

CENTURION FOOTNOTES

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DATES...DATES...DATES

The 2016 ultra racing calendar is filled with lots of challenging events for walkers. Some of the key dates are shown below. In addition, the AURA calendar shows quite a few additional Australian ultra events that may suit serious ultra walkers – check it out at <http://www.aura.asn.au/events.html>. I am pleased to see the number of 24H Track ultras on the Australian calendar growing.

May 14-15, 2016	2016 Continental Centurion 24H Qualifier	Schiedam, NED
	See http://www.rotterdamsewandelsportvereniging.nl/index.php?page=rwv-wandelweekend-english	
June 1-4, 2016	Paris-Alsace Classic	Paris-Alsace, FRA
Jun 18-19, 2016	Sri Chinmoy 24 Hour, 12 Hour & 6 Hour Track Race	Campbelltown, NSW
Jun 18-19, 2016	TrailsPlus Urban Trail Series, Princes Park 24H/12H/6H	Parkville, Melbourne, VIC
	See http://www.trailsplus.com.au/princespark/	
Jun 30, 2016	Start of 2016 Swedish Fotrally (http://www.fotrally.se/)	Sweden
Jul 9-10, 2016	Adelaide 6H/12H/24H (measured road loop)	Adelaide, South Australia
Aug 6-7, 2016	105th English Centurions 100 mile qualifier (Redcar RWC)	Redcar, Teeside
	See http://www.northernracewalking.com/redcar-blast/	
Aug 13-14, 2016	Track Ultra WA (3H, 6H, 12H and 24H Track)	Bunbury, Western Australia
Aug 27-28, 2016	Wadelincourt 24H	Wadelincourt, Belgium
Sept 24-25, 2016	2016 USA Centurions 24H Qualifier	Owega, NY
	Enter at https://raceroster.com/events/2016/7132/not-just-a-walk-in-the-park	
	See also https://www.facebook.com/NotJustAWalkInThePark/?fref=ts	
Sept 17-18, 2016	Roubaix 28 Hours Walk	Roubaix, FRA
Oct 1-2, 2016	New Zealand Sri Chinmoy 24 Hour Championship	Auckland, NZ
	Incorporating the 2016 New Zealand Centurions 24H Qualifier	
	See http://nz.srichinmoyraces.org/races/auck/24hr	
22-3 Oct, 2016	Inaugural African Centurion 24 Hour Walk	Robben Island, South Africa
	See http://www.africancenturion.com/	

I am pleased to see yet another walk friendly ultra event on the local Victorian calendar. TrailsPlus has just announced a new Urban Trail Series event, with 24H, 12H and 6H options, at Princes Park in Melbourne. Princes Park is a flat mixed gravel/bitumen loop of just over 3km in length – I have done lots of training there myself in years past. It will be held on the weekend of Jun 18-19. See more at <http://www.trailsplus.com.au/princespark/>

With our Australian Centurion qualifier done and dusted for this year, we have 5 centurion qualifiers still to go.

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	See http://nz.srichinmoyraces.org/races/auck/24hr	
22-3 Oct, 2016	Inaugural African Centurion 24 Hour Walk	Robben Island, South Africa
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OUT AND ABOUT

For anyone wanting to dip their toes into ultra running or walking, the following very comprehensive article is well worth a read. Thanks to Ralph Bennett for pointing it out to me - perhaps a good primer for someone looking at their first ultra: <https://www.washingtonpost.com/graphics/health/ultramarathon/>.

Justin Scholz (C61) and **Sharon Scholz (C63)** are currently on a European cycling tour with their daughter Jasmine, planning to arrive in Scheidam just in time for the annual Continental Centurions 24 Hour walk. They landed in Amsterdam on April 20th and then headed off through Holland, then to Germany and finally back to Holland, planning to hit Schiedam a few days before the race starts on Saturday 14th May. Just as they did in the leadup to their successful USA Centurion race last year, they are cycling around 100km per day in whatever conditions are thrown at them. Now that is impressive.



Justin, Sharon and Jasmine rugged up for a cold day's riding in Holland

John Kilmartin (C67) will also be competing in Schiedam along with European based Australian Centurions **Sandra de Graaff (C69)**, **Bertus van Ginkel (C70)** and **Sandra Brown (C36)**.

COBURG 24 HOUR TRACK CARNIVAL, COBURG, 16-17 APRIL

The annual Australian Centurions 24 Hour qualifying walk was held as usual in mid April alongside the Australian 24 Hour Track Run championships in the northern Melbourne suburb of Coburg. I was there for the duration and, with 17 walkers and 31 runners circulating around the 400m track, it was a great sight which provided its usual amount of high drama.

Conditions were better than last year when we had to endure long hours of heavy overnight rain. This time around, cool daytime conditions (temperatures around 20°C) and brisk overnight conditions (temperatures around 11°C), combined with what could only be described as light winds and the occasional misty drizzle, provided just about ideal conditions for everyone and there were many PBs and some big totals. The full results can be seen at <http://www.coburg24hr.org/24hr/wp-content/uploads/2016/04/2016-Coburg-24H-Results-Final.pdf>. I will restrict myself to the walkers, for whom the challenge was to reach 100 miles (160.934km). That is 402 laps of the track in lane 1 or 388 laps in lane 3 – either way, it's a task of monumental concentration and endurance. First to the walk results and then some comments

24 Hour Walk Men

1.	Rob Robertson	53	USA	163.462 km	C68 **
2.	Albertus Van Ginkel	55	NED	160.934 km	C69 **
3.	Louis Commins	67	VIC	134.003 km	
4.	John Timms	53	VIC	126.953 km	
5.	Albin Hess	56	VIC	123.316 km	First timer
6.	Brendan Young	49	VIC	108.891 km	First timer

7.	Phil Essam	54	ACT	103.086 km	
8.	Robin Whyte	74	ACT	102.017 km	C29
9.	John Kilmartin	64	VIC	98.858 km	C67
10.	Saul Richardson	43	NSW	82.940 km	
11.	Clarrie Jack	70	VIC	12.856 km	C4
12.	Ken Carter	63	VIC	11.395 km	

24 Hour Walk Women

1.	Michelle Thompson	47	VIC	173.200 km	C58
2.	Sandra De Graaff	48	NED	161.349 km	C70 **
3.	Dawn Parris	63	VIC	133.251 km	
4.	Val Chesterton	75	ACT	118.696 km	PB 3.118 km
5.	Sandra Howorth	53	VIC	57.408 km	

Overall we had 4 walkers who walked 100 miles or more in the required 24 hour period. For local walker **Michelle Thompson (C58)**, it was yet another successful hundred (her fourth) while for USA's **Rob Robertson** and for Dutch walkers **Sandra de Graaff** and **Bertus van Ginkel**, it was their first in Australia and hence an Australian Centurion badge to add to their existing collection – Rob is an American Centurion and Sandra and Bertus have Continental and English Centurion badges. They become Australian Centurions C68, C69 and C70 for their gallant efforts.

Michelle Thompson	AUS	C58	20:28:57
Rob Robertson	USA	C68	23:13:53
Sandra de Graaff	NED	C69	23:45:32
Bertus van Ginkel	NED	C70	23:46:36

Sandra, Bertus and Rob formed a train, walking one behind the other for almost the entire race until Rob kicked clear towards the end. It was wonderful to watch and I can honestly say it is the first time I have seen this sort of thing done over such an extended timeframe. Rob's blog at <http://www.walk100miles24hours.com/2016/04/17/2016-australian-centurion-qualifier/#comment-120> makes for great reading.

We had a number of walking and running records broken. As usual, Michelle Thompson chipped away at her Australian Open Residential records, setting two new ones as follows, before she showed down and enjoyed the second half at a more leisurely pace.

Michelle Thompson	Australian Open Record (Residential)	100km	11:36:29
Michelle Thompson	Australian Open Record (Residential)	12 Hours	103.217km

The other record breaker was 75 year old **Val Chesterton** of ACT Race Walking Club in Canberra. Val last walked in our 24 Hour qualifier in 2009, setting a PB of **115.578km**. Now 6 years later and at 75 years of age, she has bettered that time with 118.696km. As no W75 woman has ever walked further than 6 hours, she will set inaugural W75 Australian records for 50km, 50 Miles, 100km, 12 Hours and 24 Hours – now that is pretty impressive stuff. The only W75 record she failed to beat was the 6 Hour distance of Ellwyn Miskin (38.756km).

The meet also included the annual Racewalking Australia 100km track walk championships, decided by the order in which the walkers passed that milestone.

Australian 100 km Track Walk Championship Men

1.	Rob Robertson	USA	14:05:11
2.	Albertus van Ginkel	NED	14:12:38
3.	Louis Commins	NSW	15:40:06

Australian 100 km Track Walk Championship Women

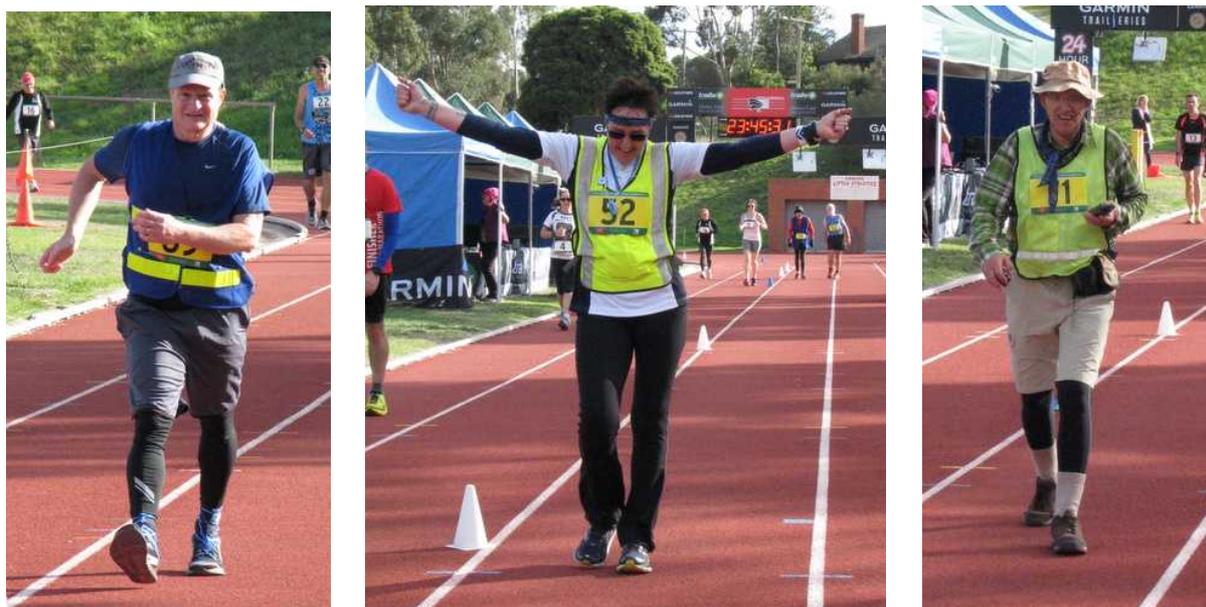
1.	Michelle Thompson	VIC	11:36:29
2.	Sandra de Graaff	NED	14:12:38
3.	Dawn Parris	VIC	17:01:42

It was great to see so many walkers in excess of 100km – 8 men and 4 women. This is one of our strongest ever results. I must mention four walkers in particular. Third placed **Louis Commins** covered 45km in the first 12 hours and looked well on target for a successful hundred. With limited training behind him after only just getting the all clear after a serious cancer scare, he was underdone but looked the real deal. I am sure that with another 12 months of illness free training, he will be a serious contender. The same can be said of first timer **Albin Hess**. He walked 45.063km in March

at Coburg in his first ever long walk, then walked 123.316km at Coburg on this occasion. 73 year old **John Timms** was in intensive care in hospital only a few months ago, suffering from a complicated leg problem, yet there he was completing 126.953km and looking good. And finally 63 year old **Dawn Parris** who again walked superbly, completing 133.251km.



Placegetters Michelle Thompson, Sandra de Graaff, Bertus van Ginkel, Rob Robertson, Dawn Parris and Louis Commins



New Australian Centurions finishing their hundreds – Rob Robertson (C68), Sandra de Graff (C69) and Bertus van Ginkel (C70)



100km+ to John Timms, Robin Whyte, Val Chesterton, Phil Essam, Brendon Young and Albin Hess

RECORD UPDATE

After three Australian events, our ultra distance walking records have taken quite a few hits, with 19 new ones to announce. Well done to **Michelle Thompson (C58)**, **Clarrie Jack (C4)**, **Linda and Heather Christison**, **Simon Butterworth** and **Val Chesterton**.

Michelle Thompson	6 Hours	W45 All-Comers/Residential	55.782 km	Coburg	06/03/2016
Clarrie Jack	6 Hours	M70 All-Comers/Residential	51.227 km	Coburg	06/03/2016
Linda Christison	200 km	Open All-Comers/Residential	43:18:31	Canberra	18-20/03/2016
Heather Christison	200 km	Open All-Comers/Residential	43:18:31	Canberra	18-20/03/2016
Linda Christison	200 km	W55 All-Comers/Residential	43:18:31	Canberra	18-20/03/2016
Heather Christison	200 km	W50 All-Comers/Residential	43:18:31	Canberra	18-20/03/2016
Linda Christison	48 Hours	Open All-Comers/Residential	219.496 km	Canberra	18-20/03/2016
Heather Christison	48 Hours	Open All-Comers/Residential	219.496 km	Canberra	18-20/03/2016
Linda Christison	48 Hours	W55 All-Comers/Residential	219.496 km	Canberra	18-20/03/2016
Heather Christison	48 Hours	W50 All-Comers/Residential	219.496 km	Canberra	18-20/03/2016
Simon Butterworth	48 Hours	M45 All-Comers/Residential	197.669 km	Canberra	18-20/03/2016
Michelle Thompson	100 km	Open Residential	11:36:29	Coburg	16-17/04/2016
Michelle Thompson	100 km	W45 All-Comers/Residential	11:36:29	Coburg	16-17/04/2016
Michelle Thompson	12 Hours	Open Residential	103.217 km	Coburg	16-17/04/2016
Michelle Thompson	12 Hours	W45 All-Comers/Residential	103.217 km	Coburg	16-17/04/2016
Val Chesterton	50 km	W75 All-Comers/Residential	8:22:23	Coburg	16-17/04/2016
Val Chesterton	50 Miles	W75 All-Comers/Residential	14:08:58	Coburg	16-17/04/2016
Val Chesterton	100 km	W75 All-Comers/Residential	18:30:00	Coburg	16-17/04/2016
Val Chesterton	12 Hours	W75 All-Comers/Residential	69.497 km	Coburg	16-17/04/2016
Val Chesterton	24 Hours	W75 All-Comers/Residential	118.696 km	Coburg	16-17/04/2016

I expect the list to grow even further as the year progresses.

You can check out all our Australian walking records at <http://www.centurions.org.au/centrec1.shtml>.

And now it's time for an indepth look at each of our new centurions. These profiles have been added to our Australian Centurions profiles page at <http://www.centurions.org.au/centprof.shtml>.

MARATHON MANIACS
MEMBER #9135 ★★★
ROB RACEWALK ROBERTSON

MM
MARATHON
MANIACS™

UNITED STATES CENTURION C78
AUSTRALIAN CENTURION C68

PERSONAL BEST RACES

24 HOUR	101.57 MILES	2016 COBURG 24 HOUR	AU
100 MILE	22:37:49	2015 F.A.N.S. 24 HOUR	MN
12 HOUR	58.44 MILES	2015 24 THE HARD WAY	OK
50K	5:57:17	2016 THE COWTOWN ULTRA	TX
26.2	4:49:53	2015 LOUISIANA MARATHON	LA

53 year old Rob Robertson, who lives in Oklahoma, is the first of three 2016 Australian Centurions, having earned the title of C68 with a one hundred mile walk of 23:13:53 at the Coburg Track in Melbourne on the weekend of 16-17 April. A relative newcomer to ultra distance walking, he became a USA centurion in June 2015, walking 100 miles in 22:37:49. He recorded a second USA based 100 mile walk finish in November 2015. His Coburg walk saw him complete his third hundred in 10 months, a mean feat by any standard.

First a brief summary of his 3 hundreds

- June 2015 - F.A.N.S 24 Hour Walk, Fort Snelling, Minnesota
United States Centurion C 78
100 Miles walked in 22:37:49
- 2015 UltraCentric 24 Hour, Grapevine, Texas
100.744 Miles walked in 23:47:52
- April 2016 - Coburg 24 Hour Carnival, Coburg, Victoria
Australian Centurion C 68
101.57 miles walked in 24:00:00 (100 miles in 23:13:53)

So how did Rob get to this point? What he describes as His Epiphany makes for wonderful reading.

It was the end of December 2012. Right after all those wonderful meals at Christmas. In two months I would turn 50 years old. I was overweight. I had high blood pressure, high cholesterol and high blood sugar. Then it hit me. My Epiphany. If I did not make some changes and make them now. A train wreck was coming.

The answer for me. Walking and whole foods.

January 1st 2013 I walked 5.5 miles on my wife's treadmill. Changed my diet to whole foods. Walked 4 miles a day, 6 days per week. Ate lots of salad, fruit, vegetables, chicken and nuts. By my 50th birthday the end of February I was down 21 pounds. Felt better than I had in 20 plus years.

I am goal oriented. I needed a goal. A BIG goal. I am loving this walking for exercise. I could walk a race. A BIG race. A Marathon. I will train to walk a Marathon. Couch to Marathon in one year. At this point I made a wise decision. I joined a walking support site. It had a catchy name "The Walking Site". Here I found a small support group of like minded Walkers. One member, Dan gave me some great advise. Try a Half Marathon First. About 100 miles from home was a race in two months. I signed up. Ramped up my training and counted down the days. Did the race and guess what, I Loved It! I walked four Half Marathons in 2013.

February 2014 I walked my first Marathon. I Loved It even More! I walked two more Marathons and three more half marathons.

At this point I was feeling like superman. Down 55 pounds. Off all my medications. Walking 50 miles per week, Strength Training. I needed a new Goal. A BIG Goal.

In my research on walking faster and farther I kept finding the word "CENTURION". Centurion: A person that walks 100 miles in 24 hours. Is that even possible? Yes it is and only a few, very dedicated people have done it. Question, Can I do it? About 85 miles from my home was a 12 Hour Race. New Goal. A BIG Goal. Walk 50 miles in 12 hours. A test of sorts. Three months of hard training and two marathons later it was show time. I raced well. Walked a very strong 56 miles in 12 hours. So I could "on paper" walk 100 miles in 24 hours.

For 2015 there is one Sanctioned Centurion race in the United States. F.A.N.S. 24 Hour in Minneapolis, Minnesota. June 6th and 7th. I signed up. New Goal. A BIG Goal. Walk 100 miles in 24 Hours.

At that stage, Rob created an internet based journal to document his ongoing adventures in the world of long distance walking. Initially it was simply to list the training and the races leading up to his American Centurion Race but he has kept it going since and it now fully covers his 2+ years as a new man. Here it is - <http://www.walk100miles24hours.com/>.

And now a brief discussion of his three hundreds thus far.

United States Centurion C78, Fort Snelling, Minnesota, June 2015

The 2015 United States Centurion Qualifier was held in conjunction with the F.A.N.S 24 Hour in Minneapolis, Minnesota in June of that year. The field of 24 hour walkers included Australian Centurions Justin and Sharon Scholz and Continental/British centurions Antoine Hunting and Jantinus Meints, along with well known American long distance walker Ollie Nanyes – a strong field and one which would help Rob. Over to him for a description of how it all panned out.

My game plan was to walk the first 15 hours at an average pace of 13:47 per mile, giving me almost 66 miles logged with 9 hours to go. That would allow me a nice cushion for the remainder of the race. Not so fast at the beginning to ensure I had the gas to finish. Part of the excitement with any new distance is the unknown. I tend to be very conservative when I don't know what to expect. Slow at the start. Quicker at the finish.

The race forecast changed my plans. An 80 percent chance of thunderstorms overnight. The race officials would stop the racers if it came a lightning storm. The clock however would continue on. With this in mind I rolled the dice on starting with a faster pace. The idea was to front load the miles. Then even with an hour delay I might still hit one hundred miles. The new pace 13:20 for 15 hours.

I got to the race early. Found a picnic table where I could watch everyone show up. Meet Ollie right off the bat. Ollie is no stranger to ultra distance walking events. Next to catch my eye were the Dutch Centurions. Easy guys to spot. What you would expect double centurions to look like. They sat across from me in the timing and lap tent. Then the Australian couple showed up. You could tell from their meeting there is a magical bond between Centurions. They came from opposite sides of the earth but they had all chewed the same pavement. They had a connection and you could tell it. I so wanted to be part of that magical bond.

At 8am sharp the race started. First an out and back then 2.14 miles around Lake Snelling. A beautiful place to race. Lots of shade and big trees. One fourth of the course was paved path. One fourth a paved road. One half a graded dirt trail. The trail had some small rock and some one inch size rock. A few steady up hills and one sharp drop down hill. Many areas had roots and buckled asphalt from tree roots.

The race started pleasantly cool. I had no problem holding a pace a little faster than 13:20. That is good because they were telling us the storms would arrive around 11pm. I started to have a problem. Little rocks were getting in my shoes. It got to be a game with me. A rock would get in. I would adjust my footfalls. Try and herd the rocks to places that did not hurt. If the rocks all gathered under my arch or around my toes I won the game. When you walked the tangents on the trail you had to cross the one inch rocks. On my lap 8 all four of the centurions lapped me. It looked like they were racing. Not me I stuck to my plan. Every lap I had to go down that sharp downhill. It hurt to go down. Later it became almost unbearable. Every four hours you had to weigh in. Lose too much weight and the medical staff would hold you. It made you eat and drink every lap. No problem for me. I eat like crazy. I never dropped more than three pounds. At the eight hour mark I changed socks and dumped the gravel out of my shoes. Patched a blister on my right big toe. My sweet wife Brenda crewed for me. I never let her go to races. I feel sorry for those wives and kids that watch daddy take off. Then wait around for 5 hours for his return. She was going to crew for me and that was that. I am glad she did. The

afternoon turned out hot and very humid. Not hot and humid to me but to anyone not from Oklahoma or Florida. I had just got my lap back from the Centurions. Then it happened. A rock jumped in the back of my left shoe. Got right at the bottom outside of my heel. I could move it but only to the middle of my heel. I would just live with it till hour 16 and change socks again. I noticed some thing about the Dutch Centurions when I passed them. They did not hold their arms at a 90 degree angle. I tried it. It was perfect for relaxing my arms while maintaining my pace. Then I saw it, Lightning flash. Every time I passed the lap counters I counted it a blessing I could get one more lap. It came one of those Oklahoma Thunderstorms. It rained so hard all I could see was rain with my light on. The low spots had over ankle deep water. The water running off a nearby highway washed out two gullies in the dirt path. The road section looked like a river with Rapids. Still they let us race and we were glad to do it. There was water. The dirt turned to slick mud. It was crazy. My friend the rock had made a big blister under the callus of my heel. My friend the sharp downhill hurt my legs beyond belief. I slipped all over that dirt path. Waded through water. Walked around the gullies. Got where no food looked good. Wet socks for six hours. Every reason to throw up your hands and say, maybe next year. None of us did that. We all five did what Centurion's do. You keep going, You finish. It really is 80 percent mental. I needed 46 laps. On lap 45 it hit me. Empty tank. No power. I was out of gas. I used everything I had and nothing was left. Brenda told me I could not stop now. I don't know how I finished that last lap. I would have cried but I was too tired. John Greene was at the little down hill from hell to walk in with me. I made it. Made the mistake of sitting right down. Almost passed out. No blood in my head. Laid on a picnic table for an hour. Brenda was so sad her camera battery had died. Would have made a great before and after comparison picture. I knew a Centurion attempt would be tough. Turned out even tougher than I thought. Oh what a rush crossing that finish line. No wonder Centurions have a magical bond. It is a Spectacular event with lots of emotions and challenges. A test worthy of a special name. CENTURION!

My finish time 22 hours 37 minutes 49 seconds. I finished after the Australians and before the Dutch racers.



Left: Rob in action at Fort Snelling in his first centurion walk

Right: The 5 New US Centurions: Antoine Hunting, Rob Robertson, Justin Scholz, Jantinus Meints and Sharon Scholz

Rob was in action in late October, walking in the 12 Hour event at the '24 The Hard Way' race in Bluff Creek Park, Oklahoma City, OK. For the record he completed an excellent 92.698km. This was a prelude to another 24 Hour walk effort a month later in Texas.

2015 Ultracentric Ultra Run, Meadowmere Park, Grapevine, Texas, 19-22 November

The Ultracentric, which has been held annually for nearly 30 years now, is a huge affair over 3 days, with races of 72 hours, 48 hours, 24 hours, 12 hours and 6 hours. While it is principally a running event, we do see the occasional walker participate and this time around, it was Rob who waved the flag on behalf of the pedestrians.

In the previous year's Ultracentric, Rob had contested the 12 Hour division and walked an excellent 90.123km. The 2015 Ultracentric 24 Hour event was his second 100 mile attempt and it proved a lot tougher than his first. A brief synopsis from his blog

My goal was to walk every mile between 12:30 and 13:00 minutes. Looking for a 12:51 Average for 24 hours. I started out even better than that 28 miles the first 6 hours in high wind. I was surprised that I only did 26 miles the second 6 hours. 54 miles at the turn. The night had North Texas first hard freeze of the season. I was getting much slower. I think the wind, cold and a sinus infection I am fighting took a toll. At 15 hours I was in trouble. Just no get up and go. So I forced myself into a 9 hour Death march. It was the toughest thing I have ever done in my life. First my wife told me I was leaning left. Then Marsha White told me the same thing. When the sun came up Sunday morning the shadow confirmed it. Leaning put extra pressure on my left knee. It hurt bad. The miles added up so slowly. The hours crawled by even slower than I was walking. I felt rough. Every mile I entertained the thought of quitting. For over six hours I wanted to quit. It was The great personal battle in my mind. With three hours left I need 11 miles. I started counting down 21 more laps 20 more laps....I reached down into places I didn't know I had. In the last three miles I drank a two liter Mountain Dew. I would have let someone shoot me in the butt with a BB gun if I thought it would help. As cruel punishment I did an extra lap I didn't need. But hey, I did it. I didn't quit. I persevered. I found a toughness I didn't know I had. That is how it should be if you walk 100 miles in 24 hours. 100.744 miles with about 12 minutes to spare. Fifth Place out of 30 racers.

Australian Centurions 24 Hour Walk, Coburg, 16-17 April 2016

And now to our own 2016 race where, once again, Rob produced the goods for his third successful hundred in 10 months. Over to Rob:

The race started at 10 am. Just 388 laps in lane three plus a few steps for a total of 100 miles. After training on the rubberized track at home for two months I knew I would like that surface. The weather was perfect. Sunny and a little warm at the start. After a couple of hours it became cloudy with a nice cool wind. Over night was cold with about 20 minutes of light rain.

My plan was a nice steady 13:20 pace for the whole race. Set my gear bag under a chair and my food on top. Tim Tams every 30 minutes. I confess. The reason I train hard. The reason I do Centurion races is so I can eat candy all day and night. Australia has good sweet biscuits and lollies. Started off at pace. I was having stomach issues. I have the same diet day after day. However traveling the food is great but the little differences upsets my system. I also tend to overeat. The pace got harder to hold. Then along came some help. The Dutch racers Sandra and Bertus. They support each other, race together with a perfect pace to finish with success. I joined in right behind them. I knew if I just stuck with them I also would find Australian Centurion Success. For 80 miles in the race I did this. As I felt better I would pass them and then later join the Dutch train again. My next problem was sleep. I could not sleep on the overnight flight. I slept very little the next two nights in Melbourne. I really felt this lack of sleep during the race. Being an International Centurion race these issues turn an already Very Tough race to one even Tougher. Not something you really need. At one point in the race we passed the big monitor that told what lap you had just finished. Bertus said, " Look Rob you only need 100 more laps." In training on the track at home I would walk 105 laps. Several times during training I would do this 105 lap walk on back to back days. That second day would always be tough. Now I needed 100 laps and had already walked 288 laps.

At that point I really thought I might not make it. I was hurting. I was sleepy. I was out of gas. If you want to be a Centurion for me anyway, the race is a real gut check. With about 60 laps to go I was finished. No food looked or tasted good. I had my Wife Brenda buy some Coke. This perked me up a little. With 22 laps to go I was down again. So close but I just did not feel like I could finish. Brenda got me another coke. Tim Erickson and All the Australian Centurions, support staff, my Australian friends Kevin and Wanda who drove down from Canberra recognized my plight. Everyone was cheering me on. It was not till I got within 12 laps that I thought I could finish. I crossed the 100 mile mark at 23:13:53. Finished with 163.462K. 101.57 miles. Centurion races really are more mental than physical. I made up my mind this race would be a success ten months ago. Had a game plan for the training and the race. I stuck to the training and had to adjust my race plan. Now I am Australian Centurion C68. Got my name right under John Kilmartin's name. Enjoyed everything about my first International Centurion Race. Tough but Enjoyable.



**Left: The train at Coburg – Sandra de Graaff, Albertus van Ginkel and Rob
Right: Rob shows the joy at finishing yet another hundred and becoming Australian Centurion number 68**

Rob's training is not your traditional diet of long miles and more long miles and more long miles. His weekly regime for the week of 26th March to 1st April 2016 makes for interesting reading – with Coburg 3 weeks away, this was obviously an easier week from a distance perspective with only 51.2 miles but the variety is fantastic – talk about an iron man. I always wanted to do enough push-ups to match my age but never quite made it – and at age 65, it gets harder to achieve that distant goal each year. But Rob did 5 sets of 69 push-ups on the Saturday and again on the Tuesday of that week. Wow, I am impressed! And I won't even mention the 20+ minutes of planks!

Saturday March 26 th	4.8 miles, 5 sets of 69 push-ups, 21 minutes of Planks
Sunday March 27 th	20 miles LSD in 4:26:02. 3 sets of 30 squats.
Monday March 28 th	4.8 miles, 4 sets of 10 chin-ups, 3 rounds boxing the heavy bag.
Tuesday March 29 th	4.8 miles, 5 sets of 69 push-ups, 21 minutes of Planks
Wednesday March 30 th	12 miles LSD in 2:37:36. 3 sets of 30 squats.
Thursday March 31 st	4.8 miles, 4 sets of 10 chin-ups, 3 rounds boxing the heavy bag.
Friday April 1 st	Date night with my Wife!

Rob's next goal will see him walking in Redcar, England, on the weekend of 6-7 August, endeavoring to win his third Centurion badge and aiming to finish his fourth one hundred mile walk. And it would take a game man to bet against the outcome of that race.

Rob has come a long way in a few short years. His determination and his thorough planning have reaped just reward.

Well done Rob and welcome to our small but elite 'down under' club!

SANDRA DE GRAAFF (C69) AND ALBERTUS VAN GINKEL (C70)

Our two newest Australian Centurions are Dutch walkers Sandra de Graaff (C69 23:45:32) and Albertus van Ginkel (C70 23:46:36). They became Australian Centurions in our 2016 qualifying event at Coburg on the weekend of 16-17 April of that year. Read on to find out a bit more about Sandra and Bertus.

Bertus started long distance walking in 1989, when he joined the Nationale Reserve in the Netherlands. His sergeant-major was looking for volunteers to walk in the Nijmegen 4 Day Classic and wanted single people who would have time to train and compete in the event. That was the start of it all for Bertus who competed in the army team in the next two Nijmegens.

In February 1991, a fellow-walker asked him if he would like to participate in a 75km Euraudax walk. He had not

walked since a 15km stroll in September 1990 but he said yes and duly completed the walk, albeit with blisters and a lot of effort.

With this walk under his belt, he threw himself into the Netherlands long distance walking circuit. In 1992 he walked his first 100km, the Death March in Belgium. At the end of 1993 he decided he wanted to walk the 1994 200km Euraudax of Brussels so he started training more seriously. This was the first of many Euraudax walks which he completed from 1993 to 2008. In this period, he earned an impressive 31 Golden Eagles (one Eagle requires 4*25km, 3*50km, 2*75km, 10*100km, 2*125km and 2*150km for a total distance of 1950km). Additionally, he walked 200km on 13 occasions and completed the 4 day Paris-Tubize (292km in 4 days) on 9 occasions.

At the end of 2007 the French Union Audax (FUA) gave the licence for organizing Audax in The Netherlands to another organisation so he moved on, participating instead in the Kennedymarches (80km) and Long Distance Walks (110km and further). It was there that he and Sandra met.

Sandra had started walking in 2006, doing the Nijmegen 4 Day Classic in 2007 as well as some Kennedymarches. After meeting Bertus, she also started participating in Long Distance Walks like Amsterdam-Leeuwarden (150km) and Nijmegen-Rotterdam (160km). Bertus tells me that in taking Sandra under his belt, according to a fellow walker, he had created a walking monster! Sandra had all the attributes needed to succeed in this challenging sport - natural endurance, a good walking gait and lots of determination.

In May 2010, they walked the 24 Hours of Schiedam, the official Continental Centurions qualifer, but just to get another Long Distance Walker stamp. They stopped for a meal during the night. Further, since Sandra had her wrist in plaster, they had to stop every couple of hours to let the swelling subside. Overall, they covered 109.9km in 22:26:22. It was their introduction to the world of Centurion walking.



May 2010 – Arm in plaster, Sandra participates in her first Continental Centurion walk

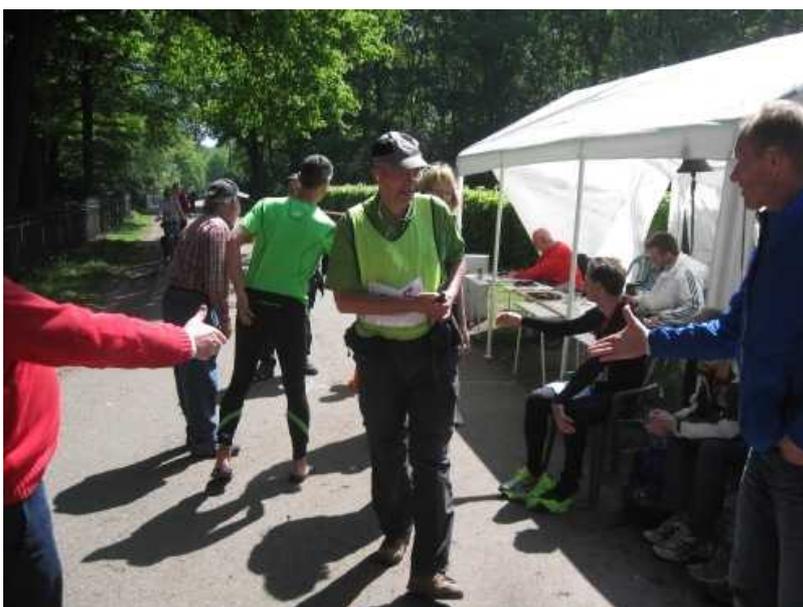
In 2011 Bertus decided to try to become a Kennedyvriend by walking 50 miles in 12 hours. This was a big challenge for him as his previous Kennedymarches had been done in 15 to 17 hours. His Euraudax background did not stand him in good stead as most Euraudax walks were done at a speed of around 6km/hour, with a pause of up to 10 minutes each hour. It did not make for fast walking. *“Euraudax is called the nursing home for Long Distance Walkers. To prove them wrong I wanted to become a Kennedyvriend.”* He did just that, walking the first 50 miles in the 2011 Continental Centurions 24 Hour in an impressive 11:42:12 to become Kennedyvriend KV 374. On that occasion, Sandra tested herself out with her own faster pace, completing 50km in 8:40:41.

In 2012, they set themselves the following goals – Bertus wanted to become a Continental Centurion and Sandra wanted to qualify as a Kennedyvriend. Alas, the weather in Schiedam in late May was much too hot, with the temperature above 25°C. Bertus decided to walk with Sandra and help her to her goal but leave his centurion challenge for another year. Sandra walked powerfully through to a final 50 mile time of 11:48:40, becoming Kennedyvriend, KV 396. With this box ticked, Bertus walked on, reaching a 24 Hour total of 147.214km, not too bad under the circumstances.



2012 – tough conditions did not stop Sandra earning Kennedyvriend KV396 and Bertus completing 147.214 km in Schiedam

In 2013 Bertus decided to give his Centurion quest another try. On this occasion the weather was a fine 17°C and he had his race well planned, covering the first 50 miles in 11:42 and walking through to the 100 mile mark with as few stops as possible (he had one 4 minute stop only). He reached the milestone in 23:47:12 to become Continental Centurion CC399. Sandra walked with him as usual, reaching a distance of 123.164km.



2013 – Bertus crosses the line to become CC399

In 2014 it was Sandra's turn to try for her Centurion badge, with Bertus alongside her as usual, but a number of things conspired against them. The June weather in Schiedam was hot (30°C) and the course was a tough one, with 180 degree turns and steep bridges to be negotiated overnight. It was not going to be their year but they did get to 151.622km, a good effort in the circumstances.

In May 2015, they returned to Weert for the Continental Centurions qualifier and this time everything fell into place. The weather was good and they were amongst the 26 competitors who walked 100 miles or more that weekend. Sandra was now Continental Centurion CC423 with a time of 23:40:38. Bertus followed soon after in 23:45:29, completing his second centurion walk.



May 2015 – Sandra, with Bertus by her side as usual, on her way to badge CC423 in Weert

In August 2015, they travelled to the Isle of Man to compete in the English Centurions qualifier and they were again successful, Sandra being awarded C1160 (23:42:23) and Bertus being awarded C1162 (23:45:18).

I always say that Sandra gets the compressor and turbo working towards the end of the race while I just diesel on.



August 2015 - Sandra and Bertus on their way to another successful hundred in the Isle of Man

They now looked further afield for their next challenge. At the centurions meeting in November 2015, Bertus spoke with Caroline Mestdagh about going to the USA as he thought that the weather in Australia would be too hot. Caroline reassured him that the Australian weather was ok, so he checked it out and it looked promising. Sure, it could be hot but the average temperature in April was not too bad. Decision made – Australia would be their next badge!

They warmed up for Coburg with a Kennedymarch in Sittard in March 2016 – Sandra completed the 50 Miles in an impressive 11:21:16 and Bertus followed with 11:29:16. They were in excellent shape.

They flew into Melbourne 3 days before the Australian Centurions race, had a night's sleep and then ventured forth on the Thursday for a 30km walk along the Capital City Trail which winds its way around inner Melbourne. A day out and a pleasant stroll to wake the legs up after a very long flight. Not exactly the way I would prepare for a 24 hour walk but

one which obviously worked for them!

Come the Saturday morning at Coburg and they were ready to walk together as per their usual plan. But it had to be a bit different this time. Normally they walked side by side but, as the rules for track races dictate you can't walk this way, they decided to walk one behind the other. Our other new centurion, Rob Robertson of USA (C68) joined "the train" and the other walkers joined in for the occasional lap whenever they could. It was an impressive site to see them working together for the entire 24 Hours.

Sandra and I normally walk side by side. The Coburg race rules stated that we had to walk behind each other. So that is how it became a train. Women like to be in charge so I let Sandra walk in front. In the night I took over as she was walking slightly slower than required. Later she went to the front again and we had enough in reserve to finish in time. During the last hour I had problems with the sun and Sandra got the compressor and turbo started. You know the results.

The final result – Sandra reached her hundred in 23:45:32 to become AC69 and Bertus was close behind with a time of 23:46:36, becoming AC70.

Their successful walk at Coburg was their third centurion finish in only 11 months – a very impressive feat. And a week later they were back in action in a Kennedymarch in Ridderkerk. "Not a brilliant time, but another 80km in the pocket. We were not too tired."



April 2016 – Sandra, Bertus and Rob Robertson get "the train" going at Coburg

And they have no plans to take a rest yet – they plan to walk in the Continental Centurions 24 Hours in Schiedam in May. "We will be doing it easy, with a Kennedymarch in the week before. If the weather is ok, we will try for 100 miles, otherwise we will just walk for 24 hours."

Jill Green rang me a few days ago to say hello and to tell me a little more about Bertus's exploits. She told me he was a regular in the Danish 7 Day Walk and that he and Sandra were regulars in the annual Welsh International Four Days Walk and were often the only foreign walkers there.

Final words to Bertus with a quick summary of his absolutely fantastic career:

I have done 495 walks of 100 km or more. My total mileage at the moment stands at 158.844 km. Speed is not my thing (I like to walk at about 6 km per hour) but discipline is. I have walked fast twice this year (Sittard and Coburg). The rest are for enjoyment.

Sandra is also amassing a very impressive list of Long Distance Walk finishes and looks like being around for some time! Their shared goal is to build up their centurion badge count which sits currently at 3 but is sure to rise quickly as they target more key events around the world.

FINANCIAL NEWS

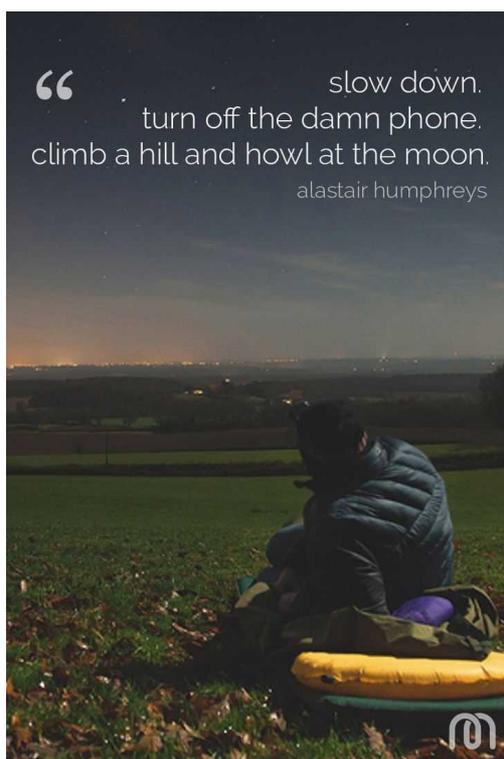
Thanks to a number of our centurions for their generous donations. A special acknowledgment to **Rob Robertson (C68)** for his very generous gift of US\$400. Our honour board and our centurion perpetual trophies are currently being updated and the cost of these tasks will be reflected in our next newsletter. However, these are relatively small expenditures and the overall bank balance is very healthy.

Income	Donation Justin and Sharon Scholz	50.00
	Donation – Sandra de Graaff and Bertus van Ginkel	70.00
	Donation – Rob Robertson (US\$400)	505.21
	Bank Interest	0.23
Expenditure	Officeworks - Photocopying	10.00
	Keyhole Engraving – RWA 100km medals	48.00
	Officeworks – new printer cartridge for printing certificates	37.95
Balance		\$1543.10

UNTIL OUR NEXT NEWSLETTER

An exciting newsletter with 3 new Australian Centurions to add to our honour board. 2016 has been very successful for us already with a successful annual qualifying event completed and swags of new Australian ultra distance walking records already ratified. And the year is only 4 months old!

As we move towards our cooler winter months here in Australia, I wish all our members and supporters a wonderful year of walking and enjoyment of the outdoors.



Yours in Centurion walking

Tim Erickson (C 13)
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