

## *AUSTRALIAN CENTURION FOUNDERS*

### *BRIAN PARKINSON*



**Brian Parkinson** was born in 1931, the grandson of Basil Parkinson. Basil was an English immigrant who was a versatile athlete over a number of distances but was most proud of the fact that he could beat anyone running backwards.

‘Parky’, as he became known, was the founder of Melbourne Harriers in 1890. He was then instrumental in drafting the rules for a proposed Victorian Amateur Athletics Association. When the V.A.A.A. was formed at the Port Phillip Club Hotel in Flinders St on 8 October 1891, he was elected as Honorary Secretary and is considered the father of athletics in Victoria.

Brian was obviously brought up in an athletics oriented family

He married Marion Redman, the daughter of former English walker Fred Redman. Fred, a former World Junior Record Holder for the 10 mile distance, had migrated to Australia in 1961. Brian joined the ranks of the walking fraternity and started to compete with VAWC.

When Len Mathews contacted Fred Redman and Jack Webber with a view to forming an Australian chapter of the Centurions, Fred immediately drew his son-in-law into the working group. Brian had the business knowledge necessary to draw up a constitution and formally setup the new organisation and it was he who did most of this necessary ground work.

With the Centurions set up, Brian then stepped back and allowed the first Centurions to take control of their new organisation.

He was now an able sporting administrator and ran the ‘Little Walkers’ races each Saturday at Albert Park. In this capacity, he was responsible for introducing many of the future Victorian champions to our sport.

Brian’s sporting administration career was cut short when he was posted to Papua New Guinea in the mid-seventies by Shell, for whom he worked. He then spent over 10 years based in Port Moresby until retiring in the late 1980’s. His career at Shell had spanned nearly 40 years. Thoughts of retirement were forestalled when he was called back into the Shell world to return to PNG and take up his accounting portfolio again after a short break.

He finally returned to Melbourne in the mid 1990’s and promptly returned to study. This eventually evolved into a variety of teaching roles in which he continued long after the normal retirement age of 65.

Now in his late seventies, Brian has finally retired but still keeps a fatherly eye on the doings of the Centurions.

