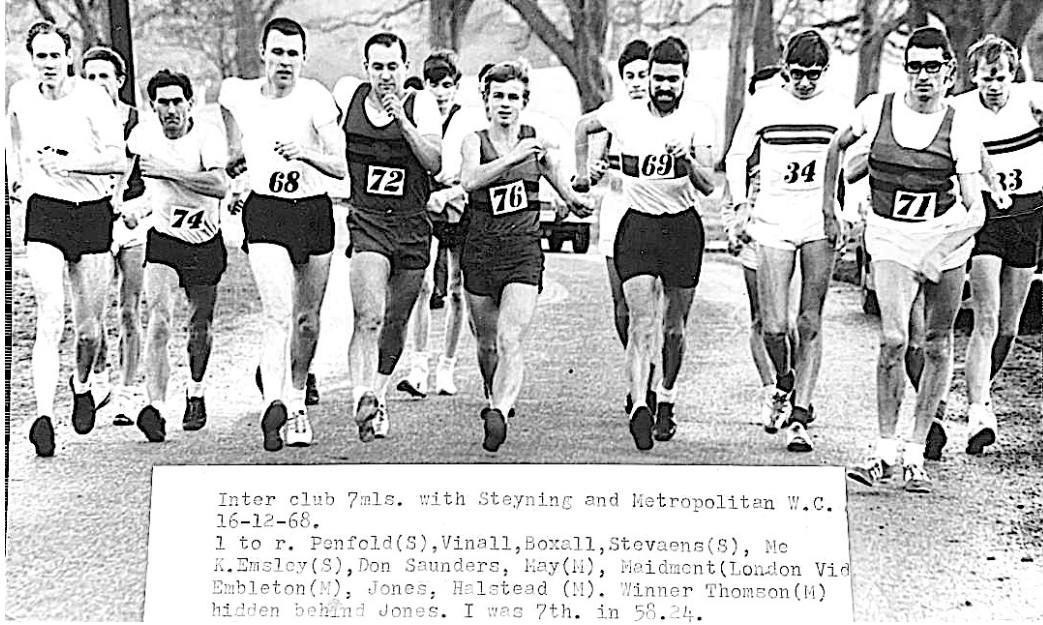


*** VALE ARTHUR JONES ... BRITISH MEXICO CITY OLYMPIAN ***



Inter club 7mils. with Steyning and Metropolitan W.C.
16-12-68.
l to r. Penfold(S), Vinall, Boxall, Stevaens(S), Mc
K. Emsley(S), Don Saunders, Hay(M), Maidment(London Vic
Embleton(M), Jones, Halstead (M). Winner Thomson(M)
hidden behind Jones. I was 7th. in 58.24.

Arthur Jones (71) in one of his last races on home roads ... an Interclub 7 mile race in Brighton. (Photo courtesy Alan Buchanan)

The sad news came through yesterday that Great Britain's 1968 Mexico Olympic 20km rep, **Arthur Jones**, has died in Adelaide, following a period of illness.

Arthur, tall, bespectacled and possessed of a powerful 'guardsman'-like technique, would be the best performed of the British walkers (11th in the 20km) at those blighted, oxygen-starved Games. Aussie **Bob Gardiner** – who raced in the 50km there – provides the following anecdote that, perhaps, illustrates the man's individual approach to his sport:

*"Frank (Clark) and I trained with the English team and made good friends with them. Arthur enjoyed a joke with us, all training around the village, but when the team went up to a higher altitude to train Arthur bowed out and did an easier session at the village track. That seemed to pay off for him as he finished a good 11th in the 20K."*¹

Arthur might be said to have had another 'connection' with Australia prior to the Mexico City Games – one that either party could have done without. Veteran UK race walking identity **Alan Buchanan** remembers the lead-up to the British team selection – interesting, perhaps, considering that Australian athletics was at the time polarised by the Noel Freeman non-selection saga:

*"(Arthur's) ambition was to make the team for the Mexico Olympics. I remember coming back on the train from the National 20km where he not done well and was very down and determined to up his training as he was basically a good track Walker with a safe technique. When the final trial came he produced the goods to make the team and finish as leading Brit. It was not without some controversy as Peter Fullager, who had spent a month living and training with Arthur in Hove, thought he should have selected. It seemed at the time the RWA selectors had more faith in Arthur's technique."*²

¹ Facebook Messenger correspondence

² Email correspondence with David Ainsworth

Arthur's acquaintance with Australia's walkers would increase when, as an émigré on an assisted passage, he and his family moved to Australia, settling first in Sydney then in Adelaide. A bond of friendship would grow between Arthur and **Frank Clark** during his time racing in NSW. Frank recalls:

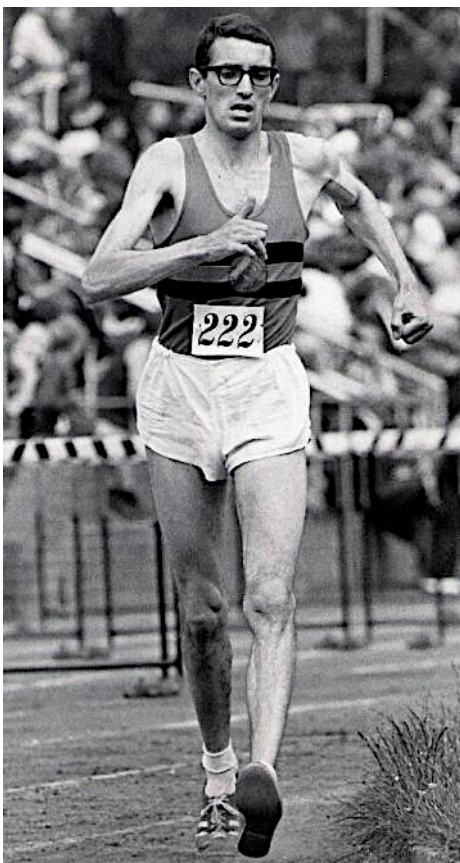
*"I raced Arthur regularly in 69 and know that he was one tough competitor. We were good friends at that time. He had left Sydney by the end of 1970 when I returned from racing for Ilford in England. His lovely wife, Carol, had kept me informed (about Arthur) in recent times."*³

It was in Adelaide that Arthur would finally put down roots. **George White** is preparing a tribute for the SA Masters newsletter, spelling out Arthur's key roles in SA athletics life and race walking in particular. George has very kindly sent me a copy to share with readers:

It is somewhat ironic that when Arthur was a child in the UK, doctors said that he may never be able to walk – yet he went on to become an Olympic race walker. At first - at school in London - his athletic light burned dimly and he is quoted as saying "in school races I was nearly always last and in one race I fell over". Later at school and after joining Herne Hill Harriers his middle distance times started to improve.



Arthur Jones, behind left shoulder of Frank Clark (12), early in the Mexico City 20km.
(Photo courtesy Frank Clark)



It was in this club that Arthur got his first taste of race walking but it was in the RAF when he entered the station sports day 2 mile walk "for a giggle" that he found that he was quite good at it. By the time he left the RAF and joined the Brighton and Hove Athletic Club, running had taken a back seat. Seven mile walk events were the common distance with fields of up to 200 walkers, and Arthur gradually moved through the ranks. Over the years 1964 to 1967 Arthur's time for the seven miles improved to 50.21 and he posted times of 6.32 for the mile and 43.56 for 10km.

In 1967 he burst onto the national scene with third placings in the 10 miles with a time of 76.10, and the 20km with 101.23. Later in 1967 he improved to second in the 20km with 98.27, which saw him selected for Great Britain to compete against the USA and France including two 20Km track walks in Paris. Continuing his improvement, he won the national two mile championship and in 1968 Arthur was invited to the final 20km Olympic trials. In far from ideal major race preparation, as the walkers were not offered accommodation, he slept on the floor of a running friend's hotel room. He finished third in the trial in a time of 94.51; then followed an anxious wait for both notification, and the birth of his youngest daughter. Daughter came first five days later, closely followed by the invitation to represent Great Britain in the 1968 Mexico Olympics.

Arthur's selection followed much criticism in the press for his apparent preoccupation with the very short distances (has anything changed?) however his time and place in the selection trials silenced any disapproval.

Any remaining criticism evaporated in Mexico City, October 1968, when Arthur finished first of the British walkers in a very respectable 11th place in a time of 97.32 – not bad at altitude and in the heat.

(Photo courtesy George White)

On his return to England he raced on a few more occasions but went into semi-retirement. In May 1969 Arthur and Carol emigrated to Australia and in Sydney he wasted no time in continuing his success, taking out the 1970 NSW 10km title, followed by several others and produced some fast times – 1500m in 6.26.5 and 3km in 13.18. In 1970 Arthur competed in the National 20km title in Adelaide recording 95.49 for third place.

³ Facebook Messenger correspondence



Jones edging out Pasquale Busca (ITA) for 11th place in the Mexico 20km.



*Racing alongside Frank Clark in a NSW interclub race
(Photos courtesy Frank Clark)*

In 1975 the family moved to Adelaide and he joined United Collegians. Arthur spent time on the Board of ASA, was secretary/president of the SA Race Walkers Club and was Race Director of the City-Bay Fun Run for a few years. He then retired from Athletics for some 20 years until becoming interested in walking again when the Masters Games were held in Adelaide in the late 1990's. Arthur joined SAMA in 1999 and the committee as Vice President in 2000, serving in that capacity for five years before taking on the President's role for another four years as well as acting as race-walk coordinator.⁴



Arthur at the SAMA 50th anniversary celebrations ...



... and celebrating Christmas with George White.

(Photos courtesy George White)

***Tributes for Arthur Jones**

David Ainsworth has been fielding tributes from across the race walking world, both in the UK and elsewhere, for a man clearly held in high regard. Here is a selection:⁵

*Sadly just got the news from Australia, Arthur Jones died today. Arthur was in the GREAT BRITAIN team at the 1968 Mexico Olympics. When I lived in Adelaide, Arthur and his wife Carol lived in the same road as me, we sometimes did a long Sunday training walk in the Adelaide hills. Good days, RIP Arthur.
- Don Cox c787.*

*Sad news. Nice to read Don's comments about the good training days with Arthur.
- Chris Maddocks*

It was with great sadness that I received news of Arthur's death. So sad that one had to compose oneself to come to terms with such sadness. Arthur and I were selected to represent Gt. Britain in an international athletics meeting against

⁴ Email correspondence with George White

⁵ Email correspondence with David Ainsworth

France in La Baule 1967. Ken Bobbett made up the trio in the 20k track walk. We shared a room in a splendid hotel and became great friends although fiercely competitive in racing. I admired Arthur's upright walking style and his training regime. He was intent as I was to go to Mexico. For Arthur that ambition was realised and how proud he was and rightly so. I shall treasure memories of a truly good friend and a race walker of the highest calibre. Rest in peace and rise in glory.

- Roy Lodge

I remember training with Arthur. He was a bespectacled and very tall walker and he was charming.

- Peter Marlow, 1972 Olympian

Very sad news indeed to hear of the passing of Arthur Jones. A very stylish race walker who achieved an outstanding performance at the 1968 Mexico Olympics - 20 Kms Walk. He was certainly one of the stars in Brighton and Hove A C in the late 60's before emigrating to Australia and enhanced their depth in top race walkers. May he Rest in Peace and always be remembered fondly. With sincere condolences,

- Bill Sutherland BEM, 1970 Commonwealth Games bronze medalist.

Very sad news about the death of Arthur Jones. I have tried several times over the years to track him down in Australia. Whenever I have been over there I have enquired as to his whereabouts but alas, always to no avail. I will never forget the day I won the National 10 at Exeter in 1981. I felt extra proud that I had emulated Arthur's feat in winning that particular event. I'm not sure but I think we remain the only male racewalkers from Brighton & Hove AC to win a national title. Except of course for George Larner all those years earlier, certainly a long time before the emergence of the RWA. So it has been a sad day, another one of the old Brighton & Hove AC racewalkers gone. Please add my name to any list of condolences for Arthur. Thanks again for keeping me in the loop. Cheers,

- Mike Parker



Withdean Stadium, Brighton: Arthur Jones leads in the 1968 Langmaid Trophy 2 miles, utilizing that long-legged stride to good effect. (NOTE: Any Aussie walkers who are too young to recall what the Olympic Park track in Melbourne was like at around that time, this 'll give you a good idea!)

(Photo courtesy Alan Buchanan, who is racing here wearing No 82.)