

Essex Walker

Editor: Dave Ainsworth

FINAL CURTAIN?

When Essex County AA ended an Indoor Race Walking Championship, owing to declining lack of entries over the years, it appeared to signal an end. We had no Race Walking Representative in the Committee Room to put our case for giving it another go, nor one to drum up entries. **We still haven't.** But to our rescue came Hertfordshire County's Hon Race Walking Secretary, enthusiastic Dave Annetts, who after consulting with Hon Race Walking Secretaries of other 2 County teams in a Tri-Counties Indoor Meeting at Lee Valley, agreed to admit Essex entrants in order to "save" our County Championship. Although a busy administrator, your Essex County Chairman Andy Catton took on a task of representing our County's race walkers in order to get a deal done in **your** interests. Many emails were sent to one-and-all to try and keep this race walking Championship going. It wasn't a long journey, as it was at the same Lee Valley venue where our Essex & Eastern Counties Championship was held (a meeting at which walking had been dropped). Former Essex County AA President Peter Cassidy offered his services to judge at the Tri-Counties Indoor meeting. Essex Walkers were clearly told, "use it or lose it". You'll see Andy Catton's comments below. We must all thank Colin Harle and Melanie Peddle for flying our Essex flag - one in each category.

*Writes Essex County AA Chairman **Andy Catton**:*

"I suspect the County will consider it is not something to continue with next year: But I gather Mark Easton has a "cunning plan" to revitalise race walking in the South of England. When entries closed for this event, very disappointingly there were just 2 Essex entrants (Mel Peddle and Colin Harle)."

A VERY HAPPY BIRTHDAY

On St George's Day, 23 April 2024, Centurion 576 **George Eastwood**, a member of Woodford Green AC (as then called) is to celebrate his **100th** birthday. He qualified as a Centurion reaching 100 miles in 20:39.29 on route to covering 115 miles 1705 yards in his Club's 1976 race at Ashtons Track, when leading the hosts to a team victory. He'll become The Centurions' 2nd centenarian after another Essex race walker - Leigh-on-Sea based ex-Ford Dagenham worker and 1908 Olympian Bill Brown (Polytechnic Harriers) Centurion No 12 - who'd qualified in 20:38.01 in a 1907 London-to-Brighton & Back event. Bill reached 100 years in 1979 before passing in 1983 aged 103. If wishing to send a card, George's address is: "Pedne", Carpenters Arms Lane, Thornwood, Epping. Essex. CM16 6LR. All readers wish George the very best and send our hearty congratulations.

MICK BARNBROOK CREMATION - STATEMENT

Mick Barnbrook belonged to a pressure group organisation - "*Bexley is Bonkers*". On their website is a [statement](#) that Mick had a private cremation, in accordance with his wishes, on the morning of Thursday 29 February, and that his widow Sharon referred to messages received - stating "They are much appreciated". Mick Barnbrook RIP - Cambridge Harriers, Ilford AC, Sarnia WC, Ilford AC again, The Centurions, Metropolitan Police Walking Club and British Police Representative team.

Reader's comment: "A shame for the walking community not to have a chance to say goodbye, he was so welcoming and encouraging and such a supporter of races. Wonder if there might be a memorial later or if one of the races might get named in his memory." **Pamela Abbott**

CHANGES AT THE TOP

At their AGM Ilford AC elected new Joint Presidents - Club stalwarts, running duo **Neil** and **Dianne Crisp**. **Anna Crawley** takes over from Sharon Honey as Social Secretary. **Steve Uttley** remained in post as Club Walking Section Secretary. Other Officers remain unchanged with no contested elections. A reminder that Ilford's top 3 officers are: Secretary **Andy Catton** (who also serves as Essex

County AA Chairman), Treasurer is hammer thrower **Wesley Clarke**, a former "Mr Universe" and wielding the gavel is Chairman **Ernie Forsyth** a former race walker with Essex Beagles in long decades' past.

ROY STRATTON RIP

- *Notification from Bill Sutherland:* [Roy Stratton](#), who was a great official for Middlesex County AAA plus I can remember his name on the Race Walking Scene at Enfield, passed away recently.
- *Writes Martin Oliver:* Roy Stratton - When Ponders End AC amalgamated with Enfield AC in 1965 to form Enfield Harriers, Enfield AC had, of course, a strong squad of race walkers - Ponders End AC had none! So, several of the leading lights from Ponders End AC were persuaded to 'have a go' at Race Walking - Roy was very much the star of the show - with limited training, he finished the Enfield Open 7 in 1966 in 60.47, and was clearly a 'natural'. Our coach, Stan Mantor tried everything to get him to take up Race Walking but to no avail. Roy enjoyed his running and of course got heavily involved with the official side of Enfield Harriers, being Secretary among other things, so he wasn't really interested. I hope that helps to fill in the details. This is all done from memory, so there might be slight differences. Glad to see you're still going strong. Sadly I can't say the same!
- *Adds Hon Ed:* A former race walker, yes, but also a "one hit wonder". Enfield's Roy and Beryl Stratton were among many who turned up for that great Enfield 90th Open 7 Reunion in 2016 - let's face it, who wasn't there? Remember that wonderful picture, taken by Brian Boggendoel, with 28 Centurions in shot (2 had to leave straight after the race) and our host Club's showing of former stars and stalwarts. As for that 1966 Enfield Open 7 it was a time when top walkers raced most weekends - the first 3 were all Olympians-to-be: John Webb, Brian Eley and Shaun Lightman who clocked 51.06, 22 and 55 respectively. Two more future Olympians were high on the result sheet: Arthur Jones (7th) and Peter Marlow (13th). In the handicap race, 2 of our current readers took home 1st and 3rd prizes - Bob Dobson and Brian Keegan respectively. Enfield had the last finisher - A King 146th in 77.11. One wonders how his race walking progressed? Trowbridge AC were the top team, followed by SWC and Southend. Trowbridge also won the Handicap team, followed by London Vidarians and Essex Beagles. Brian Eley, Brian Keegan and Bob Dobson were in their respective scoring fours, so adding handicap team prizes. Host's Enfield held their annual 7 Miles' Championship in conjunction: 1 Ken Easlea, 2 Amos Seddon, 3 Charlie Fogg. **We extend our condolence to Beryl and all other family members.**

CHARITY DONATIONS

Mrs Sharon Barnbrook (Mick's widow) has given details of the family's chosen charities, should persons wish to mark his sad death with a charity donation. You're invited to choose from 2 nominated charities which were supported by Mick, and donate directly: British Heart Foundation and National Autism Society. Details of both worthy organisations are below:



- [Donate – British Heart Foundation](#)
- [Donate – National Autism Society](#)



FIXTURES

It is recommended that dates/start times are confirmed directly with organisers for accuracy.

APR	2	Veterans AC 5K 'B' Road Race (all welcome)*	Battersea Park Bandstand	7.00pm
	6	"Peter Worth" Enfield League 2/3/510K	Donkey Lane	11.00am
	7	Blackheath & Bromley (with SWC) Open 5/3/2K	Norman Park	TBA
	17	Civil Service AA160th Anniversary Fun 5K Walk**	Battersea Park	2.00pm
	20	RWA 10K & YAG Championships 10/5/3/2K	Leicester Cycle Circuit	11.00am
	23	Centurion 576 George Eastwood (Woodford Green) 100th birthday	Epping (Thornwood)	
	30	Eastern Masters Track & Field League	Peterborough	TBA

MAY	1	Eastern Masters Track & Field League	Corby	TBA
		Eastern Masters Track & Field League	Melbourne Park Stadium	TBA
	4	Centurions Social Walk 6 miles (all welcome)	Herongate/ Olde Dog Inn	10.30am
	5	Centurion 789 Olly Browne's 70 th birthday	Hadleigh (Essex)	
	6	Herts & Suffolk 3000m Championships (others to be added?)	Ridlins End Track, Stevenage	TBA
	7	Veterans AC 5 miles 'B' Road Race (all welcome)*	Battersea Park Bandstand	7.00pm
	11	Sussex County Championships 2000m/3000m	Crawley	TBA
	12	Kent County Championships 3000m	Ashford	TBA
	13	Southern Veterans Track & Field League 2000m	Lee Valley	6.30pm
	13	RWA Southern Area Committee Meeting	Zoom	6.30pm
27	Cecil Gittins Memorial 2.5/5/10K (+ Enfield League)	Gravesend Cyclopark	3.00pm	
JUNE	4	Veterans AC 5 Miles Road Championship*	Battersea Park Bandstand	7.00pm
	8	Ken Livermore 10K Olympic Year Relay	QE2 Stadium/ Donkey Lane	TBA
	19 - 21	England Athletics Track & Field Championships	Birmingham	TBA
	26	Blackheath & Bromley (with SWC) Johnson Bowl/ Challenge Development Walk 1-to-4 Miles	Norman Park	7.30pm
	26 - 28	England Athletics Age Group Track & Field Championships	Birmingham	TBA
NOTES	<p>* Allow 5-10 minutes from registration to start line. Non-VAC members eligible for Championship 1st/2nd/3rd awards.</p> <p>** Not judged under RWA laws. Commemorative medal for all finishers.</p>			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Regular distance training walks are held from Leigh-on-Sea's Belfairs Park – details from Centurion Steve Kemp on 07860 617899. <u>Reminder</u>: All Enfield League races now require online pre-entries to: www.fabian4.co.uk. Any problems entering refer to 07532-397528. 				



GLOUCESTER 24 HOURS - UPDATE

This event, to be held on 24/25 August, has already welcomed an International field of both runners and walkers. **The Centurion 100 miles** has walkers from several Countries [registered](#): Britain, Netherlands, Australia, Belgium, France, United States and the Isle of Man Crown Dependency. Also on the programme is a **50 kilometres walk**. All events are on Gloucester athletics track. Let's see some more entries! [Gloucester Track Ultras \(racedirector.co.uk\)](http://racedirector.co.uk)

A MESSAGE OF THANKS

Robin Davis asked me to extend his heartfelt thanks to everyone who have reached out to him after the sudden death of his wife Gwen. He thanks everyone for the enormous support, cards, phone calls, visits, and also the kind words at the track. He is very grateful and wanted a message to be put out to say how touched he is.

Adds Hon Ed: Robin is an Ilford AC Past President, and many in our race walking community will have met him, as he's a busy official and helper at athletics meetings.

A GOOD SEND OFF

Bob Watts RIP - London Vidarians/Loughton AC (2nd Claim)/The Centurions - certainly had a proverbial *'good send off'* as his funeral service at Honor Oak Park Crematorium saw its attendance boosted by an Olympian, 2 Commonwealth Games representatives, 4 National Champions, Centurions high-ups and Club stalwarts. At his Committal, standards were lowered by 2 smartly attired Royal British Legion members. Bob himself had been a Legion Standard bearer and had served as Hon Treasurer at his Legion's nearby East Dulwich Branch. An Order-of-Service was a collector's item - all 8 pages of it! This contained a front cover photo of Bob (see right) as many knew him - at the bar with a cigarette on the go. Inside was a full-page action shot of Bob in long distance action and another picture of him alongside Centurion 983 Hazel Fairhurst (Lancs WC) in a classic Roubaix 28 Hours race (see page 7). Music chosen for The Committal was *"The Long-and-Winding Road"* (Beatles) and Chapel exit music was *"That's All"* (Stacey Kent). The back page saw smartly dressed Bob with Royal British Legion colleagues outside his East Dulwich branch, where a post-service gathering was held. Also printed was a full-page account of Bob's life and highlights, which included earning an England Representative blazer as a long distance walker. A half-mast Union Flag flew outside the Legion. This venue had, in past times, been used as a Centurions' Committee meeting venue. Bob's good send off ended with an open bar all afternoon and a buffet feast. With so many racewalkers, past and present, now retired, it's more convenient to be available for funerals of our former colleagues and rival competitors alike.



NEW KIDS ON THE BLOCK

Relatively recently formed Brentwood Beagles AC have started a Walking Section and aim to encourage newcomers into our discipline. Lead coach is respected former International **Stuart Bennett**. You'll see some familiar names in their colours.

<https://www.beagles.org.uk/>



Dear Dave ...

RACE WALKING IN SOUTHERN ENGLAND

With reference to the long term aims and objectives, presented to the London Regional Council, as mentioned racewalking is at an all-time low in the UK. The situation, targets and proposals aforementioned is what was called "a think tank" 14 years ago when serious efforts were made to promote the sport and achieve Olympic representation. The efforts by some paid dividend to allow the sport to be more recognised. However, generally all the endeavours (with missions, strategies and heartbreak) were made by athletes who had family lives, full time jobs and attempting to train twice a day seven days a week. Only a small minority had the privilege to train full time with no other commitments. Expertise is available in our sport. However, this has been badly overlooked for many years by our race walking fraternity for whatever reasons, whether coaching certificates, health and safety issues etc. My memory goes back to Essex schools visited in 2010 when Paul Nihill and Olly Flynn took their medals to the schools and assisted in the presentation of race walking. This period and later saw the full development of the King brothers who achieved Olympic qualification on limited resources, no funding or the like. Their amazing endeavours can be replicated again, providing correct guidance and motivation are provided. Regional Ambassadors such as Chris Maddocks and Ron

Wallwork I am sure would carry a torch to lighten up the sport again. I am still passionate about our gladiator sport of race walking. We need to be more united in our mission and embrace the expert knowledge available to promote racewalking for it flourish again. Respectively submitted.

George Nibre (Frinton Walking Guru, former think tank apprentice)

STATE OF PLAY

It's very disappointing, isn't it? Essex CAA - no Walking Secretary. Last night we held our AGM - no Walking Secretary, still, to take over from John Brock, but then we have no Walkers either. Ilford surely still maintains a core of Race Walkers, don't you? Generally speaking, and judging by the regular good turnout at our Open Meeting on August Bank Holiday Monday, it is essentially Veterans who keep the party going. Schools perhaps? Ideally though, that would require the presence of a top-class Race Walker to give the initiative any cachet. I'm sorry I have no answer to the dilemma. It would be disappointing if the event hit the buffers though: the friendliest event of all those in which I ever competed was Race Walking.

June Cork



OUT AND ABOUT

Still putting in the miles, in Malta this time, is Centurion 788 Martin Fisher - a former resident of Southend-on-Sea. Martin's 1985 Centurion qualifying race was in Essex, on Colchester's Garrison Track, with a time of 22:58.45. Many more long distance completions were to come in a distinguished athletics career that is still ongoing. On Sunday 25 February, in the "Lifestar" Malta Marathon, he clocked 4:55.57 (chip time) and 4:56.32 (gun time) to fill 704th spot (553rd male finisher).

Place	Bib	Name	Nat.	Gender	AG	Club	ChipTime	GunTime
Malta Marathon								
704.	375	FISHER, MARTIN		553. M	29. Male Over 60	NO TEAM	4:55:57	4:56:32

BY OUR SOCIAL CORRESPONDENT

Wonderful evening enjoyed by all at the Metropolitan Police Walking Club Reunion and Buffet on Wednesday 6 March. There was a larger than usual attendance with around 32 of 38 attending – a notable increase in the Police attendance even though many notables were again missing. Dr Kitty Hung and her team of organisers put in a tremendous effort in organising a menu, programme, short speeches of welcome and toasting, a running slide show featuring many race walkers from the past, a large buffet with much selection for differing preferences and a raffle with a very large array of prizes, with many winners and much banter and laughter. It was a busy evening all round being Budget Day and many Civil Servants and others enjoying a very welcome drink or two in the ground floor lounge! On the walking side in attendance were Peter Hannell, Chris Flint, Reg Denny, Kathy Crilley, and oldest member Bill Coleman. He comes every year by taxi from South London no less! Well done to him!, Dave Neagle, Peter Addison, Hans and Derry Rennie from Yeovil - brought a special Nijmegen Marches Medal commemorating 46 years of participation. One walker has done 52 years but he is much older than Hans - in fact in his 80's - so Hans has plenty of time to catch up. A super achievement indeed! The Adler's too were there, Margaret and her husband Les. Of course, there was Kath and myself greeted by our hosts on entry. A special mention was made of deceased Mick Barnbrook and others. It was a shame that Ed Shillabeer and also Jackie and Peter Hodgkinson were unable to attend, but they were greatly missed. The rather small Trafalgar Room was used, but served its purpose very well. Plenty of exercise climbing the stairs to get there although there was a lift if needed. We all look forward greatly to our return to this excellent venue in 2025.

Bill and Kath Sutherland

PERSONAL MESSAGE FROM Mrs SHARON BARNBROOK

I have received cards and wonderful messages from the race walking and Police fraternities. I am very touched and I know Mick would be. He is very much missed and was very much loved, even though he drove us nuts at times. We as a family went out for a small lunch on the day of his private cremation to celebrate his life. I have been told that there are some wonderful messages on various sites regarding his passing. I send my love and regards to everyone who has kindly contacted me. Mick was a unique

guy and they broke the mould when they made him. We were together a long time and he is much missed. I'm trying to stay strong as I know he would have wanted. But some days it is very hard. He didn't pass alone - I was holding his hand and our dog Tommy was snuggled up to him. It was very peaceful at the very end and he just slipped away.

Sharon Barnbrook

Ed Shillabeer writes: "That's lovely. I quote one of the prayers from my reading of the intercessions on Sunday March 10th. "We pray for those who have died and for those who miss their physical presence. We commend to God the souls of all who have died recently ..." Amen. For Mick Barnbrook RIP Blessings.

OUR MANY RECENT SAD DEATHS

It is with great sadness to have lost our dear walking friends. May they all rest in peace 🙏🙏🙏

Kitty Hung (Met Police Walking Club Secretary)

WRITES AN OSCAR WINNING FILM EXTRA

Oddly enough the request for extras (for Chariots of Fire) appeared in Athletics Weekly circa 1980 in something like a two-line sentence. It seemed bizarre that anyone wanted to make a movie about 1924 gold medallists. It had the same resonance as: 'Wanted! Extras for film about 1936 ping-pong championships!' How little one knew, eh? Always a good parlour topic: "I was in an Oscar-winning movie, lol!"

Paul Warburton

Adds Hon Ed: He was an ace walker at the Bels and Southend-on-Sea AC, who appeared in 2 scenes of "Chariots of Fire". With many TV repeats, you'll spot him time and again. Recently Essex Walker published stills from those 2 scenes (Page 10 of [Issue 423 Jan/Feb 2023](#)).

EVENT NOTIFICATIONS

Just a note to confirm that this year's **Moulton Five will take place on Saturday 6 July** and will be part of the Moulton Village Fete. In addition to the "5" there will be a junior/novice walk and a children's 200m event. There will be lots going on, so it's the opportunity for a good family day-out! More details in due course.

In addition, *recognising the inclusion of a race walk relay in the forthcoming Olympic Games, the Enfield Race Walking League would like to know if you would support the:*

The Ken Livermore 10km Relay

2-people per team each walking 1 x 1000m + 5 x 800m Open to walkers over 13 years of age.

11.00am at QEII Stadium, Enfield, EN1 3PL on **8 June**. This would be a FUN EVENT, not part of the League, an Ideal Training Session and with an Olympic Year memento to all participants.

Walkers can enter in pairs or individually - Entry fee £10 per walker (Under 17's £5 per walker).

Replies by Friday 19 April please.

Ron Wallwork

ESSEX COUNTY CHAMPIONSHIP REPORT

There was a total of 5 male walkers from the 4 counties and 11 in the female race. Both myself and Melanie competed as the only Essex entrants in the 2k race walk.

Colin Harle

Adds Hon Ed: Both Essex gold medallists were 3rd in their respective races: Melanie and Colin clocking 10:40.49 and 11:37.71 respectively. Three DQs were in the ladies' event.

NEWS FROM KEVIN

I am (at the moment) unlikely to return to Racewalking, as I am focusing on Triathlon and the Ironman in particular! I set myself to do an Ironman before I reach 65 years old! The Ironman has always been on the agenda but not being able to swim properly was a huge obstacle. I have been learning to swim and am now confident to begin training in earnest.

Kevin Marshall

Positive Steps - Fitness and Wellbeing Ltd

Adds Hon Ed: In Ilford's colours Kevin became a Centurion at Colchester in 2004, has 4 times been RWA Long Distance Championship silver medallist and once bronze medallist - and led Ilford 2009

winning RWA Championship team (with Micky Sutton and Olly Browne the other scorers). Happy to mention his business, as they sponsored the 2017 Bury St Edmunds 100 Miles.

NEWS FROM ACROSS THE BORDER

- The Suffolk authorities have agreed that the 3000m track championship be incorporated in the Herts championships at Stevenage on the Early May Bank Holiday Monday. All we have to do now is get some walkers to enter and turnout.
- At the Suffolk meeting I stepped down as the Suffolk County AA Race Walking Secretary and George Wilkinson was elected to take my place. He is currently enrolled on courses for Coaching, time keeping and race walk judging - quite a busy young man.

Ron Wallwork

Adds Hon Ed: We thank Ron for his service in this role. We still need an Essex County AA Race Walking Secretary to promote an Essex revival.

BOB WATTS RIP - CONDOLENCE

I send condolences to Bob's family and friends. What a proud time that was race walking for England in Roubaix. Treasured memories.

Hazel Fairhurst

Adds Hon Ed: Photo taken from the 8 pages "Order of Service" at the funeral of Bob Watts (London Vidarians, Loughton AC and Centurions) featuring Bob and Centurion 983 Hazel Fairhurst (Lancashire Walking Club) taken during a Roubaix 28 Hours.



LET'S NOT FORGET THE LATE JOHN HEDGETHORNE

What a marvellous motivator he was in Essex Cadets, bringing on Peter Ryan, Mike Dunion, Denis and Roy Sheppard and so many other notable male and female stars. Essex was full of experienced Coaches and Motivators bringing on Scott Davis, the O'Rawe twins, the King twins and so many more. Now's the time for the Think Tank to be reinvented and plan for the future! Onwards and upwards into 2024!

Bill Sutherland



FIRST RACE OF THE YEAR

Thought I'd share this with you guys. A 5km fund raiser for Amanecer School for Children with Disabilities here in Huatulco. 2nd place in the Masters (40+) 20.27. Same as last year.

Jacky Lord

[CARERRA 2024 - Let's go Huatulco! \(vamoshuatulco.org\)](http://vamoshuatulco.org)



MESSAGE FROM THE FAMILY OF BOB WATTS RIP

The family would like to express their appreciation for your kind messages of sympathy and condolences. If wishing to make a donation in Robert's memory there are 2 charities for your consideration: King's College Hospital Charity and The Royal British Legion.

Adds Hon Ed: Bob sadly passed on at the hospital and had been a stalwart Legion member for decades. See below for links to donate to the respective charities.



- [Donations | King's College Hospital Charity \(supportkings.org.uk\)](http://supportkings.org.uk)
- [Donations | Royal British Legion](http://www.rbl.org.uk)



ESSEX COUNTY AA 3,000 METRES CHAMPIONSHIP WALKS DISCONTINUED

Regrettably yes (the 3K will be discontinued) but may be included in another meeting - same as with the indoor 2k.

Andy Catton (Essex County AA Chairman)

DAVE TO OUR RESCUE AGAIN

I have been looking at an event to mirror the Tri Counties Indoor collaboration but availability of Judges was the determining factor in going ahead. I very much hope Essex athletes will support this event. Collaboration between Counties in the region is the best way forward for now. Strictly a start time will not be known till entries close. If anyone is hoping to attend but needs help with local transport please get in touch. **Herts / Essex / Middx / Suffolk 3k Race Walk Championship Monday 6 May at Ridlins End, Stevenage (Incorporated within the Herts 1500m / Masters and Relay Championships)**. This event is primarily a template for future regional combined Race Walking Championships for those Counties who cannot at this moment support their own event. It's great to be able to make a start this year! Invites are for a 3k Race Walk. It's possible we can have a shorter race within this if there is Junior interest. (Cambridgeshire have their own race on 11 May but will be invited as guests).

ROSTER ATHLETICS

Hertfordshire May 6 Bank Holiday Championships



Entries for the race are on the Roster Athletics site: [Roster Athletics](https://www.rosterathletics.com)

Closing date 25 April 2024.

There is a box where you can leave a message to highlight your County.

Dave Annetts

ESSEX WALKER

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