

2019 AGM Web masters report

The website is a great channel of communication for the Centurions.
to remind everyone...

The mission is

- to reach out to the world to tell everyone who we are;
- to keep the movement alive by relating the history and achievements of Centurions
- to inform fellow Centurions and other (non Centurion) race walkers of forthcoming races and events to promote participation in long distance races
- to advice on training, nutrition, etc, to encourage and help race walkers and non race walkers to take up the challenge
- to promote opportunities to take part in races at home and abroad -
- to keep in touch socially - to gather and participate in social events and walks

This is, in fact, very much in accordance with “aims and philosophy” set out by Ken Munro many years ago and now forms some of the thinking for a Centurions constitution (discussed and agreed at the last Centurions Committee meeting earlier this month.)

This includes: that “men and women should aspire to realise their mental and physical potential. through long distance walking. We believe long distance walking is not only a natural and beneficial form of exercise but also promotes health, comradeship and happiness.”

How far-sighted was Ken’s thinking! Especially as 2019 is the year of “Mindfulness” which really does capture this philosophy.

Website management - I thought that I would give you all a bit of background on what the job of web manager entails as there is much more to managing a website than many people realise.

It is 20 years, or so, since I took over the Centurions website from its previous webmaster, and I really had to start from scratch. New software, new web hosting company, register a new domain etc. But it was not a problem as it was my day job. ie to manage a government department’s website and intranet, so I knew exactly what must be done.

I was also the webmaster for another walking club (Surrey) and an ultra distance running association. So all in all, I reckon that I had (and still have) plenty of experience in not only managing a website, but also building a website from scratch and keeping it updated with relevant and appropriate information (for the Centurions... very much as set out above in the mission statement).

I was not just doing this as an “amateur/at home webmaster” but as a professional who knew exactly what was involved and I am still very well situated to keep in touch with current web developments.

As an information scientist, I do have a good understanding of information management - which translates into good and relevant file structures of content management systems.

For the Centurions website, it also requires a good knowledge of the Centurions, race walking and athletics. This is just one side of a web manager’s job.

What else is involved?

Well, knowing which software to use, ie which is the best software for the job? what are the costs e.g. an upfront cost or pay a monthly subscription, etc... A lot to bear in mind and consider, and it does take a bit of know-how to proceed.

There are now so many software packages on the market - all offering more or less the same options, but all so very different to use - some easy, others quite complex (especially if you don’t know what you are doing) and, importantly, it does take expert knowledge to identify exactly which is the best option.

Over the years. I have used many web and content management systems - professionally and for private use.



The one I now use for the Centurions website is - Incomedia - which has been deemed to be the best software by several computer journals over the last few years. OK, it's not perfect, but it has proved to be fit for purpose for the last 12 years or so and the software is upgraded every year to keep up to date with technical advances and lately GDPR issues.

However, I don't take everything for granted and I do undertake frequent research for new software packages which are reviewed in computer journals and by doing online research. To that end, I have experimented over the last 12 months or so with a few other bits of software both by downloading trial packages and actually purchasing the software.

other issues to think about...

Choosing a web host company - again what they may offer (support, guidance, etc) and obviously costs come into play... hosting, registering the domain ..compliance with W3C....

Once this is all sorted ... then it's all about building the website....

The structure

As an information professional, I favour the hierarchical file structure (as opposed to a flat file structure -page 1, page2, page 3, etc)

The image opposite shows the current file structure where similar files are grouped into various subject or topics with top level subject level and sub levels where necessary.

So basically a website is a structured collection of pages logically connected with each other.

And so to the content

Once you know what you want to tell your audience, it's then down to designing and writing the content.

But firstly, who is our audience? As a unique society, part of our audience is obviously our existing Centurions, but we want to encourage race-walkers and non-race walkers alike to join us. So, I am trying to ensure that, not only is the website functional, but also engaging.

Examples of our pages

- About Us Obviously describes who and what a Centurion is. Our contact details, our history, information on qualifying races, trophies and awards, the Committee, Centurions abroad, achievements of Centurions. And more ...

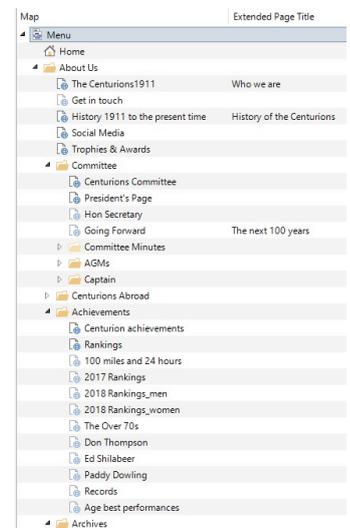
- Archive, - what is deposited at the Surrey History Centre
- Social walks - upcoming walks, reports of past ones
- Race Walking, the Rules, fixture list, results etc

Each landing page has its links to related information....

Other considerations are:

- Writing for a website - and there is a definite writing style when it comes to websites. I follow a style guide. This looks at the use of abbreviations, acronyms, hyphens - the list is endless!
- Web design - knowing how to structure the page, images, captions, text..font size...
- Cyber security - knowing how to protect the website - spot a phishing or spam email...

I am lucky, that through work, I do get to attend workshops and courses on a variety of subjects relating to website management from web design, cyber security to communications, marketing, creative writing. As I said earlier, I am not just a "sit at home as a wannabe web master".



GDPR - General Protection Data Regulations was the big headline in 2018.

This took up a fair amount of time last Spring when the regulations came into force and I had updated the website last January (see Website report AGM 2018). But it was clear that more needed to be done. To this end, I spent a lot of time researching exactly what the Centurions should be doing about this.

After a lot of research and consultation, I updated the Centurions position (via the website) on our privacy policy and GDPR. The Privacy Policy page invites Centurions to opt in (or out) from receiving emails, newsletters etc, from us. Initially, there was a flurry of responses saying "yes please." Then it tailed off. I have monitored the ICO website and guidance and the professional press over the last 12 months with a view as to whether we are, in fact, complying with the regulations. I think that we are safe!

Under development

Continuing from last year, I am still working on creating a list of British, World, age records, etc, which Centurions have achieved over the years. This is a very difficult area as the RWA only records actually "records" of 50km and 100miles (track). But we do walk on road! The accolade of "best performance" is not recorded and not officially recognised in the UK race walking space. Stop press - Australia is considering, this for multi day events, so I shall be in touch with Tim Erickson.

I am also in touch with UK and US statisticians who primarily compile ultra running results, but they are beginning to appreciate that race walkers can notch up good and often better results walking.

Another area I am developing is the collation of race results by race venue (eg the classic races of Rouen, Bazancourt, Roubaix, etc.)

Many Centurions have taken part in these classic races and feature prominently in the results. We should celebrate this - especially as many of our race walkers of the 60's 70s and 80s are still held in high regards by the French - 1971 Rouen winner was Colin Young.... and again in 1972... and then fast forward to the 1990s and the the top female walkers were dominated by British Centurions...

The French have compiled many interesting lists which is fascinating reading - seeing all our Centurions and their achievements is truly wonderful. In time, it will all be on our website. I promise you, It really does make wonderful reading.

And given that the website is on the British Library's web archive - it is important to have all this information recorded for all time.

Memories are also very important. It helps those Centurions who have hung up their trainers to keep touch with the current as well as the past race walking scene. Which brings me to the obituaries. Each time that I sadly have to add memories and tributes on the website, what strikes me most is that surviving families and friends really appreciate that their loved ones did treasure their Centurion status - way and above everything else that they may have achieved in their lifetimes. And that says everything.

My thanks to everyone who contributes their memories of our fallen Centurions. I assure you, it is very much appreciated by their loved ones.

Re stats - how many people have looked at the website?

Well, quite a lot as it turns out..

Number of "visits" in 2018:

- highest was in August 2018 was 12,315.
- unique visitors : highest 5526 (August). Average monthly visits throughout the years = 2500

Websites hits can be "seasonal ie just before the AGM or the next 100 mile race This week the number of hits have gone from 2956 on Monday (21st January) to 3,358 on Thursday and by lunchtime yesterday to over 4,000. In January this year, it has averaged at 170 hits per day.

The most visited pages:

- news
- training for 100 miles
- fixture page
- nutrition
- Castletown 2019 100 mile

“Visits” by country: as at 25 January 2019

- USA
- Germany
- UK
- France
- China
- Netherlands

Many thanks to Centurion Dave Ainsworth for keeping me up to date with a lot of news of Centurions . However, it would be good to hear from other Centurions personally - races and events you have been involved in.

We really do need to share our experiences to encourage “would-be” Centurions (as well as existing Centurions) to come along and take part and get involved. We are, after all, all about race walking and especially long distance/ultra race walking. I am always looking for content, whether it is a report from the latest 100 miles or wherever (Yes I know I say this every year, but people really do want to know.)

Over the years, many walkers have told me, that the website is really informative and they love reading about races and events that fellow Centurions have done and consequently many have entered races purely on the strength of the race reports on the website.

The website reflects the wide interests of our Centurions - long races, short races; races on track, road and trail. Reports makes them more real and it may well encourage others to do likewise. Let’s hope so.

We are pioneers! Celebrate it.

Kathy Crilley C933

Web Manager

January 2019