



Ernie Forsyth

**NAME** ERNIE FORSYTH

**DATE OF BIRTH** 3RD OCTOBER 1954

**JOINED** NOVEMBER 1985

### **FIRST CLUB RACE**

This would have been one of the Metropolitan League cross country races

### **P.B's**

Can't find any track times as I mainly ran road and Country but I couldn't get anywhere near the track team due to the outstanding athletes in the club at the time.

I did manage some vet track 800m and 1500m races.

I actually won a 'C' race at Watford.

5 Miles 28.40 Hillingdon

10m 58.58 Rainbow 10

Half Marathon 78.50

Marathon 3.04 Glasgow.

### **NOTABLE PERFORMANCES**

Offas Dyke 15 mile Fell race in One hr 56.

Glasgow Marathon 3hr 04m

Club x country championships on old course at Hainault. I finished as 4th Ilford scorer and beat many of my clubmates in awful conditions but a really good run.

Cambridge Half Marathon in 78.50 and Rainbow 10 in 58.58.

Many of my best runs were achieved in Thursday night burn up 9 mile sessions with my friends and heroes messrs Catton, Mackenzie Coates, Layzell twins, Gary and Mick Webb,



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Stuart May. Lee Richardson Les Rowerth , Meadows , Lewis Dunbar, Mad Man Murdoch. Gerry Pells, Tim Heaney and our Mentor and all time great Mick Herring.  
Surviving training sessions with all these legends was a great achievement.

Essex U14 1st team road race walking champions 1968 (Essex Beagles)

1st Junior team Royal Navy X Country championships 1972  
Club President 2012 (olympic year)

1st Marathon Athens 1985 3h 52m

Silver medal at 1996 Essex Vets road relay with legends Mackenzie, Nixon, Catton, running last leg (no pressure there)

### **BIGGEST DISAPPOINTMENT**

Not winning Gold at 1996 Essex Vets road relay, lost a winning lead on last leg, although i equalled my PB

Failing to break 3 hours for the Marathon , despite being in really good condition, particularly Glasgow in 1987 when i suffered from cramp in calf at 22 miles whilst averaging 6.50 miling . very disappointing. i thought that there would be more opportunities but a fall in the 1989 London cost me again but i enjoyed both races.

### **TRAINING AT MY PEAK**

Monday Easy recovery 6 or 7

Tuesday Track session Cricklefields. Varied sessions. 400 600 800 1000 800 600 400 was always fun 20 x 400 was a killer

Wednesday 7 or 8 easy

Thursday 9-10 squad run usually at fast pace

Friday rest

Saturday 10 or more group run over country or road if no race

Sunday Long slow run depending on race targets



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### **FAVOURITE DISTANCE**

I loved the X country, the sense of camaraderie and us against them was always a great incentive. winning 12 man team North of Thames trophy was brilliant, I was recovering from injury and ran in borrowed shoes as one runner never turned up. Great team spirit, great day

### **FAVOURITE EVENT**

5K 5M road and League x country

### **ADVICE TO YOUNGSTERS**

Always be willing to listen to advice from the OLD WRINKLIES, you can pick out the bits that may help you, also don't be afraid to speak your mind. always try to be positive and enjoy your athletics, we only have one life don't be afraid to live it and love it. everybody is special.

### **MOST FAMOUS ATHLETE I HAVE TRAINED WITH**

It was great having a run with Eamonn Martin and Olympic Walker Roger Mills, but you only have to train with Andy Catton to fully grasp what competitive running is all about. I would have liked to run with Jac Buckner or Steve Jones

### **IMPROVING THE SPORT**

More grass root funding, better facilities and support for Junior athletes. LIFE BANS FOR DRUG CHEATS.

### **FAVOURITE SPORTSMAN**

Billy Mills Olympic 10k Champion. Native American runner an inspiration.



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### **OTHER SPORTS**

Spurs fan, for my sins. I follow most sports. I love boxing and all big Championship events that involve Great Britain but I wont watch Motor racing.

I was a football Referee for many years and was fortunate enough to referee at every top London ground. I am a Spurs fan but loved going to West Ham's Boleyn ground. great atmosphere and we were always well treated

### **BEST COUNTRY VISITED**

Mexico is my favourite place, the people are so friendly. they really live their lives and love it. Cuba was a great place to visit SAMBA WOW

### **FAVOURITE FOOD**

Clam Chowder

Sea Bass

mixed ice cream

nice cold beer or wine

### **FAVOURITE TV SHOW**

Sopranos. Boardwalk Empire Sons of Anarchy True Detectives anything really funny. I like watching Biographies

### **LAST FILM SEEN**

Richard Jewell. Directed by Clint Eastwood

### **LAST BOOK READ**

Wokini - lessons of a Lakota by Billy Mills. ( a journey to understanding happiness and self understanding)



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### **FAVOURITE SINGER**

I love most music from old standards , rock and roll , the blues . One of my current favourites is Luke Combs but my favourite song last year was Dance Monkey by Tones and I.  
Music soothes the soul but Elvis will always be king

### **LAST ALBUM BOUGHT**

What you see is what you get Luke Combs

### **LAST CONCERT ATTENDED**

Grand old Opry in Nashville USA . different but really enjoyable bit of music history

### **ANY PETS**

I had a German Shepherd called Max who sadly died which broke my heart, I am considering getting a Border Terrier to run with in my retirement

### **AIMS FOR NEXT SEASON**

To enjoy my running , hopefully injury free, support the Club and it's fantastic members, they deserve my best efforts .

To enjoy my life and family to the full, every day is a gift.

### **JOKE**

Five rules for men to follow for a happy life

1 it's important to have a woman who can cook, help out from time to time and has a steady job



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2 it's important to have a woman who can make you laugh

3 it's important to have a woman you can trust, who doesn't lie to you

4 it's important to have a woman who is good in bed and likes to be with you

5 IT'S VERY IMPORTANT THAT THESE FOUR WOMEN DO NOT KNOW EACH OTHER OR YOU  
COULD END UP DEAD



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one of my favourite memories 8am after training  
run in hills, Croatian Island, no cars, run , swim  
in Ocean and lovely cup of tea. PERFICK





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Founded in 1923

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Me and Lee Richardson at Hilly 5



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Derek Coates and Howard Williams Thrift Green



1970 with Mum and Dad I won a trip to FIFA World cup



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12 man North of Thames team winners MUDDY



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Martin and Mick battling out hilly 5



1972 royal navy junior team winners. Billy would kill for those shorts



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Met League X country, hot day thus normal running shoes



Receiving an award from Princess Anne on behalf of save the children



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me, mum and 3 sisters with football award



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Beverly Gull 10 team winners. Les Hislop Martin Etchells  
Brian Meadows Gerry Pells ( sponsor) Beverley Gull (Paralympian)



Dave Jones Me Alan Lovett Jim mcnamee Gary Webb Dave Bull Andy Catton Lee Richardson  
John Platt Martin Layzell



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I was lucky to beat these 2



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Chelmsford Half ( long course due to poor marshalling ended up doing 14 miles in 80 mins)



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Richard and David racing at Southend



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Flying back from Glasgow marathon 1987 top Ian Bishop Gary Webb Dave Bull  
Me Newman John mackenzie ( picking a winner)



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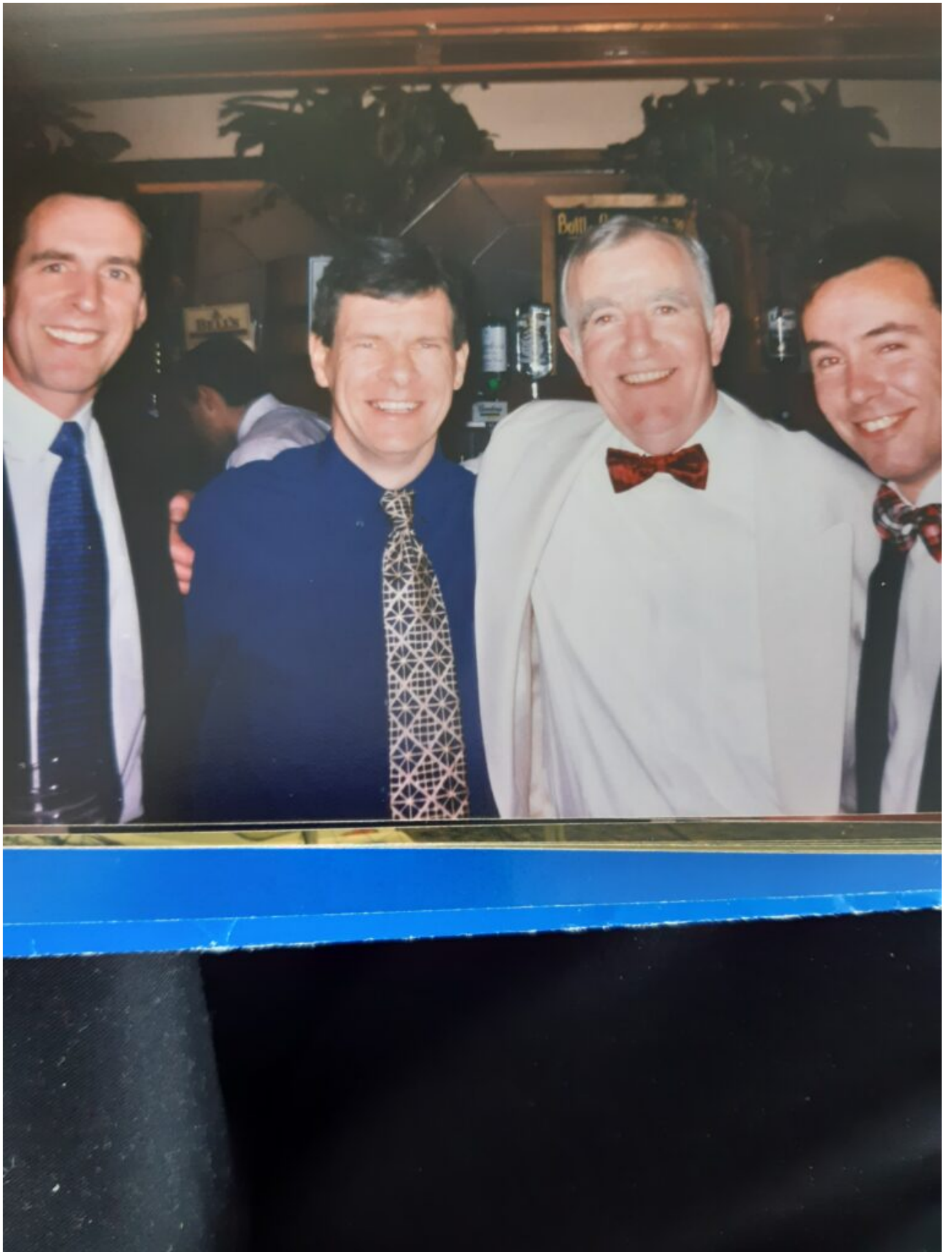


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1st Marathon in Athens. love this picture , looks like i won it LOL



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John Mac Me Frank and Tim Heaney



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Martin and Mike Layzell Roger Mills and Newman

## ERNEST ANSWERS

**You race walked in a strong Essex Beagles team (including ex-Ilford's late Colin Young). Any highlights to recall from such times, and why didn't you press on with "pedestrianism?" We know you've race-walked for Ilford AC in the Essex League.**

I really enjoyed my young race walking days with Essex Beagles. We were lucky enough to win many prizes including the Essex junior title which was raced over a course in Chigwell. I have fond memories of the old Beagles training hut at Hainault which is now a housing development. The major memory of those days was always finishing behind Ilford great Lawrence Dordoy who I got to know very well when I eventually joined Ilford AC. I stopped race walking when I started work at Plessey in Ilford in 1970 and joined mates football team before joining the Royal Navy in 1972.

I was very lucky to meet some great people in my race walking days, my coach Bill Fortune, Colin Young and Steve Gower (Ilford) were always encouraging, but one of my fondest memories was attending a service call at Colin Young's flat in Ilford to repair his washing machine, I spent 10 minutes repairing his machine and an hour talking about Ilford AC and race walking. Colin was a lovely man, like so many of the Ilford greats that we have lost.

I cannot finish this section without mentioning Dave Ainsworth and "Pavarotti in the Park", what has a former RAF man and veteran race walking stalwart got to do with the world's greatest Tenor, I hear you ask, let me explain....

Dave found out about my successful walking days and would continually be "ASKING" me if I would race again, I eventually relented and agreed to a "one off" race for Ilford around South Park, which also happened to be the night that Pavarotti sang in Hyde Park July 1991. Two things stood out that night, 1 it absolutely poured with rain all night 2. I had forgotten how hard race walking was, never be fooled into thinking it looks easy, it isn't and my shins hurt for weeks after.

Still at least Dave was good to his word and didn't ask again





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## **All ex-servicemen have a few yarns. Any more sporting tales from your time in uniform?**

As any ex servicemen will confirm, we all have many “yarns” some serious, some funny, some heartbreaking, some suitable and some not so suitable but one sporting one that makes me smile and taught me a serious lesson about ego, here goes.

During my training days at HMS Collingwood I ran x country and played football ( you got more time off if you played sport). I was training with the boxing squad in order to improve my strength and positioning . I was approached by the boxing coach ( who was also in charge of the Royal Navy football squad) and he asked if I could help out with some sparring, so seeing a chance to impress him with my enthusiasm ( and possible selection in the next football squad ) I agreed. I’m pleased to say that I held my own for a few sessions and the coach asked me to represent my weight division in the upcoming championships, I started to panic and told him I didn’t think it was a good idea as I was so inexperienced ( SCARED) He said that I had sparred all the other possible contenders who had entered the championships and that with a bit of fine tuning I would do very well, so I agreed. Championship fight night was in the Main exhibition hall and it was packed to the rafters, the bouts were flying by and it came to my turn (PETRIFIED)

I was the first to enter the ring to loud cheers and a lot of jeers, then my opponent entered the ring, he was a Kenyan sailor about 6 feet 4 with arms like an octopus, I turned to the coach and said ” Who the #### is he, I didn’t spar with him” the coach said ” He’s a late replacement, sorry should have told you” I spent the next 9 minutes being continually punched in the face without getting anywhere near my opponent and getting punched in the face REALLY HURTS. Needless to say I Lost the bout but learned a valuable lesson about ego . I did go on to represent the Royal Navy at football but NEVER BOXED AGAIN.

## **Tell us how you became a football referee and what was the most prestigious game you were involved with?**

I qualified as a referee after refereeing my son’s teams on Sunday mornings in the early 90’s. I was very fortunate in my career to referee some high profile names and managed to referee at every major London club ground. I always enjoyed refereeing representative games where only the best players were selected.

John Terry and Paul Konchescky were always a pleasure to referee but Steven Gerrard and Joe Cole were the best young players I refereed. I was fortunate enough to referee Sir Trevor



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Brooking and many other former pros , in their veteran years, but Sir Trev was a real Gent.

**Also can you name who was the most famous player you had the pleasure of refereeing?**

Has to be Sir Trev, but Danny Cowley, former Lincoln and Huddersfield manager was always a great talker and a great challenge

**Why did you originally join Ilford AC**

I joined after my first marathon (Athens) and realised that I would need help to improve, also I had poor advice at Essex Beagles so joined Ilford instead.

**Tell us how you became great friends with Our old friend Newman Sargent and your favourite running memory of him?**

Newman and I share the same birthday, he was a unique character always dressed in the best gear, full of advice and loved Bruce Springstein. We probably met at the track , Chigwell or more likely his second home Roger Mills' shop in Wanstead. Thinking of him always makes me smile, I miss him a great deal. My favourite running memory of Newman would be of him marshalling at the top of the golf course at the hilly 5 singing my name as I struggled to the top. He was a gem.

**What was your worst injury ?**

Worst injury , I broke my left leg in 3 places ( so I don't go to those places anymore LOL) seriously, i was out of action for a year. My recent shoulder injury has lasted over a year and is very frustrating because of the pain but there are a lot of people in worse situations so we just carry on



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### **First vinyl Single and album you bought ?**

My first single was a 78rpm from a second hand shop. Elvis Presley Hound dog . My first album would probably have been a K TEL various artists rip off album.

### **Favourite Park Run and best time ?**

I haven't done a Park run yet but would probably do Valentines or Barking if I did

### **What was your day job ?**

I am a qualified Domestic appliance engineer, specialising in Gas, Refrigeration and wet goods ie washing machines, dishwashers and tumble dryers

### **What school did you go to and did you do athletics at school ?**

I went to Robert Clack, the only athletics we did were on school sports days but I did represent the school at X country ( nobody else liked it )

### **Favourite Cross Country Course and race ?**

My favourite courses were in the Metropolitan league, I always found Claybury to be a challenge and most enjoyable along with Welwyn, proper courses

### **Can I ask how long was Ernie in the RAF, where he was stationed and what job he did while he was there?**



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I was actually in the Royal Navy submarine service, I qualified in radio communications. I served from July 1972 to March 1981. I served on submarines HMS Courageous and HMS Warspite, both Nuclear submarines involved in the Cold war years.

I was also lucky enough to work for the Director of Naval recruiting for a short time, travelling the country putting up displays, it was a great way to see the country.

My last "posting" was due to be HMS Conqueror in 1980 but prior to joining her in America I tore a cartilage in my knee and somebody else took my place. the significance of this is that HMS Conqueror was the submarine that sank the Belgrano during the Falklands War. I wouldn't have liked that on my CV. Fortunately I left before hostilities broke out in full.

**As a fellow team member of the winning Ilford team in the music quiz, can I ask do you have a large music collection, or do you just listen to a lot of radio? Do you/did you attend a lot of concerts and if so what was your favourite?**

I have always been a music lover, my mum and dad used to sing in the pubs and our house was always full of music of all kinds. I love concerts U2 at Wembley, Bette Midler at O2 , Carmen at the Royal Albert Hall (opera), but my favourite is Marvin Gaye at the Royal Albert Hall 1976 mesmerising, I still get goosebumps listening to him

**A question I always ask - Your fantasy Dinner party. 12 guests alive or dead (obviously alive for the party). You can choose 4 sportsmen, 4 music artistes and 4 others. Who are you inviting.**

Billy Mills ( 10k Olympic champion) Bobby Moore, Jimmy Greaves, Joe Calzaghe.

Frank Sinatra, Elvis Presley, Aretha Franklin , Johnny Cash.

My Dad , Bob Monkhouse Jackie Kennedy ( just to wind up Frank Sinatra)

**You are always encouraging others. In your time at the club does anyone stand out as someone who really encouraged you to push yourself?**

I could name everybody, people are inspiring without really knowing it. I was so lucky to be part of the " Grasshopper group" led by our great master Mick Herring. Dave Jones was always a great encouragement to me and my 2 sons. The example set by leading athletes and a desire to get better was a major driving force, nowadays it is the example set by all our Club athletes, young and old, they are my inspiration



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**Did your 2 sons ever share your love of running, and what do they do for a living? Do they live close? Have you any daughters (that you know of) Are you a grandparent?**

Our sons Richard and David represented Ilford at track and x country as youngsters, it was an integral part of their upbringing and the people at the Club have played a big part in their lives and in making them the fine men that they have become.

Richard is an Electrical Supervisor, listing the new Tottenham Stadium as one of his successful projects.

David works as an I.T recruitment Consultant.

We are lucky that they both live locally in Hornchurch, so we get to see them regularly. We have 2 delightful grandchildren Evie and Zach both love sport, Evie is a good stylish runner who loves ice skating but Zach loves riding his bike and football. Hopefully in the future I can introduce them to running.

**Tell us more about your winning a trip to the 1970 World Cup. What was the competition, what games did you see, and did your mum and dad go with you?**

1970 trip was fantastic. I entered a competition run by David Coleman. I had to name an England team that I thought could win the World Cup and any tactics that would achieve that goal. I went with my Dad for 3 weeks . we saw all the games in England's group including the classic Brazil game, we then saw the quarter final and Brazil's semi final before going to see the greatest game in World Cup history Italy v Brazil absolutely amazing. I think this experience started my love for Mexico

**Second last photo was uncaptioned (probably the Editors fault!!) It looks like you were with Teddy Sheringham and a young Gary Neville?**

Martin and Mike Layzell with me and Lee Richardson. We used to call Lee , Harry Lime, from the Third man TV series, because he always seemed to finish 3rd



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**Behind every great man is a great woman. Tell us how you met Mrs F and how long you have been together?**

Yvonne was a friend of my youngest sister Eileen so we knew each other since she was about 15 although we never went out as a couple until 1978 when we went to a football presentation dance . We married in March 1981 ( I think, hope she doesn't read this).

**Today's runners have so many gadgets to measure time, distance, heart-rate etc and also trainers that give them a speed advantage - yet it's fair to say that before all this technology runners at clubs were far quicker. Why do you think this is?**

A very difficult one to answer, would those athletes have used the technology, probably. I think it was different lifestyles, different training methods, more quality athletes to train with and race against, do people really want to push themselves if they are constantly looking at times, distances and predicted results. I can only say that when I was competitive I trained and raced with athletes and groups of different abilities, we only used wrist watches, but not always and raced every race as if it were the last. I believe competition brings out the best in us, with or without technology

**On a related point. Athletic / running clubs have far more 'casual runners' today due to the increased interest in the sport. Is this something you are pleased with?**

I cannot say anything negative about anyone who puts on a pair of running shoes and does their best, what is the difference between a good Club runner doing 5 miles and a " casual runner" i would say that the "casual runner" will put in as much effort as the Club runner and will feel the benefit just as much. In this day and age " running snobbery" is a thing of the past SPORT FOR ALL. Watching a slower runner give their all is as inspirational as watching an Olympic athlete

**What is your view on mass participation running events (London 10k, Adidas city runs, Havering Half etc) as opposed to the club focused smaller events?**



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Serious Club runners will target Championships and rightly so, there is a place for bigger “mass” events as they inspire an “in it together ” feel good factor, especially when fundraising. It is unlikely that these runners will enter or even qualify for events aimed at “serious runners”. It’s like Pick n Mix there’s something for everyone. THANK GOD

### **Have you any favourite Great North Run stories you can share - that are repeatable ?**

The Great North Run was a classic enjoyable weekend, that’s why we kept going back. My PB was 7 pints of Newcastle Brown and pizza then ran 82 minutes next afternoon.

There are many stories that can’t be repeated but a couple spring to mind.

One particular year we were at breakfast waiting to go to the race when we noticed staff running to and fro, the manageress came in and said I’m very sorry we can’t do any cooked breakfasts today as the Chef has died . I called out to her ” I hope it wasn’t anything he ate”. It seemed to break the ice and everybody laughed. Later that afternoon she was serving behind the bar, which was getting very busy, when she slipped over, revealing her Black and white knickers, somebody said “you can tell she supports Newcastle, look at those Black and white Knickers “.

Gerry Pells dancing round handbags, Andy Catton beating Peter Elliot’s protege to the vet’s title, Quiz hosted by John Motson, out sprinting Frank Bruno, sharing a hot tub with Olympic champ Lynn Davis , sitting in the VIP tent ( don’t know how Newman swung that one) watching and talking to them, driving back cramping up in Richard ( the beast) Long’s car, beating Gary Webb International athlete (3 weeks after his hernia op LOL) GREAT GREAT MEMORIES.

### **How did you manage to train when you were away for months 20,000 leagues under the sea ?**

Training at sea( underwater) was impossible except for some jogging on the spot and static exercises, hence when we returned to base after long trips we were all very unfit and took weeks to recover, it took some even longer after all the beer that was consumed on the train from Scotland to London.

### **Do you listen to Chris Country radio?**



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**Have you seen Like Combs live?**

Didn't know about Chris country, but will look it up and give it a go. Unfortunately C2C was cancelled this year and Luke Combs was headlining. We have tickets for next year and he has agreed to headline again really looking forward to that