

**CHRIS BURN C72 : 22:08:09**

**Chris Burn (C72)** was one of 4 walkers to qualify as an Australian Centurion in our 2018 qualifying event at the Harold Stevens Athletics Track in Coburg, his time a personal best of **22:08:09**.

Chris was the first Isle of Man walker to participate in our qualifying event and his win is yet another achievement for the walkers of this small island.



*Chris at the 2017 Australian Centurions race at Coburg – during and after!*

He is the latest Manx-born or Isle of Man resident walker to perform impressively in major 100 mile events all around the world in recent years. Some others include

- Stewart Jones of Manx Harriers who finished third in the US Centurion race in New York State two years ago.
- James Bassett who won the RWA English National 100 Mile Championship last August.
- Former Parish Walk record holder Sean Hands who has also won the same title.
- Current Parish Walk record holder Richard Gerrard who won the inaugural African Centurions race in October 2016 to take the coveted CI badge.
- Fellow former Parish Walk winner Janette Morgan who was the first woman home in the same event on Robben Island.
- Robbie Callister who won the African Centurion event in 2017, along with fellow Castletown man Andrew Titley who finished runner-up.
- Looking a little further back, Douglas based Irishman Vinny Lynch who won the Continental Centurions race in Rotterdam in 2016 with an impressive 18:48:36.

Our 2017 Australian Centurions qualifying event had been one of conflicting fortunes. Australians Justin Scholz (C61) and Colin Heywood had headed out fast, with Chris in close pursuit. Justin's pace was too demanding for the others and they gradually gave ground in their chase. Justin passed the 12 Hour mark with an impressive 97.7km, nearly 5km clear of Colin and a further 1km clear of Dutch walker Jantinus Mients and Chris. The race complexion changed when Justin retired just after the 14 hour mark. By then, Colin, Jantinus, Chris and Adrie Ross had come together and were within 2 laps of each other. They stayed within touch of each other until the final hours, when Chris eventually pulled clear, reaching the 100 Mile mark with 22:08:09 and then retiring, with his goal achieved. Jantinus was next to reach the 100 mile mark, with 22:25:34, then he too retired. The same was the case for Adrie Ross with 22:33:31 followed by race retirement. Colin was next to reach the 100 mile mark with 22:46:53.

For his efforts, Chris was awarded the Jack Webber Perpetual Trophy for the most meritorious walking performance for the weekend.

For Chris, born 27<sup>th</sup> March 1975, this was his second centurion badge, having twice completed the UK Centurion 100 Mile walk, first in 2013 (C1126 23:44:57) and then again in 2015 (22:39:34).

Chris tells me he was very active at school, being involved in a lot of the sporting teams and always on the move. Post school, he mainly enjoyed playing indoor 5 a side football (soccer), which he still plays on a weekly basis.

He competed in his first Parish Walk in 2006, calling it quits at Bride, a distance of 52 miles. "*I thought I could get to the end – it was a lot harder than I thought it was going to be.*"

In the 2007 Parish Walk, he did further, reaching Lazeyre, a distance of 67 miles.

The following year 2008, he completed the full 85 miles of the Parish Walk. Interestingly, this remains his sole finish in this event. In subsequent years, he has either not entered or has just completed a fast walk to Peel (36 miles) before supporting his brother who has been doing longer distances (his brother has finished the Parish walk 5-6 times now).

It was this 2006 finish in the Parish Walk that led to his Isle of Man End to End walk finishes (39 miles) and ultimately to the centurion challenge.

First to the End to End walk which must be his favourite event. It is a tough 39 miler, starting at the northern tip of the island and finishing at the southern end, hilly for its entire route and with a huge climb not far from the end - and he has 6 finishes to his credit. His 2017 finish saw his best place (7<sup>th</sup>) and best time (7:40:06).



*Chris competes in the 2016 and 2017 Isle of Man End to End walk*

With the 2013 English Centurion qualifier to be held in Douglas on the Isle of Man, Chris decided to test himself out over the centurion distance. It proved to be a correct decision, as he completed the 100 miles in a time of 23:44:57 to become English Centurion 1126. In a high quality event, he had come 21<sup>st</sup> out of 24 finishers, IOM walkers taking the first 3 places (Richard Gerrard 18:29:39, Vinny Lynch 19:00:35 and Robbie Callister 19:19:45). To cap off a huge day for Manx walkers, Janette Morgan was the first female walker with 21:46:12.

With the 2015 English Centurion qualifier to be held in Castleton on the Isle of Man, Chris fronted once again and was successful for a second time, completing the 100m miles in an improved 22:39:34. Once again, Manx walkers dominated with the first 5 positions, Vinny Lynch winning by over an hour with 19:14:21 ahead of Michael Bonney 20:17:32, Janette Morgan (20:23:11), Andrew Titley (20:23:11) and Karen Chiarello (20:36:14). For his part, Chris finished 24<sup>th</sup> out of 49 finishers. Overall, the Isle of Man accounted for 28 of the 48 successful walkers!



*Chris in action in the 2013 and 2015 English Centurion qualifying races on the Isle of Man*

And now of course, his 2018 Australian Centurion win gives him an all important second badge.

The next challenge for Chris will be the 2019 Continental Centurions qualifier. A third badge beckons!

And as a final aside, while I have focused already on the huge ultra distance walking footprint in the Isle of Man, it is worthwhile pointing out that IOM walkers have won 3 of the 6 centurion races. Chris is the current Australian champion (April 2018), Manx walkers have won both African Centurion qualifiers (Robbie Callister in 2017 and Richard Gerrard in 2016) and Manx walkers have won the English Centurion walk on multiple occasions.

Welcome Chris. May you have many more years of enjoyment from our wonderful sport. Final words to the man himself and it contains a very welcome surprise:

*I would like to thank Shardean for her support during the Australian event and also all the events before, being the End to End / Parish Walk and English Centurions 100 mile walks. I would also like to announce that Shardean and I got engaged post-race and pre awards ceremony'*

To finish, what I can only describe as an iconic photo of Chris competing in the 2017 Isle of Man Parish walk, with the spectacular Manx scenery in the background.

