



President's Christmas Letter 2013

Dear fellow Centurions

It gives me very great pleasure to send Christmas greetings to all Centurions wherever you may be. At the last AGM in January 2013 I was greatly honoured to be elected your new President, the first woman to be so elected, and making a Ladies Pair with your Captain Sandra Brown C. 735. The decision by Carl Lawton C.750 to stand down necessitated an election and I am very pleased to say that day by day he is getting stronger after his bone marrow transplant. We wish him continued improvement. He is a hard act to follow with his quiet interest in and knowledge of all things Centurion and Race Walking.

I am very sorry that we have had news of a number of deaths of Centurions during the past year and their names are recorded in the Captain's letter. We send condolences to friends and family and also extend our sympathy to Ken Munroe C.370, Secretary of the Centurions from 1999 to 2003, on the death of his wife, Val.

I would like to express my particular thanks to Chris Flint C.849 and Sandra Brown C.735. Chris has worked as our indefatigable Secretary for the last 10 years. The Centurions is only a small organisation because of our unique membership requirements, but keeping an eye on our affairs takes a considerable amount of time. Not content with being Secretary of the Centurions he is also Secretary of the Race Walking Association (Southern Area) and took on the role (temporarily, he hopes) as Merchandising Officer. Sandra has enthusiastically promoted the Centurions to the wider world and encouraged increased contact between existing Centurions. Her Captain's Newsletters have gone a long way to keep us all regularly in touch. And the social walks are an excellent idea. Thank you, Sandra. Sincere thanks are also due to our Treasurer, Richard Brown C.760, Archivist Sue Clements C.950 and Assistant Secretary Kathy Crilley C.933 and to two Committee members who retired at last year's AGM, Hans Rennie C.915 as Treasurer and Ian Statter C.968 as Merchandising Officer.

The big event of the year was, of course, the hundred miles race in the Isle of Man. The Centurions as such do not organise races but rely on having our qualifying event hosted by a willing athletic club. This year we thank the Isle of Man, especially Manx Harriers and their major sponsor, Tower Insurance. As you will read in the Captain's letter this was a successful event with 24 new centurions. However, the event was not

without its problems, particularly an over-burdened software system of lap recording which collected all the data but was unable to present it for public viewing for a considerable number of hours. However, thankfully, it all came right in the end. The Isle of Man has built up a great tradition of long distance race walking over the years. Back in 1978 I completed the 85 mile Parish Walk and was third out of 8 finishers. Since then the popularity of the walk has grown enormously, particularly since the Millennium and in 2013 there were 215 walkers who completed the full 85 mile route.

Our archive of Centurion records which for so many years was collected and held by Bob Watts C. 838 is now housed in the very fine modern building of the Surrey History Centre in Woking. We are keen to add contributions from individual Centurions and urge you to look through your papers to see what you can give us. Please contact the Secretary, Chris Flint, to discuss the best way of getting your material to the Archivist. Unfortunately at present we are able to collect only paper records such as press cuttings, programmes, result sheets, etc. We should perhaps consider a way to collect artefacts as well.

Many of you are now receiving this letter by e-mail. Thank you very much for giving us your e-mail address. This greatly reduces the communications work-load and saves us money. If you are online but have received this via the post, we would be grateful if you would consider letting us contact you by email. Please send your email address to the Secretary, Chris Flint at flintc@scr-ltd.co.uk and also let us know your news. For instance, in August George Foot C.885 featured largely in a BBC Radio 4 programme "Lives in a Landscape" when at the age of 76 he successfully tackled his 25th Long Distance Walkers Association Hundred which took place across Cornwall and Devon over Bodmin Moor and Dartmoor. Congratulations to George. (The programme is still available on BBC iPlayer).

We were very grateful to receive a legacy from the estate of Brian Scrivens C.337 who died in 2012. He qualified in the Leicester to Skegness race in 1962 and was always a great supporter of the Centurions. Our Treasurer, Richard Brown, has asked me to remind all Centurions that as we do not seek an annual subscription we rely upon your generosity to help us meet some of our outgoings which include getting our trophies engraved and insured, administrative and other costs. We have rebuilt our reserves over the past year thanks to the generosity of Centurions, but these funds will not last forever and it is always good to have some reserves. So it would be wonderful if you could support us through a donation. Please send a cheque made payable to the Centurions to Richard at Rose Cottage, Worth Matravers, Dorset BH19 3LQ or if you would like to make an electronic transfer to our account please phone him on 01929 439014 and he will give you details.

Chris has ordered a new batch of kit ready for purchase at our AGM. All the details and prices are on the Centurions 1911 website. If you are not able to access the website please write a note to Chris at Glenthorne, 65 Liverpool Road, Walmer, Kent, CT14 7NN, telephone 01304 368324, and he will provide details. The merchandise is great value and if you wish to have a personalised number this makes it very special!

Our AGM is to be held on Saturday, 25th. January 2014 at 12.30 for a 1 pm start at the West Midlands Police Sports and Social club, 'Tally Ho!', Pershore Road, Edgaston. It is easily reached by bus or taxi from Birmingham railway station, and there is adequate parking. We hope that this central England location will encourage more Centurions from across the country to attend. All Officers and Committee members come up for election each year, and all existing Committee members are willing to continue for a further year. If you wish to nominate a Centurion to come on the Committee please forward your nomination to the Secretary. Nominations will be accepted on the day and need to be seconded. At the last AGM a motion was passed that the President and Captain should serve no more than 3 years consecutively in office.

It has long been the tradition of the Centurions to remember the organisation on Christmas Day, so please carry on the tradition by raising a toast to The Centurions at 2 pm on December 25th.

Very best wishes for Christmas and the New Year.

Ann Sayer C. 599
President

a.sayer1@which.net