

CENTURION FOOTNOTES

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VALE MERV LOCKYER (C30): 1931 - 2020

I am saddened to have to advise of the death yesterday of Australian Centurion C30 Merv Lockyer, at 89 years of age. I have updated my profile of Merv to bring his story to an end.

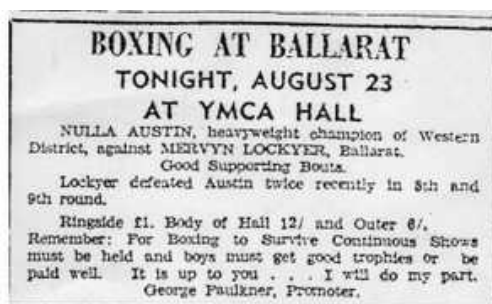
Mervyn (Merv) Lockyer was born in 1931 in Perth in Western Australia. He was the great grandson of one of the earliest settlers of the Swan River Colony so could lay claim to be an Australian of longer standing than most of us.

While Merv competed in various sports at school, the opportunities were few in those days and he did not pursue a sporting career at that time. The one sport in which he did compete and excel was boxing. He was a middleweight boxer in his early adult years, boxing in the Western Districts in Victoria, with some success.



*May 1953, Findon Park Hall, Adelaide
Merv (Tex) Lockyer 12.3 Vs Tommy Ferguson 11.7
Merv's third fight as an amateur*

In the arena, his greatest moment was in 1957 when he knocked out Western District heavyweight champion 'Nulla' Austin in the 8th round in a main bout in Hamilton, Victoria. The bout was all the more meritorious as Merv weighed in at 11st 3lb, against Austin's 13 stone.



1958 – local advertising for the return bout between Merv and Nulla Austin

Like many veteran athletes, he came into the sport of athletics at a later age and perhaps even by accident.

Due to a very severe automobile accident in 1983 (aged 52) and a second accident in 1987, Merv suffered very severe arthritis in both ankles and knees and was confined to crutches and then a walking stick. His doctor had advised him at this time that due to the arthritic condition, he would be unable to walk in the normal way and might eventually be confined to wheelchair. This was a challenge to Merv who decided that if it was at all possible, he would walk to and from work every day and try to actively rehabilitate. He sold his car and some 4 months later, he was covering the 4 km walk in 32 minutes.

As time went by, Merv found that his condition was improving and that he was walking at a faster rate. While watching TV one night in February 1990, he saw Australia's top female walker Kerry Saxby in action in a walking race and decided to try it out. He found it very hard to walk with the proper technique due to his arthritic condition, but Merv was not one to give up and he kept at it, gradually getting on top of the pain and improving in his standard. He competed in his hometown Ballarat and in Melbourne in Veteran competitions and was helped to improve his technique. He competed in the Veterans Games in Alice Springs in late 1990 and won gold in his age group. It was a thrill to be awarded the medal by swimming legend Dawn Fraser.

A series of major setbacks occurred when he suffered a mild heart attack in March 1992 and then suffered a mild stroke in September 1993. Not to be deterred, Merv was back in light training after only a couple of weeks off in each case.

Now with a new lease of life, Merv competed in the Oceania Games in Auckland and the World Masters Games in Brisbane, Melbourne, Perth and Alice Springs and won a number of medals, as well as setting a few age records in walks, Javelin and Discus. His repertoire was wide and he competed in walks, Javelin, Discus, Shotput, High Jump Long Jump, Triple Jump, Pole Vault and sprints.

His arthritis eventually caught up with him in the early 1990's and he was forced to undergo a complete knee reconstruction, resulting in a new plastic knee joint. This put an end to his running but he endeavoured to keep up his walking, and Merv started to look for new challenges.

While competing in Adelaide in 1995, he walked a half marathon and found the experience to his liking. Hearing of the 100 mile distance, he approached Australian Centurion C2 Jack Webber of Adelaide for help in preparing for such a challenge. With Jack advising him by correspondence and phone, he increased his mileage and entered the **1996** Australian Centurion event which was being held in Melbourne in September of that year.

The race report from the 1996 Centurions Qualifier at the George Knott Athletics Track in Clifton Hill reads as follows

Merv Lockyer was the surprise packet of the weekend. At 65 years of age, Merv was not highly rated by those in the know - especially when it was known that he had sustained a heart attack some 5 years ago and had at one other stage had a knee replacement operation on his left leg. But there were rumours of the long training sessions done and the strength of the man so we were interested to see how he went. And he is from Ballarat and we know how tough Ballarat competitors can be. Well, he certainly did himself proud. He started off at a conservative pace of just over 3 mins per lap but just kept it going at between 3 mins and 3:30 per lap for about 80 of the 100 miles. Only in the dying stages of the race did he slow towards 4 min laps but by then, he was safe with enough time up his sleeve. He certainly struggled in the second half but amazingly, he managed to maintain his lap times. This is an indication of his sheer strength and determination. He suffered badly with his plastic knee and was forced on numerous occasions to stop briefly for a rubdown or take some pain killers. But he obviously had confidence in his own ability and his support team looked after him very well. He finished in good spirits and was able to walk from the track, not bad at 65 years of age and after 100 miles of walking.

Merv was one of only four starters in that race, with the results reading:

1.	Robin Whyte	54 years of age	100 Miles	20:37:12	Centurion No. 29
2.	Merv Lockyer	65 years of age	100 Miles	23:45:51	Centurion No. 30
3.	Peter Waddell	65 years of age	100 Km	14:49:43	
4.	Sydney Elks	71 years of age	30 Km	3:36:29	

Merv had just become Australian Centurion number 30 with a final time of **23:45:51**. Aged 65, he had also become the oldest person to qualify for centurion membership in Australia thus far.



*Left: Merv celebrates his centurion finish in 1996
Right: Robin Whyte (C29) and Merv (C30) – new centurions*

Merv was keen to explore the limits with his long distance walking and felt that he had a few more good races left in his artificial knee joint. He fronted for the annual centurion walk the following year (1997) but suffered ankle problems early on and was forced to stop at 100km (achieved in a bit over 14 hours). For most of this distance, he had walked with Carmela Carrassi and the two had certainly helped each other to maintain a good even pace.

In 1998, he was forced to retire after only 50km in the Centurion qualifier and it was fair to say that the chances of emulating his 1996 feat were diminishing. He fronted in the 50km walk at the 1999 Centurion qualifier but was forced to stop after only 20km. His legs were now paying the penalty for his years of hard work and he eventually realised it was time to hang up the racing shoes.

He remained a proud member of the Australian Centurions and took a great interest in our ongoing activities and growth, and was always at the front of the queue to help us financially when required or to suggest activities or actions that might help us to grow.

In the late 1990s he moved from the crisp climate of Ballarat to the warmer climes of Mildura, in north western Victoria. He settled into Red Cliffs, just south of Mildura and quickly started to enjoy his new life, working at a winery and helping maintain the grape vines. He was a jack of all trades and could turn his hand to most things.

In 2000, Merv was recognised for his many years of sporting service, one of a number of Australian Centurions to carry the 2000 Olympic torch as it travelled around Australia on its way to Sydney. Other included George Audley (C22), Andrew Ludwig (C25) and Terry O'Neill (C18).



Merv – 2000 Olympic Torch bearer in Mildura



June 2001 Centurions get-together in Melbourne

*Back: Merv Lockyer, Ken Walters, Fred Brooks, Tim Thompson, Bill Dyer, Stuart Cooper, Stan Miskin
Front Row: Michael Harvey, Carmela Carrassi, Clarrie Jack, Tim Erickson*

Around 2010, Merv stopped coming down to Melbourne for our centurion activities as the trip was just too much for him. Sadly, he had a bad fall a couple of years ago and suffered a fractured hip. No longer able to look after himself, he was forced to move into a nursing home. He also started to deteriorate around this time, a victim to Alzheimer's disease, perhaps a result of his years in the boxing ring or perhaps just the natural deterioration of old age.

Sadly, Merv passed away on 24th December 2020, aged 89.

Merv had a full and varied life, but his Centurion qualification was amongst his proudest achievements. He is an example of what can be achieved if you have the mind and determination to test yourself.

We remember Merv as a friendly, courteous man, one who would give you the shirt off his back, a man with old school manners. Indeed, I don't think any of us ever heard Merv say a bad word about anyone or anything.

We will miss his warmth and enthusiasm. C30 - gone but never forgotten.

Tim Erickson
25th December 2020

OUT AND ABOUT

Only one ultra result on which to report. The 2020 Coast to Cosci (240km) was held earlier this month, with Centurion **Justin Scholz (C61)** amongst the starters. Justin had clocked up finishes in 2013 (33:02:05), 2014 (31:21:12) and 2017 (33:28:03) and was hoping fourth time would also prove successful. Alas it was not to be, as he was forced to stop after 121.5km, due to leg issues and dehydration. Bad luck Justin but the usual top effort.

2021 AUSTRALIAN CENTURION QUALIFIER – NUMBERS BUILD

Numbers continue to build for our 2021 Australian Centurions qualifier, to be held in conjunction with the Coburg 24 Hour Carnival on the weekend of 17-18 April. We are up to 73 entries now, a great start, with nearly 4 months still to go.

Event: 2021 Coburg 24 Hour Carnival and Australian Centurions Qualifying 24 Hour
Venue: Harold Stevens Athletics Track, Coburg, Victoria
Date: 17-18 April 2021
Website: <http://www.coburg24hr.org/24hr/>
Event Page: <http://www.coburg24hr.org/24hr/race-entry/>

EMMANUEL TARDI DOES IT AGAIN!

Our European correspondent Emmanuel Tardi has been busy during the covid lockdown, putting the finishing touches to a huge stats file which lists all French racewalking performances in the following categories

- 10km, 1 Hour, 20km (until 1970)
- 50km and 100km (until 2020)

There are over 30,000 entries in the huge multi-tab spreadsheet and he's been working on it, off and on, for some 4 years. He tells me that many of the old results came from the archives of Jean Dahm who died on 17th January 2016 (see <http://www.vrwc.org.au/newsletters/heelandtoe-2016-num16.pdf>).

I have uploaded the file to <http://www.centurions.org.au/documents/Bilan%20Marche%20Anglais.xlsx>.

Emmanuel has also updated his files which document the complete results (as much as possible) of all the selection races for the Paris-Strasbourg and Strasbourg-Paris classics. They are also available on our website:

- [Paris Strasbourg Selection Races 1926-1938](#)
- [Paris-Strasbourg Selection Races \(1949-1959\)](#)

You can see these and many more stats files at <http://www.centurions.org.au/centranks.shtml>.

DAVY CROCKETT CONTINUES HIS HISTORY OF THE 100 MILER

I've been talking a bit in the last few newsletters about the many wonderful articles published by USA ultra historian Davy Crockett. Davy has now produced a comprehensive index of his many articles and research pieces. Astound yourself and check out <https://ultrarunninghistory.com/history-links/>. Well done Davy – wonderful work!

1903 STOCK EXCHANGE LONDON TO BRIGHTON

The A23 road from London to Brighton probably ranks as the most famous walking route in the world of racewalking. It has seen more endurance races and more drama than any other route of its kind. For nearly 100 years it boasted at least one ultradistance walk per year and sometimes as many as 3 such events¹. These events included

- **The London to Brighton Open** which is probably the most famous walking event in the world. It was for many years a mainstay of the British Walking Calendar and was the one event that most people knew about and associated with racewalking. It was first held in 1886 and became an annual event (first weekend in September) that continued unabated until 1985. Eventually the A23 motorway traffic became too great and the event was relegated to the history books.
- **The London To Brighton Stock Exchange Walk** which was a closed event for which eligibility was only extended to those walkers who worked for one of the London Financial Houses or associated companies. This event was normally smaller in size than the Open and was first held in 1903. It was eventually stopped for much the same reasons as the Open.
- **The London to Brighton and Back** which was first held in 1902 and was held roughly every 4 years till its last occurrence in 1959. A majority of the early British Centurions became members by virtue of completing this event - its distance of 104 miles was sufficient to satisfy the criteria for membership.

This article discusses the first Stock Exchange London to Brighton Walk, held in 1903.

Early in 1903, William Bramson, a member of the London Stock Exchange, decided to try his own walk from London to Brighton. He accomplished it in 12:30. This sparked his idea that the Stock Exchange should join the current craze of pedestrianism, and that members of the House and their clerks be persuaded to attempt to walk from Westminster Bridge to the sea front at Brighton, a distance of 52 miles, in a time of 13 hours.

The idea of such an event caught the imagination of the House and soon they had 100 entries. It was decided no charge would be made for entries and that the first man to complete the course would receive a gold medal, value 10 guineas, with second and third medals to the value of 5 guineas each. It was also agreed that there would be a sealed handicap race with a silver cup to the value of 10 guineas to the winner, with prizes to second and third, and that Bramson would be responsible for the handicapping. Because of the amount of organisation required, it was agreed that the race should be held on the 1st May, that being a Stock Exchange holiday. Entrants started training, some even employed professional trainers, and members were sighted striding through the country roads most weekends.

Near the date several sweep stakes were organised in the House, the largest being in the Kaffir market with a first prize of £350. By the eve of the race bets of several thousands of pounds were made and it was reported some market pitches resembled miniature Tattersalls.

On the day of the race the weather was wet and windy. The race had had much publicity and it was reported that 30,000 spectators were in the Westminster Bridge area. Because of the crush, some of the competitors failed to reach the start line at the official start time of 6:30AM and the race eventually started at 6:34AM. A large number of mounted and foot police were required to clear a passage through the human mass to allow the 87 official competitors to proceed the first few miles. Most of the competitors were young stockbroker's clerks.

Prominent companies were present on the road advertising their wares. Among the most popular of these were the OXO cars, who handed competitors refreshments which included OXO, hot or cold, OXO and champagne, OXO and soda, cheese, biscuits, bananas and apples.

The finish line was located near the entrance to the Brighton Aquarium and the square was overflowing with people. A large police force tried to manage the crowd. A smart advertiser caused a false alarm as an imposter dressed in running clothes came down the road with a placard pasted on his back telling the crowd where to dine.

The official winner of this first race was **E. F. Broad**, a clerk with the broking firm of Marsden & Co, who struggled through the mob of admirers and reached the winning post in 9:30:01. The winner of the sealed handicap was **S. E. Knight** in 10:08:30. Of the 87 starters, 77 completed the course in the 13-hour limit. *“Some of the men, especially among the later arrivals were terribly exhausted by their long task. One or two of them absolutely collapsed and had to be carried from the ground.”*

¹See Davy Crocket's wonderful London-Brighton article at <https://ultrarunninghistory.com/the-100-miler-5/>



1903 Stock Exchange London to Brighton Walk (77 finishers)

- | | |
|-----------------------|----------|
| 1. E. F. Broad | 9:30:01 |
| 2. G. D. Nicholas | 9:33:53 |
| 3. T. E. Hammond | 9:35:07 |
| 4. R. Davie | 9:35:21 |
| 5. W. L. Nicholas | 9:40:40 |
| 6. N. Varley | 9:41:50 |
| 7. J. H. Murray | 9:49:09 |
| 8. H. A. Dunkesbuhler | 9:56:13 |
| 9. H. N. Duke | 9:58:27 |
| 10. John. H. Childs | 9:59:28 |
| 11. George Hoare | 10:03:48 |
| 12. F. East | 10:04:02 |
| 13. J. T. Jull | 10:06:21 |
| 14. S. E. Knights | 10:09:31 |

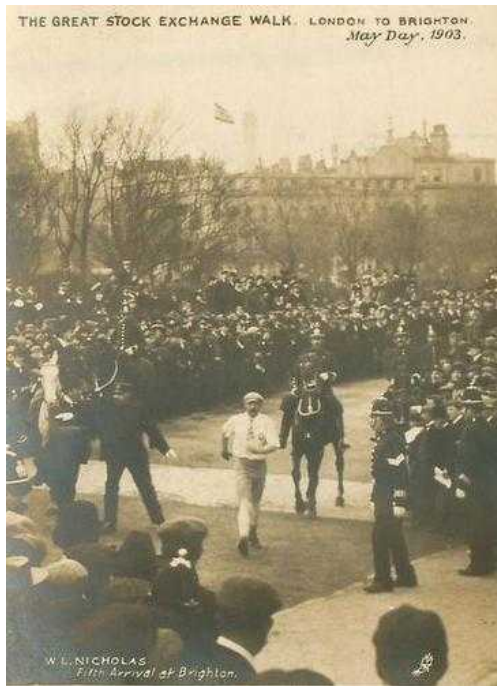
The event was immortalised by the post-race release of 2 sets of postcards published by the now defunct Raphael Tuck & Sons². They provide an invaluable photographic history of the race.³



Winner E. F. Broad breaks free of the crowds to win the 1903 Stock Exchange Walk from London to Brighton

²See <https://tuckdbpostcards.org/history>

³See <https://tuckdbpostcards.org/sets/14716>



Second placed G. D. Nicholas finishes in Brighton



N. Varley, the youngest competitor, finished 6th

The 1903 event was also captured by a short silent film titled *Stock Exchange Walk from London to Brighton*. Released by British film director, producer and screenwriter Cecil Milton Hepworth⁴, the documentary hit British cinemas soon after the race. Sadly the film no longer exists, probably destroyed in 1924 when Hepworth's studios went bankrupt. All of the original film negatives in Hepworth's possession were melted down by the receiver in order to recover the silver nitrate. Although this 1903 file has never been recovered, an original 35mm print of his 1920 film *Helen of Four Gates* was located in a film archive in Montreal, Quebec, Canada in 2008.

In 1910 the Stock Exchange Athletic Club⁵ was formed and was responsible for the organisation of the all subsequent races, with the next edition being held in 1912. The subsequent races did not initially attract such huge field sizes, but the winning time was normally of a high quality. Consider the first 10 Stock Exchange races:

1093	87 starters	77 finishers	1. E. F. Broad	9:30:01
1912	30 starters	26 finishers	1. T. E. Hammond	8:44:10
1914	21 starters	18 finishers	1. H. E. Shaddock	8:59:26
1920	19 starters	13 finishers	1. H. B. S. Rhodes	9:37:52
1911	29 starters	22 finishers	1. H. B. S. Rhodes	9:16:23
1922	19 starters	18 finishers	1. H. B. S. Rhodes	9:13:55
1923	34 starters	24 finishers	1. H. St.G. Taylor	9:28:35
1924	28 starters	21 finishers	1. H. J. Grimwade	9:25:46
1925	37 starters	27 finishers	1. S. M. Ayles	8:51:52
1926	51 starters	38 finishers	1. S. M. Ayles	8:51:25

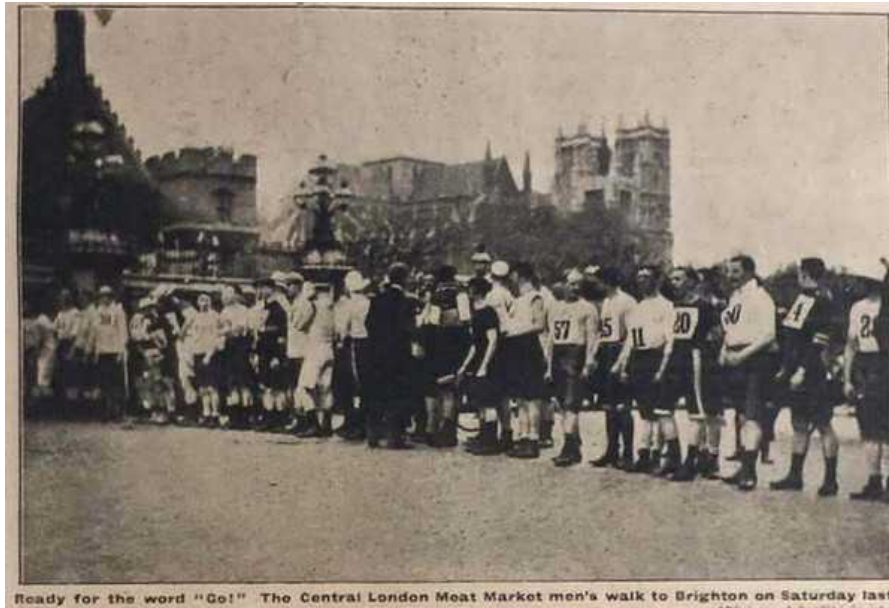
The 1976 Stock Exchange L-B saw the largest ever field of 123 walkers, but only 65 finished. Thus the 77 finishers in the inaugural event in 1903 remains the largest ever number of Stock Exchange finishers.

Ray Hall was the first Stock Exchange walker to better 8 hours, winning with a time of 7:58:33 in 1962. **Dave Jarman** also bettered 8 hours when winning in 1983 with his time of 7:59:07. But it was **Adrian James** who set the overall record time of 7:55:27 with his 1985 win. While Adrian won the race on 5 occasions, the record for longevity must to to **G. E. Green** who won 13 times between 1954 and 1972.

Many organisations featured their own London to Brighton walks. The earliest races were promoted by the now defunct Hairdresser's A.C. and the Polytechnic Harriers. One interesting press clipping documents a further London to Brighton walk that took place in 1983. It was billed as The Butchers' Walk.

⁴See https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cecil_Hepworth

⁵See <https://stockexchangeac.org/>



Ready for the word "Go!" The Central London Meat Market Men's Walk to Brighton on Saturday last

The article accompanying the photo reads:

Out of seventy-seven entries, sixty butchers lined up on Westminster Bridge on Saturday morning last to endeavour to lower the record established by Mr. R. F. Broad in the Stock Exchange Walk to Brighton. All the competitors were associated with the Smithfield Markets, with the initials C.M.W. (Central Markets Walk) floated on red flags over the twelve committee cards that accompanied the walkers.

The competitors were drawn from all classes. Some were master men, with their own shops; others were salesmen and apprentices, porters only being barred. Correct walking costume was almost universally worn.

Otway, the winner, reached the Aquarium in 9hr. 57min. 15sec., just about nine minutes better than Broad's time. Jagers, who came second, did the journey in 9hr. 57min. 16sec.

Though Otway beat Broad's time, it must be remembered that the conditions on Saturday were considerably better than on the occasion of the Stock Exchange Walk, and the hope was universally expressed that the two champions of the road might meet for a match.

The final (and centennial) edition of the Stock Exchange Athletics Club London to Brighton was held in May 2003 over a distance of 50.5 miles. Unlike most previous editions, this race was open to all walkers. English international 50km walker Mark Easton was the winner in a super fast 8:06:15, while Paul King was the first Stock Exchange walker to finish, coming 5th with 9:15:27. The Stock Exchange A.C. posted the results as part of a wonderful commemorative booklet. It is truly a historic document, coming in at 81 pages and including the full results of each and every Stock Exchange London to Brighton walking race (all 79 of them), along with many historic photos. I direct readers to the online copy at <https://stockexchangeac.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/10/2003-79th-Walk-Final-Results-Edition.pdf>.

And finally, what better way to finish than with this photo of the first 5 place getters in that famous 1903 walk, taken many years later.



A unique photograph of the first five finishers of the 1903 race taken in their twilight years.
In order of finishing from left to right, E.F. Broad, G.D. Nicholas, T.E. Hammond, R. Davie and W.L. Nicholas.

Gone now but forever immortalised by their deeds.

UNTIL OUR NEXT NEWSLETTER

This is a sad newsletter to finish the year, with the passing of Merv Lockyer (C30). Merv was well known to and much loved by all our older members and he will be sadly missed. His 1996 centurion performance will remain as a fitting tribute to him and a lasting memorial to what was a wonderful achievement.

Rest easy Merv.

Yours in Centurion walking

Tim Erickson (C13)
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