

With a population of just over 17 million people and a size of just 41,000 square kilometres, Nederland has a smaller footprint than Australia against all the main measures. Yet, the Dutch long distance walking fraternity fights above its weight and leaves Australia far behind in its wake.

The country boasts many annual long distance walk classics such as *Nijmegen to Rotterdam*, *De Bossche 100*, the *Van Z. tot Z. tocht* at Zeewolde and of course the world famous *International Four Day Marches Nijmegen* which is the world's largest walking event, attracting over 40,000 participants each year.

The Dutch statistics are just as impressive when it comes to the 100 Mile walk. Over 300 Dutch walkers have successfully completed the English Centurion qualifier. Further, the Continental Centurions organization based in Nederland has awarded 457 badges, the vast majority to Dutch walkers. Finally, Dutch walkers have travelled around the world, winning Centurion badges in America, Australia, New Zealand, Malaysia and South Africa.

Jantinus Meints is one of these globe trotting dutchmen, with 4 centurion badges to his credit, along with many finishes in the various Dutch long distance walk classics.

Jantinus, born 2nd April 1958, had just turned 60 years of age when he visited Australia earlier this year, one of a significant overseas contingent (4 Dutch, one Belgian, one IOM and one American walker) who had joined us in Melbourne for the 2018 Australian Centurions annual qualifier.

And what an interesting race our 2018 Australian Centurions qualifying event turned out to be. Australians Justin Scholz (C61) and Colin Heywood had headed out fast, with Chris Burn (IOM) 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 Jantinus and Chris. The race complexion changed when Justin retired just after the 14 hour mark. By then, Colin, Jantinus, Chris and fellow Dutch walker 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 the fourth and final walker to reach the 100 mile mark, with 22:46:53.



Jantinus in action in Melbourne in April 2018 – Australian Centurion 73 (22:25:34)

It was yet another successful walk for Jantinus, his fourth centurion badge (Continental 2011, England 2012, American 2015, Australian 2018) and his seventh centurion finish overall (June 2011, May 2012, Sept 2012, June 2014, June 2015, May 2016 and Apr 2018).

I have reviewed web pages <http://www.belgianwalkingassociation.com/nl/walkers/meints-jantinus.htm?flandrien=true> and <https://www.wakkee.nl/atleten/jantinus-meints> to build up a bit of a picture of Jantinus's endeavours over the years.

Although his first Centurion attempt was not until June 2011, he had been walking the various Dutch and Belgian Classics long before that, and was a seasoned long distance walker by then. He has completed the *International Four Day Marches Nijmegen* on 13 occasions (4 x 50km on 12 occasions and 4 x 55km on one occasion) and has completed the *Van Z. tot Z. tocht in Zeewolde* (110 km) on 13 occasions.

His first introduction to the world of the centurions was in May 2010, when he completed 50 miles (10:42:41) in the annual *International Wandelevenement* in Schiedam, earning his Kennedy March badge. He returned the next year for the June 2011 *International Wandelevenement* at Weert, successfully completing 162.88 km in **23.38.11** to become Continental Centurion 388.



Jantinus earns his first centurion badge in Weert - Continental Centurion 388 (23:38:11)

2012 was a big year for Jantinus, with a number of high quality walks. In April, he completed the Kennedymars Sittard (80 km) in 10.10.50. In May, he completed his second Continental Centurions walk, this time in Schiedam, his 100 mile time a much improved **21:50:33**. Then in September, he travelled to Colchester for the annual English Centurions qualifier, completing the distance in a PB of **21:08:23** to become English Centurion 1101.



Jantinus earns a second centurion badge in Colchester - English Centurion 1101 (21:08:23)

It was not until June 2014 that he revisited the *International Wandelevenement* at Schiedam, completing 168.866 km in **22.36.11**, with a 100 mile split of 21.16.34.

May 2015 saw Jantinus earn his third badge (USA C80), with a 100 mile walk time of **23:30:57** in the American Centurion qualifier in Minneapolis.



Jantinus earns his third centurion badge in Minneapolis - American Centurion 80 (23:30:57)

2016 saw a couple of walks that deserve a mention. In March, Jantinus completed the *Kennedymars Sittard* (80 km) in a PB time of **9.32.29**. Then two months later, in May 2016, he completed his fourth Continental Centurions walk (at Schiedam) in a PB **20:28:12**.

Fast forward 2 years to April 2018 for his sixth centurion walk, this time in Melbourne for his Australian Centurion badge (C73 **22:25:34**).

Jantinus's long distance walking endeavours take him to many of the classics in Nederland and Belgium. Web page <http://www.belgianwalkingassociation.com/nl/walkers/meints-jantinus.htm?flandrien=true> reads impressively:

Nederland

- 2 x Amsterdam – Tilburg (125 km)
- 2 x Nijmegen - Rotterdam (160 km)
- 4 x Mergellandroute / Bocholtz (135 km)
- 9 x De Bossche 100 / 's-Hertogenbosch (110 km)
- 3 x Nacht van Bocholtz (110 km)
- 13 x Van Z. tot Z. tocht / Zeewolde (110 km)
- 5 x Nacht van Santpoort (110 km)
- 1 x Jubileumtocht / Amsterdam (135 km)
- 2 x Internationaal Wandelevenement Weert (110 km)
- 5 x Nachtmars door de Zuid-Westhoek / Roosendaal (110 km)
- 7 x Omloop Goeree - Overflakkee / Ooltgensplaat (110 km)
- 3 x Waterpoort-Loop / Ooltgensplaat (110 km)

Belgium

- 4 x Ardennenklassieker Plombières-Houffalize (3 x 110 km / 1 x 120 km)
- 1 x Dodentocht / Bornem

We are very pleased to welcome Jantinus to our Australian Centurion brotherhood and we look forward to reading about his ongoing walking exploits.

Tim Erickson
3 July 2018