

CENTURION FOOTNOTES

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DATES ... DATES ... DATES

Two more centurion qualifiers to go this year, along with the usual sprinkling of other interesting long distance walks. As always, check the AURA calendar for upcoming Australian events (<https://www.aura.asn.au/2023-aura-calendar-of-events/>).

Aug 19-20, 2023	2023 English Centurions 100 Miles Qualifier	Middlesbrough, GBR
	Entries at https://www.entrycentral.com/Middlesbrough_100_mile_Challenge	
Sept 16-17, 2023	28 Heures de Roubaix	Roubaix, FRA
Sun Sept 17, 2023	IOM End to End Walk	Isle of Man
	See http://www.endtoendwalk.org/	
Sept 22-23 2023	2023 NZ Centurions 100 Miles Qualifier	Auckland, NZL
	See https://nz.srichinmoyraces.org/races/auck/24hr	
Oct 14-15, 2023	24 Heures de Lipsheim	Lipsheim, FRA

OUT AND ABOUT

- **Pramesh Prasad (C81)** recently represented Fiji at the 2023 Gold Coast Marathon which was also the Oceania Marathon Championship. He finished with a time of 2:54:07 which is a PB by 4 minutes. Well done mate!
- It's been a while since we have heard from **Sandra Brown (C36)** but we caught up recently with a few emails and she updated me on her recent outings.

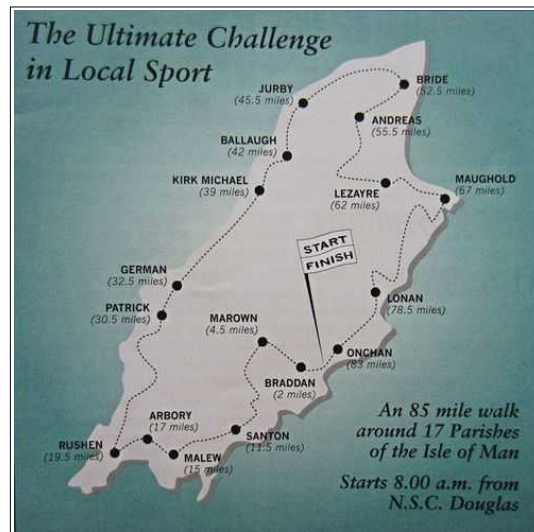
*In late May, Richard and I greatly enjoyed walking together the LDWA 100 [100.6 miles], held for the first time in England's Midlands region and with an HQ in the great city of Birmingham. The route was a wonderful experience of lovely countryside including ranges of hills, with fabulous cultural heritage in the great villages and towns as we passed through such well-known places as Henley-in-Arden, Stratford on Avon, Warwick, Kenilworth, Coventry ... the organisers ensuring that we had a great tour [guided by the detailed route description] of the attractions in each place. A great achievement for the LDWA members in the area. **Jill Green (C38)** and her partner Jim also completed, both now aged 81. Other UK Centurions also took part and completed. Richard and I realised that we have a combined age of 150 and more than 350 events of 100 miles or more between us. And we're still loving every event and looking forward to the next one. What a wonderful sport and a great sporting community to be members of!*

I don't think anyone will ever challenge Sandra stats with regard to quality and quantity and longevity. Check out the full list at <http://centurions.org.au/documents/Sandra%20Brown%20Ultra%20record%202023.pdf>

- 213 completed events of 100 miles or more:
- 90 at 100 miles [often more eg LDWA 100s]
- 104 at 24-28h with 100 miles plus
- 19 multi-days
- In our last newsletter, I announced that NSW ultra athlete **Sabina Hamaty** had set new Australian Women's Open and W50 records for the 48 Hour and the 200km walk categories. I was able to publish her 48H distance (250.820km) but not her 200km time. I have now been forwarded the lapsheets from the Southern Sydney ultra and can confirm her 200km time was 35:36:17. Well done Sabina!
- In the aftermath of the inaugural Deutchland Centurion Walk, held in Bochum, Germany, on the weekend of 1-2 October 2022, discussions were held with a view to formalising rules to govern events wishing to advertise

themselves as Centurion qualifiers. As a result of these discussions, *the Fellowship of International Centurions* was setup and various recommendations were put in place. I have added a page to our Australian Centurions website to document it all. See <http://centurions.org.au/FellowshipOfInternationalCenturions.shtml>.

ISLE OF MAN PARISH WALK, ISLE OF MAN, 24-25 JUNE 2023



The Manx Telecom Parish Walk is a walking race that takes place on the Isle of Man each year, usually on the weekend nearest to the Northern Summer solstice. The biggest walking event in the Isle of Man, it is so called because the walk passes through every parish on the Isle of Man, a total distance of **85 miles (137 km)**. Originally, walkers had to touch the door of each of the seventeen parish churches but nowadays electronic timing chips are worn. A time limit of 24 hours is enforced, and there are cut-off times for reaching each stage. Only a small number of walkers complete the full distance each year. Walkers may drop out at any of the stages, which correspond to each parish. You can read more about it at https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Parish_Walk.

This year, Isle of Man walkers were able to don the shoes on the weekend of 24-25 June. My report is taken from <https://www.bbc.com/sport/66013802>.

The winner of the 2023 Isle of Man Parish Walk says he "just can't believe" he won the race after battling injury for 18 months. **Dean Morgan** completed the 85-mile (137km) race in a time of 15 hours 27 minutes 3 seconds on Saturday. He finished 16 minutes 11 seconds before his nearest rival, double winner **Paul Atherton**. **Simon Gawne**, who had led in the early stages of the endurance event, came in third, a further five minutes 17 seconds back from Atherton. **Lorna Gleave** was the first woman to cross the line, with a time of 17 hours 27 minutes 31 seconds.



Dean Morgan in action is this year's Parish Walk (photo <https://www.bbc.com/sport/66013802>)

In the under-21 categories, which finished 32.4 miles (52km) into the course at the Peel checkpoint, **Jake Richmond** come home first in a time of 6 hours 40 minutes 19 seconds. **Becca Ormisher** was the first woman in the category to reach the checkpoint in a time of 7 hours 5 minutes 43 seconds.

Speaking to Manx Radio after taking his maiden win, Morgan said: "I went through a lot of pain, I carried an injury before the race, that's why I can't believe I've done it. I've got a hernia, and I've had it for 18 months and I shouldn't even have been doing it." He said the pain was so bad that at times it had been "hard to stay upright", which meant he had to "fight it with every inch of what I had".

Commenting on how the race unfolded, he said he knew it would be "between us three from the start. As soon as Simon set that early pace, me and Paul both knew it was going off a bit too fast and it was only a matter of time. I hit a massive bad patch after Peel where the heat really got to me, and I slowed down. We all went through bad patches, just me less than the others. But once I got out in front I just went from strength to strength, I didn't actually think I would get that much of a lead on him [Atherton], but once I had the lead it gave me more confidence. I just fought with everything ... I'm relieved to get over the line in the end."



Winners Dean Morgan and Lorna Gleave (photos <https://www.facebook.com/photo/?fbid=724395432823181>)

Of the 1,100 entrants in the 2023 event, 134 completed the full gruelling challenge within the 24-hour cut-off period. See the full list at https://www.parishwalk.com/page_499374.html. For completeness, here are the results for all those who achieved GOLD status (time less than 18 hours) and SILVER stats (time less than 21 hours).

1.	Dean Morgan (3)	Senior Men (1)	15:27:03	GOLD
2.	Paul Atherton (1)	Senior Men (2)	15:43:14	GOLD
3.	Simon Gawne (6)	Senior Men (3)	15:48:31	GOLD
4.	Adam Killip (4)	Senior Men (4)	16:25:35	GOLD
5.	David Walker (14)	Veteran Men (1)	16:40:05	GOLD
6.	Josh Knights (7)	Senior Men (5)	16:51:05	GOLD
7.	Callum Gawne (35)	Senior Men (6)	16:59:25	GOLD
8.	Stuart Osborne (43)	Senior Men (7)	17:02:38	GOLD
9.	James Quirk (5)	Veteran Men (2)	17:06:45	GOLD
10.	Connor Gilbert (16)	Senior Men (8)	17:19:01	GOLD
11.	Tristan Shields (11)	Senior Men (9)	17:27:31	GOLD
12.	Lorna Gleave (21)	Veteran Ladies (1)	17:27:31	GOLD
13.	Sophie Watterson-Jone (67)	Senior Ladies (1)	18:16:59	SILVER
14.	Andrew Titley (19)	Veteran Men (3)	18:32:40	SILVER
15.	Chris Cale (13)	Veteran Men (4)	18:36:39	SILVER
16.	Richard Sille (28)	Veteran Men (5)	18:39:15	SILVER
17.	Amy Sykes (23)	Senior Ladies (2)	18:46:05	SILVER
18.	Andy Dawson (18)	Veteran Men (6)	18:55:52	SILVER
19.	Alex Jones (41)	Senior Ladies (3)	18:57:00	SILVER
20.	Adey Callister (135)	Veteran Men (7)	19:06:12	SILVER
21.	Adam Huxham (141)	Senior Men (10)	19:19:41	SILVER
22.	Paul Callow (71)	Veteran Men (8)	19:20:13	SILVER

23. Sarah Ohare (31)	Veteran Ladies (2)	19:22:20	SILVER
24. Jayne Farquhar (37)	Veteran Ladies (3)	19:33:40	SILVER
25. Tiffany Bell (30)	Senior Ladies (4)	19:43:08	SILVER
26. Charlotte Barham (476)	Senior Ladies (5)	19:44:25	SILVER
27. Maureen Moffatt (47)	Veteran Ladies (4)	19:46:08	SILVER
28. Tom Melvin (54)	Veteran Men (9)	20:10:20	SILVER
29. Craig Fletcher (36)	Senior Men (11)	20:14:47	SILVER
30. Juan Kinley (26)	Veteran Men (10)	20:22:22	SILVER
31. Nicola Raven (38)	Veteran Ladies (5)	20:28:17	SILVER
32. Lauren McKinley (597)	Senior Ladies (6)	20:28:34	SILVER
33. Courtenay Heading (66)	Veteran Men (11)	20:39:35	SILVER
34. Danny Metcalfe (804)	Veteran Men (12)	20:41:51	SILVER
35. Stephen Caley (74)	Veteran Men (13)	20:43:24	SILVER
36. Andrew Joughin (139)	Senior Men (12)	20:47:16	SILVER
37. John Halligan (744)	Veteran Men (14)	20:47:48	SILVER
38. Chris Wade (874)	Veteran Men (14)	20:47:48	SILVER
39. Greg Hoskisson (149)	Veteran Men (16)	20:51:55	SILVER

24 HEURES DE MARCHE DE LA HAUTE SAINTONGE, MONTGUYON, FRA, JUN 24-25, 2023

The annual 24 Heures de la Haute Saintonge (see <https://www.24heuresdemarche.com/>) is without doubt the toughest 24H walking race in the world, because of its demanding 2.186km lap that climbs 55m up to the local castle and then drops 55m down again. Consider what this would mean if Montguyon were a mountain range
 With 34 laps (74km), you climb 1886m, which corresponds to the altitude of Puy de Sancy
 With 60 laps (131km), you climb 3298m, which corresponds to the altitude of Vignemale
 with 87 laps (190km), you climb 4809m, which corresponds to the altitude of Mont Blanc!



1 55m climb every lap for walkers in the 24 Heures de la Haute Saintonge

Our intrepid European correspondent, Emmanuel Tardi, was in Montguyon, some 500km SW of Paris, and reports on this year's edition of this traditionally tough race. The weather was very hot but it did not deter the starters, which numbered over 200. In the men's race, **Alain Malfondet** led for the first 40km, before surrendering the lead to **Fabrice Vergnaud**, who reached the 50km point in around 7 hours. **Laurent Favriou** took over at the 60km mark and led through to the 100km mark, reached in around 14 hours and 30 mins. Towards the end of the night (at 4.30am), **Gilles Letessier** caught and passed him, going on to win with a distance of 150.768km. In the women's race, **Sylvie Mathis** led from start to finish, coming second overall with a distance of 149.048km.

Lots of photos at <https://www.24heuresdemarche.com/>. Full results at <https://en.24heuresdemarche.com/copie-de-2022>. The following list shows those finishers who walked 100km or more within the 24 Hour time allocation.

24 heures de marche de Haute-Saintonge (215 starters)

1.	LETESSIER Gilles	1950	M1	68 laps	150,748 km
2.	MATHIS Sylvie	1970	F1	68 laps	149,048 km
3.	FAVRIOU Laurent	1965	M2	66 laps	144,376 km
4.	SUAU Michel	1957	M3	65 laps	142,090 km
5.	VINCENT Dominique	1956	M4	62 laps	136,232 km
6.	MALFONDET Alain	1965	M5	62 laps	135,932 km
7.	DELGADO-COLCHERO Olivier	1980	M6	60 laps	131,260 km
8.	PICHARD Audrey	1986	F2	60 laps	131,160 km
9.	MALLEREAU Anthony	1971	M7	58 laps	126,788 km
10.	AUBERGET Mireille	1963	F3	58 laps	126,788 km
11.	LOPEZ Rene	1953	M8	57 laps	125,802 km
12.	MORIN Patrice	1954	M9	57 laps	124,802 km
13.	BOUSSQUET Jean Gilles	1944	M10	57 laps	124,602 km
14.	SOULARD Eliane	1957	F4	54 laps	119,144 km
15.	DUPERRET Jacques	1964	M11	54 laps	118,344 km
16.	FILLIEUX Christian	1955	M12	54 laps	118,244 km
17.	BARBIER Florence	1968	F5	54 laps	118,144 km
18.	DELANGE Dominique	1957	M13	52 laps	114,072 km
19.	ODOUARD Dominique	1957	M14	52 laps	113,772 km
20.	PETIT Jérôme	1971	M15	51 laps	112,886 km
21.	ROBERT Danielle	1949	F6	51 laps	111,586 km
22.	ETTER Cynthia	1993	F7	49 laps	107,714 km
23.	GUILLLOT Jean-Louis	1953	M16	49 laps	107,114 km
24.	BERTOT Sylvain	1957	M17	49 laps	107,114 km
25.	BORDAS Jean-Marie	1951	M18	49 laps	107,114 km
26.	GARNIER Gilles	1958	M19	48 laps	105,028 km
27.	TRILLAUD Nadine	1968	F8	47 laps	102,742 km
28.	ROCCO Jean Marie	1952	M20	47 laps	102,742 km
29.	OSSE Thierry	1967	M21	47 laps	102,742 km
30.	LINARD Benoit	1965	M22	46 laps	101,756 km
31.	PASTOR Fabrice	1982	M23	46 laps	100,756 km
32.	DEGEORGE Laurent	1965	M24	46 laps	100,656 km
33.	LAFOND Carine	1973	F9	46 laps	100,656 km
34.	BRIAUD Sophie	1969	F10	46 laps	100,656 km
35.	BELUTAUD - LEOTARD Jeanne-Marie	1962	F11	46 laps	100,556 km
36.	COURRAUD Joel	1956	M25	46 laps	100,556 km
37.	COURRAUD Brigitte	1956	F12	46 laps	100,556 km



Gilles Letessier and Sylvie Mathis in action in Montguyon (photos Emmanuel Tardi)

2023 SWEDISH FOTRALLY, MARIEFRED, SWEDEN, JUNE 30 ONWARDS

The *Backyard Ultra* is certainly the flavour of the month around the world, with events being scheduled at a rate of knots (the backyard ultra is a form of ultramarathon race where competitors must consecutively run the distance of 6,706 meters (4.167 miles) in less than one hour. When each lap is completed, the remaining time within the hour is typically used to recover for the next hour's race.)

What's with the odd looking hourly distance of 6,706m. Well, multiply that by 24 and you get 160.94km (ie 100 miles). While it's a great concept, it is certainly not the first of its type and the standard remains the Swedish Fotrally which is held each year in that country(see <https://www.fotrally.se/>). Let me explain.

The Long Walk is a novel by Stephen King, published under the pseudonym Richard Bachman in 1979. It was collected in 1985 in the hardcover omnibus *The Bachman Books*, and has seen several reprints since. Set in a dystopian present, the plot revolves around the contestants of a gruelling walking contest, held annually by a totalitarian version of the United States of America. In 2000, the American Library Association listed *The Long Walk* as one of the 100 best books for teenage readers published between 1966 and 2000. According to Stephen King, it is the first novel he wrote, begun eight years before his novel *Carrie* was published in 1974, when he was a freshman at the University of Maine in 1966–1967. It's a ripper yarn that I first read many years ago. Of course, in the book, once you dropped behind, you were shot. Luckily that does not happen with Fotrally – you are simply out of the race but live to fight again another day!

So, just how far can a person go before he/she can go no further? Well, in 2009, Pontus Kylberg decided to put the concept to the test and organised what is perhaps the ultimate ultra challenge. The walkers walk day and night, without rest until there is only one left standing. Hundreds test themselves each year but only a few get beyond the 24 hour mark. From then on, it's a brutal war of attrition as, one by one, they fall by the wayside. All contestants walk together as a group at a speed of 5 km/h. In the front there is a leading vehicle which the contestants may not pass and in the back there is a portable toilet which the contestants may not be passed by. Each contestant gets 25 minutes per 24 hours for toilet breaks (all the contestants are timed). You must carry what you need, with support zones only once every 6 hours where you can supplement drinking water and food stocks. But the race itself never stops, even for such refreshment points. You must get going before the rear vehicle passes.

Wow! What a concept. Let's focus on a few key milestones from previous editions.

- The 2014 event was fought out between Swedish walkers **Silvio Cannavá** and **Lena Jensen**. Lena eventually had to call it quits after 55 hours of walking, leaving Silvio as the last man standing. In fact, Swedish walkers filled the first 25 places that year.
- The 2015 staging really upped the ante on what was possible with winner **Fredrik Forsström** walking for an amazing **87 hours and 45 minutes**, just over 32 hours above the previous record. **Jonas Davidsson** took second place in the same time (but obviously could no longer continue) while Silvio Cannavá, Pia Rosvall, PerOla Axelsson and Niklas Grebäck also shattered the 2014 record of 55 hours. For 44 year old Forsström, it was his 4th Fotrally – his previous placings had been 20th (2012 24:20), 3rd (2013 33:26) and 5th (2014 48:18). 5km/hr for some 88 hours comes out at around 440km of continuous walking.
- In 2016, it came down to another two person duel, with **PerOla Axelman** eventually winning with 72 hours 12 minutes, after **Robert Jonsson** had to stop, total distance 361km! Obviously Axelsson could have gone on but he called it quits at that stage, content with being the last person standing. It was his sixth attempt and the win gave him his first victory after 5th, 4th, 3rd and 2nd placings in previous years.
- A similar two person duel happened in 2017, when **Richard Andersson** outlasted **Ange Truss** by walking for 81 hours (405km).
- 2018 saw a duel between the same two walkers. After **87 hours and 48 minutes**, the win was finally decided when officials forced Agne Truss to retire, worried that her condition had deteriorated too much to continue. That left Richard Andersson as the final walker, repeating his 2017 win. They had both bettered the previous record of 87 hours and 45 minutes and had each walked a total distance of 439km! Richard chose to stop then as well. I suppose when you have won and set a new record, you can be excused for resting on your laurels!
- 2019 saw Agne Truss of Estonia finally take the overall title and become the first non Swedish winner, outlasting Swedish walker Niklas Yjord, with a final time of **75 hours and 6 minutes**.
- After a two year covid break, the event returned in 2022, with the win going to **Anders Jungfors**.

The improvement in the event can be traced with the winning times from the 12 annual stagings held up till and including 2022.

Year	Name	Location	Time (hh:mm)
2009	Thomas Gjutarenäfv	Tullinge, Sweden	9:45
2010	Maria Thomsen	Stockholm, Sweden	29:58
2011	Jonas Davidsson	Hägersten, Sweden	33:21
2012	Jonas Davidsson	Hägersten, Sweden	50:40
2013	Silvio Cannavá	Stockholm, Sweden	48:05
2014	Silvio Cannavá	Stockholm, Sweden	55:00
2015	Fredrik Forsström	Huddinge, Sweden	87:45
2016	PerOla Axelsson	Stockholm, Sweden	72:12
2017	Richard Anderrson	Lund, Sweden	81:00
2018	Richard Anderrson	Lund, Sweden	87:48
2019	Agne Truss	Södertälje, Estonia	75:06
2020	Cancelled due to Covid		
2021	Cancelled due to Covid		
2022	Anders Jungefors	Stockholm	55:10

The big question was the same as always – how far would they go this year? Like last year, the event was held in the Swedish city of Mariefred, with four different six-hour routes around the city. The walk got underway at 9PM on Friday 1st July, with 100 entrants toeing the line.

My report is based on the very comprehensive writeup by Birger Fält on the event website <https://www.fotrally.se/>.

98 of the 100 starters made it around the first 6 hour lap through Hedlandet but by the 12 hour mark (bronze medal standard), a further 12 had dropped out. A further 19 participants opted out at or shortly after the second visit to the support zone, so the field was down to 64 by the time the walkers left Mariefred for the third time.

During the third lap, the daytime heat made for a challenging time and a further twelve participants dropped out, 52 participants eventually reaching the 18 hour point. Nine participants were forced to throw in the towel on the fourth round so 35 participants reached 24 hours (silver medal limit).

Ten participants broke in or just after the support zone so 25 continued out on the first loop for a second time and night two. Back in the support zone after 30 hours there were 17 fighters left in the ranks. Six broke at and just after the support zone and another three within the next half hour.

Thus, 8 participants headed off for lap 5 and further attrition - after 6 laps (36 hours), the field was down to 5.

*Sunday would offer completely different weather, with rain and lower temperatures and wind. Three more participants gave it up in the first half of lap 6, meaning that only five people entered the support zone after 36 hours. Two hours later and we were down to the final 2, last year's winner **Anders Jungefors** and last year's fifth place finisher **Anna Hessel**. By now it was raining heavily and it was two wet walkers who entered the pit after 42 hours. Anna had achieved her goal (PB 36.00 in 2022) and realized that Anders had many hours left in his legs, so she called it quits and settled for second place. That meant that Anders Jungefors was declared the winner and did not need to go any further.*

Here are the placings and distances of the 35 who reached the 24 hour mark, as per <https://www.fotrally.se/resultat>.

1.	Anders Jungefors	Stockholm	Sverige	42 hours 00 min
2.	Anna Hessel	Uppsala	Sverige	42 hours 00 min
3.	Helen Lagerblad	Mora	Sverige	38 hours 00 min
4.	Theodor Colombo	Åkersberga	Sverige	36 hours 38 min
5.	Lisa Mobrand	Stockholm	Sverige	36 hours 05 min
6.	Lars Hagstedt	Örebro	Sverige	32 hours 21 min
7.	Svenerik Johansson	Boxholm	Sverige	32 hours 00 min
8.	Jan-Erik Ramström	Nynäshamn	Sverige	31 hours 43 min
9.	Mattias Fahlén	Boxholm	Sverige	30 hours 45 min
10.	Christer Janzon	Stockholm	Sverige	30 hours 40 min
11.	Olof Torbrand	Skövde	Sverige	30 hours 34 min
12.	Stefan Lindgren	Sollentuna	Sverige	30 hours 16 min
13.	Markus Åkerman	Åby	Sverige	30 hours 14 min
14.	Niklas Mylfalk	Solna	Sverige	30 hours 13 min
15.	Karl Lewenhagen	Mariefred	Sverige	30 hours 12 min
16.	Leon Jämtin	Stockholm	Sverige	30 hours 11 min
17.	Stefan Olsson	Bromma	Sverige	30 hours 09 min
18.	Stefan Edström	Järfälla	Sverige	28 hours 42 min

19.	Anna-Pia Ternström	Bälinge	Sverige	28 hours 41 min
20.	Karin Kebbe Helin	Årsta	Sverige	28 hours 22 min
21.	Christer Broström	Skärblacka	Sverige	27 hours 08 min
22.	Lars Molin	Bromma	Sverige	25 hours 59 min
23.	Nicklas Ulvnäs	Uppsala	Sverige	24 hours 48 min
24.	Andreas Mossljung	Torslanda	Sverige	24 hours 39 min
25.	Stefan Jonsson	Mariefred	Sverige	24 hours 27 min
26.	Leonora Johnson	Degerfors	Sverige	24 hours 10 min
27.	Hans Kneczke	Hässelby	Sverige	24 hours 08 min
28.	Stefan Larsson	Bollebygd	Sverige	24 hours 07 min
29.	Kristoffer Björklund	Karlstad	Sverige	24 hours 04 min
30.	Carl Björklund	Göteborg	Sverige	24 hours 04 min
31.	Magnus Svensson	Örebro	Sverige	24 hours 04 min
32.	Birger Fält	Norsborg	Sverige	24 hours 04 min
33.	Anders Ternström	Bälinge	Sverige	24 hours 04 min
34.	Stefan Andersson	Tumba	Sverige	24 hours 04 min
35.	Tommy Swärdh	Kramfors	Sverige	24 hours 04 min



Photo 1: The walkers head off – don't fall behind the portalo trailer at the back

Photo 2: The final 5 head off on Sunday morning - Anders Jungefors, Anna Hessel, Helen Lagerblad , Lisa Moberand and Theodor Colombo

Photo 3: The final two walkers Anders Jungefors and Anna Hessel

I missed this at the time, so this obituary catches up with the passing of **Colin Raymond “Col” Bailey**, who was born in South Australia in 1937 and who died in Tasmania in February 2022.

Col was a well known naturalist and author who moved to Tasmania in 1990, convinced that the elusive Tasmanian Tiger was still to be found in the wilds of that island. He became a world expert on the thylacine and published 3 books on the subject

- Tiger Tales (2001)
- Shadow of the Thylacine (2010)
- Lure of the Thylacine (2013)



Col in Tasmania in later life (photo <https://www.weeklytimesnow.com.au>)

I was lucky enough to meet Col in 2008 and have his book *Lure of the Thylacine* at home. His life is of interest to us as, in his younger days, he was a top flight long distance walker who first came to prominence in 1962, with the inaugural staging of the 53.2 miles walking race from Adelaide to Murray Bridge.

Unlike the flat NSW or Victorian courses, this race saw walkers climb out of Adelaide and then negotiate the many long rolling hills as they made their way east. It was not a course for the faint hearted. The race officially started from the Adelaide Town Hall and finished at the Murray Bridge Town Hall. Six walkers fronted the start for the 53.2 mile event at 5:35AM on 2nd July 1962 but, of the starters, only Col Bailey and Jim Forrest completed the course, the other 4 dropping out at various points along the way. Final results were

1.	Col Bailey	9:13:24
2.	Jim Forrest	9:45:55
	Peter Whitham	Retired at 40 miles
	John Corrie	Retired at 30 miles
	M Parrott	Retired at 25 miles
	B Carter	Retired at 10 miles

Col broke several road bests along the way:

- A new South Australian 25 mile best of 4 hours 1 minutes (beating the current record by 9 minutes)
- A new South Australian 50 km best of 5 hours 7 minutes (beating the current record by 9 minutes)
- **A new Australian 50 mile best of 8:37:40**, beating the 1932 record of 8:38:32, held by Victorian Joe O'Farrell.

Col's personal comments from his diary add some flavour to what would otherwise be a dry report.

It was a fine, mild mid-winter's morning and warmed considerably as the day wore on. We all stuck together as a bunch until Glen Osmond and, as we headed up into the hills, the less fitter walkers began to drop back. Jim

Forrest, Peter Whitham and I stuck together until reaching 'the Devils Elbow' and the steep climb began to take its toll. Whitham dropped off and Forrest stuck with me until Crafers where I slowly moved away. (Please keep in mind that this race was entirely on the old road, most of which has now been superseded by the freeway) By the time I reached Stirling I was feeling superb and was by then, well out in front. It was about there I had my last drink until I reached the 40 mile mark in the afternoon, and this very nearly brought me undone. I had moved so far away from the others that the grub waggon had forgotten all about me and concentrated on those remaining, who were up to thirty minutes behind at that stage. As I came out of the hills past Kanmantoo and began walking through the flatter country of Monarto, the heat really built up and, with my face caked with salt, my mouth parched and my body screaming out for water, I was in big trouble. When the chief Judge, Claude Knight, came along I told him I would have to pull out if I didn't soon get water, and within 10 minutes I had my water, right at the 40 mile peg. It was then I learnt of my actual time because up to then I had no idea how fast I was going. I realised that I had blown my pre-arranged schedule to bits and my time was almost an hour faster than I had expected at that stage. I was now in unknown territory, never having walked that far before. I must admit, I was feeling really stuffed by then, I had well and truly hit that fabled wall, but fortunately the water and a few salt tablets got me going again and my mile rate began to pick up. I didn't eat anything because I feared it would upset my stomach. When they told me I was in sight of a 50 mile record I really got stuck into it again. I had no idea what the record actually was, or even who held it, that was never in my mind, but it gave me the incentive I needed to finish strongly. I learnt many valuable lessons from that walk, namely to keep walking through adversity and never give in, and to think positively, not to mention continually reminding yourself of all the darned hard training you put in over many months. The fact that I walked so much of the race alone didn't seem to worry me until the last 10 miles when I began looking over my shoulder, because I had no idea how far Forrest was behind me, but I needn't have worried. I went into the race weighing 122 lbs and finished weighing 114 lbs. Fortunately it wasn't a windy day because good burst of wind and they would never have seen me again.

Reminiscing in 2008. Col added some additional details

At the time I was living out in the country, 23 miles from Adelaide at a little place called Kangarilla and I did all my training alone on rough, unlit bush roads. I would arrive home from work just before dark and hit the road training - regardless of the weather - in the dark: 10 mile Tuesday, 20 mile Wednesday, 10 mile Thursday, race on the Saturday and a good long walk Sunday. Every third Sunday. I would do a 35-40 mile country circuit, up hill and down dale which took me anything up to seven hours. It was time on my feet that counted and back then you could train reasonably safely on the roads, unlike today. I had an old 1939 Chev sedan at the time and measured all my walk routes thoroughly to know exactly how far I was walking. I did three months of solid, relentless training for that walk; my wife called herself a 'walking widow', because I thought about little else for the whole three months, but in the end it was worth it.



Col in walking mode in South Australia, circa 1962

Col's new Australian 50 Mile best did not last long. The Victorian 50 Mile walk, held 3 months later in Melbourne, saw Jim Gleeson improve his best time by 27 minutes to set a new Australian best time of **8:15:19**. It would take 13 years before another Australian would better that time. Col made the trip to Victoria for the race but was forced to retire after a persistent hip problem sent him lame around the half way mark.

Col eventually retired from the sport of racewalking and moved onto other things, raising a family and earning a living. But he harboured a life long fascination with the thylacine which had been declared probably extinct after the last known one died in captivity in 1936.

When Col retired in 1990, he and his wife moved to Tasmania and settled in New Norfolk. The new environment ideally suited his passion for bushwalking, fishing, hunting, canoeing and other outdoor pursuits. It also allowed him to fully explore his decades-long passion for the thylacine and he developed a reputation as an expert on the subject. "I wanted to find out for myself whether it still existed in Tasmania. Up to that point I'd only read about it."

Col spent years tracking down and interviewing bushies, especially fur hunters, to hear first-hand their experiences of dealing with live thylacines. He was certain that the Tasmanian tiger was not extinct and he spent much time searching in the South-West wilderness. His *Tiger Tales* column in the Derwent Valley Gazette led to a book publishing deal, and the world's media beat a path to his door in Maydena.

I finish with some links, published at the time of Col's passing

- <https://newnorfolknews.com/2022/03/farewell-col-bailey-thylacine-true-believer/>
- https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Col_Bailey
- <https://www.weeklytimesnow.com.au/country-living/col-bailey-has-dedicated-his-life-to-the-mystery-of-the-tasmanian-tiger/news-story/c9d94d5d4657af3486e30f33a1102fe9>
- <http://www.cryptozoonews.com/bailey-obit/>

By way of postscript, potential thylacine sightings have become fewer and fewer in recent years and it is now likely that, even if they did still exist in the wild 30 years ago, time has now caught up with them.

VALE MICK HOLMES (C717) : 1951 - 2023

I finish the newsletter with another valediction - for English Centurion walker **Mick Holmes** who died in Bradford, England, on 1st July 2023, aged 71. I've handpicked a few facts from those published by Dave Ainsworth and Tony Taylor and recommend the following in depth obituary by Tony: <https://lancswalkingclub.com/2023/07/11/mick-holmes-rip-race-walker-extraordinaire-the-like-of-whom-we-will-never-see-again/>.

I never met Mick but the many obituaries, from those who did, paint a picture of a wonderful walker and a special person who has left a giant footprint in our centurion world.

Growing up in the post-1945 world of race-walking in the North of England everyone knew of the Holmes family. It was the beating heart of the Yorkshire Race Walking Club, with 3 generations of Holmes men standing tall as walkers. And in the centurion world, the name was also special, with all 3 men (father, son and grandson) qualifying as centurions

Father:	Harry Holmes Snr	C104	1936	21:05:39
Son:	Harry Holmes Jnr	C303	1960	19:31:08
Grandson:	Mick Holmes	C717	1982	17:21:52

Mick was talented at all distances from the short sprints to ultra-distance, but one performance stands out by the proverbial mile. In August 1982 at Leicester Walking Club's 100 Miles race, held on their Congerstone course, Mick was in imperious form as he dominated a large 77 strong field to break the tape in **17:21.52** to claim Centurion No.717, racing for York Postal Walking Club (who had 5 other new Centurions in the race). It was the 2nd fastest Centurion qualifying time ever, headed only by 1970/74 Commonwealth Games 20 Miles representative John Moullin RIP, who clocked 16:55.44 at Ewhurst in 1971. In 1982, 55 finished (1dq) of whom 33 became new Centurions. Mick's performance was the top distance achievement of the year and is still talked about to this day.

His walking PBs confirm his versatility: 3000m 12:40.56 (1980), 10000m 43:34.55 (1980), 20km 1:31:46 (1980), 30km 2:29:34 (1974), 20 miles 2:42:01 (1974) and 100 miles 17:21.52 (1982).

He was a junior international in 1969-70 and went on to earn eight international vests for Britain from 1973 to 1980, in distances ranging from 10000m to 50km.

Dave Ainsworth sums it up nicely with the closing comments from his obituary:

Mick hasn't competed for a long time, yet his best efforts are so well remembered by so many - and that's the true test of a great athlete. To his family, we extend our heartfelt condolences. Mick Holmes R.I.P.



*Mick Holmes in full flight - captured by the prestigious Athletics Weekly in his heyday
(photo <https://lancswalkingclub.com>)*

UNTIL OUR NEXT NEWSLETTER

Another big monthly newsletter and one that I hope you enjoy. It's cold and windy here in Melbourne but never too cold or too windy for a walk! May your jaunts be many and filled with joy.

With kind regards

Tim Erickson (C13),
Secretary, Australian Centurion Walkers, Victoria, Australia