). And I would have liked to. But nobody had actually asked me – and, in fact, I will be announcing as always on the Loughborough International Meeting which is that very date".

Leamington Race Director IAN RICHARDS points out that this info was only in the Record and, at no time featured on the official Leamington website.

STATEMENT FROM PETER MARLOW

Not our mistake. We were told by UK Athletics that Peter Matthews had agreed to broadcast at Leamington.

NO MORE BIDS

We've all got excited by Leamington's successful bid for the 2007 European Cup of Race Walking. In March, bids closed for the honour of staging the 2009 European Cup of Race Walking. Total bids received = NIL!

"WAKEY WAKEY"

So shouted the late Billy Cotton every Sunday lunchtime on the Light Programme. These days it could apply to our Donkey Lane host MARTIN OLIVER, for he does his regular training at 6 am!

POLITE NOTICE

"The future of the Nicola 5 was put in jeopardy because of entrants urinating within the school grounds. Please refrain from doing so. Any person caught will be disqualified" This was the written warning sent to all entrants of the 2007 race, after some athletes (including a walker) were observed relieving themselves in the grounds of Canvey Island Infants School at last year's race. Additional toilets are provided in the adjacent Junior School and at Concord Rangers Football Club near the start line.

SAVING PLANET EARTH'S RESOURCES

Every person who ceases to take Essex Walker in paper form is saving us postage, stationery, staples, envelopes, postage stamps and our honorary time. More and more of you now get it as an email, in colour and earlier. You can just read it on your screen then delete it. But who was the reader who got in touch with our Subscriptions Secretary TONY PERKINS and wrote, "I no longer want a printed copy as I can now get it on E-Bay". E-Bay?



TONY CHALLIS IN CONVERSATION WITH.....ARTHUR THOMSON

T.C. Arthur, thanks for taking the time to chat to me today. We are here at your home in Letchworth but I have a feeling that you have a Welsh qualification.

A.T. You are correct, I was born in the Cardiff area at a place called Rhiwbina in 1936, I have not represented Wales but I was only 3 weeks old when the family moved to the London area. My father came from Buenos Aires in Argentina and for some time was a trader in West Africa. My mother was born in Telford and was a Nurse but during the war worked as an electrician. I have one older sister. Following the usual junior school etc, I attended Latymer Upper School at Hammersmith then went to Southampton University and gained a degree in Aeronautical Engineering. From there I went to Hunting Aircraft and did an apprenticeship, which was partly at University and partly at the factory. My first post was in London at Hyde Park Corner where The Royal Aeronautical Society has its main offices. I stayed with the R.Ae.S for twenty years then, due to illness, I left for a while before I took a position with BAe Space Systems working on stress analysis, not only in metals but often in plastics etc. After ten years I took early retirement in 1992. For a while I kept myself active by doing the odd job here and there. I drove a van around schools and also did some invigilating at exams.

T.C. That means that you have been retired from work for quite a while?

A.T. After being 'retired' for a few years I had a call from a firm of consultants at Biggleswade who asked me to join them, which I did. I again worked on a stress-related project concerned with the wings of the new Air Bus A380, I stayed with them for three years then finally retired.

T.C. Your wife has been busy looking after us and making us coffee, when were you married?

A.T. We had been working together for about a year and were married in 1962 at South Norwood with Don Thompson as my Best Man. On the way back from our honeymoon we stopped off so that I could compete in the Chippingham to Calne where I finished 4th. We have had three children but, sadly, our third baby died at 18 months. Our two other children are both married and we have two grandchildren.

T.C. Let us now get on to your walking career, how did you get into the sport?

A.T. At school I was no good at any ball games. At Latymer there was a long corridor where running was strictly forbidden, so we all walked fast which probably meant 'race-walking'. At the school sports I entered the ½ mile Walk and the Shot, as I was quite a chunky strong boy. I finished 4th in the Walk. The following year, 1948 I finished 2nd in the Walk and found that I was good at it and became a race walker. I joined the Metropolitan Walking Club in 1951 and found that I was training with some elite walkers; Don Thompson, 50km Gold medallist 1960 Olympics, Brian Hawkins, 5th European 10km 1954 and Hrold Whitlock, Gold 50km walk 1936 Olympics who coached us and many other top class walkers. Don lived not far from my home and we trained together quite a bit. There was a 7-mile circuit around Heathrow that the club used often in the evenings with a long stroll on Sunday mornings. One Christmas Don and I went to the Lake District and did some long hill walks, Don would always insist that we reached the top of all the hills! Incidentally, Race Walking is all about 'contact'. My Grandfather was an athlete of some note in Argentina and his discipline was just the opposite, he was a high jumper in the late 1800's. I have his Gold (solid gold) medal as River Plate AAA Champion in 1894 with a height of 5ft 2ins and a Silver medal with 19ft ½ ins in the Long Jump. Granddad taught me to do the 'scissors' style in the High Jump, which helped me to get my Athletes badge in the Cub Scouts.

T.C. What were your performances in your 'first' walking career?

A.T. Without going to look at my racing diary (I have all my event times upstairs) it was 7 miles in 52 minutes; 10 miles 75 min; 20km 94 min and 20 miles 2 hours 50 min. I was also the 12th Brit to cover 8 miles in the hour. This I managed at Parliament Hill in 1961 in the old Highgate Hour walks which, along with the Chippingham-Calne was one of my favourite events. I mentioned that I had a Welsh qualification. For the 1974 Commonwealth Games in New Zealand I had entered the trials for the 20-mile Walk. I finished 5th and 1st for Wales but was not selected. I was told at the time that due to a lack of funds there were only so many places available and they took a cyclist instead! The Walk was won by Jake Warhurst of England in 2h 55m. It was shortly after this that I retired from Walking, possibly due to my non-selection but I had been ill for some time.

T.C. Obviously you have returned to Walking after a lay-off of some 30 years, tell me how you made the comeback.

A.T. There is a gym just down the end of the road and I often went there to keep in reasonable shape. I would use the treadmill quite a bit and tried walking. Having read some walking results in the athletics press I decided to try a 10km on the treadmill and found that my time was comparable with most of the Vets times and not too far off some recorded in open competition. With this in mind I entered a race but I sustained a muscle pull and it had to be delayed for a month or so. My first race was the Herts County Championships, a track 10km, which I won as an M65. I was back as a race walker!

T.C. You are now in the M70 age group and pretty much the best there is. Of course we all have to slow down with age, how do your times compare now?

A.T. My times as an M69 are 7 miles in 60.10. I hoped to get under the hour at age 70, but managed only two low 61's in 2006 so maybe that is too late now. 10 miles 91 min; My World record stands at 1 hour 56 mins for 20km but I have recorded 1.54 and my 20 mile time is 3 hours 13 mins, this time actually heads the British 2006 Seniors (Open) rankings. You may have noticed a large sword on the wall. This is awarded annually for the Hertfordshire Long Distance (Senior) Walk, usually 20 miles and I have won it for two years.

T.C. You have, of course, been voted as European Best Veteran Athlete for 2006, due to your World records for M70.

A.T. Very rewarding. My World records are on the road 20km 1.56.44 and 30km 2.52.47 and on the track 5000m 26.01.52, a record that had stood for 24 years. I also have British track records at 3000m in 15.15.24 (which has yet to be ratified as a World Record, although I do not know why there is a delay) and 10km in 55.26.3. The presentation for the Best European Vet is to take place at a dinner at Regensburg in May.

T.C. Congratulations on the award. Since your return to competition you have shown that you are by far the best M70 walker in Europe, so I suppose you approve of Veteran/Masters competition?

A.T. I think that the Vets has done a lot of good for athletes who can now compete on equal terms long after the normal athlete retires. I am not in favour of the men's age group being lowered to 35 years, many men at that age still can compete in senior events. EVAC do a good job with walks in the League and at the Championships. When I eventually retire from competing I would like to do some coaching for the younger walkers. The sport can certainly do with some new blood.

T.C. Arthur, I have enjoyed our chat today, reminiscing over past events and people we knew. I had better get out of your way now as you are expecting BBC TV Look East to arrive soon for an interview and then you have Three Counties Radio wanting to talk to you.

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ALSO NOT INVITED

A CHIP OFF THE OLD BLOCK

The talented O'Rawe family have provided successful participants in several sports and walking just being one. In the boxing ring JAMIE O'RAWE won an Essex title and competed on the continent, while brother ANDY gained international selection under the amateur code before turning professional with Frank Warren. Granddad ALAN is Chairman of Canvey Island Amateur Boxing Club. Latest to duck between the ropes is 13-year old CONNOR who won his debut bout in Brentwood recently. Let's hope he'll also find time to give walking a bash!

Our last issue reported that MARTIN OLIVER (Enfield & Harringey Walking Section Hon. Sec) had not been invited to the grand televised opening of the new Picketts Lock athletics stadium. He was not the only forgotten one. Said Middlesex County AAA Walking Secretary JOHN HALL, "Despite being the immediate Past President of the Middlesex County AAA, and one who resides in the Borough of Enfield, I also was not invited". Further investigation reveals that even the current Middlesex County President (who lives in Chingford) was uninvited – until this was pointed out and an invitation duly sent. It appears that, yet again, the real workers were forgotten about while 'hangers-on' quickened their footsteps (or were more likely chauffeur driven) to the function!

ME AND MY CLUB

Each week we speak to a YA reader, who tells us about something special in their life or their favourite thing to do. This week **Peter Cassidy**, 67, from Shenfield, talks about being treasurer of Loughton Athletics Club, based at The Pavilion in Southview Road, Loughton.

WHAT DOES THE CLUB DO?

It is a general athletics club, offering training and competition for all ages.

People can take part in track and field, road running and cross country, race-walking and - remarkably for a club based in Essex – fell running.

The club belongs to various leagues, which give a variety of competition at different levels.

The club is currently the holder of the women's team trophy in the Essex race-walking league.

It has also had various successes by individual athletes at County and area level, as well as in the English schools' championships.

HOW DID YOU GET INVOLVED WITH THE CLUB?

I was an athlete in my younger days. When I got to 40, I went along to watch my employer's staff sports day.

I thought to myself that I would be better than some of them, so I began to train again, firstly at cross-country running and later at my first love, race-walking.

At the time I lived in Theydon Bois and Loughton was my nearest club.

A work colleague said the club contained a very friendly crowd who known for having the occasional pint to round off training sessions.

After a few years I became a member of the committee and then treasurer, which I still am.

WHERE DOES THE CLUB PRACTICE?

The club headquarters, where most of the training sessions take place, are at Roding Valley playing fields, Loughton, where we are fortunate enough to have premises fairly close to Epping Forest. There we have endless opportunity for cross-country running.

WHAT DO YOU GET OUT OF BEING PART OF THE CLUB?

Firstly, the companionship of others in training and racing.

Secondly, the opportunity to help the newer members to get out of athletics as much pleasure as I have had over the years.

Thirdly, the lively social side of the club, which has several functions during the year, as well as the informal get-togethers.

Fourthly, in a sport that is largely individually based, the experience of competing as a member of a team.

Fifthly, the accessibility of gym sessions that are held during the winter.

CAN ANYONE JOIN?

The club is open to anyone older than eight years of age, regardless of ability. Many members join for the sake of fitness and exercise and have no intention of competing.

The subscriptions rates are kept as low as possible.

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NICE TO SEE YOU

Although not attending the function it was nice to see LOUISE BENNETT on the 4th floor of New Scotland Yard just prior to the Met. Police Dinner. Louise, who was recently in the UK junior hammer rankings, is the daughter of recently retired Met. Officer and Centurion STUART BENNETT.

UPDATE FROM POPULAR MIKE SCAMELL

I've joined LA Fitness a few months ago and have been working very hard to improve my fitness. I've lost several kilograms and I'm actually in better shape now than for several years.

NOTE THE DATE

The Race Walking Association is to stage a Centenary Dinner on Saturday 20th October (venue to be notified) so please note this date in your diaries.



WANTED

MICK BARNBROOK would appreciate a copy of January's Record, if anybody wants to pass it on when they've read it, as his picture is in it.

EAMONN IS APPEALING

Dear All,

Your assistance is much appreciated in this. It is long over due to have a 'roll of honour' in the club house something that the current members can be proud of and realise that the club has a good history. As you can appreciate collating the data is not easy so I do appreciate any help that you can offer.

I need names and if possible the years for any of the following:
GB/England full international representative vests.
National titles.
International titles.
Olympians.

Regards,

Eamonn Martin.

Chairman Basildon AC.

eamonn.martin@mira.co.uk.

ADVISES MARTIN OLIVER

The Enfield Walker website www.enfieldwalker.co.uk paid for by Charlie Fogg has nothing on it, as apparently Charlie is waiting for ME (!) to set it up!!!! The old Samuel Beckett play 'Waiting for Godot' comes readily to mind!!!

AN ATHLETE'S QUOTE

"I have kept all the press cuttings so he can have a good read, so he can see and understand". Dwain Chambers, returning from a drugs ban, on a gift in waiting for his 9-month old son, Skye.

MAN OF KENT

A Kent-based walker asked Hon. Ed., at Bexley's March meeting, "When you did your nostalgia item based on early 1971, how come you missed my 46.30 for 10,000 metres on cinders at a Withdene Stadium in Brighton?" The answer was, "There's a hint in the title. It's called Essex Walker and does tend to lean towards the performances of those with Essex connections". This particular guy has been known to cart around his 70s medals to show people but, as DAVE SHARPE told him, "It's what you do today that matters".

YOUR GUIDE TO BUYING A SPORTS BRA

You need to arm yourself against the irreversible effects of gravity, for once the ligaments around the breasts stretch, there's nothing you can do to shorten them again. Normal bras reduce breast movement by around 35 per cent but a good sports bra achieves closer to 60 per cent. When buying:

1. Get measured professionally at a department store and try a variety of styles in your size as all bras have a different fit.
 2. Avoid cotton as it absorbs sweat and leads to chafing.
 3. Avoid rough seams or bindings which will irritate your skin.
 4. Do a changing room jump test to see how comfortable the bra will be when you're moving and remember – wider straps minimise bounce.
 5. Think about the exercises you'll be doing and how well strapped down your breasts need to be.
- This advice comes from NICKI WATERMAN, the Sun's fitness expert who recommends the Sportjock Action Sport bra (sizes 28-40) at £24.99p for AA and A cups. For B and C cups the Nike Revolutionary Support bra (sizes 32-40) at £40 is recommended.

n.b. This article is for our lady readers – and any furtive cross-dressers!