

## AUSTRALIAN CENTURION PETER CRUMP C66

Peter Crump (C 66)  
23:39:40  
Middle Park, Melbourne, Victoria  
14-15 September 2013

When Peter Crump finally crossed the finish line at Middle Park in September 2013, he became Australian Centurion number 66. The last of six centurion finishers in that race, he had walked an excellent first half, covering 93.224km at the 12 hour mark, so he had only just over 64km to go and 12 hours in the kitty. Sounds easy! If only life were so simple. He hit the proverbial wall around the 19 hour mark and had to dig deep in the final 5 hours of the event, eventually reaching his 100 mile target in a time of 23:39:40. His performance against the odds was so impressive that he was awarded the Jack Webber Trophy for the gutsiest walk of the meet. It was a well deserved honour.



### **Peter qualifies as Australian Centurion number 66 in Melbourne in September 2013**

Finally I am able to add a short biography of Peter to the website, to sit alongside all our other Australian Centurion, on webpage <http://www.centurions.org.au/centprof.shtml>. I hope you enjoy the read. Thanks for your input Peter!

Born in England in October 1960 and migrating to Australia with his family in 1967, athletics was not an activity that Peter aspired to. As a youngster in Sydney, soccer was the main sporting activity until University, when hockey became an interest.

At the time of starting work in Sydney (1980), fun runs, half marathons and marathons were at their peak of participation, and his first tilt at distance was the 1984 (Olympic Trial) Canberra marathon (3:17:26). On the tail of that, Peter moved from Sydney to Adelaide, where he has lived since (aside from a brief return to Sydney for 2 years from 1989 to 1991), and completed a further 5 marathons (PB 3:07:24) before children caused a suspension of activity.

On returning to Adelaide in 1991, his brother-in-law persuaded him to join the St Peters Old Collegians Athletics Club and to participate as distance runner for the club over 3,000, 5,000 and 10,000 metres. At that time, track and field athletics was strong in Adelaide, and Peter was generally a “reserve” competitor, with the club having great depth across all disciplines. Peter watched the racewalks with interest, but only took the event up at a time the club when was aspiring to win the final series and needed to field full numbers in all events. “I’ll give it a go”, were his final words before he started out on his race walking venture.

It was an inglorious start, as Peter had not undertaken any formal coaching and proceeded to “goose step” (legally but most inconveniently) for the majority of the 5,000 metres. Many who were there still look back at that as an “interesting start” to Peter’s race walking career.

As any mature age athlete knows, it is difficult balancing family, job and athletic pursuit (training and competing) and for a number of years, Peter's walking participation was a weekly event, with no formal training or endurance work to support it.

And so it continued until 2007, when after much persuasion, Peter joined the South Australian Race Walkers Club and commenced competing in their winter competition, starting to train as a race walker, undertaking a number of sessions each week with gradually increasing distances – endurance training.

This training progressively paid off and Peter's times over the winter racing distances steadily improved, some seasons being better than others for times. Over the next few years, Peter developed an interest in national competition, representing the SARWC at the national winter (20km) road walking championships, as well as the main race walking carnival, the "LBG", over the 20 mile distance. Clearly more suited to distance than the shorter events, Peter enjoys the sense of rhythm that can be attained in a longer event.

While the times were never world (or even State) beaters, they were good enough for Peter to feel a sense of achievement, and his PBs were generally around the high 70% of world age ranking. But participating in the 20km and 20 mile national events were not enough, as the elite walking distance of 50km was an interesting proposition, not for any attempt at national qualifying, but rather for personal attainment. It took a few years of forward planning and a modest training regime (by elite standards) for Peter to front for the 2010 Australian 50km championships. It was a good year to participate, as there were only three finishers (of 4 starters), Peter being the third, in a time of 4:59:14, just inside the cut off time of 5 hours. (The two themes of modest training and just inside the cut off would recur for the centurions walk a few years later.)



### **Peter walks to third place in the 2010 Australian 50km championship in Melbourne**

One of Peter's good race walking friends, Darren Bown, an experienced international walker, was in Melbourne to see Peter complete the 50km and joked afterwards "It was great to be there for your 50km. Next year for Christmas I will support you for your Centurions ...". Prophetic words, even though they were delivered and received in jest.

It was Tim Erickson's regular weekly newsletters that lay at the root of the initial thoughts of attempting the Centurions qualifier. Early in 2012, Peter was discussing the idea of the 24 hour walk with one of his mentors, Bob Cruise, and noted that this was something to attempt when the race walking career was nearing completion. Bob retorted that it was better done sooner rather than later, and so the idea began to grow. During the 2012 year, it was mooted that the 2013 24 hour event would be held separately from Coburg and probably in Melbourne in September or October. So Melbourne in September 2013 became the goal.

In hindsight, the training regime that was adopted for the 24 hour event was very light on and not really event specific, which will explain the dramatic fade out in the second half of the event. Peter elected to follow his standard training regime up until the SA state 30 km road championships, held in late July 2013, before embarking on a program which was more suited to longer and slower events. Time was never a major ingredient in the recipe, what with a busy day job and not wanting to tip the balance of time away from home. His training was undertaken alongside regular SARWC events, as well as with the training group co-ordinated by Kim Mottrom, for company, and with walks on his own.

As a result, the greatest weekly distance that was undertaken in the lead up was 95km and the longest single walk was 45 km in 6 hours (over two successive days 75 km in 10 hours). The strong performance over the first half of the 24 hour event (93.2 km in 12 hours) is likely a result of good general fitness, rather than the lead up training.

On reflection, Peter says that there are two important factors for a successful Centurions outcome, the first being walking preparation and the second being event preparation / support. In Peter's case, underdone walking preparation (but with good endurance fitness) was outweighed by the support that he received during the event from his support crew (Darren Bown and Bec Pelentsov). The regular feed, drink, goo and change routine was invaluable and this part of the event cannot be overstated. And the significant contribution from other walkers, officials, Centurions and spectators was an amazing adrenaline lifter, which maintained the desire to achieve when the ability was compromised.

And it's done, goal achieved and in the bank. Is there another 24 hour event on the horizon ? Not at all. It's just like the Australian 50km, having done it, let's not ruin the moment, leave it up there. Perhaps a 6 hour to see what distance can be done, but no aspiration for anything longer. For now.

Peter is now back into shorter distance racewalking mode with the South Australian Racewalking Club (road) and with Athletics South Australia (track) and continues to improve and enjoy his walking.



**Peter walking in a SAWC event in Adelaide in May 2014**

For the record, Peter's personal bests currently read as follows

3,000 metres	0:15:38
5,000 metres	0:26:28
10,000 metres	0:56:31
10 km	0:53:31
20 km	1:49:49
30 km	2:51:59
20 miles	3:02:40
50 km	4:59:14
100km	12:55:06
100 miles	23:39:40
24 hours	161.25 km

A belated welcome to the club, Peter! May you have many more enjoyable years in the sport, walking both short and long distances.

Tim Erickson  
12 October 2014