

Essex Walker

Editor: Dave Ainsworth



GEOFF HUNWICKS TRIBUTE EDITION

GEOFF HUNWICKS (1950 – 1922)

Sadly Geoff passed on, after a long illness, following hospital in-patient treatment in The Gambia. He was well known as a successful race walker with both Ilford AC and Weymouth St Paul's Harriers - both Clubs being ones where Geoff held Offices. He tasted early success as a race walker as a member of Ilford's scoring 3 which won the 1968 RWA National Junior 5 Miles Championship at Little Hulton, their scoring-3 team led by winner Roger Mills (37.14), with Brian Armstrong 5th and Geoff 7th. In close order as a reliable back-up was Laurence

Dordoy. Laurence was Geoff's next-door neighbour in Chadwell Heath, and one wonders if their race walking footwork was improved by regular attendance in the ballroom - as both keenly went to dance classes. Geoff's success continued as he earned Junior International status a year later. Soon after he was in the senior ranks and making his name in Essex County and open events. Ilford won a first National walking title at Southwick in 1975 over 10 miles with a scoring 4 of Roger Mills 3rd, Steve Gower 9th, Lew

Mockett 16th and Geoff 26th. That title was again won in 1978 at Crystal Palace with a scoring 4 of Steve Gower 9th, George Nibre 12th, Geoff 22nd and Brian Armstrong 27th. Geoff was Essex County AA 50 Kilometres Champion in successive years: 1976/77. Showing stamina his career best 50K time was 4:32.08. At 50K he failed by 1 position to gain full International status in a Basildon sudden death selection race when pipped by Barry Ingarfield.

In the '70s Geoff was Ilford AC's Press Officer and submitted informative reports across the board to the Ilford Recorder and now defunct Ilford Pictorial. He was

Photographer: Mike Street



Ilford AC team (L -R) Geoff Hunwicks, Lew Mockett, Roger Mills and Steve Gower

a founder participant in our popular Enfield League. In its early days races alternated between 5 and 6 miles. On a bitter mid-winter below freezing point Saturday afternoon in Enfield, a 6 miles race was billed. Mutiny was in the dressing room as walkers wanted a shorter 5 miles' race - except Geoff. A vote was taken with only Geoff raising a hand for a longer distance. Geoff won a reduced 5 miler. An Ilford Recorder sub-editor wrote a great headline: "*Hunwicks Loses Vote but Wins Race*". Geoff travelled far and enjoyed long ones: Leicester Mercury/Bradford 50K/London-to-Brighton etc. Once at the latter event he showed up at Westminster a whole hour after "Big Ben" had set the field on its way. He still started, caught the back marker on the Gatwick straight, and then powered on to the Brighton seafront. The Referee ruled that "as he hadn't joined the race until reaching a back marker at 26 miles, he'd walked unjudged for half the race and therefore should have his name expunged from the result sheet" - which it was.

Geoff made 2 attempts at joining The Centurions (an organisation for walkers who've competed a 100 miles' walk in under 24 hours) - in 1973 at Bristol when his attendants were Tony Perkins and Len Ruddock, and at Ware in 1997 with John Perkins in support. Both attempts fizzled out before the halfway mark. His infamous 1973 effort reached folklore status, as after a few travelling hiccups, Geoff got going - only to fuel his progress with tins of Heineken and cigars. *You couldn't make it up!*

Geoff was bright as proved by his success at chess, where his ranking saw him as a high board player. Geoff was proud to be a County Representative in 2 areas: Essex and later Dorset. He was a more than useful player at snooker and spent many hours in the Seven Kings snooker rooms, where his regular fellow player was the late Ilford athlete John Platt. Geoff had a lengthy spell attending Centurion 100 Tom Richardson's coaching sessions at Newham AC and a shorter time taking advice from Colin Young. Both gave Geoff health advice as he liked to both drink and smoke (as tributes show). His lifestyle wasn't one usually seen in an athlete. It was an odd sight to see Tom Richardson puffing away with smoke clouds rising from his pipe while lecturing Geoff on the evils of smoking! Indeed Geoff had a frequent cough but never saw his GP as he boasted he could go years without seeking such attention - yes he did have a high natural fitness level as seen by so many athletic performances. He was good at running and one year had a great run in the Unigate Marathon at Harlow. Geoff was described as mercurial, as a lack of consistency meant he could be below form one week and sensational the next - and when he was, it was truly remarkable.

His best race came in 1975 in a wonderful RWA National 20 Miles at Castletown (Isle-of-Man) for which Ilford colleague Tony Perkins organised an eventful minibus trip. "Race Walking Record" Editor Alan Buchanan described it as the finest National ever held. Southend's Bob Dobson won in 2:36.26. Despite "*having a few*" the night before Geoff finished 9th in a truly top-class field clocking 2:46.17. Afterwards, top RWA official Len Mitchell singled out Geoff for special praise, saying how good he looked throughout the event. Len said Geoff had everything needed to make the very top and predicted he would do so. Coaches urged those under their control to watch Geoff as he was always perfect, stylish and effective. In Geoff's heyday many races had programmes - and those compiling them so often had his surname wrongly published: *Hunwick, Hunswick, Hunnswicks* etc. *But we knew who they meant.*



Geoff battling it out with Richard Pannell in the open 10kms (World Cup walks weekend, Isle of Man 1985). Photo: Chris Maddocks

Geoff had a number of jobs, one of which was as a gravedigger/gardener at Rippleside Cemetery in Barking's Ripple Road - which was on one of Ilford's training routes (we had pack training sessions in those days). As we trained we often remarked how good the gardens looked since Geoff started work there. All of a sudden Geoff ceased work to visit a remote Scottish island for a quiet time - during which he evaluated his life and decided to make a dramatic career change. This to work with those having learning disabilities. This needed a qualification, which Geoff obtained by study in Wales. He commenced his new employment with positions around Greater London before deciding to relocate to Weymouth in Dorset. He worked for many years at a Centre for persons with learning disabilities and joined a talented walking squad at Weymouth St Paul's Harriers. Geoff fitted in well, making many notable appearances in the West Country. He organised a series of great open races which put walking on before crowds - the Weymouth seafront/promenade races which started and finished at Weymouth Pavilion by the pier. It had razzamatazz as the Town's Mayor always came in robes with a current *Miss Weymouth* present. Living at a resort, Geoff always had a spare room where visitors could put down camp beds/sleeping bags for a few days. Geoff showed another sporting talent as a serious and successful skittles player in the Weymouth & Portland Skittles League. When Geoff decided to leave Weymouth, the Centre he'd worked at staged a farewell evening - which I attended as a guest. A hall was packed with those using the centre, their parents/friends/relations and the Centre's staff and helpers. They were so sad he was moving on, and many gifts were presented to him to show sincere appreciation. One of Geoff's jobs at the Harriers was to edit a Club newsletter - in which a walking report was written by Centurion Brian Copp, a Dorset Echo sports reporter. In assessing Geoff's contribution he wrote, "Geoff is an enigma as he trains at a snail's pace yet at weekends races as though the devil is after him". [Tributes paid to 'wonderful' Geoff Hunswick who died in Africa | Dorset Echo](#)

Geoff's mother had passed on many years earlier and when his father became ill, Geoff moved back to a family home in Chadwell Heath. He didn't seek work and proudly stated he'd no intention of seeking unemployment benefit. He married Rohey, who most of us only saw once at a walking race, when she showed up with Geoff for a Woodford Wednesday Walk. Rohey sat in a folding chair beside Ashtons track with her head in a book during our 3,000m walk's duration - clearly not "hooked" on race walking! He was a keen environmentalist, and when back in Chadwell Heath, founded a branch of the Green Party - and stood unsuccessfully in a Council Ward election.

The greatest chapter in his life came when Geoff and Rohey relocated to The Gambia and founded "The Gambian Home for Children with Learning Difficulties" which was based at Hart House and opened its doors in Summer 2002. Geoff named this building in memory of Albert Hart, the late Essex-based Grade 1 Walking Judge, who'd worked in the same field and had inspired Geoff to enter the profession. The rest is history as Geoff managed the project from Day 1 until his sad demise. Many walkers chipped-in with generous donations to assist the aims of Hart House and this included Essex Walker's readers, many of whom for 13 consecutive years donated money in lieu of sending each other Christmas cards. Geoff and his team sent regular newsletters to his many home-based supporters and other interested parties.

There's so much sadness in The Gambia, and here in the UK, at the news of Geoff's departure. What a character - he's one you can guarantee will never be forgotten. If new to our sport and never got to meet him - then you've missed something special. The world was a much better place - **with him in it!** DA

NOTICE FROM HART HOUSE - THE GAMBIA

We are so shocked and sad to report the sudden death of the inspirational Geoff Hunwicks, founder and CEO of Hart House, during the night. He had spent some time in hospital over the festive season but was beginning to feel better and had returned home. Hart House has been fully open until now but will temporarily close whilst arrangements are put in place by the Hart House Committee to allow it to reopen. Geoff's devout wish would be for the facility to stay open as a long-term legacy for his work and we will be doing all we can to ensure that happens. Rest in peace Geoff.



HART HOUSE

REMEMBERING OUR STALWARTS, IN PARTICULAR GEOFF HUNWICKS

Friends. A rather [melancholy post](#) remembering stalwarts of the sport, who died last year, and drawing your attention to the tragic death of Geoff Hunwicks, an outstanding athlete and a committed, compassionate human being.

Tony Taylor

Adds Hon Ed: This is kindly supplied by now Crete-based Tony, who many of us met at Moulton in June.

GEOFF HUNWICKS - MY TRIBUTE by Denis Sheppard

I first knew Geoff in my teens. He was a fellow race walker who had already represented his country at junior level, was of a similar standard to me and we were fierce competitors. He would normally end up in front of me but I always knew when he was behind me because of his nervous cough which stayed with him for the rest of his life. If Geoff didn't beat me it was probably because he had overdone the beer and cigars the night before because he knew how to work hard and play hard. He was also a very good chess player and represented both Essex and Dorset in the activity. We remained in the same sporting circle until well into the 1980s when Geoff moved to Weymouth and we lost contact until he opened Hart House in 2002. Geoff had had a number of jobs, one as a gravedigger/gardener and another working in insurance before he suddenly left work to visit a remote Scottish island to evaluate his life. He eventually decided to make a dramatic career change and to devote his life to supporting people with disabilities. This needed a qualification so Geoff went to Wales to study and once qualified he returned to London to work with his friend and mentor Albert Hart at a facility supporting people with learning disabilities in Forest Gate. He worked in a number of other local institutions broadening his experience before deciding to relocate to Weymouth in Dorset where he continued to work for many years at a Centre for persons with learning difficulties. In 1996 Geoff left Weymouth and went to put his skills to use working as a volunteer in Palestine. He was there for nearly four years and spent the latter part of his time there working at a home in Jemima specialising in respite care for children with learning disabilities which inspired him to want to open a

similar facility himself. Geoff moved back to a family home in Chadwell Heath to care for his ailing father who died after a short period of time. Geoff then took another break from work to think about his future and became a keen environmentalist founding an early local branch of the Green Party and standing unsuccessfully in a Council Ward election. He was a true child of the 60s “hippy” world and was also into yoga and spiritual karma and remained throughout his life a committed Christian to no particular denomination. Christian teaching certainly seemed to underpin his core values and it was at this time that he decided he wanted to do more to help people with learning disabilities. So he set off to Africa with money from his inheritance and the sale of his house in Weymouth in search of a location where he could turn his dream of a home to provide respite care for children with learning difficulties into a reality. I was shocked and impressed in 2002 when I got to hear that Geoff had moved to the Gambia, got married and opened Hart House to provide respite care and development for children with learning and physical disabilities. I knew that, through his relationship with someone else from race walking circles (Albert Hart, hence Hart House), he had trained to work in various capacities with disabled people but this was at another level. As a result of the visit to Hart House by a mutual friend I decided to visit Geoff in the Gambia with my daughter Orla, who had just completed a degree in special needs and was working as a teacher in a special needs school in Essex, and I wanted her to see for herself what Geoff was achieving in the Gambia. We visited in April 2014. It would be an understatement to say that we were both impressed by what we saw. He had moved to the Gambia and then found a site to build a facility with overnight accommodation using his own money and an inheritance from his father, opened it and raised money from around the world to pay for the day-to-day costs of running the centre (it is important to note that there was no funding from the Gambian government and the facility relied totally on voluntary donations). Impressive as all of that was, the most extraordinary part of all was the quality of the programmes he had developed for each child to improve their cognitive skills and limb function. It was not just a facility where children were cared for during the week to provide respite care to their parents but somewhere that gave them the skills and mobility to improve their lives. We were both moved by what we saw and I resolved to help Geoff keep the facility open. About a year later together with a small group of Geoff’s friends from the UK we set up a small fund which we registered with the Inland Revenue so that we could claim Gift Aid on his regular donations and set out to provide him with a regular monthly income to give him some guaranteed funding. Geoff was finding it increasingly difficult to raise enough money as tourism to the country decreased and there was a real danger of him having to close down. Although he had the support of others, Hart House was Geoff, he controlled all aspects of the project from raising money, recruiting, training and paying staff, managing the premises, selecting and supporting the children and their families and ensuring their personal development. It was a huge responsibility on one person’s shoulders who was not getting any younger and was not in the best of health. It is remarkable that even on the day before he died he was still personally supervising the project and the children were still on the premises receiving care and support Geoff had devoted the last twenty years of his colourful life finding a way, against all of the odds, to provide a unique facility in the Gambia for the children Albert Hart had inspired him to care for. He used his own money to continue to support the project and lived a frugal lifestyle to minimise personal costs. The task may have taken its toll on his mental and physical health but he continued to make it happen and the Gambia has him alone to thank for a fantastic facility delivering care and development comparable to that available in the world’s most advanced countries. When I was competing against him on the streets of Ilford in the 1970s I never dreamt that the man with the nervous cough would be capable of such an achievement. I have worked with many devoted and talented people in my life but I have never come across anyone who achieved what Geoff did and I suspect I never will. Geoff was unique and irreplaceable. Now he has left us we have to wait to see what the future holds for Hart House but whatever emerges in the future Geoff’s contribution to humanity throughout his life but particularly the last twenty years should never be underestimated. He really did make a difference.



Denis Sheppard

TRIBUTES TO GEOFF HUNWICKS RIP

Both shock and sadness have been expressed by many readers, including **Hilary McDermott**, **Alan O'Rawe** and **Peter Marlow**. Many fond memories and expressions of admiration have been shared:

- Sad news. I was only last week looking up Geoff's Gambian venture a week or so ago, and he seemed to be a very well-respected figure there. I was seriously considering donating to Hart House, and may well do so in his memory. Geoff was a good friend and drinking buddy in the early seventies when I spent most weekends staying at my parents' Hainault home so that I could support Ilford AC activities. Geoff witnessed, and was largely responsible for, one of my notable PBs - 13 pints in a day assisted by an afternoon bar at Chelmsford AC and a subsequent boozy party. Geoff always seemed a bit restless to me in whatever his job was up in town. When he surprisingly made a dramatic career change and took a job at the Astley Centre in Bromley, working with troubled children, he moved into my flat for the first couple of months, and I drove him to his first day at work. The rest, of course, is history. What a man! **John Bachelor** (past Ilford AC President).
- Was very sad to hear about Geoff passing away. He played a large part in my early days as a race walker, training partner and club rival. **Len Ruddock**
- Very sad news. Geoff was one of those people who pass through your life and leave an indelible impression and his very dry sense of humour and generous nature. He achieved much in our sport being part of that great youth and junior Ilford group of the late 60's who left their mark at the very highest level. His achievements later in life are what truly marked Geoff out when he founded Hart House which he gave so much of his later life to and left footprints in the sand which we all admired and were secretly humbled by. Thank you for passing our way Geoff. May you rest in peace. **Oliver Flynn**
- Sad news. I believe he had a competition with Dave Sharpe for who could do the most races in a year. It led to them both travelling the country endlessly!! RIP Geoff. **Steve Till**
- Very sad news indeed. He achieved so much for those far less fortunate than himself deserving of a Top Award whilst living and leading the Hart House Community in Gambia for such a long time. We remember him well attending the Late Reg Youlden's Funeral in full training gear on his cycle and drawing a chuckle from those present! Also, he once provided 'The Last Supper' all over the back seat and below of my new Orange Vauxhall Cavalier with droppings from his lunch when I gave him a lift back after a race. No car cleaning depots available in those distant days! He was such a likeable character! Many happy times and wonderful memories. May he Rest in Peace. He will be greatly missed by so many. With sincere condolences. **Bill and Kath Sutherland**
- RIP Geoff. Remembering your visits to Guernsey to race and play in the Chess tournaments. **Rob Elliott**
- Although we were aware that Geoff had been ill Joan and I were stunned upon hearing the news of his passing. We only knew him briefly but were touched by his quiet resolve and consider ourselves fortunate to have known him. Geoff was an *Enfield Leaguer* and took part in the first Enfield Race Walking League race in 1998 and I have a result sheet that shows him finishing 72nd of the 135 that raced in the 1967 Enfield Open 7 Miles. He was a teenager, his time was 62.21 and he went on to gain Junior International status. The race winner was Paul Nihill (Surrey WC) 50.48. RIP Geoffrey. **Ron Wallwork**
- Sad beyond words. If some of us think we have achieved in life, it is nothing compared with Geoff's dedication to the children of The Gambia. Rest in peace. **Alex Ross**
- What a shock, and how saddening. Geoff came and stayed for a few days with Pete and me many moons ago and enjoyed training round the streets and byways of our little town of Downham Market in Norfolk, before the pull of the Gambia took him off with Rohey to set up the wonderful enterprise that Hart House has become. I have sent condolences. I am sure there will be a great commitment towards ensuring the valuable work done there continues as a legacy to Geoff's memory, but first we must mourn the loss of a very genuine, caring man, and a great sportsman too. **Cath Duhig**
- Sorry to hear of Geoff's passing. I remember when he came to Brighton with Roger Mills and Brian Armstrong in the late 60's in the Ilford team when we used to include a walk in our inter club track matches. He was a junior international along with Olly Flynn and a lad I coached at the time, Richard



Evans. He was dedicated to working with people with learning difficulties which was also my late wife Jean's calling. He was a Facebook friend and I followed his great work at Hart House in The Gambia. RIP Geoff. **Alan Buchanan**

- OMG very sad. I remember spending many a riotous drinking session with Geoff and John Batchelor etc back in the '70s. I remember all the smoking and drinking. Amazed that he was ever able to compete at the high standard he did and maybe quite incredible he made it to 71. **Andy Catton**
- I didn't know Geoff other than as a fellow walker but I am saddened by his passing for he was clearly a committed man having founded Hart House which must have been a tremendously tough job. I do hope his legacy will continue into the future. **Chris Flint**
- So sad. Geoff was a good friend back in the late 1960s and 70s. We were always at the Chelmsford AC and Ilford parties. We also trained and raced very hard. Geoff was in the junior GB team. **Don Cox**
- Truly saddened by this report. So many fond memories of our competitions, especially at Jyvaskyla in 2000. My thoughts are with all the children and staff at Hart House ... indeed, rest in peace Geoff. **Keith Phillips**
- Really sad to hear of Geoff's death. For a period through to the mid-70s there was a real bond between Lancs and Essex - with Colin, Roger, Phil, Alec et al and Geoff was a part of that gathering. RIP Geoff. We go back a long way. **Tony Taylor**
- Very sorry to hear about Geoff's death. I remember having a few pints with him at the now long-gone White Horse. At least he ended up doing some good in this now crazy world. **Les Hislop** (Past President Ilford AC/occasional Essex league walker)
- Geoff – quite the shocker. He obviously did a lot of good with Hart House (sure hope it can remain open to continue his good works) and I always remember his competitiveness and going out hard, as well as some of the parties and 7-pint Pipkins. **Steve King**
- Deeply saddened by the news of the passing of Geoff Hunwicks. He will be remembered for all his work and commitment to Hart House. **John Webb**
- I'm very sorry to hear of Geoff passing away at such a young age (for a race walker at least). I remember him well from our races together in the 70's and 80's. **John Hall**
- Sad to see Geoff leaving us. We raced each other when we were in our teens and were still in contact while he was doing sterling work in Gambia. **Denis Holly**
- Very sad to hear the news about Geoff, too young to go at 71. I remember him well from the old days. He came along at Ilford with the likes of Brian Armstrong and Roger Mills. **Mike Hinton**
- So sorry to receive this sad news, I always hold fond memories of Geoff. **Jeanette Street (nee Gower)**
- So sad. We did meet up with Geoff and his wife at Hart House when we went to Gambia in our motorhome. **Irene and Mike Bateman**

“Walk Tall Geoff in your next chapter.” **George Nibre**

ESSEX COUNTY ATHLETIC ASSOCIATION AGM, 6 December 2021

As befits an AGM at the end of a year in which not very much happened, the AGM was all over in 42 minutes, with nothing very contentious happening, with 25 Officers and representatives present and 8 apologising for being elsewhere.

With Chairman Andy Catton being absent, the chair was taken by President Gerry O'Docherty.

After formal acceptance of 2020 Minutes, with no Matters Arising, Treasurer Gary Chandler presented the Audited Accounts, pointing out that the year of little activity had resulted in an increase in the Association's reserves, which he expected to be largely eliminated next year by the increased costs of holding events, etc. The shortage of competition was also reflected in Claire Levey's Secretary's Report.

Gerry O'Docherty and Brigid Wallen were re-elected as President and Vice President, in recognition, again, of the emptiness of their previous year of office, in which they had had few

duties to carry out and Gary Chandler was also re-elected as Treasurer; Andy Catton was likewise re-elected as Chairman. After several years in office, Claire Levey retired as Secretary and Malcolm Bailey added the position to his already-held post as Minutes Secretary. Allison Gillan, Marian Stiff and Colin Stiff were elected to Life Membership of the Association.

Annual Trophies were presented – largely to Havering AC and Chelmsford AC – and news was given on progress towards the provision of a trophy for the 5K Ladies' Track Championship; individual and Club donations may be made via www.justgiving.com/crowdfunding/essex trophy initiative

With Kaye and Paul Merrywest retiring from the Track and Field Championship Secretaryship after the 2021 indoor event, Hayley Pegg was elected to take over. **There is a vacancy for County Race Walking Secretary!**

It has been the custom for some years to award medals in the track and field championships to the first three finishers, regardless of how many competitors take part, although the Constitution provides that:

In all championships Essex County medals shall be awarded subject to the number of entries as follows:

1. One medal only if four entries or less;
2. Two medals if five entries;
3. Three medals if six entries are more.

Except that, if second and/or third place positions, are better than, or equal to UKA Grade 3 performances, then medals shall be awarded.

Team Championships

1. One set of medals if three teams are less are entered;
2. Two sets of medals if four teams are entered;
3. Three sets of medals if six teams or more are entered.

The AGM agreed that in future championships, *excluding road and cross-country*, this Rule will be applied. Report by **Peter Cassidy** (Essex County AA Life member)

RACE WALKING ASSOCIATION AGM



Despite outgoing Honorary General Secretary Colin Vesty spending much time distributing full details far-and-wide, walkers showed little interest as a mere 20 showed up (this on "zoom" so saving travelling time/costs) all of whom were over 60 and included a number who were already RWA Officers & Committee members. A mere handful even sent apologies for absence. A list of the deceased since your last AGM (29) exceeded the numbers present. True enthusiastic and optimist Chris Hobbs is your new President, with Isle of Man Commonwealth Games Representative Alan Callow as Vice President. We congratulate both worthies on their elections. Alas nobody came forward to serve as Secretary, Assistant Secretary or Minutes Secretary. However Colin offered to stay on as Assistant Secretary to assist a newcomer in the role of Secretary - if one comes forward - which was an appreciated gesture. **Are any readers perhaps able to assist by coming forward to take on these roles?** This meeting ended with an open forum which saw contributions from Ron Wallwork and George Nibre. Ron gave details of an initiative to have a parade of UK Commonwealth Games medallists at the Birmingham walks. It's worth noting and celebrating, as all our UK medallists are still with us! Let's hope it comes off. George ignited a discussion to why Dominic King failed in his Tokyo Olympic 50K Olympic selection bid? Both points raised were interesting and should have commanded a larger audience. Last word from one attender, "Not much hope for renewal when all attendees were over 60 and only 20 from the whole country". How much longer will the RWA continue?

THANKS

On the Thursday before Christmas Hon Ed took a Covid test in an NHS "walk-in" testing centre. It was positive, followed by instruction to self-isolate for 10 days. Thanks to readers for their kind messages

received during this period, which were all much appreciated. This period might have passed quicker had our Festive Season television been better but - yet again - it was dismal.

CENTURIONS' WORLDWIDE TOAST

This long-established Christmas Day tradition commenced in 1931, when founder member Ernest Neville (C7) of Surrey Walking Club, made a suggestion in his Captain's Christmas newsletter. It was proposed that Centurions - wherever they were - all raised glasses at **2pm** for a worldwide toast. It's been the case ever since. Hon Ed spent Christmas in self-isolation, when just before 2pm, fellow Ilford AC Centurion Tony Perkins (C685) rang, so a toast was shared. At 2pm Hon Ed raised a glass of malt whisky and said "*The Centurions*" to which Tony fittingly added "*and absent friends*" - a thoughtful addition to our toast.



CENTURIONS' AGM

A well-attended AGM - on "Zoom" - was held on 22 January. Members showed satisfaction with the way things had been going as, with one exception, Officers holders and Committee Members remained in post. The line-up is therefore:

President Pam Ficken, Immediate Past President Eric Horwill, Treasurer Richard Cole, Captain Martin Fisher, Vice Captain Frans Leijtens, Auditor Alex Ross, Webmaster Sue Clements, Archivist Sue Clements, Social Walks Secretary Steve Kemp and Merchandising Officer Chris Flint. Committee: Dave Jones, Carl Lawton, Richard McChesney and Ian Richards. Sue Clements stepped down after 3 years meritorious service, for which she was warmly thanked. Sue had combined her Secretary role with 2 other positions. Chris Flint returned for a second period as Honorary Secretary. On being elected he said, "I've taken over for continuity and see this as a temporary holding position, which I shall carry out to the best of my abilities". An Assistant Secretary's post remains unfilled - so is there a volunteer out there who can consider filling this position? Other news, such as their next social walk (in Suffolk's Constable County, based on East Bergholt) and the Middlesbrough 100 Miles (entries already coming in) will be featured nearer their dates.

"YOU'D NEVER GUESS WHO I HAD IN THE BACK?"

Many a London cabbie has uttered those words. Steve Allen's latest "names" are TV and radio 'personality' of "I'm a Celebrity Get Me Out of Here" fame, Roman Kemp - and octogenarian Delia Smith - who needs no introduction. Incidentally Steve, Centurion No 1102, celebrated his birthday on the same day as The Centurions AGM.

DICK LAMIE RIP

Former IAAF President Dick, a Senegal long jumper in his day, has died aged 88. He was once leader of our World's athletes and a big player on the Olympic Committee. His fall from grace was monumental. Last year he was jailed for 4 years on a corruption charge, when found guilty of helping to cover up doping in Russia in exchange for millions of dollars in bribes. However he was deemed too ill and old for prison, so it was changed to 5 years' house arrest. *No further words are needed!*

FRED PERRY BAKER's FUNERAL – APPRECIATION

- It was lovely to meet you all yesterday and thank you so much for attending my Dad's funeral and wake (especially with the difficulty in finding the Rose & Crown!). **Sue Johnstone**
- The family were very pleased with our efforts to say goodbye appropriately. **John Northcott**
- I got the distinct impression that Sue and the family really appreciated our presence as Centurionism had been a huge part of Fred's life. His brother's description of Fred's (sorry Perry's) irritation at not being given the right refreshment during a 100 brought back memories of how we ultra-distance walkers demand things to be right and delivered on time! It was a simple funeral for Fred who came from a close family who were very impressed with his sporting prowess and professional abilities. They were all very kind with their hospitality and showed great interest in our descriptions of race walking heroics. Thank you Dave, Ian Statter and the two Johns (Northcott and Nye) for driving to a crematorium that was so well-hidden it nearly defeated SatNavs. **Chris Flint**

Adds Hon Ed: We all knew him as Fred, but in his family was only known by his middle name - Perry. We learned Fred was a high-ranking Civil Servant in his professional life and, in sporting terms, had been a Kent County Cricket Club triallist and a Club member until his demise. He was a lifelong West Bromwich Albion supporter through good times and bad (often the latter) - but none knew how this had come about? To find the Crematorium in Royal Tunbridge Wells and a post-service gathering in the next town of Tonbridge took both a venturesome spirit and an enquiring mind.

A MOST WHOLESOME TRIBUTE

We hope that the following short note provides a helpful contribution to the walking community's tributes to Graham Peddie.

Sandra and Richard Brown

Graham Peddie, MBE, passed away peacefully on 6 May 2021 aged 82. As warden for many years of Tanners Hatch Youth Hostel on the National Trust's Polesden Lacy estate in Surrey, Graham was particularly known for his contribution to the YHA and to the health, wellbeing, education and enjoyment of young people. Graham delighted in introducing young people to the joy of being connected with the natural world. Hostelling weekend events organised by Graham, for example with folk music, are still fondly remembered many years later. Graham retired as the warden of Tanners Hatch in 1998 and set up the Pitstop charity for the homeless and socially isolated. It is for this work that he was awarded the MBE in 2002.

Graham was an early member of the Long Distance Walkers Association (LDWA) and of the Surrey LDWA Group. Tanners Hatch Youth Hostel was a key feeding station on the 30 miles and 50 miles Tanners Marathon long-distance walking challenge events, at which Graham provided much appreciated drinks and words of encouragement. He was a Surrey Walking Club (SWC) member for some years in the 1970s and 1980s. Graham walked for SWC, wearing his club vest and black shorts, in long distance race-walks like the Hastings to Brighton. Many SWC strolling and racing members participated in "The Tanners" events, and, for racing members like Peter Selby, these provided good training for the London to Brighton 52 miles race. Graham qualified as Centurion C605 (Surrey Walking Club) in 1977, completing 100 miles in 21h 56m 47s at the Bristol RWC 100 miles race.

Graham will be remembered for his humanity and kindness, his outstanding contribution to the Surrey community, and as one of the great characters of long-distance walking, race walking and the world of Hostelling.

[Memories of Graham Peddie MBE FullHD - Bing video](#)



Tributes to Graham Peddie RIP

Bill Sutherland, **Ed Shillabeer** and **Peter Marlow** all wrote to say that they remembered Graham well and expressed their sadness.

- He was such a likeable chap. I did the Tanners Marathon 30 Miles with Charlie Weston in my build up to the Commonwealth Games 20 Miles in 1970. Great days indeed and he was a real character. May Graham Rest in Peace. **Bill Sutherland**
- He will also be remembered as Warden of Tanners Hatch Youth Hostel, just 50 kms from Central London but its position suggested it could have been in a remote area of the Highlands. Many great weekends there in 60s and 70s often with folk music. It was also a valuable feeding station on Tanners 30/50 Miles, (I used to use the latter as training for the "Brighton " as I am sure others did) Graham was handing out drinks and words of encouragement. He had a hair style similar to our Prime Minister's (although he may not be by the time some read this!!) but different colour! Graham was one of the real characters of Race Walking and the world of Hostelling. RIP. Sue his daughter lives nearby, or did, in Maresfield, East Sussex. **Peter Selby**

- This is sad indeed. Totally addicted to the Youth Hostelling Association, walking, etc, there can't be many who haven't met him or heard of him. To have been warden of a youth hostel only 25 miles out of London which would not have had electric power until recent times (maybe this century?) is absolutely extraordinary. **Dave Hoben**
- He was certainly a great character with an appetite for walking long distances. He was the highly regarded and well-liked Warden of Tanners Hatch Youth Hostel for 30 years. He had an unusually unselfconscious character and a well-developed understanding of people, and this led him into charity work in the Leatherhead area in which he provided a place of refuge for those for whom the "slings and arrows of outrageous fortune" had not been kind. He was well loved and respected and his remarkable contributions to the lives of others led to an MBE. His life is well documented on the internet, and this profile of his life is probably not so well known to most of us. **Lyn Atterbury**
- My memories of Graham are from the LDWA Tanners Marathon (30 miles) which had a checkpoint at Tanners Hatch youth hostel where Graham was a warden. Graham was also a member of Epsom and Ewell Harriers. Apart from manning the checkpoint, did take part in many LDWA events, triathlons and running races. **Kathy Crilley**
- It is many years since I saw Graham but I do remember travelling to Tanners Hatch one evening to give a "lecture" on race walking to a packed house of about 4 (!), and then making my way back through the wild wood to my vehicle in pitch dark. **Carl Lawton**

ILFORD WALKER MAKES THE FRAME IN THE MIDLANDS

It was bright, sunny and mild conditions for mid-December on Sunday at Warwick University Science Park in Coventry where a well supported 5 kilometres road race was held. On a 1 kilometre lap course the race was led early by Ellis Symonds and Jacqueline Benson (it was a mixed race). Ilford's Steve Uttley was 6th behind Daniel McCerlich who dropped out after fading badly on the second lap (he'd recently recovered from Covid). Steve gradually made ground on the leaders until he was lying not far off the first 2 by halfway. He passed early leader Ellis Symonds around this point but was then overtaken by steadily starting former Welsh senior champion Mark Williams who went on to win the race. Meanwhile Steve moved away from Ellis on the final lap of 5 to consolidate 3rd place in 29 minutes and 44 seconds.

CENTURION 214 JOHN M PRICE RIP

Sorry to say the Centurions were notified of a sad death of John (Birmingham Walking Club) who was aged 90. He resided in Stratford-on-Avon. He qualified in the 1953 Birmingham-to-London race, which was 103 and a half miles' long. John clocked 23:10.27 passing 100 miles in 22:14.12. 53 started (1 DQ) 29 reached 100 miles including 15 new Centurions, all of whom pressed to the finish line. The team race was won by Midlands-based Royal Sutton Coldfield WC. Two new Centurions with Essex connections were Tommy Lown (C208) of Essex Beagles and Bill Symes (C216) of Queens Park Harriers, who was a long-time Essex resident. As for the race it was supposed to be an exact 100 miles until late enforced route changes caused diversions. It was probably the most dangerous 100 miles ever held as there was a constant stream of all night heavy lorry traffic, and continuous glare from oncoming headlights into walkers' faces, which saw a number stumbling against the kerbs and falling over. This course received so much criticism, it was never used again. A full report of such difficulties is in The Centurions' Handbook. John was an author. In 2002 a paperback "Stratford-upon-Avon A Flora & Fauna" was published. Earlier in 1980 he'd penned "Memories of Bagnall And His Flora" which was written for the Natural History Society and featured the life and works of naturalist James Eustace Bagnall. John was a prominent member of the [Heteroptera](#) Study Group.



LOCAL SPORTSMAN HONOURED

Hornchurch based **Tony Brooking** (*brother of West Ham & England's Sir Trevor*) received a British Empire Medal (**BEM**) in the New Year's Honours List. *What's Essex Walker's connection some may ask?* Now retired Tony was at the helm of the Metropolitan Police Athletic Association (an organisation which honoured him with esteemed Life Membership). They own 4 Sports & Social Clubs in and around Greater London - at Bushey, Chigwell, Hayes (Kent) and Imber Court. The latter 3 were frequent race walking venues. Many readers will have appeared at some - or even all 3 - when the Metropolitan Police were prominent on our walking scene. In Essex, Chigwell has staged our County 10 Miles Championships and

races over other distances, before increased traffic plus risk assessment ended our attendance. Ilford AC often used this venue for Dinner & Dances, and other functions - as it has excellent facilities and a vast car park. Our congratulations to Tony on his recognition.

PRAISE FOR PUBLICATION

Enfield & Harringey AC have published a comprehensive Centenary booklet chronicling, in detail, the history of their famous Enfield Open 7 Miles from its first race in 1920. Edited/compiled by keen statistician and historian **Ron Wallwork**, it's attracted a host of favourable comments. Essex walkers feature prominently so it's hoped most will get to read it. Many copies have been distributed and all agree it's so good, that once you pick it up, you can't put it down. Here's a comment from one reviewer, **Bill Sutherland**:

"Many thanks indeed for sending me the wonderful Centenary Booklet of Enfield Harriers. It brings back many memorable and happy memories of countless race walks at Enfield. You are all part of my Bronze Medal for Scotland in the 1970 Commonwealth Games in Edinburgh. Without the competition that many of those featured gave me over many years my achievement would not have been possible. Thank you one and all!"



NEWS FROM THE HIGHLANDS

Where 73 year old **Alex Ross** has fallen off his road bike on black ice and broken his hip. Following 4 days in hospital, Alex is now at home recuperating with the assistance of a couple of crutches. Much to his annoyance he will be out of action for a couple of months whilst the break sorts itself out, with the aid of a pin, a plate and few screws.

Alex said: *"It's been 17 years since we moved back home. I ran with Forres Harriers for 10 of those years, then bought a road bike, to take the pressure off my right knee. I have been able to get out cycling 2 or 3 times a week since then. We have some quiet back roads around here, either flat along the coast or uphill, inland. I have always had 2 wheels of one form or another so cycling is a great hobby which suits me fine – provided there is a cup of coffee mid-way. Best wishes to all and very many thanks to Dave, Tony and Christine for keeping the EW show on the road."*

RAY PLATT RIP

Sad to say Prittlewell-based Ray has passed on aged 73. Prior to his departure he'd been a rest home resident. Ray was part of a successful Southend-on-Sea AC squad (see photo). He became Centurion 939 at Surrey Walking Club's 1995 100 Miles Battersea Park race when clocking 23:33.41. This event was moved from Ewhurst due to traffic conditions. Held in hot humid conditions, Ray and fellow competitors had to put up with joggers, roller skaters and skateboarders on the park's Queen's Carriageway. Among joggers was ex-professional wrestler and then National Theatre actor Brian Glover - forever known as overbearing sports teacher Mr Suggs in "Kes". Men's and women's winners were the host club's Richard and Sandra Brown. 65 started, 1 d/q - 32 finished including 13 new Centurions, among them Boyd Millen, Kathy Crilley, Pam Ficken, Bernard Yates, Dave Kates, Maureen Cox, Ken Cardozo (attended by Centurion 527 Dave Neagle) and popular Essex visitor Hans van der Knapp. Ray, who



Southend-on-Sea AC's mid-90s walking squad supplied by Andy O'Rawe, captioned by Andy and Steve Kemp.

Back row: Andy O'Rawe, C694 Chris Bent, Paul Warburton and C912 Kevin Perry

Middle row: Ricky Champ, Tim Stout RIP and John Brock RIP

Front row: Rob Peachey, Chris Leeman, **C939 Ray Platt RIP**, C791 Alan O'Rawe and Jamie O'Rawe

repeated his 100 miles feat on a subsequent occasion, was well looked after by a famous "Southend Support Squad" who were enthusiastic attenders at so many venues for 100 miles/24 hours events. Ray was a trader with a stall at Rochford Market before running a window cleaning round. Alas, in a split second, his life changed forever when falling a ladder while working at first floor level. In a moving account he recalled how he showed alertness by turning his head away at the last moment before making contact with the ground. That prevented a more serious outcome, but he still needed a week's hospital treatment in Southend General. By eventually returning to start lines he showed great fortitude, although - understandably - never recaptured past form. Many last saw Ray at one of the always popular "Nicola 5" events on Canvey Island, organised by Centurion 1075 Steve Kemp as a successful charity fund raiser. It had a 5 mile walk and run on the card, both simultaneously over the same course. Ray opted to run, as that was his main event. Afterwards he looked jaded and pale, despite the short distance - Ray had excelled over longer distances in his heyday (coming 44th in the 2000 Harrow Marathon 3:40.39). Popular Ray didn't deserve that bad hand life dealt him. We say farewell to a lovely man and express our heartfelt condolences to his widow Janet and all other family members. **DA**

Southend-on-Sea AC record keeper, ex-race walker **June Cork**, brings us statistical info from Ray's running career: A member of Southend AC for 20 years from 1987 to 2007. Best **Marathon** as a **vet** was London 2005 when he clocked 4:04.33. Best **Half Marathon** as a **vet** **Jim Peters*** 1989 1:27.08. Best **10k** 2005 Hatfield Broad Oak 46.41. Southend-on-Sea AC prominent race walker **Andy O'Rawe** writes: "More sad news. I remember Ray being part of our super Southend-on-Sea walking team. He was always a happy chap."

*Adds Hon Ed: There's a well-known annual event in Southend (where Jim Peters retired to - after owning an Opticians in Chadwell Heath) called "The Jim Peters Half Marathon" in his memory. I've run it myself a couple of times - when a fitter and younger person!

Ray Platt, Centurion 939 – a tribute from Steve Kemp

I first met Ray in the late 1980's when he came along to Southend Athletic Club. In addition to the Tuesday and Thursday track sessions, during the winter months there was a Wednesday evening road run from the sports centre in Kiln Road, Thundersley. It was during these 9½ miles road runs that our friendship formed. My training diary from 1989 records a typical session.

Wed 25 Oct	Hadleigh 9.5 miles	Comfortable evening run with Ray [Platt] and Rob [Hill]. 60:00 mins
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Ray had a real enthusiasm for his running and quickly improved his performances as entries from 1990 show.

Wed 28 Nov	Hadleigh 9.5 miles	Run with Ray [Platt] and Micky. 57:15 mins
Wed 5 Dec	Hadleigh 9.5 miles	Run with Ray [Platt] and Micky. 57:15 mins – same as last week
Wed 12 Dec	Hadleigh 9.5 miles	With Ray [Platt] and Micky. Windy. 56:45 mins. Good run

We continued those Wednesday evening runs for many years, typically attracting up to ten runners, but I often found myself running alongside Ray.

Ray also enjoyed his off-road running and in September 1992 we took part in the Essex Way relay. The 81 miles was divided into 10 stages, I took the first leg for Southend AC from Harwich to Ramsey and Ray did a later leg from West Bergholt to Great Tey.

During this period we had a great coach at Southend named Barry Edwards and would share many evening hill sessions running up Belton Way in Leigh. As Barry's coaching days came to an end, Ray took over the coaching role and with his magnetic personality, grew the training group so numbers of 20+ would not be unusual. During the winter months, Ray led many lovely training runs through Belfairs and Hockley Woods, as many club members prepared for the London marathon.

In the mid-nighties when my wife and I organised the Nicola 5 mile race to raise funds for Great Ormond Street, Ray was there year on year either running or marshalling. He achieved his best time of 34:58 mins over that course in 1995.

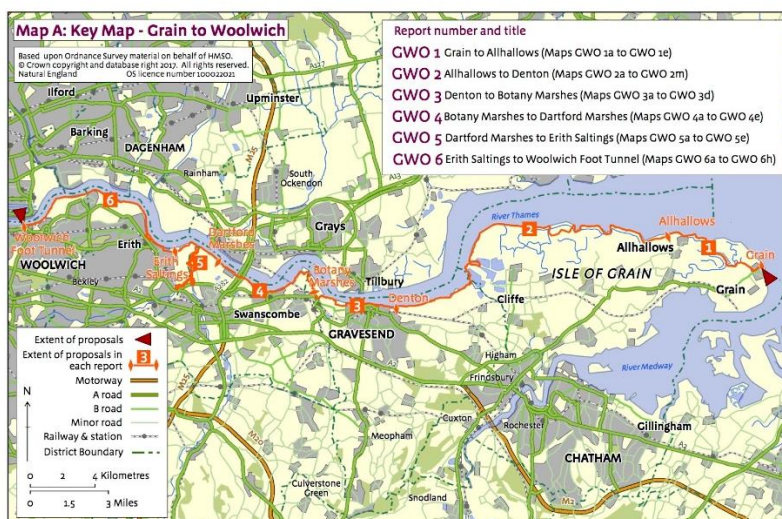
In addition to running, Ray also race walked for Southend AC and qualified as a Centurion. All Centurions are proud of this achievement and the recognition and bonding it brings within the race walking community. Ray shared this pride and wrote a poem of what it means to be a Centurion. Many will be aware that a fall whilst at work brought Ray's running to an end. We continued to socialise and in recent years have sadly witnessed his deteriorating health. Nonetheless, you never really expect the end to come. God bless you Ray.

Steve Kemp

TRAINING ROUTE FOR DISTANCE WALKERS?

We've received an email from Bill Sutherland which draws attention to the newly opened River Thames path, which has recently been well featured on television etc. Let's see some race walkers doing their bit along the waterfront. *Bill asks:* "Just wonder who will be the first Centurion to walk in training the new Thames footway from Woolwich to the Isle of Grain. Looks ideal for those planning to be at the 2022 Centurion Race at Middlesbrough."

[English coast path walking route Woolwich London to Grain Kent coast](#)



LEW and BRENDA MOCKETT REMEMBERED

A tree is to be planted on the Sea Estate in Rustington, West Sussex, in memory of Lew and Brenda Mockett, where they had resided in retirement.

NEWS FROM THE CHILTERN

Centurion 363 **Martin Cartwright** has, after **40 years'** meritorious service, stepped down as Junior Coach at Chiltern Harriers, a Club where he's a most appreciated and respected member. He's also organiser of the long established hilly Pednor Open 5 Miles. Club Chairman Trevor Davies said, "I would like to thank him for his huge contribution over many years". Incidentally a decision on the 2022 Pednor event is to be taken shortly when the situation is likely to be clearer. At present he suffers from osteoarthritis in a knee, but is still able to enjoy going out for a run.

GET WELL SOON

We're sorry to learn that respected coach **Mick Graham** has suffered a heart attack whilst at home and has been admitted to Addenbrookes Hospital in Cambridge. Mick's contribution to race walking, for decades, has been immense. We hope his treatment is progressing well and he'll soon be out-and-about again.

LEN ARMSTRONG RIP

Word from our friends in the north is that past Redcar RWC President and long serving Committeeman Len has passed on aged 91. He'd resided in a York home prior to his departure after a short final illness. Len was a timekeeping stalwart at Winter League events over many years. A funeral service was held at York Crematorium on Monday 10 January.

Richard Cole wrote: "A good age, but sorry to hear. Len was a good bloke. We have lost touched with fellow walkers during covid."

DOROTHY MANLEY RIP

In the past we've mentioned Essex *athletic* Olympians who've passed on, even those who've not race walked. Manor Park born [Dorothy Manley](#), an Essex Ladies AC member, has died aged 94. She was our 1948 London Olympic 100 metres silver medallist. She was awarded a gold medal (4 x 100m) and a

bronze (200m) in the 1950 European Championships and collected a silver and bronze in the 1950 Empire Games. *Thanks to Laurie Kelly for the info.*

IN THE MONEY



Those with Essex connections scooped the top 3 prizes (£25/£15/£10) in your latest Race Walking Association 200 Club draw. Respectively they were Sharon Herbert, John Sales and Eric Horwill (a Loughton AC 2nd claim member). Many readers are former race walkers, so now spend little on travelling to support our races. With travelling outlay now not required, why not consider shelling out £12 per year - which gets you entry into 12 monthly draws. Profits go to race walking, so enabling our pursuit to progress with strength. If seeking details please contact the RWA 200 Club Organiser - RWA Treasurer Mark Easton at rwatreasurer@yahoo.co.uk

WHAT A STAR

A day after our last edition was distributed a disgruntled reader wrote strong criticism that we'd ignored a *milestone* achievement of Amos Seddon, by failing to mention he'd just completed his **200th parkrun**. Failing to mention? - details would have been published had they been known - indeed if sent to Essex Walker. EW often mentions successes of now octogenarian Amos in parkruns, now his main athletic activity, as he's been seldom seen on race walking start lines of late. By asking around, other readers - George Nibre and Martin Clarke - have supplied information. Amos recently completed his 200th in Great Yarmouth so we express our profound and deserved congratulations. To date his name has made 205 result sheets and - he gets about a bit - as he's appeared at 55 different venues with his home town of Harwich topping the list with 104 turnouts. Amos has also 30 credits as a parkrun helper. George points out his 2 hours 40 minutes for 35 kilometres in 1980 would still see him make world rankings today!



BATON BEARER NOMINATIONS FOR BIRMINGHAM 2022 COMMONWEALTH GAMES

[Batonbearer Nominations | Birmingham 2022](#)

The search is on for 2,022 Batonbearers, each with inspiring stories, to take on the special experience of carrying the Queen's Baton through England in summer 2022. Closing date for nominations is 14 February 2022. To submit a nomination for the Take It On Campaign, the nominator will need to visit the website at www.Birmingham2022.com, complete and submit the 'Batonbearer' Nomination form. Eligibility criteria apply.



Dear Dave ...

A READER RECALLS

Did you see the Tan Hill story? <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-york-north-yorkshire-59684889>
As the highest altitude pub in England, for Bristol Uni Rag Week many February's ago our cross country club visited it. Raffles were banned so we raised money each year by selling tickets on which punters guessed the time we would take to run a relay. Arduous on both counts! That particular year (?1961?) the gimmick was from Bristol to a below sea level fenland pub and back via the Tan Hill. Four minibuses routed by the AA took turns to escort the runners, each team of six with two drivers covering about 30 odd miles before handing over to the waiting crew! Tan Hill was snowed in so we had to park as close as the minibus could get leaving one poor sod to climb up and back through the drifts!

So we missed the bevvies and roaring fire we had been looking forward to!! Another year we ran to the North East and back, carrying a coal to Newcastle; the longest and most fun was the year we visited all the other universities in England (16 then). Because our tickets were sold by all departmental students we raised thousands, but nowhere near as much as Manchester Uni who used to raffle a new car!! Happy days. Tough but the runners who avoided injuries etc became mega fit, doing about 5 miles as fast as possible every 12 hours ... and more to cover the ones unable to do their full stints! Happy days!!

Ed Shillabeer C590

IN OFF THE POST

- Thank you very much for the Essex Walker, I do appreciate it. I have one comment to make if I may please, it's with regard to the walk along the Kent coast in the spring. If there is anything I can do please let me know. I know the coastline along Kent pretty well and a good part of it is wheelchair accessible, or if nothing else I can come along to support and encourage. Just a thought! **Sheila Appleton**
- As usual wonderful. Thanks to Mike Hinton for his memories of me and my 1957 Highgate Hour track race which he remembers so vividly. As others have written/said other memories are cherished as one's own if only you could remember them. Thank you Mike. **John Northcott**
- Many thanks for such an interesting and comprehensive publication. A wonderful chronicle of race walking matters. **Ron Wallwork**
- As ever another enjoyable read. George brings up a serious point about the Tokyo Olympics and other major race selection processes. Going forward hopefully we will see very clear, impartial and transparent selection processes that we can understand for all major games. **Oliver Flynn**
- Thanks, just had another enjoyable read, not sure how you manage to find so much news to report on! **Sharon Gaytor**

FROM A DISTINGUISHED READER

Firstly, thank you to all Essex Walker readers who considered Sandra Brown and I should be honoured with a place in the England Athletics Hall of Fame. I last saw Sandra during the UK National 100mile/24-hour track race on the Isle of Man in 2018; I commentated and had the pleasure of interviewing her soon afterwards. Fantastic lady! Secondly, a brilliant monthly edition with so many interesting articles and news items.

The Ian Richards' piece on his back pain evoked memories of my own. In 1982 I injured my back doing a dead-lift during a weight training session. Nine months of therapy followed with a doctor concluding my racing days were over. Spondylolisthesis was also diagnosed - a congenital back condition. I took some satisfaction seeing the family doctor again in 1984 when I needed vaccination jabs for my trip to the Los Angeles Olympics. More importantly and possibly similar to Ian's story, following the injury I continued a whole new regime of exercises which I diligently carried out daily for the rest of my competitive days. I have an empathy with the words written by George Nibre. In Dominic King and Cameron Corbishley the UK had two athletes deserving of a Tokyo 2020 place, especially the new GB 50km record holder.

The words and Weymouth team photo submitted by Jim Ball were great to see. I'd love a copy of the picture if possible? Harry Callow once called me a prima donna after I had won a seven-mile road race in Briantspuddle. Saturated in sweat, I moaned that there were no working showers. I smile at the memory and remember Harry with total respect. So many other good features which sadly included news of some recently departed. Wally Emery was a hard-working official who always offered constructive support. The photo from 1996 shows the two of us with the Mayor of Calne shortly after the annual Pewsey Cup seven miles which I won in 48.23. The tankard was a special award in commemoration of competing at four Olympics. Incidentally, I won the same race in December 1986 with a time of 45.26 which I believe is still a seven-mile UK all-comers record? Still desperately clinging onto a few records!

Finally, might that *not newly married* couple, Peter Cassidy and Pauline Wilson, have a monthly column? They crack me up!

Chris Maddocks

Sandra Brown commented: "Oh my goodness! Many thanks for sharing Chris's note and the photo – I remember that race very fondly and it was wonderful to have Chris there."



SPORTS APPOINTMENT

I'm now chairman of the [Ilford & District Churches Football League](#) (IDCFL). A much smaller fish but I can see that my approach to the role, in being committed, energetic and bristling with new ideas, (mainly augmenting existing structures I might add) could be scaled into a bigger scenario. However, you need the keys and authority and committed support of many others to carry the changes through for it to happen. Money via sponsorship would be a big part of it as well.

Len Ruddock

Adds Hon Ed: This is why Len isn't often seen at Enfield League races nowadays, as his Football League (in which he also manages a team) plays its fixtures on Saturday mornings.

WRITES JIM BALL

I was sad to see the news about Wally Emery. He was another ever present official, particularly in the south and west as a grade 1 judge from the old RWA rules through to IAAF rules. I'm sure he walked for Eastleigh AC back in the 50's/60's. That's likely to be when my dad first knew him. I think there is an RWA YAG Champs trophy donated by him for the best style award? Chris's memories of the Pewsey Cup 7 remind me of when we got stuck behind a herd of slow-moving cows that were passing from one field to another along a muddy section of country road (very frustrating when you're on sub 7 min mile pace). I also have memories as a very young lad of the Mexicans doing the race at its original Pewsey Vale venue and the excitement it created. Trowbridge AC were fortunate to be able to call on Harry Callow, Wally Emery, Judy and Stan Farr, Geoff Saxty, Mervin Geere, Don Little, Basil Gale, Ed Hitchins, Doug Keynes and Alf Middleton to name a few, to officiate at their various races. Unfortunately, I don't have very many photos of myself racing during my peak, probably due to my dad still actively racing himself until his passing in 1990.

Jim Ball

NICE TO HEAR FROM BOB

I do still recognise many of the names ... like mention of Harry Callow and Glyn Jones. I gave-up competitive walking sometime after 1980 but remained involved with a little coaching followed by many years judging. I started dancing in 1996 and coming up to first lockdown (March 2020) was keeping very fit dancing three evenings per week (8 -10 pm) with occasional weekends (Fri/Sat/Sun) and greatly enjoyed European and UK Conventions. With ALL social clubs (eg dancing and pension clubs) unable to meet in "mass" numbers, I returned to race walking in April 2020 and got myself quite fit. Since September, I've had [Plantar Socillious](#) (Policeman's Heel) and then [Labrynthitis](#) (inner ear infection affecting balance) and am being checked-out for prostate problems and water infection. Oh, the joys of getting old! I will keep in touch.

Bob Picton

A RESPECTED READER'S VIEWS

Thanks for another fantastic edition of Essex Walker, a good read as always, full of interesting news and a great way to keep in touch with race-walking "family" and friends. Warm thanks to Essex Walker for recording the richly deserved and long overdue recognition of Paul Nihill MBE in the England Athletics Hall of Fame. Paul, a fellow member of Surrey Walking Club, was one of our greatest race-walkers, and for me a hero and an inspiration. I am glad that his family were able to receive the award and to see him thus honoured. I am blown away to learn that readers of Essex Walker have suggested that Chris Maddocks and myself should be nominated for the England Athletics Hall of Fame. It's an honour to be mentioned alongside Chris, someone I've always liked and admired, a five times Olympian, not just a great walker but a multi-talented man who has supported and encouraged others. I remember so well the IOM track 100 miles, a great experience, where Chris added to the atmosphere and interest of the occasion with his excellent commentary.

I can hardly believe that 2022 will mark the 40th anniversary of my qualifying 100 at Leicester in August 1982. That event opened my eyes to the brilliant event that is race-walking, to the friendship, fun and mutual support of the walking community, and to the sheer beauty of endurance walking and the 100 miles distance which I fell in love with! Since 1982, I have successfully completed 209 events so far of 100 miles or more. What an amazing sport and a wonderful community we are all privileged to be part of.

With warm thanks and very best wishes to all for a happy, healthy, successful year to come.

Sandra Brown C735

Adds Hon Ed: Now we need somebody of note, or an Organisation or a Club to nominate Sandra and Chris (and other worthies). It wouldn't be promising if I did this - again - as for the 2021 awards I nominated **2** candidates, both of whom were successfully inducted. They were Paul Nihill MBE (for a second time) and Verona Elder MBE - who I knew well on our athletics scene, when she lived in Romford for decades. New names are needed on nomination papers. **DA**

WALLY EMERY - TRIBUTE

I was sorry to hear about Wally, he was a good honest judge and helped me to improve, I believe he raced for Eastleigh AC back in the 50's.

Jim Ball

WORDS FROM KEVIN CARLEY

Thank you for the great write-up, I had better get my shoes on to qualify for such humbling words. I will certainly try and get to Moulton even if I am just there for the entertainment!

Kevin Carley

GREAT TIMES RECALLED

About the loss of all those long-established local races. The photo quality may not be too good but thought you might like to see a couple of my snaps from 1982 and 1985. It's likely my dear late mum took them; quality no reflection on her only that I usually owned a cheap camera. Both pictures at least show what great annual races we once took part in. You might enjoy spotting some familiar faces. **Chris Maddocks**



Photo 1 is from a start line at Briantspuddle



Photo 2 from Chippenham

PETER GOODCHILD RIP

It is with regret that I would like to inform you that my dad passed away. **Keith Dyckes**

- Very sorry to hear the sad news - Peter was a well-known racewalker in Surrey WC. **Kathy Crilley**
- Peter qualified as Centurion 471 at the Ewhurst 100 organised by Surrey Walking Club in 1971 in the creditable time of 20:19.37. **Sue Clements**

FAREWELL TO TWO MORE STALWARTS

Sadly I have to add two more to the list namely: **John Hutton** past member of Coventry Godiva Harriers who joined in 1966 and, **Norma Blaine** MBE past President of Birchfield Harriers and previously a club walker for Birchfield who passed away on 12 December.

Glyn Jones (RWA Chairman)

APPRECIATION + QUESTION?

Always a good read! I am always surprised by the abundance of news. As names appear from the dim and distant past I sometimes wonder what happened to some others: the Jarman brothers or Maurice Fullager, for example. The cautionary tales from Ian Richards and Carl Lawton warn of the "slings and arrows of outrageous fortune" to which none of us are immune, but at least we might survive them better.

Lyn Atterbury

FROM THE FAR EAST

Long time no hear from you. Hope you are well in this time of the epidemic. I hear it's really bad in the UK. Here in China - we live normal daily lives here. Is amazing really. Safest country to be living in. I have been teaching in China now for the last 9 years. Still enjoying it. I was putting together a PowerPoint Presentation about myself, to show my students as an 'interest piece', talking about England, my family, work, jobs, hobbies and interests etc. But I discovered I have no photos of my years and time race walking. It's a sad shame really, as in those earlier days very few people were using digital phones - mostly SLR Cameras. So I want to ask you if you can help when you have

some free time perhaps. Maybe you have some photos of me race walking or mentions in the Newsletter? Thank you.

Mike Sweeney

Adds Hon Ed: If any readers can assist Mick, please email your photos/cuttings to him at: michaelsween@aol.com

NEWS FROM CANADA

Truly appreciate you continuing to keep me in the loop as I love reading the Essex newsletter and the Heel and Toe – both really informative. Certainly hope 2022 will bring you very good health, much joy and plenty of ongoing race-walk action. We have been socked in by more heavy-duty dumps of snow and very low temperatures and very few people going out as a result. New Year's Eve was the first time we haven't stayed up till the midnight hour as nothing was going on in town – no fireworks even. Sign of the times. Hope all around you are remaining Covid-free and that you can keep fit and have some socialising.

Steve King

NAMES FROM OUR PAST RECALLED

Unfortunately I did not know that John Price lived in Stratford. I do recall that in the 60's era he was a member of the Birmingham WC. My recollection is of the name rather than the person. It was great to see Paul Nihill recognised in the BBC Sports Personality of the Year programme in those who died in the year. I wish you a safe and fulfilling New Year.

Roy Lodge

Adds Hon Ed: Alongside Paul Nihill, Barbara Lawton (nee Inkpen) was also acknowledged in the BBC's SPOTY event.

[Sports Personality 2021: Remembering the stars we have lost - BBC Sport](#)

Remembering the stars we have lost

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NOT WALKING THE PLANK

It was, in fact, the Boxing Day Pierless Handicap race, the decision having been taken, to avoid the now slippery pier planks, to run on the seafront instead and definitely not over the 2 miles of the "real" event. We actually ran it *from* the Pier west towards the Cafes-Under-The-Arches and back. 45 or thereabouts had signed up but some, waking up to a damp and miserable morning, decided that a cup of tea and brekkie were far more enticing than a soaking on the seafront. Rain definitely cooled the air down, but not the enthusiasm of those present. The first person 'off' actually walked the course but not as a race-walker so we won't be rushing to join him to the Pedestrian Crew just yet.

Let's hope for a better year than the last two!

June Cork

Adds Hon Ed: for a second successive occasion **no** race walkers accepted a host Club's kind invitation to appear, when in past years a number have walked it.

ANDREA INGRAM RIP

May I take this opportunity of advising the sad death of **Andrea Ingram**, a Lewes AC member who frequently took part in Race Walks until taken ill about 2 years ago. Many Masters competitors will recall her.

Peter Selby

MIDDLESEX COUNTY WALKING SECRETARY

John Hall has agreed to take back the role, at least until a suitable replacement can be found. Anyone wanting to know more about race walking in Middlesex, in particular about championship events, should email John at stroller49@gmail.com. Race walkers are training regularly in Middlesex at the Queen Elizabeth II Stadium, Donkey Lane. The track is open for community use, free of charge, on Saturday and Sunday mornings from 9 am till 12 noon.

FOR YOUR 2022 DIARY

Veterans AC summer series; 'B' laws, on the road, **all** at Battersea Park, London SW11 4NJ: 7:00 pm. Check [Veterans AC website](#) for exact starting point. 5 Apr 5k, 10 May 5m, 12 July 5k and 2 August 5m.

Dave Hoben

NOTIFICATION

The funeral of Ray Platt C939 is to take place at Southend Crematorium on **Friday 4 February 2022 at 3pm**. It was his wish that rather than flowers, a small donation be made to Little Havens Children's Hospice, a cause that Ray supported through his athletic fund raising. There will be a private wake for family members.

I spoke to his wife Janet and youngest daughter Jessica. Ray became unwell after contracting a water infection and was taken into Southend hospital. Unfortunately this proved one battle too many for Ray but his family gained some comfort in being with him during his final days. He passed away just after 2am Monday morning (17 January). Ray was a proud Centurion and wrote a poem about what that achievement meant to him. Hopefully if the family feel strong enough, this will be read during the service.

Steve Kemp

Aide memoire: Southend Crematorium, 285 Sutton Road, SOUTHEND-ON-SEA, Essex SS2 5PX

Note: Essex Walker has previously published Ray's Poem.

MET POLICE WALKING CLUB DINNER & REUNION 2022 POSTPONED

It's been nearly 2 years since our last annual dinner which took place on Wednesday 4 March 2020 just before the COVID-19 lockdown. We decided to cancel this event last year due to the continuation of the pandemic outbreak. This year, we really want to bring it back but have decided it would be better to hold it in late summer at the beginning of September rather than in March which is still very much a flu season. If you are still interested in attending, please email me and let me know. To make the event worthwhile, I need at least 30 people. If I can get this number, I will go ahead to book the venue which is the Civil Service Club at Great Scotland Yard. The proposed date is: **Wednesday 7 September 2022**. If you could reply to me by the end of February, we will make a decision at the beginning of March. If we go ahead to host the dinner, I will send out the invitation and menu to those who are attending. Many thanks and look forward to seeing you at the dinner.

Dr Kitty Hung

Secretary for the Met Police Walking Club Annual Dinner and Reunion (Mobile: 07930343205)

NEWS FROM THE ROBERY FAMILY

Julie asked me to say she is back in training and is doing 3kms in 21 mins - not quite Olympic standard but not bad for a vet. As for me, I had a heart attack back in March last year, called a Stemi 1 the Widomaker, but have now fully recovered and aiming to get back into training very soon. Hope you're all ok.

Ian Robery

STOP PRESS - LATEST COMMONWEALTH GAMES TICKET UPDATE

Women's walk on Saturday morning and men's Sunday morning last day. There are plenty of [tickets](#) left as stadium seats 30 thousand.

Peter Marlow

BRIGHT PREDICTION

There is a future for racewalking. Things only look desperate at the moment due to two years of Covid disruption, which is all finally coming to an end in the UK by April.

John Constandinou - RWA Press & Publicity Officer

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