

## AUSTRALIAN CENTURION DETAILS

12. **John Harris (18/02/1951)**  
18-19 October 1975  
23:18:15  
George Knott Athletic Field, Clifton Hill, Victoria

John Harris qualified as an Australian Centurion in Melbourne in 1975 in a time of 23:18:15, becoming Centurion Number 12. He was Queensland based at that time and was an up-an-coming young walker aged 24. Club captain Fred Redman reported on his race as follows

*The fifth to finish and fourth new Centurion was John Harris of Queensland. Many years junior to the others he found his early fast pace a sap on his strength and energy as the miles built up and indeed was only able to finish at all because of his stubborn determination to become Queensland's first. He tired visibly in the later stages of the race but never lost his style and cheerful disposition. A good effort John and though you were heard to say "NEVER AGAIN" I am sure that this was only a natural reaction. The number of times this plaintive cry from walkers has been heard over the years is countless, and does not signify. We are all gluttons for punishment. May you be the first of many from the Sunshine State. You are now our ambassador there.*



**A happy John Harris after finishing his first centurion walk in 1975**

He regularly represented Queensland in Federation and National events and eventually moved to Sydney towards the end of the seventies to further improve his walking. I remember when John travelled to Europe with the Lugano Cup team in 1983 and did some fine races. At that time he was walking around the 46 minute mark for 10 km so was no slouch.

John continued on with his walking until he married in 1989. At that stage he returned to Queensland, hung up the walking shoes and disappeared from the public view.

We were pleasantly surprised to see him resurface at the 1997 Centurions event in Brisbane and walk an effortless 50 km on zero training. This rekindled his enthusiasm and he has been an active club member since.

The following September, after a quick preparation, he made the trip to Melbourne for the 1998 Centurions event and surprised us all by completing the 100 miles in 23:10:36, a few minutes faster than his 1975 time. The race report explained

*Behind Gerald and Norm, an interesting battle was developing. As others fell by the wayside, Centurion John Harris of Queensland and Victorian Yiannos Kouros were slowly making their way though the field while British Centurion Roger LeMoine was trying to hold them off and take the third placing. They finished with only 4 laps separating the 3 walkers. Yiannis was the first of the 3 to reach the 100 mile mark in the time of 22:55:23 and he then continued on to the 24 hour gun, completing 168.406 km. Roger*

*was on his heels and completed his 6<sup>th</sup> 100 miler in 23:04:51. For Roger, it was especially pleasing given his limited training over recent years. John Harris had been about 30 minutes behind them at the 50 mile mark but walked a great second half to eat up the field. His 50 mile splits were 11:28 and 11:42. He walked 23:18 in 1973 and improved that to 23:10 some 25 years later. John had been some 13 years out of the sport and was only intending to walk 100 km but felt so good that he continued on.*



**John (in middle) in Brisbane in 1997 with Tim Erickson (C 13), Chris Clegg (C 11), Tim Thompson (C 6) and Stan Miskin (C 23)**

In July 2001, John contested the Australian 48 Hour championship on Bribie Island, Queensland, and was the first home with a distance of 221.680 km.

In April 2002, he completed his third centurion walk at Coburg with a time of 23:34:50 but this one was his toughest yet and he had to draw on his reserves, both mental and physical, to complete the challenge.

In July 2002, he returned to Bribie Island to defend his Australian 48 Hour championship and, although walking a longer distance of 230.307 km, he was relegated to second place behind runner Tony Collins.

He fronted for our 2003 Centurions event the following April and, although second overall, his distance of 149.268km was just short of the required centurion distance.



**John competes in the 6 Hour event in the 2009 Australian 24 Hour Championship in Brisbane**

Since then he has restricted himself to the shorter distances of 6 Hours and 12 Hours and regularly competes with the Queensland Race Walking Club.