

March 7th

Memory verse

My times are in thy hand. Psalm 31:15
More information about this verse tomorrow.

Some outdoor exercise

March 7th is the date on which George Littlewood set off on a record-making walk. In six days he covered 531 miles 677 yards and his record *still stands today*. Can you guess the year in which he performed this feat?



You will probably be surprised to find that this unbeaten record, was set in 1882! Not only that but Mr Littlewood also held the world record for distance *running* for 96 years. His record of 623 miles 1,320 yards in six days, set in 1888, was not beaten until 1984 when the Greek Ultramarathon runner and poet, Yiannis Kouros, whose nickname was “the Golden Greek”, achieved over 635 miles in the same six day period.

My children used to say they should be able to walk one mile at one year old, two miles at two years old and so on. However, there is definitely something wrong with this rule as far as George Littlewood is concerned – he would have had to reach over 531 years old!

Walking is very good exercise and it is enjoyable too. How far can you walk? See if you can build up your distance. Look out for free leaflets with details of guided walks in your own area. These can often be found in your local library. Your library may also have a book of local walks which you can borrow. These make walking very interesting as they usually have information about the places you walk through and generally include footpaths as well as familiar roads. Here are some tips on how to improve your walking:¹

Beginner

Try walking briskly at a 3 to 3.5-mph pace (walking a mile in 17-20 minutes), beginning with 10 minutes per day for the first three weeks. Slowly increase the time you walk by 5 minutes per week until you are able to walk 30 minutes per day, six days per week.

Intermediate

If you are already in good shape, start at this level. If not, you can continue here after about a month of the "Beginner" program. Aiming for a pace of 3.5 to 4.5 mph (13-17 minutes per mile), walk 3 miles (about 45 minutes), 3-5 times per week. If you find that you can't walk that fast, increase the distance that you walk instead.

Fitness Walking Technique

Proper technique in fitness walking can make your workout more effective and enjoyable while helping to prevent injuries.

Posture

Keep your head upright, looking ahead. Your chin should be in a neutral position, not too high or tucked in towards your chest. Your shoulders remain back and relaxed, not hunched over.

¹ By kind permission of the University of California Berkeley University Health Services. Permission granted by email. 19/10/21.

Foot Placement

Keep feet close to an imaginary line in the centre of the pavement in front of you....

Finding Stride Length

Stand upright with feet slightly apart. Lean forward at the ankles (like a ski jumper). Transfer your weight forward and as you do, put your right foot out in front of you and catch yourself before you fall forward. This is your stride length. You should maintain the same stride length regardless of the type of walk you do (Strolling - 3 mph; Brisk/Fitness walking - 4 mph; Race walking - 5 mph).

Stride

Always keep at least one foot on the ground. The heel strikes the ground first, following with rolling onto the ball of your foot, finishing with a strong push off the toes (trailing foot). Focus on quicker rather than longer strides. Avoid slapping the ground with your feet and concentrate on smoothing out the movement.

Arm Swing

This makes your walk a total body exercise. You will burn an additional 5-10% calories. Let your arms bend at the elbows and swing them in step with your feet in an arc from your waist to the front of your chest; your hands should reach just below chin level. Your forearms should brush your hips to keep your stride forward.

Some Arithmetic!

George Littlewood covered 531 miles 677 yards in six days. What was his daily average? (Tip: there are 1760 yards in a mile.)

A yard is 0.9144 metres. A mile is 1.60934 kilometres. Can you convert Mr Littlewood's record distance into metric measurements?

Mr Littlewood's running record was 623 miles 1,320 yards in six days. How much further could he run in six days than he could walk?

Yiannis Kouros ran 635 miles, 1023 yards in six days to beat Mr Littlewood's record. How much further did he run than Mr Littlewood?

Below is the story of Samuel Rutherford. He was sent 220 miles from his home in Anwoth to the city of Aberdeen. How long would it have taken George Littlewood to walk that distance?

Keep a record of your own walks especially if you are trying to build up your walking stamina. You can then work out your own average distances and times.

Something to write: a letter written on 7th March²

Samuel Rutherford (1600–61) was the minister of the parish of Anwoth in Scotland in the years 1627–1636. He was a good, kind minister and he preached the gospel faithfully to his people. Crowds of people from Anwoth and nearby parishes came to hear him and many were converted.



² There is more information about this period of British history in the lesson for 13. Information from: The Letters of

You can see the remains of his little church building or “kirk”, as a church is called in Scotland, in the picture. These were troubled times leading up to the Civil War in England. The King, Charles I, believed he was king by divine right and that no one should therefore oppose his wishes. Charles tried to govern without parliament and he was an opponent of the Puritans in the Church of England, persecuting them if they would not conform to his ideas. What were his ideas?

Charles wanted elaborate music, vestments (robes) for the minister and an altar instead of a communion table. He also forced on all churches a written prayerbook which it would be breaking the law not to use. These ideas were called *Arminianism*. They were shocking ideas to the Puritans because ministers in robes were like priests and the Bible tells us *all* God's children are priests, not just the ministers or preachers. An altar is for sacrifice but Christ is our only sacrifice and he died on the Cross for his people *once* and is now risen so we do not need an altar any more. Perhaps the worst thing of all was this: no one could have any *other* kind of church. It was against the law to hold any other church services even in woods and fields or private houses. There were many Puritans in Parliament so you can imagine that the king and parliament did not get on well with each other. Charles could not tax people without permission from Parliament. That meant that when he dismissed parliament he ran out of money. He imposed illegal taxes to get round this and put people in prison if they did not pay. All this made many of his subjects very angry.

Charles was king of Scotland too, of course. The only church allowed in Scotland was the Presbyterian Church. Samuel Rutherford was a Presbyterian and Charles hated Presbyterians. Presbyterians organised all their churches in a democratic system with a synod that was rather like a parliament. Charles thought Presbyterianism was dangerous. If people governed their churches in this way without the king and his bishops perhaps they would decide they wanted to run the whole country in the same way without the king and his lords!

Charles decided he would make the Scottish Church a church with bishops like the Church of England and a prayer book out of which the services were read just like the Church of England too. He would have to be careful though, even he realised that. The Scots were very jealous of their Presbyterian system. In the end this was one of the steps that led to Charles's downfall and the Civil War in England.³

Samuel Rutherford had written a book about how bad Charles's church system was. His book was called *An Examination of Arminianism*. This book was about the vestments, music, altars and all the other things that are not in the Bible that Charles wanted to have in the church. So Charles and his friends made sure that Rutherford was taken away from Anwoth and put under arrest in Aberdeen. He was not allowed to preach any more. Anwoth is near the Solway Firth. If you look at a map of Scotland you will see that he had been deliberately taken a very long way away from his home. I calculated that it was over 200 miles. Little did his enemies realise just what they had done. They had done the opposite of silencing him!

Samuel Rutherford missed Anwoth terribly. He missed his friends – they were 200 miles away! He missed the poor people who made up his congregation. It was even worse not being allowed to preach. He loved his Saviour dearly and he loved to do the work of preaching which his Saviour had called him to. Sometimes he was very sad. But as he read God's word and prayed he was comforted too. He wrote letters – over 300 of them – in the year and a half he was under arrest in Aberdeen.

Samuel Rutherford (Edinburgh, 1997) <https://www.evangelical-times.org/articles/historical/a-little-fair-man-samuel-rutherford/> and other sources.

³You can read about what happened in *The Story of God's Dealings with Our Nation* Volume 2. Available from <https://www.creationresearchstore.com/s/search?q=The%20Story%20of%20Gods%20Dealings%20with%20our%20Nation>.



Rutherford wrote to his friends, his congregation and his family – and we still have his letters today. They were letters full of good advice, and above all meditations on the goodness of God and the sweetness of His Salvation. He poured out his heartfelt thoughts into letters that quickly became enduring Christian classics as soon as they were gathered together into book form and published.

Very few people have read *An Examination of Arminianism* and, although I am told it is an excellent book, it has only recently been completely translated out of the Latin in which it was originally written. But the *Letters of Samuel Rutherford* have been an inspiration to thousands of Christians. The learned Puritan Richard Baxter said that apart from the Bible itself “such a book as *Mr. Rutherford's Letters* the world never saw.” The great Victorian preacher Charles Haddon Spurgeon said Rutherford's letters were “the nearest thing to inspiration which can be found in all the writings of mere men” and he chose a hymn based on Rutherford's words at the very last service he conducted before his death.⁴ The letters continue to help preachers and other Christians down to the present day. Charles I and his friends had not silenced Rutherford. They had caused him to write letters that would be read by far, far more people than he could ever preach to in Anwoth!

On the next page is one of the letters. It was written on **March 7th** 1637. Samuel Rutherford's language is quaint and sometimes difficult to understand. Sometimes he uses Scottish words and phrases too. I have not changed his words so you will have to puzzle out the meaning a little. I have added some footnotes to help you. What does he write that makes us think the lady he is writing to might be old?

When you have read the letter, think of someone who would like a letter from you. Do you have a friend or relative that lives a long way away? Or is there someone at your church who is too ill to get out to the services often? Or what about a missionary in a country abroad? Do you have a friend you have not been able to see for a while? It does not have to be a long letter or a great letter like those of Samuel Rutherford. If you would prefer to make a postcard and send that, look at the instructions in the lesson for 9th November. Just a few written lines – perhaps with some patterns or pictures in the border – might really make someone's day when it drops through their letter box.

There is more about Samuel Rutherford in the lesson for 30th of this month.

4 See the lesson for 30th March for the hymn.

To the Lady Earlston.

MISTRESS,—Grace, mercy, and peace be to you.—

I long to hear how your soul prospereth. I exhort you to go on in your journey; your day is short, and your afternoon sun will soon go down. Make an end of your accounts with your Lord; for death and judgment are tides that bide⁵ no man. Salvation is supposed to be at the door, and Christianity is thought an easy task; but I find it hard, and the way strait⁶ and narrow, were it not that my Guide⁷ is content to wait on me, and to care for a tired traveller. Hurt not your conscience with any known sin.

Let your children be as so many flowers borrowed from God: if the flower die or wither, thank God for a summer loan of them, and keep good neighbourhood, to borrow and lend⁸ with Him. Set your heart upon heaven, and trouble not your spirit with this clay-idol of the world, which is but vanity, and hath but the lustre of the rainbow in the air, which cometh and goeth with a flying March-shower....

My Lord hath been pleased to make many unknown faces laugh upon me,⁹ and hath made me well content of a borrowed fireside, and a borrowed bed.¹⁰ I am feasted with the joys of the Holy Ghost, and my royal King beareth my charges¹¹ honourably. I love the smell of Christ's sweet breath better than the world's gold. I would I had help to praise Him. The great Messenger of the Covenant, the Son of God, establish you on your Rock, and keep you to the day of His coming.

Yours in his sweet Lord Jesus,

Aberdeen.

5 Wait for.

6 Confined.

7 That is, Christ.

8 This strange (to us) expression means "To be on good terms with."

9 His captors were taunting him.

10 That is, he was feeling less home sick and was happy in his lodgings.

11 Pays all my expenses.