

## VALE CHRIS CLEGG (C 11), 1913 - 2007

I am saddened to report that Chris Clegg, Australian Centurion Number 11, died on 13<sup>th</sup> December, 2007. Chris had been living in retirement in Santa Monica in California and, at 94 years of age, was our oldest living Australian Centurion. Chris's family had moved him into a convalescent home about 3 months ago as he'd become very frail but, even with the more intensive care, his time had obviously come and he passed away peacefully one week ago.



**Chris Clegg in England for his second British Centurion finish in 1979**

Chris was born in England on 4<sup>th</sup> May 1913 and developed his love for racewalking during his early working days when he was a member of the Leicester Walking Club. He joined Leicester in 1941 and went on to help the club to many team victories. In June 1947 he became Leicester's first centurion in the London to Brighton and back, passing 100 miles in 21:39:42. (He returned to the Shoefayre 100 miler in England in 1992 and was the special guest starter.)

At the end of the second world war, Chris found that it was hard to find work in Britain and so migrated to Canada where he worked for a period of years. At one stage, he travelled to the USA for a racewalk and decided to stay. He lived there for the rest of his life. But it is fair to say that, even though he lived in America/Canada for over 50 years, he never lost his English accent and he remained a 'Brit' in manner and attitude.

He worked for many years as a postal worker and eventually retired to California where he lived in Santa Monica. In retirement, he no longer racewalked but kept fit with long strolls in the hills outside Santa Monica.

It was many years after his first Centurion walk that he decided to try again. The American Centurions had recently formed and their first few walks saw few finishers. Chris joined the field for the 1971 scheduling and became American Centurion Number 7 with a time of 22:46:14. He was 54 years of age.

This seemed to rekindle his love affair with long distance walking. In 1975 he travelled to Australia where he recorded 22:34:14 to become Australian Centurion Number 11. Then in 1977, he travelled to Holland to become Continental Centurion Number 53 with a time of 23:18:55. With this performance he became the first walker in the world to capture all 4 Centurion badges – England, America, Australia and Continental.

Not content with that, he then travelled to England in 1979 and finished a second British Centurion walk, his time on this occasion being 23:07:51. He was aged 62 at that time.

He was an insatiable traveller and in retirement he made many trips to various locations around the world. His regular postcards were always from a different overseas location. In 1996 he decided to make a trip to Australia to coincide with our Melbourne based Centurion event and it was great to see Chris once more after such a long absence. He was at that stage 79 years of age but showed with his enthusiastic approach that age is no barrier to someone so full of life. He stayed with me in Melbourne and saw more in his few days here than most of us see in a year!. Chris and I caught up with Mike Porter during his lunchbreak at the Melbourne Ports Historical Area and Mike was able to show him around the Port area in which he worked.

After the race, Chris ventured north to Sydney, then to Brisbane where he caught up with various old friends, then to Canberra and hence back to Melbourne. This was his third trip for the year, having travelled to Turkey and Greece in May and then to England and Scotland in July.

He returned to Australia a year later and turned up unannounced to watch our 1997 Centurion race in Brisbane. With the weather oppressively hot, he took over the sponging table and spent the day handing out water to the walkers. He was 84 years old at the time.



**Chris in Brisbane in 1997 with fellow centurions Tim Erickson, John Harris, Tim Thompson and Stan Miskin**

Chris was for many years our most decorated Centurion, having completed the 100 mile distance on 5 occasions as follows

June 1947	Age 30	London to Brighton and Back	21:39:42	British Centurion 135
Sept 1971	Age 54	Colombia, Missouri, USA	22:46:14	American Centurion 7
Oct 1975	Age 58	Melbourne, Australia	22:34:14	Australian Centurion 11
June 1977	Age 60	Sint-Oedenrode, Holland	23:18:55	Continental Centurion 53
June 1979	Age 62	Ewhurst, Surrey, England	23:07:51	

On top of this, he completed the Rouen 24 hour walk in France and came 22<sup>nd</sup> out of 50 starters with a distance of 157.47km (at the age of 63).

On a personal note, Chris was one of our most generous financial supporters and his regular large bequests helped us set up many of the things we now take for granted.

His superb record shows that age is no barrier if you are keen. We shall all miss Chris who was truly our 'elder statesman'.

Tim Erickson  
Secretary, Australian Centurions  
19 December 2007