



## CENTURIONS PRESIDENT'S CHRISTMAS LETTER 2015 – Ann Sayer C.599

Dear Fellow Centurions

This is my final Christmas letter to you as President. At the forthcoming AGM I will have completed three very enjoyable years as President and am standing down. You may remember that three years ago the AGM passed a motion that, other than in exceptional circumstances, the President and Captain should serve for no more than 3 years consecutively.

This year's 100 in 24 hours was held very successfully at Castletown on the Isle of Man. It took place on a two mile circuit round the town and the townsfolk took the event to their heart. The event proved one of the most successful for several years with 101 entries, 93 starters, 48 finishers and 32 new Centurions. The event was notable in that four members of the same family became Centurions on the one occasion. While Dad, Julian Thomas, walked on his own to become Centurion C.1141, his wife, Louise, and two young daughters, Megan and Hattie, walked together throughout and finished together to become Centurions C.1163, C.1164 and C.1165 in 23h. 47 min. A remarkable achievement. I had great pleasure in presenting individual badges to the new Centurions after the race.

The 2016 Hundred will be held in Redcar on August 6-7 with the support of York Race Walking Club and the local Redcar and Cleveland Council. This should be a good event on a seaside promenade course.

Over the weekend of November 20-22 four members of the Committee (Chris Flint, Kathy Crilley, Sue Clements and I) went to the Netherlands to join in the Dutch Centurions Annual Reunion. This took place at Wijk en Aalburg, near Dordrecht and we were made very welcome with good food and good companionship. Festivities included a visit to a delightful, quirky museum of VW Beetles of all vintages and afterwards I was delighted to be able to present Centurion certificates to the 12 new Dutch and Belgian Centurions. Next March the Association of Dutch Centurions, CVN, will be celebrating its 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary in Amsterdam, its birthplace.

I am sorry that it falls to me once again to report the deaths of a number of Centurions during the year. Like us they had done the one thing that is needed for membership of our illustrious society in that they walked 100 miles within 24 hours in a properly organised qualifying race. We remember them.

C No.	Name	Qualifying event	Time
C 303	Harry Holmes	1960 Leicester to Skegness	19.31.08
C 377	H. J. Doornekamp	1965 Chigwell	23.03.15
C490	Sqdr Leader Mike Perkins	1972 Leicester to Skegness	20.05.32
C560	J.P. van Steen	1975 Surrey WC Ewhurst 100	22.32.51
C584	Charlie Weston	1976 Leicester to Skegness	18.29.14

C634	T. Bakker	1978 Leicester to Skegness	22.34.20
C693	John Errington	1980 Leicester 'Congerstone'	20.20.58
C810	Max Jansen	1986 Leicester 'Congerstone'	22.50.07

We remember particularly Charlie Weston who was Captain of the Centurions for 7 years 2005-2011.

Our AGM will be held on Saturday, January 30, 2016 at Leicestershire County Cricket Club's Grace Road ground in Leicester. Please see enclosures for details and please try to attend as there are important matters to discuss.

Over the last 70 years (since the end of World War II) there has been only one year (1950) without a Centurions qualifying race. With the sad decline of Race Walking in Britain in recent years it is becoming increasingly difficult to find a club willing to organise the race for us. As a body The Centurions is almost completely informal and has always relied on an athletics club to host our events. We must face reality and discuss seriously whether the nature of our organisation should change to allow us to organise our own races, sign organisational contracts and give protection to the Officers in this increasingly litigious age, etc. Please read carefully the attached summary of possible ways forward. A copy of the complete analysis can be obtained via the Secretary. The matter was raised at the last AGM and will be discussed fully at the forthcoming AGM.

All Committee members come up for election each year. So the forthcoming AGM will mark the end of my term as President. I am delighted to report that Eric Horwill has agreed to allow his name to be put forward for the position of President. Eric qualified as Centurion C. 390 in the 1966 Leicester to Skegness Hundred. He is extremely well respected in the Race Walking world, has been President of the Race Walking Association and in 2015 together with his wife Pam was awarded the prestigious England Athletics "Volunteer of the Year Award" in recognition of their exceptional work on behalf of sport over many years within the Midlands community.

All other Committee members are willing to stand again. Please consider making further nominations or nominate yourself.

Other noteworthy achievements among Centurions include Chris Flint's award of a rare accolade, Life Membership of the Metropolitan Police Athletic Association. The citation reads "in recognition of the distinguished services rendered throughout a career in furtherance of sport in the Police Service generally". Well done, Chris. The Committee relies heavily on Chris's consistent effort on behalf of the Centurions and the Race Walking Association. Congratulations also to Piet Jansens on completing an incredible 50 Nijmegen Marches, and to Jack Thomas C606 for his Welsh award.

All members of the Committee work hard and regularly meet and thanks are due to them: Kathy Crilley has had a successful year as Captain, Sue Clements works diligently on our Archives and would like to get your piece on "Becoming a Centurion". Also, any of your records for placing in the Centurions archive. Richard Brown is our efficient Treasurer and as we need to increase our 'fighting fund' would appreciate any donation you are able to send us.

Please remember to toast the Centurions at 2 pm on Christmas Day. Bon Noel. Ann.