

CENTURION FOOTNOTES

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DATES...DATES...DATES

Sadly, our Australian ultra walking year remains on hold. I am not aware of any races going ahead in the immediate future, either in Australia or in the wider world.

You should regularly check the AURA calendar (<http://aura.asn.au/>) to see what is still on and what is cancelled on the Australian front. Locally, Justin and Sharon Scholz are hopeful that the Ned Kelly Chase will be ok

Oct 24, 2020 Ned Kelly Chase (50km and 100km) Wangaratta, VIC

You should reference Kathy Crilley's *Centurions Worldwide Community* fixture page for the latest on the international front - <http://www.centurionsworldwide.org.uk/race-fixtures.html>.

All the immediate ultra walks have been either postponed or cancelled (including the English Centurions Qualifier at Colchester).

May 30-31, 2020	2020 Continental Centurions Qualifier , Schiedam, NED	CANCELLED
Jun 3-6, 2020	Paris Alsace (4 day stage race), FRA	POSTPONED TIL 2021
Jun 20, 2020	Parish Walk, Douglas, Isle of Man, GBR	CANCELLED
July 21-14, 2020	Nijmegen 4 Day Walk, Nijmegen, NED	CANCELLED
Aug 8-9, 2020	2020 English Centurions Qualifier – Colchester 100 Miles, GBR	CANCELLED
Aug 14, 2020	Dodentocht /Death March (100km challenge event), Bornem, BEL	CANCELLED
Aug 29-30, 2020	Wadelincourt 24H, Wadelincourt, BEL	CANCELLED

Looking further ahead, some events are still pending a final decision

Sep 19-20, 2020	28 Heures de Roubaix, Roubaix, FRA (decision on May 11 th)	UNDER REVIEW
Sep 19-20, 2020	Nijmegen-Rotterdam 160 km, Nijmegen, NED	UNDER REVIEW

and some are hoping to go ahead on their gazetted dates.

Aug 16-22, 2020	6 Jours de France (6D/48H/24H track race)	Privas, FRA
Sept 24-30, 2020	EMU 6 Day Run, Balatonfured (HUN) – moved from May	Balatonfured (HUN)
Sept 26-27, 2020	2020 USA Centurion Qualifier - Just A Walk In The Park See https://raceroster.com/events/2020/15288/not-just-a-walk-in-the-park-v30	Owego, NY, USA
Oct 31- Nov 1, 2020	French 24H Walk Championships, Chateau Thierry	Chateau Thierry, FRA
Nov 14-15, 2020	2020 NZ Centurions Qualifier - Sri Chinmoy NZ 24H	Auckland, NZ

OUT AND ABOUT

- USA ultra distance historian Davey Crockett has recently posted a superb article on the early history of 100 mile running (1737-1875). Check it out at <https://ultrarunninghistory.com/100-miler-part-1/>. Ok, its running rather than walking but still a great read.
- I must sadly announce the passing of **Deryck Skinner (C51)** in Adelaide. Deryck had been in palliative care for the past 12 months, his cancer now too widely rooted for further treatment. His long battle against the disease has now ended. I enclose a suitably obituary for Deryck on subsequent pages.

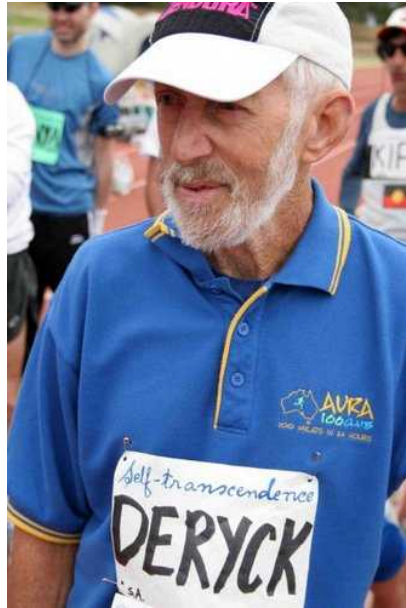
VALE DERYCK SKINNER (C 51) : 1932 - 2020

51. *Deryck Skinner (27/11/1932 - 19/05/2020)*

22:39:55

17-18 October 2005

Santos Stadium, Adelaide, SA



Deryck Skinner burst onto the long distance walking scene in October 2004 in his first ultra at the Adelaide Sri Chinmoy 24 Hour event, rewriting the M70+ record books with new standards for 50 Miles (**11:15:30**) and 12 Hours (**85.583 km**).

It was a case of “Deryck who?” as he had literally come from nowhere. He subsequently explained:

Back in 2000, when I first retired and came to Adelaide to live, I bush-walked two or three times a week with a local club in the Adelaide Hills, and I believe that this was the groundwork for my success in ultras at a later date. I thoroughly enjoyed it, having having spent a good deal of my life living and working in the bush.

After a couple of years bushwalking, he had joined the Adelaide Masters Athletics Assn and learnt about racewalking. With his bushwalking fitness and with a bit of work on his racewalking speed, he was ready for a new challenge and hence had entered the annual Sri Chinmoy 24 Hour event.

With that initial success under his belt, Deryck knuckled down for his next challenge – could he keep up the pace and complete 100 miles in 24 Hours?

A year later he returned to the same venue to become **Australian Centurion number 51** with a superb 100 mile time of **22:39:55**. His significant splits on that occasion were as follows

50 Km:	6.16.29
50 Miles:	10.23.05
100 Km:	13.10.44
100 Miles:	22.39.55
24 Hrs:	166.033 Km (415 laps + 33.2 mtrs)

It was a record breaking spree for Deryck, setting new Australian M70 walking records at 50 miles, 12 Hours, 100 km, 100 miles and 24 Hours and new Australian M70 running records for 100 km, 100 miles and 24 Hours (even though he was walking!). His 100 miles and 24 Hour records were probably M70 World Walking bests for track and he became the first Australian male in that age group to cover 100 miles whether running or walking. He also became the oldest ever Centurion Walker on Debut. This performance gave Australia the rare distinction of boasting both the youngest Centurion debutante (Bill Dyer at 16 years and 6 months) and the oldest Centurion debutante (Deryck at 72 years and

10 months). Deryck was born 27 November 1932. Hence he was only just short of his 73rd birthday when qualifying as a Centurion! This superb performance won him the inaugural Gordon Smith Award.



Deryck in action in Adelaide in 2005 – 22:39:55 for the 100 miles

Deryck journeyed east in April 2006 to participate in our Centurion qualifier at Coburg and was one of 4 walkers to achieve the centurion distance (the others being Jens Borello, Pat Fisher and Geoff Hain), stopping the clock at **23:23:43**.

Deryck was now on a roll and in August 2006 he travelled to the Gold Coast in Queensland for the Australian 48 Hour Championship. He astonished all present by coming 3rd overall with a distance of **257.877 km**. This was an Australian best ever 48 Hour walking performance (previous best of 230.3 km was set by John Harris in 2002). What made it even more amazing was that Deryck covered **162.8 km** for the first 24 hours to record yet another centurion mark (100 miles in less than 24 hours). At the half way mark, he was only 3.3 km behind his current M70 Australian record for 24 hours. Deryck's 200 km and 48H marks also set Australian M70 walking and running records!



Deryck in action at the Gold Coast in August 2006

After this huge race, he commented

This was my first 48 Hour event so it was a steep learning curve, and the second 24 hours was really hard going

- I had hoped to walk the whole distance without taking a rest. This proved impossible and I had to take four short breaks in the last 24 hours. As it happened, this was probably a good thing as I felt better for a while after each break and was able to put in a few (comparatively) faster laps. At the end I was able to say, for the first time, that I could not have done any better - that was quite satisfying.

As I usually do, after each ultra, I vowed never to do another one - but a few days in I find myself planning for the next one - Ultras are just about as addictive as family history research!

It was not long before Deryck's words proved true – 7 weeks later and he was back in action in the annual Sri Shinmoy 24 Hour event in Adelaide. Unfortunately it always depends on the weather and this particular weekend was HOT and sunny, with daytime temperatures nudging 30°C. The attrition rate was high but Deryck was not put off. In fact, he was the outstanding walker, finishing his fourth centurion qualifier within a 12 month period – **23:30:12** at just under 74 years of age. Deryck's comment - *“The heat was cruel and it was the most rugged 24 hour I have contested so far.”*



Deryck on his way to his fourth hundred in October 2006

Deryck's next event was the April 2007 Australian Centurion qualifying event at Coburg and the contrast could not have been greater, with cold weather and intermittent squalls of rain, some quite heavy. He was content for an easy stroll, completing only **89.200 km**. His body was not yet ready for another big effort.

Six weeks later he was back on the track and attempting what was undoubtedly his toughest challenge thus far. Inspired by Jack Webber's 1980 endurance walk around the Adelaide Harriers track (when Jack, at 66 years of age, had covered 1062.25 miles in 38 days 2 hrs 30 mins at an average of more than 27 miles per day), Deryck decided to emulate the feat. He started his 1,000 mile walk on 28th May 2007 at the Adelaide Harriers track, with Geoff Peters seeing him off. He had set himself an even tougher task than Jack – he aimed to complete his 1,000 miles in about 23 days and, if he felt ok, would do another 100 miles to better Jack's performance. He commented to me in an email before he started: *“It is all uncharted territory and the weather conditions will probably play a big part.”*

How true this turned out to be. His basic plan was to start at 6AM each day and walk for 12 hours, covering as much distance as he could and hopefully averaging around 80 km per day. But on day two, the Adelaide weather turned bad and he battled gale force winds for the entire 12 hours, still covering 80 km. But his back was now gone after only 2 days and the weather did not let up. On day 4, it rained so heavily all day that the old cinders track was unable to cope and he walked the whole 12 hours in ankle deep water. He confided to me that he walked in continuous pain from day three onwards. It says a lot for his personal toughness and determination that he soldiered on for 13 days, covering **780 km** (an average of 60.5 km per day) before he was forced to retire.

With such a gruelling endeavour behind him, we did not expect to see Deryck back in action for quite some time but in late September 2007, he toed the line yet again for the annual Sri Chinmoy 24 Hour championship in Adelaide – it was perhaps not surprising when he passed the 50 mile mark in just under 12 hours and then called it quits.

Deryck now had to take some time off to allow his body to recover physically. He was just hitting 75 years of age and had done so much in such a short timeframe. It was nearly a year before he felt ready - his next appointment was the

Australian 48 Hour Championship at Caboolture in Queensland starting on 29th August 2008. The course was a 500 metre circuit with a compacted decomposed granite road surface and the race direction was reversed hourly. He and Andrew Ludwig (C 25) were never far from each other and beat all but the first 3 runners. The final results showed Andrew 4th with 240.033 km and Deryck 5th with **238.811 km**. Deryck had announced his entry into the M75 division with new Australian records for 100 miles, 200 km and 48 Hours.

Amazingly, 5 weeks later and he was back at the 2008 Sri Shinmoy 24 Hour event in Adelaide setting a whole swag of new M75 records for all categories up to 24 Hours.

*I set new times/distances for all the M75 standards. However, with the exception of the 100 km, which was clear cut, all the others were a very close call. I was never going well, and it is obvious that 5 weeks between Caboolture and Adelaide was not enough. The body just did not respond, and I am probably not going to do any competitive walking for 12 months. My final distance was **143.033 km** - it was very obvious early on that a centurion qualifier was not possible and I had to go off the track for a couple of hours in the early morning on Sunday.*

Lorraine Billet took on the role which you usually do when things are a bit tight, and "bullied" me into finding a little bit extra when it was needed.

Now with his new M75 records in Adelaide, he had all the M70 and M75 records up to and including 48 Hours. But it had taken a great couple of walks by Deryck to beat Stan Miskin's M75 records which were themselves outstanding performances. It is astonishing to me that we had two such wonderful walkers in close succession. I suspect that the new records will last a long time.

M75 50 Miles	11:35:51	M75 6 Hours	43.852 km
M75 100 Km	14:49:42	M75 12 Hours	83.229 km
M75 100 Miles	30:04:37	M75 24 Hours	143.033 km
M75 200 Km	38:53:58	M75 48 Hours	238.811 km

It was no surprise when he won the 2008 Gordon Smith Award, his second win in 4 years.

Deryck's last ultra walk was in March 2009 at the Coburg Carnival 6 Hour Walk at Coburg and, although the oldest competitor in the field at 76 years of age, he showed that he has lost none of his form with a fine **43.836km**, just 16m short of his M75 record.



Deryck's final walk at the 2009 Coburg 6 Hour Carnival

Later that same year, Deryck announced his retirement from ultras. He explained

Hi Tim,

Just a note to let you know that I have finally decided to retire from ultra-walking. I was quite disappointed with my last 6 hour, which was well below my expectations, and I was never comfortable in the event. I am now carrying a slight injury, which is unusual for me, and this may have helped my decision.

Thanks for your help and support in the past and I hope the club continues to prosper and turn out many future Centurions.

Regards,

Deryck C51

I was not too surprised to get this email as I knew that Deryck had been battling niggling injuries for a couple of years and that his recent performances had been below the high standard that he had set for himself. But I was so grateful that I had able to witness first hand Deryck's performances over the previous few years and I have no hesitation in saying that it will be some time before we see someone who can match that sort of quality.

There was a further unpublished reason for his retirement, as he had recently been diagnosed with prostate cancer. An operation and chemotherapy followed quickly.

Deryck's racing days were now over but his commitment to the Centurions continued. Each year from 2010 onwards, he volunteered as an official for the annual City Bay Run Run in Adelaide, generously donating his earnings to the Centurions.

In October 2011, Deryck emailed me to advise that he was feeling exceptionally well and now walking everywhere.

I look forward to seeing the results of the 24H. I am still considering getting back into training for my 80th.

Deryck's records in the M70 and M75 division were awesome but Stan Miskin's M80 records were just as challenging. Deryck as an M80 walker was indeed a mouth watering proposition!

Alas, it was not to be. Deryck did enter the 2013 Coburg 24 Hour event but emailed me in February of that year to withdraw. His training has not been good enough and his cancer was spreading, something of which his urologist had warned.

He continued with his annual fundraising via Adelaide's City Bay Run Run until 2015, when he had to retire from that activity, the effort now becoming too much for his failing body.

He suffered a further setback in December 2016

Hi Tim

Thanks for the update. You might like to know that I received somewhat of a surprise to find myself hospitalised in December, with the need for a triple heart bypass, from which I have emerged quite well. The fact that I had maintained my fitness held me in good stead and I was home within 5 days without any complications.

I continue to walk wherever I need to go rather than take public transport, although not at a speed which my brain wants and my body doesn't!

In early 2019, his health had deteriorated to such a level that he was forced to move into palliative care in Adelaide, his long battle with cancer now seemingly getting on top of him. The specialists gave him only months to live, with the cancer now spreading to his bones.

I rang him monthly for a chat during his final year, always expecting to hear the worst, but he continued to hang on, his body not yet ready to pack it in. I was in Adelaide in February and was lucky enough to pop into the home and spend some time with him, before the COVID lockdown put paid to such activities.

He finally died on Tuesday 19th May 2020, aged 87, after 12 months in palliative care. He had remained alert and mobile during that whole time, although his walk had become more of a shuffle in the final months. He is now at peace after a long battle.

Deryck's name will live forever in our Centurion annals – his career inspired us all and his superhuman efforts are etched in the record books.

Tim Erickson, Friday 29th May 2020

JOHN CANNELL – MANX EXCELLENCE

No results to report so time for some history!!! **John Cannell**, born 29/12/1945, is one of the greatest of the Isle of Man walkers, and that is saying a lot, given the depth and quality of walkers who have come from that small island. Any article on John should start with a review of the top 10 100 miles walks by British athletes¹

1.	Frank O'Reilly	Lozells Harriers	1925	16:54:16	01/07/1960	Leicester-Skegness	C276
2.	John Moullin	Belgrave Harriers	09/09/1941	16:55:44	25/06/1971	Ewhurst	C462
	<i>Frank O'Reilly</i>			<i>16:58:16</i>	<i>06/07/1962</i>	<i>Leicester-Skegness</i>	<i>C276</i>
3.	Richard Brown	Surrey WC	18/11/1946	17:00:35	29/07/1988	Leicester-Congerst.	C760
4.	John Cannell	Boundary Harriers	29/12/1949	17:10:15	29/07/1988	Leicester-Congerst.	C388
5.	Derek Harrison	Boundary Harriers	02/03/1949	17:15:50	30/07/1976	Leicester-Skegness	C466
6.	Hew Neilson	Woodford Green		17:18:51	20/10/1960	Walton	C145
7.	M. Holmes	York Postal		17:21:52	20/08/1982	Leicester-Congerst.	C717
8.	Dave Boxall	Brighton & Hove	28/10/1933	17:24:00	22/06/1979	Ewhurst	C464
9.	Billy Baker	Queens Park		17:27:35	18/06/1926	Lond-Brighton-Ret	C 66
10.	Karl Abolins	R.Sutton Coldfield		17:32:16	03/06/1964	Leicester-Skegness	C233

I have written previously of the first three walkers on this list (**Frank O'Reilly**², **John Moullin**³ and **Richard Brown**⁴) and now it is time to extend my scrutiny to John, who sits in fourth place with a best time of 17:10:15, done in the 1988 *Leicester 100* at Congerstone.

You should initially read this excellent interview with John, published by Tony Taylor of Lancashire Walking Club:

REMINISCENCES: JOHN CANNELL ON MANY A MILE UNDERTAKEN, OFTEN AGAINST THE ODDS

<https://lancswalkingclub.com/2020/05/20/reminiscences-8-john-cannell-on-many-a-mile-undertaken-often-against-the-odds/>

John's 100 mile walk of 17:10:15 one of five English Centurion finishes, ranging from 1966, when he was 20 years of age) to 1989 (when he was 43 years of age). It was one of 3 occasions when he bettered 18 hours for the 100 miles walk, a measure of excellence that few have matched.

14	John Cannell	Boundary Harriers, IOM	21:45:21	05/08/1966	Leicester to Skegness
2	John Cannell	Boundary Harriers, IOM	17:52:39	27/07/1984	Leicester-Congerstone
1	John Cannell	Boundary Harriers, IOM	17:55:10	26/06/1987	Ewhurst
2	John Cannell	Boundary Harriers, IOM	17:10:15	29/07/1988	Leicester-Congerstone
4	John Cannell	Boundary Harriers, IOM	19:28:05	29/07/1989	Hendon, London

Let's start with the 1966 Leicester to Skegness qualifier which saw a record breaking number of starters (84) and an equally amazing number of finishers (47, 27 of whom were first timers). John finished in 14th place in **21:45:21**. I reproduce all 47 qualifiers as the list reads just so impressively:

1.	Karl Abolins	R.Sutton Coldfield	18:10:46	C 233
2.	A. Staines	Leicester WC	19:04:55	C 205
3.	R.S. Thorpe	Wakefield Harriers	19:51:06	C 381
4.	John Eddershaw	Sheffield United	20:03:56	C 299
5.	Lieuwe Schol	Suomi	20:12:55	C 291
6.	J.H. Barraclough	Wakefield Harriers	20:22:22	C 382
7.	G.P. Young	Boundary Harriers	20:24:30	C 383
8.	M.T. Blyth	Leicester WC	20:26:15	C 384
9.	Jeff Nutt	Leicester WC	20:34:44	C 385
10.	J.E. Leech	Surrey WC	20:45:50	C 358
11.	Jan Kon	AV40	21:01:40	C 368
12.	E.K. Livermore	Woodford Green	21:07:41	C 386
13.	Mart Kastelijns	KNAU	21:41:46	C 387
14.	John Cannell	Boundary Harriers	21:45:21	C 388
15.	Piet Jansens	RWV	21:46:37	C 389

1 <http://www.centurions.org.au/documents/Top%20100%20100%20miles%20Gerrit%20De%20Jong%202016.pdf>

2 <http://www.vrwc.org.au/tim-archive/articles/wo-frank-oreilly.pdf>

3 <http://www.vrwc.org.au/tim-archive/articles/wo-len-duquemin-john-moullin.pdf>

4 <http://www.vrwc.org.au/tim-archive/articles/wo-richard-brown.pdf>

16. Edwin Horwill	Dudley & Stour	21:51:09	C 390
17. C.G. Evans	Leicester WC	21:53:02	C 158
18. Hew Neilson	Woodford Green	22:00:10	C 145
19. G. Hall	R.Sutton Coldfield	22:03:42	C 107
20. B. Mawer	Sheffield United	22:07:07	C 391
21. S. Smith	Lancashire WC	22:07:07	C 355
22. Eddy McNeir	Cambridge Harriers	22:07:47	C 375
23. Leo Scholten	LAT	22:09:58	C 392
24. Piet Borst	RWV	22:13:10	C 393
25. D.G. Pook	Hinckley College	22:20:05	C 394
26. D.D. Seddon	R.Sutton Coldfield	22:35:24	C 395
27. Hendrik Doornekamp	Altis	22:38:36	C 377
28. P. Maskell	Metropolitan Police	22:39:53	C 396
29. Ko van der Kwaak	AV Leiden	22:45:10	C 365
30. Klaas Kruymer	LAT	22:46:20	C 397
31. D.R. Hill	Leicester WC	22:48:32	C 398
32. Wiebren Teensma	LAT	22:49:44	C 399
33. Chris v.d. Heuvel	P.H.	22:49:50	C 400
34. W.R. Stapleford	Hinckley College	22:52:34	C 401
35. R.W. Stone	Coventry Godiva	22:52:36	C 185
36. Wout van Wieringen	RWV	22:55:05	C 402
37. F.G. Nickolls	Surrey WC	23:04:40	C 320
38. Rinus van Kuilenburg	RWV	23:07:14	C 403
39. R. Eenling	Lionitas	23:14:20	C 404
40. Fred Gerrish	Metropolitan Police	23:21:56	C 405
41. W.R. Meijer	RWV	23:24:57	C 406
42. Wim Timmer	RWV	23:26:20	C 379
43. H. Martin	Trowbridge AC	23:27:07	C 273
44. Herman Hekelaar	Suomi	23:29:16	C 360
45. Herman Stakenburg	Suomi	23:38:57	C 302
46. Ger Cozijn	RWV	23:41:46	C 407
47. Anne Sinnema	LAT	23:51:40	C 380

It would be another 18 years before John walked another centurion qualifier, and it was a race to remember. Hosted by the Leicester Walking Club on their usual Congerstone course, the 1984 Centurion Qualifier saw another big field and another big finishing list, with 31 of the 64 starters completing the course. The winner, the first of 10 new centurions, was local man **Brian Adams** in a sub 18 hour performance (17:39:28). After a fierce battle with Brian, John had to settle for second with **17:52:39**. The race also saw **Sandra Brown** C735, in only her second hundred, clock the remarkable time of 18:36:29. As an aside, she then had to wait 14 minutes for her husband Richard C760 to finish.



John in action in the 1984 English Centurions walk in Leicester (photos <https://lancswalkingclub.com/>)

Three years later, John returned, attracted by the fact that the 1987 Centurions Qualifier had been designated by the R.W.A. as the National Long Distance Championship. Hosted by the Surrey Walking Club at Ewhurst, it saw John win with **17:55:10**, another sub-18! However, the race was not without drama for him. Apart from having to contend with the next 4 men who all finished within half an hour of him, he went straight past the dogleg on one lap during the night. Thankfully the referee allowed him to do the dogleg twice next time around to make up the distance. Overall, 38 of the 54 walkers completed the full 100 mile distance.

And now onto the 1988 race, which was held on the usual Leicester course at Congerstone, despite concerns for the safety of walkers on the outward and return sections from the town centre. 75 walkers started the race, many of them repeat protagonists. The race soon became a titanic battle between the winners of the two previous years, namely John Cannell and Richard Brown. Richard won with 17:00:35, just under 10 minutes ahead of John, who recorded **17:10:15**. In total, 47 completed the race, with 19 first timers. The quality of the 1988 race can be judged by just looking at the times of the first 10.

1.	Richard Brown	Surrey WC	17:00:35	C760
2.	John Cannell	Boundary Harriers	17:10:15	C388
3.	AdLeermakers	Attila	17:38:27	C561
4.	Dirk Timmerman	België	17:38:27	C772
5.	Jan Vos	RWV	18:32:59	C369
6.	T.W. Corkill	Boundary Harriers	18:34:56	C828
7.	Tony Collins	R.S.Birmingham	18:42:18	C688
8.	Dave Boxall	Brighton & Hove	18:49:50	C464
9.	Gordon Beattie	Medway AC	18:55:25	C807
10.	John Sturgess	Leicester WC	19:15:58	C829



John with the Sunday Dispatch Trophy in 1988: The Sunday Dispatch Trophy was won that year by Boundary Harriers team of John Cannell C388, C Corkhill C828 and C Keown C799 (photo John Cannell facebook)

For good measure, John completed one further Centurions Qualifier the following year (1989), coming 4th with **19:28:05** on a new off-road course at the Metropolitan Police Training Centre in Hendon, London. Times were generally slow due to high winds and squally showers which plagued the race.

John had many other highlights in a long career in racewalking.

He represented the Isle of Man in the 1970 British Commonwealth Games in Edinburgh, coming 15th in the 20 Miles walk with **2:56:19**.



John Cannell (227 in dark singlet and glasses) sits at the back of the field as it circles the track before heading out of the stadium in the 1970 Commonwealth Games 20 Miles Walk in Edinburgh

John's favourite event had to be the classic 85 miles Parish Walk on the Isle of Man. He still holds the record for the most wins, with six, ahead of Richard Gerrard and Robbie Callister, both on five.⁵ He was also the first person to win the event three years in a row (1981-1983). The full list of his wins reads as follows

1976	John Cannell	17:28:12
1981	John Cannell	16:15:11
1982	John Cannell	15:59:33
1983	John Cannell	16:31:38
1993	John Cannell	16:11:11
1994	John Cannell	16:13:46

These wins were not always easy. Robbie Lambie, in his essay *OUTSTANDING MEMORIES OF THE PARISH*, discusses John's first victory in 1976:

Another Parish that stands out for me was John Cannell's first win in 1976 when he won in 17.28.12. John had overcome a serious illness only several years earlier so you can imagine how popular that win was.⁶

John made a return visit to the Parish Walk in 2009, participating once again 7 years after his retirement.⁷

The reason I am taking part in the Parish Walk this year is simple. I could not resist the challenge. It's all about the challenge and of course I am curious about whether or not I can still make it round the course. And if I do, what sort of time I can do.

The Parish Walk is the toughest course I have ever done. It's much tougher than some of the 100 mile competitions because of the terrain. It's difficult to sit by and watch other people taking part. This year I wanted to be involved again.⁸

He was not successful on that final occasion, having to stop at the 32.5 mile mark. But a finish was not necessarily the goal – it was just a chance for one final walk in his favourite event.

John was a postman by profession and had been a regular competitor in the annual Postman's Walk. 2009 saw him, now

5 https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Parish_Walk#Past_winners

6 http://www.iomvac.co.uk/Parish_Walk_Reflections.pdf

7 http://www.bbc.co.uk/isleofman/content/articles/2009/06/19/johncannell_feature.shtml

8 http://www.iomvac.co.uk/Parish_Walk_Reflections.pdf

retired, appear in the 48th annual Postman's Walk in London⁹, walking with the Isle of Man team and coming in 13th in the men's event.

Aged 74, John is still going strong in 2020, and is still seen regularly at major Isle of Man events. We hope that continues for many years to come.



Still looking fit - John Cannell walking in the 2010 edition of the Guernsey Church to Church

UNTIL OUR NEXT NEWSLETTER

A sad newsletter this month, with the unwelcome news of the death of Deryck Skinner (C51). At 72 years of age, Deryck was the oldest Australian to earn his Australian Centurion badge. He went on to finish 3 further hundreds in the next 2 years and set a series of M70 and M75 records that will take some beating.

Gone but not forgotten.

Yours in Centurion walking

Tim Erickson (C13)
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⁹ <http://www.isleofman.com/News/details/32229/manx-posties-walk-tall-at-london-race>