

CENTURION FOOTNOTES

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DATES...DATES...DATES

27-28 March 2010	24 Hours de Chateau Thierry	Chateau Thierry, France
17-18 April 2010	2010 Australian Centurions 24 Hour Walk	Coburg, Victoria
22-23 May 2010	Continental Centurions 24 Hour Walk	Schiedam, Holland
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6-12 June 2010	6 Day Race, Antibes	Antibes, France
27-28 June 2010	Sri Chinmoy Australian 24 Hour Championship	Brisbane, QLD
31 July – 1 Aug 2010	Australian 48 Hour Champs and Qld 24 Hour Champs	Caboolture, QLD
14 May 2011	British Centurions Centenary Dinner, House of Commons	London, England

The latest Race Walking Record magazine says that, at this stage, there will be no 100 mile walk in the UK this year. The Isle of Man was originally listed to host the 2010 edition but had to cancel. At the Centurions AGM, an alternative venue could not be found. The only possibility for a UK Centurions walk now would be for another club to step forward and offer to organise an event. Fingers crossed!

NEWS ON OUR MEMBERS

I reported in the last newsletter that **Jill Green (C 38)** was intending to join the West Yorkshire group of the LDWA to do the famous Three Peaks, Pen-y-ghent, Whernside and Ingleborough (see <http://www.3peakswalks.co.uk>). Well, she did just that and what a fantastic story it is.

I wanted to say goodbye to 2009 with a bang. I saw in the 'Strider' that the West Yorkshire group of the LDWA were going up the Three Peaks on New Years Eve. This is a classic walk, only to be undertaken by fit people in good weather. A person of average fitness would expect to take 11 hours to do all three peaks. In 1995, I did it with two other friends and became a member of the Three Peaks Club (number 950077). You have to clock out as you leave the cafe at Horton in Ribblesdale and clock back in on your return.

In 1995, I was a lot fitter than I am now, but I decided to join the group at 7:15AM in the dark on 31st December 2009 in the carpark. The leader, Andy, said the ice and snow was too deep for us to do all three so we would do the two peaks of Whernside and Ingleborough. It was a long slow slog up and I could put my feet in the deep holes made by the walkers in front or risk going on virgin snow and go up to the top of my legs if I fell in. We did a lot of falling in and pulling out. It was -5 at the bottom and -20 at the top. The views were stunning and I was warm because I had lots on and I didn't stop. The descent from Whernside was awful – snow on ice. I had on thick waterproof trousers and wanted to come down on my bum like a big kid but was told that without an ice axe, I could go out of control and hit a rock or worse.

At the bottom we ate our packed lunches behind a wall. Five people decided to go back another way and not attempt Ingleborough. I suggested to Andy that I go back with them but he said "No lass, you come wias". So up I went. We met people coming down who said that no one had got up today and that we would need crampons and ice axes. I thought "good, we will turn back" but up we went with the front people cutting steps in the snow and ice. The two men behind me decided not to try for the summit but to go around so I found myself at the back of the group and not quite able to haul myself up fast enough to stay with those in front. On the summit there is a plateau but I could not see anyone as it was snowing hard and blowing a gale. I blew my whistle but the snow muffled the sound and the wind blew it away so I hurried forward until I saw my group coming towards me. They had thought I had gone round with the other two. "Well done", they said, "and now keep with us." That's what I was trying to do!

On the 5 mile descent I had someone behind me all the time. At one stage, one of them gave me a bottle of drink to aid my cramp but when he got it out of his rucsac, it was frozen solid. When I got down, they cheerfully said "See you next year. You will do all three then."

I started in the dark and finished in the dark. The next day, I did "The Haugoor Hike" out of Dewsbury, again lots of ice. I was again in the last group on the 21 mile route as I was stiff from the day before. The radio was

telling old ladies to say indoors. I'm glad this old lady took no notice. I had a day to remember always.

It might be a cold and wet winter/spring in Europe but it did not prevent centurions **Sandra Brown (C 36)**, **Jill Green** and Kevin Marshall and getting out in late February for the "Not for Nothing Fifty" mile LDWA crosscountry event - a veritable mud-bath around the fields and paths of North Norfolk, with bits of minor road and tracks providing spells of welcome relief. Sandra explains further

The LDWA Norfolk and Suffolk Group, to their great credit, organised this event on a low-key, low-publicity, low-cost basis to provide the real hard core walkers and runners (they set a limit of 100) with an opportunity to do 50.2 miles in an attractive, rural environment and in tough, wintry, late-February conditions, involving some hours of night walking for the vast majority. The key feature of the event was the appalling wetness of the ground after what seems like weeks of almost unrelieved rain and snow. The mud in the fields and in woods was deep and glutinous. It sometimes felt as though as much energy was spent moving sideways as forwards. Some participants arrived back at the village hall, which acted as event HQ, muddy from top to toe having almost literally taken a bath in it. Perhaps the highlight was an infamous "green lane", a few miles from the finish, which involved a mile or so of wading ankle-deep in the mud. The whole event had a delightfully friendly, simple, "back to basics" character - there were few checkpoints and these were mostly tents, providing simple, sustaining fare, and Jill and I were among those who slept in sleeping bags on the little village hall floor the night before the event. Not everyone might have thought this a suitable warm-up event for the following weekend's Bourges 24h, but Kevin and I agreed we wouldn't have missed it."

Ken Walters (C 26) has been producing the goods lately on the coaching side with walkers performing very strongly at the Victorian and Australian Track and Field titles. Firstly at the Victorian championships in February, three of his athletes took gold medals - Rhydian Cowley (U20 Men 5000m), Kylie Irshad (Open Women 5000m) and Jasmine Irshad (U14 Girls 1500m) - and then at the National championships Rhydian took silver in the U20 Men 10000m and Jasmine took bronze in the U14 Girls 1500m. Well done Ken and keep up the good work.

Many of his friends from the racewalking world gathered at Queenscliff in country Victoria in Mid March to help **Chris Erickson** celebrate his marriage to fiancée Rachel Semmens. I thought the opportunity too good to miss so gathered all the assembled walkers, current and past, together for one large photo and it's a pretty impressive lot of talent on show. The list includes Adam Rutter, Jared and Claire Tallent, Tom Barnes, Brent Vallance, **Tim Erickson (C 13)**, Nathan Deakes, Duncan Knox, Kellie Wapshott, Frank Bertei, Andrew and Lorraine Jachno, Jess Rothwell, **Clarrie Jack (C 4)**, **Ian Jack (C 17)** and Megan Szirom. It was a veritable Who's Who of Australian racewalking



Chris Erickson's wedding in March 2010

Finally, a number of us gathered in Melbourne last Sunday to wish Fred Brooks (C) bon voyage as he prepares to return to England after nearly 50 years in Australia. I have more to say on Fred later in the newsletter. Suffice it to say that a good time was had by all. The photo shows **Ken Walters (C 26), Stan Misikin (C 23), Ian Gleeson (C 3), Fred, Karen O'Neill (C 45), Stuart Cooper (C 5), Terry O'Neill (C 18), Tim Erickson (C 13) and Clarrie Jack (C 4).**



Goodbye to Fred Brooks from the Melbourne centurions

COBURG 6 HOUR WALK/RUN CHAMPIONSHIPS, SUNDAY 7 MARCH 2010

Earlier this month, the annual Coburg 6 Hour Walk and Run Championships were held at the Harold Stevens Athletics Track in Coburg, a northern Melbourne suburb. Of the field of 35 entrants, there were 14 walk entrants and, while none of our top walkers were there, it was still an enthusiastic group of participants, ably led by **Terry O'Neill (C 18)** and **Karyn O'Neill (C 45)**. Terry won the men's event with just over 50km, although troubled by a hamstring strain. A special mention to Alex Poore who came second in the men's event at 71 years of age – that's a great effort. Michelle Thompson won the women's walk with 49.133 km (Michelle is a well credentialled ultra runner who did 44km last year in her inaugural walk. She improved by some 5km in her second attempt and set a new W40 Australian record for the 6 Hour Walk. Karyn O'Neill was second with a good 44.302km ahead of first timers Raffy Snell and Katrina Ablett.

6 HOUR WALK MEN

1.	O'NEILL, Terry	VIC	50.746 km
2.	POORE, Alex	VIC	45.139
3.	JORDAN, Steve	VIC	44.440
4.	TIMMS, John	VIC	44.328
5.	VOITIN, John	VIC	41.310
6.	TURNER, Gary	VIC	40.765

6 HOUR WALK WOMEN

1.	THOMPSON, Michelle	VIC	49.133 km
2.	O'NEILL, Karyn	VIC	44.302
3.	SNELL, Raffy	VIC	41.318
4.	ABLETT, Katrina	VIC	38.240
5.	HOWORTH, Sandra	VIC	37.468
6.	HUNTER, Janet	VIC	21.564
7.	MACDONALD, Jean	VIC	17.417

This is very much a buildup event for the annual Coburg 24 Hour event which is on in 5 weeks time at Coburg. Thanks to Stuart Cooper for the great photos.



Terry O'Neill, Alex Poore, Michelle Thompson and Karyn O'Neill in action at Coburg last weekend

24 HOURS BOURGES (FRENCH C'SHIP), BOURGES, FRANCE, 6-7 MARCH 2010

The 24 Heures de Bourges, which incorporated the French National 24 Hour Championships, was held on the weekend of 6-7 March in Bourges in France. David Regy was the star male walker, winning his sixth French 24 Hour title and his 12th national championship overall with a final distance of 208km, confirming his place at the best French ultra distance walker. Franck Gallot was perhaps a surprise in second place, reaching just on 200km with Jean-Marie Rouault in third with a PB distance of 197km. The women's race saw many of the favourites falter - Kora Boufflert, Corrine Fauquere, Sylviane Varin - but Sandra Brown was not amongst them. She walked patiently and consistently, coming through to be the first woman home and fifth overall, just shy of 190km. Dominica Alverne took the women's French National title with a personal best distance of 182.788km.

But the bare results do not tell the full story and, as you will read below, conditions were arctic! **Sandra Brown (C 36)** and **Sue Clements (C 35)** were amongst those braving the weather and Sandra's report says it all.

The same weekend as the big storm hit Melbourne, an icy blast swept through France. With that memorable weekend (my first visit to Bourges) still fresh in our minds, when the 24H was abandoned after 6 hours of sliding around the circuit in deep snow, the organisers and walkers at Bourges had a very lucky escape this year. Snow was again forecast as a distinct possibility on Sunday. As Richard and I walked back to our hotel for a shower after the event, we could feel snowflakes in the air. That evening and the following morning, the hotel TV carried astonishing footage of the snow's impact - France's most southerly eight departments, those bordering the normally warm and sunny Mediterranean Sea, were struggling under inches of snow. The palm trees of Nice's promenades looked more like Christmas trees.

So Bourges had a lucky escape as the snow swept further south. For many of those on the circuit, however, the intensely cold conditions probably didn't feel lucky at all. If you know the expression "too cold to snow," that's how it was! The French spoke of a "glacial" wind, and it really was so cuttingly cold that it was difficult to keep warm, even when moving at a fair pace. For some walkers, the very cold wind of Saturday night and Sunday morning was their racing Nemesis - once they stopped, it proved impossible, despite extra clothing, massage, hot drinks etc, to get moving again. This was unfortunately the fate of Sue Clements and of several others who had been going well up to Saturday evening.

Feeling the progressive chill in the air, I spent the final several hours of the race wearing almost all I had in my bag - including no less than four jackets (all lightish, but four for heaven's sake!) on top of a thermal, a vest and a teashirt, plus nylon overtrousers on top of my lycra leggings. My fleece gloves and woolly hat were a godsend. Richard, who had sensibly stopped after nine hours with bad blistering under one foot, kindly donned everything he had to keep warm and stayed outside in the cold to feed me as I came round each 2.6km circuit. He said that any water spilt on the table quickly froze, even though the table was inside a tent. My mashed potato froze solid and he had to get hot soup or water to soften a little for me every lap. That's love for you! The organisers deserve full credit for every aspect of the race. Their support for the athletes and helpers in tough conditions was excellent (the local onion soup during the cold night drew special praise on the marchons.com website!) Some innovations this year, including the introduction of a small lap during the final 45 minutes, very successfully enhanced the interest of the competition for the spectators.

For those who could keep going, the dry conditions were good and some good results were posted. The 24H race at Bourges incorporated the French national ultra-distance walking championship and all the big guns were there. In 2009, I won at Bourges with 176kms, from Dominique Alvernhe. Since then, Dominique has gone from strength to strength, winning last year's Paris- Colmar ladies' event. This year, I was nearly 4kms clear of Dominique at the finish, and our similar pacing meant that we never saw one another throughout the race.

My final distance of 187.503km was pleasing, and almost certainly a W60 best (if anyone has information about better W60 performances, anywhere in the world, I'd be grateful to have this please.) Only the top four men at Bourges went further. The David Regy's wining performance of 208.912km was superb; it must be said that he appears at least 6ft 6inches tall to me and makes full use of the fantastic stride length this gives him! He was the only man to better 200kms on this occasion.

I was surprised to win the race, and would be the first to say that neither Kora Boufflert nor Sylviane Varin was on good form: Sylviane had to stop after some hours; Kora bravely kept going, while knowing that her distance would be well off her usual mark. That said, my 187.5kms does not compare badly with Kora's winning 189kms at St Thibault des Vignes in 2009, on an easier course in early September.

The day after the race, we had two hours for a lovely walk around the beautiful town of Bourges in brilliant (but still bitterly cold!) sunshine, before catching our train back to Paris. Walking beside the River Seine to make our connection for the Eurostar to London, we spied a café offering mulled, spiced, warm red wine and gratefully stopped for "un coup de rouge" to thaw us out! Two days after the race, the endorphins and adrenalin have soaked away, and what remains is a tale of soreness - a mixture of stiff legs and shoulders, sore feet, lips chapped by the cold wind, and even patches of something akin to nappy rash which results from moving at speed in enough clothes to make one feel like Michelin man! The soreness will pass, of course, and the FFA medal which the French walking establishment gave me will hang proudly in our kitchen!"

My warm regards to all and very best wishes to everyone walking in your own coming 100 - not long now!

Sandra

And now the results.

1.	REGY David EA	Cergy Pontoise	208.348	8.681 km/h
2.	GALLOT Franck	US Berry Athlétisme	201.552	8.398 km/h
3.	ROUAULT Jean-Marie	Omnisports Pithiviers	197.366	8.224 km/h
4.	MARECHAL Pascal	AC Château-Thierry	196.623	8.193 km/h
5.	BROWN Sandra	Surrey Walking Club	187.517	7.815 km/h
6.	BIEBUYCK Pascal	ASSA Renaix	185.642	7.793 km/h
7.	GEORGELIN Serge	EA Cessonaise	185.526	7.730 km/h
8.	ALVERNHE Dominique	Montpellier Athlétisme	182.778	7.629 km/h
9.	BUNEL Dominique	Neuilly-sur-Marne	179.471	7.478 km/h
10.	GIRAUDEAU Denis	PLM Conflans	177.196	7.383 km/h
11.	VARAIN Cédric	AC Château-Thierry	176.789	7.386 km/h
12.	NAUMOWICZ Dominique	CM Roubaix	175.481	7.312 km/h
13.	LAILLER Patrick	ASPTT Tours	174.926	7.289 km/h
14.	DIEN Daniel	Neuilly-sur-Marne	170.934	7.122 km/h
15.	BUNEL Pascal	Neuilly-sur-Marne	170.175	7.091 km/h
16.	BAUDRILLART Antonio	Pays de Colmar	168.202	7.008 km/h
17.	MARSHALL Kevin	Ilford AC	168.118	7.029 km/h
18.	CLEMENTZ Bernadette	RESDA Vosges	158.015	6.591 km/h
19.	LEPROUST Philippe	NL - Luisant AC	154.083	6.449 km/h
20.	BONVARLET Patrick	Decines Meyzieu	154.083	6.420 km/h
21.	RIVIERE Sylvain	SPN Vernon	151.284	6.304 km/h
22.	ANXIONNAT Claudine	RESDA Vosges	150.151	6.264 km/h
23.	COURCY Jean-Claude	SPN Vernon	148.094	6.171 km/h
24.	BOVIN Laurent AM	St Thibault des Vignes	146.662	6.111 km/h
25.	LEGRAND Gildan	AAEE Epernon	140.997	5.875 km/h
26.	BAUDOUR Raymond	UA Tarbes Stado	137.991	5.750 km/h
27.	GLASER Jean-Bernard	Neuilly-sur-Marne	137.431	5.726 km/h
28.	SPIESER Jean-Paul	RESDA Vosges	134.788	5.616 km/h
29.	DOUET Christiane	Neuilly-sur-Marne	134.684	5.682 km/h
30.	BOUFFLERT Kora	ASC Le Havre	132.002	5.518 km/h
31.	LANDRU Noëlle	AS Corbeil Essonnes	121.274	5.070 km/h
32.	FOUDJEM-GANO Daniel	FAP	118.774	7.678 km/h
33.	CLEMENTS Susan	Enfield	110.728	6.776 km/h

34. GAUZE Francis	NL - AS Mourenx	108.046	7.735 km/h
35. BERT Dominique	SA Mérignac	105.364	4.390 km/h
36. COUTURIER Denis	US Berry Athlétisme	102.682	4.278 km/h
37. LABARRE Bertrand	CS Provins Athlétisme	91.954	3.831 km/h
38. ERARD Christophe	ASM Bar-le-Duc	89.272	3.720 km/h
39. COSTILS Alain	SPN Vernon	81.226	3.384 km/h
40. RASSAIND André	EA Centre Isère	78.544	3.273 km/h
41. DUFRIEN Pascal	AM St Thibault des Vignes	78.544	3.273 km/h
42. BERILLE Philippe	EA Bourg-en-Bresse	73.180	3.049 km/h
43. BROWN Richard	Surrey Walking Club	67.816	7.842 km/h
44. KIEFFER Pascal	AS Libourne	62.452	2.602 km/h
45. VARIN Sylviane	SPN Vernon	51.724	7.516 km/h
46. VIT Philippe	AM St Thibault des Vignes	30.268	9.073 km/h
47. FAUQUEUR-DUDA Corinne	EL Dunkerque Gravelines	24.904	8.451 km/h
48. ALBRECHT Jacky	ASM Bar-le-Duc	3.448	0.144 km/h



Corinne Dots et Sandra Brown



*David Régy
et son chrono
main droite . . .*

Sandra Brown (left) and David Régy (right) – winners at Bourges (<http://www.marchons.com>)

FRED BROOKS - C42

Fred Brooks was born on January 6th 1934 in Birmingham as one of 11 children and grew up in a small two story terrace house in an impoverished working class area of that city. Although he liked school, it was not a long academic career and he left at age 15 to train as a bricklayer, specializing in the fireworking inside furnaces.

Inspired by the heroics of the athletes competing in the 1948 Olympic Games in London, he joined Lozells Harriers, one of the Midlands athletics clubs, and enjoyed a number of years as a track and cross country runner. He also took on the role of club secretary in the mid fifties and worked hard to make Lozells Harriers one of the top clubs in Warwickshire. Fred was busy on several fronts around that time – Feb 26th 1955 saw him marry Lill and form a partnership that would last 54 years.

Fred's entrance into walking ranks was unusual to say the least. In 1957, after kidding a bunch of walkers that anybody could walk 6 miles in an hour, he put himself on the line, recording a distance of 6 miles and 52 yards in a Highgate Harriers 1 Hour championship event. This marked the start of his walking career which he enthusiastically embraced. He improved quickly and a year later could boast a win in the Midlands 10 Mile Open walk and a fourth place in the 1958 Leicester to Mercury 20 Mile event (2:54:07). He had sourced his walking shoes from Harold Whitlock, the 1936 Olympic 50km champion, and he approached Harold at this time for coaching help. Various correspondences ensued and Harold took him under his wing.

He maintained his position in the British racewalking rankings over 2 miles, 3 miles, 10 miles and 20 miles for the next 3 years. He had plenty of speed (he regularly walked around 36 minutes for 5 miles) and had natural endurance. He walked in the golden era of English walking and competed against the likes of Stan Vickers, Don Thompson, Ken

Mathews, Frank O'Reilly, Alf Poole and the many other famous names of that time.



Fred's first walk in 1957 – 6 miles and 52 yards in the Highgate Harriers 1 Hour championship

Life as a bricklayer was not a steady trade in the midlands at that time and in winter when the weather turned foul, tradies like Fred was just as likely to be put off work. Yet in 1961 when he was finally offered a job as bricklayer foreman and some job certainty (“a job for life”) he had to sit down and think about his future. Not really wanting to be tied down in Birmingham for the rest of his working life, he came home that night with the necessary papers for migration to Australia and said to Lill “How about it”. They filled in the forms that evening and the future direction was set.

With their 2 small children in tow, they soon embarked as “Ten Pound Poms”, intending to look for work in Sydney. Making friends on the boat, their plans changed and the destination port was changed to Adelaide. Initially housed at the migrant hospice at Glenelg, Fred spent a lot of time chasing jobs and his walking opportunities were few. But in his occasional forays into the local racewalking scene, he made his presence felt with State Championship wins and State Walking records.

The following photo, taken at the start of the 1961 South Australian 10,000m walk championship at the Adelaide Harriers track, shows Fred at the front right in an Adelaide Harriers singlet. Directly behind him is Eddie Folland (second from right) who was the State Record Holder till Fred beat it that day and behind Eddie is **Jack Webber (C 2)** (extreme right). The walker next to him on the front row is Peter Witham who represented South Australia many times in the LBG and the tall walker next to him is Frank Leonard who gained places in the Australian Two miles and 3000m Championships. Also in the photo but obscured by Fred is **Geoff Peters (C 20)** and Dean Knight who was a very good Junior Walker (Fred coached Dean from when he was a 15yo until 1964).



Fred wins the South Australian 10,000m championship in 1961 in a new State record

Eventually, the difficulty of finding ongoing work in Adelaide was too much and in 1966 the family moved to Melbourne. He joined Ivanhoe Harriers for a brief time but it was short lived and he marks 1966 as his retirement year from racewalking. Work and family priorities now took precedence.

In the seventies, he took up soccer and was immediately successful, winning a couple of Best and Fairest awards with his club. He eventually turned to coaching and travelled to Palmerston North in New Zealand to study for his full English Soccer Coaching badge in 1979. Armed with this accreditation, he was able to move into the Australian Soccer Federation as a staff coach. Of course, this was the day of the volunteer and he still worked full time as a bricklayer and spent his spare time working in the soccer arena.

In 1982, he took a Victorian Junior side on a New Zealand tour and returned undefeated. In 1985 he was the Coaching Director for the Brisbane North and Districts Soccer Association. In 1987, he was the Under 12 Development Coach for the Victorian Soccer Federation. His coaching involved many moves and I remember him telling me that he and Lill moved house 23 times in their married life.

He was instrumental in developing the first junior soccer program in Australia and travelled the State as part of his role in the Victorian Junior Soccer Association. The McDonalds Soccer SuperSkills Award Scheme, initiated in 1982, to develop grass roots soccer, kept him very busy and saw thousands of young children exposed to soccer as a sport.

He continued his soccer associations until 1994 when he finally felt it was time to move on. Living at Bunyip in country Victoria at the time, he swapped codes to Australian Rules Football, becoming secretary of the Bunyip Football Club.

It was not until 1996 that he made a return to walking at the Veteran level and rekindled his friendship with the likes of Jack Webber. When he moved from Bunyip to Berwick in 1999, he found that there was no local athletics club so promptly founded the Berwick Veterans Athletics Club. Over the next 10 years, he lobbied tirelessly for an all-weather track to replace the grass surface at Berwick. At the time of writing, this has finally been approved but Fred will not see it himself due to his forthcoming move to England.

I first met Fred in 1996 when he came down to watch Robin Whyte (C 29) and Merv Lockyer (C 30) qualify as Centurions. Fred was inspired by what he saw and advised me at the time that he would be back the next year. But other things intervened and we had to wait 5 years for that promise to be fulfilled.

Fred was certainly an unconventional trainer in many ways. Rather than avail himself of the hilly bush tracks or quiet parkland around his home in Berwick, he trained instead round his suburban block. *"It's 401m around my block and the standard track is 400m so I've got one extra metre up my sleeve."* The letter box at his front gate was used to store water bottles and Mars bars and a convenient toilet stop was never more than half a block away. He used to start his block circling at 5am in summer and a little later in winter. Little did he know at the time that he also shared his block with Stan Miskin, one of Australia's greatest ultra runners and a member of the Australian centurions.

"I used to see this man walking around an around the block", Stan said, wondering *"who is that idiot that keeps walking round in circles"*. Stan then discovered the Berwick Veteran's Athletic Club, which had recently been setup. *"I went to a meeting and who was running the show but this same bloke I had seen running around the block"*. This was the start of what has been an enduring and close friendship between these two walkers.

Stan immediately started preparing Fred for his Centurion attempt, the target being the Coburg 24 Hour Carnival on 7-8 April 2001. The preparation was thorough – they did long and consistent mileages over the 4 month leadup period – and it was no surprise when Fred powered through the 100 miles to become Australian Centurion 42. As an added bonus, he became at 67 years of age our oldest qualifier. His 50 mile splits were very even and his final time of 22:31:15 was excellent. It was a real strength walk. He also set new Australian M65 running records for 12 hours, 50 miles, 100 km and 100 miles even though he walked rather than ran!

As an aside, Stan was just as impressive, finishing with a final distance of **142.791 km**, and blitzing the previous Australian M75 running record of 132.8 km, held by Aussie running legend Drew Kettle. Along he way, he also broke Drew's records for 12 hour, 50 miles and 100 km. A fitting achievement at the age of 75 – again done as a walker!

Inspired by his walk, Fred penned the following poem which was published in one of our newsletters. Of course, it must be read with Fred's Midlands accent for the full effect!

Now that I am retired,
It's almost as bad as being fired!
But what can I do to carry on?
How about becoming a Centurion.

So it's up the training, up the pace.
I'm going to try this Centurion race.
Heel and Toe, Heel and Toe
Around and around the streets I go.
Neighbours, strangers give me funny stares
but I am training to be a Centurion – who cares.

Sometimes I am joined by my mate Stan,
He's done it so he helps me all he can.
I will do my damnest and try my best
and until then I won't rest.
And at the end of all this carry on,
I hope to become a Centurion.

Then I receive a leg injury that lays me low.
How I got it, I don't know.
Off to the doctor, a diagnosis and scan.
It will be nine more days till I am back with Stan.

Two weeks to go, all the hard work is done.
I will be glad to hear the bang of the starter's gun.
The apprehension, the fear of the unknown, in this
Centurion race
Is the journey that I have to face.

So I have toiled and slugged for 24 hours
And I am here at last in the showers.
A Centurion at last for all to see.
I owe it all to my wife and me.



Stan and Fred at the time of Fred's successful centurion walk in 2001

Since earning his Centurions badge in 2001, Fred has been one of our most enthusiastic members, coming up with lots of new and innovative ideas and working hard to raise the club's profile in Australia. But his endeavours have not been restricted just to us. In 2002, he became records officer and Victorian delegate for the Australian Ultra Runners Association (AURA) and, in 2003, was judged the recipient of the inaugural Bryan Smith Memorial Award by AURA for his administrative work. The AURA magazine noted: *“No one ever thought they would see the day when Fred would be lost for words but he was speechless when it was announced.”*

In December 2003, I mooted the idea of setting up Australian Masters ultra distance walking records and called for a volunteer to help with the task. Robin Whyte took in the role of Records Officer and we started trolling through the old results but it was soon obvious to us all that Fred was driving the agenda. It took 8 months before we could announce the inaugural record holders and Robin then stood aside to allow Fred to take on the official role as Records custodian. Fred immediately got busy producing record certificates and oversaw the entire records process for the next few years until Lill's failing health forced him to stand aside. In June 2005, Fred took on the additional role of AURA Secretary. It is fair to say that his enthusiasm was seemingly without limit.

His last ultra walk, in the Australian 48 Hour Championship, was held in August 2005 at the Sports Super Centre in Runaway Bay, Queensland. Coping with Lill's increasing frail health, he managed to get in enough training to make the start line and from then on, it was a case of how far could he go. Fred strode through the 24 hours mark with 151.600 km (4th at that stage), passed the 100 miles mark in 25:37:16 to break Cliff Young's M70 mark of 30:49:10 and was on track to break the 200 km and 48 hour records when he suffered a fall at 176.000 km. He was forced to withdraw from

the event at that stage but his effort was deemed to be so meritorious that he won the Golden Boot award for best performance. He also set a number of new M70 walking records along the way.



Fred Brooks receives the Golden Boot award from event organiser Ian Cornelius

In late 2005, Fred and Stan approached me with the idea of a trophy in honour of C1 Gordon Smith and we duly setup the Gordon Smith Memorial Award. The inaugural winner was Deryck Skinner C50 and the trophy has been presented each year since.

It was no surprise when Fred's many contributions were recognised and he was chosen to carry the Queen's Commonwealth Games relay baton on 2nd March 2006 in Berwick. At this time, he was broadening his range of activities, raising money for teenagers with learning difficulties and donating monies from pamphlet delivery to local charities and generally involving himself in whatever worthy causes caught his attention.



Fred and Stan in wheelchair mode in 2006 – raising awareness

Early in 2006 he was diagnosed as having an irregular heart beat and, at the age of 72, was forced to contemplate retirement from ultra walking. Only a few months later and aged 81, Stan Miskin, also under advice from a cardiologist, announced his retirement from ultras. How closely the final stages of their careers had been intertwined!

In 2007, Fred downsized house and shifted to Cranbourne North to be nearer Lill who was now to be moved to a nursing home. His support of Lill was a full time commitment and he accepted it fully and loved her to the end.

Never one to rest on his laurels, Fred became involved in 2008 in the City of Casey's Positive Ageing Champions Program and, in January 2009, completed a 300km walk around the City of Casey to show that older members of the community can still get out and enjoy life. Aged 75, he did 54 hours of walking overall over 4 days.



A newspaper cutting of Fred after his 300km walk around the City of Casey

Fred's biggest challenge was spent nursing his wife Lill through the last years of her life as she battled the debilitating effects of Parkinson's disease. When she finally died in June 2009, Fred travelled back to England to see his and her families. It was then that he made the decision to return home. Now with his Melbourne house sold, he is booked to return to Birmingham early next month after a 49 year sojourn in Australia.

We wish Fred all the best in this latest move and want to let him know that we will be thinking of him and wishing him all the best for the future. Thanks for sharing your Australian life with us Fred!

FINANCIAL NEWS

Thanks to annual donations from Cathy Cox, Stan Jones and Fred Brooks we continue to keep our heads above the water in the leadup to our big event next month. The only other cost coming up is a refresh of our tee shirt supplies.

Incoming	Cathy Cox – donation	50.00
	Stan Jones – newsletter postal subscription	12.00
	Stan Jones – donation	38.00
	Clarrie and Ian Jack – newsletter postal subscription	12.00
	Centurion Shirt sales – Fred Brooks	60.00
	Fred Brooks – donation	40.00
	Centurion Shirt sales – Karyn O'Neill	15.00
Outgoing	Photocopying (newsletter)	- 15.00
	Consumer Affairs – annual incorporation payment	- 40.90
	RWA 100km medals – purchase	- 42.00
	RWA 100km medals – engraving	- 36.00
	Replica Trophies – Jack Webber and Gordon Smith Awards	<u>- 60.00</u>
Balance		702.47

UNTIL OUR NEXT NEWSLETTER

Wow, another bumper issue. Good luck to our walkers preparing for Coburg next month. Let's keep the fingers crossed and hope we see one or more new members to our exclusive club.

Yours in Centurion walking

Tim Erickson (C 13)
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