



The Centurions Annual General Meeting – Saturday 26th January 2019

Hon. Secretary's Report

The Centurions upward trajectory has been maintained over the past year. The new Captain, Martin Fisher C788, has established himself and is keen to publicise the Centurions as the pre-eminent race walking body for ultra-distance events of 50 miles plus to encourage more participants to take up the challenge of competing in our flagship event, the 100 miles in 24 hours. The Douglas, Isle of Man, event was successfully organised by Graham Young C383 and his team, and particular thanks to Mark Byrne C870 for his significant support and involvement. Despite the torrential rain during the night the event saw 13 finishers of which 8 new qualifiers are eligible for admission at the AGM to the Centurions Brother/Sisterhood. A full report is to be given by the Captain who completed the event in style. He will also include the exploits of Centurions at the World Masters Championships at Malaga, and at other international ultra distance events particularly the performances of Dominic and Daniel King, Centurions 1098 and 1100 respectively, on their 50 km times at Berlin.

The committee met on four occasions during the year and under the careful stewardship of the President, Eric Horwill C390, it conducted its business in a professional and efficient manner. In particular, it examined the impact of the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) on how we communicate and retain personal data of Centurions. In essence, each Centurion must agree to the Hon. Secretary and officers of The Centurions retaining their data and to receive communications, such as the Captain's newsletter, details of the AGM, information of upcoming events in the UK and abroad, etc. The Centurions is Affiliated to England Athletics but because we are not a club there is no requirement to transfer personal details to EA. However, it is important that we comply with the GDPR requirements and this is contained in our updated Data Protection Policy (copies available) and our thanks to Kathy Crilley C933 for her research. One requirement is that we cannot retain personal data of Centurions from whom there has been no communication for some years. There is an assumption that they have no wish to retain contact. I personally wrote to 50 Centurions falling in this category and am pleased that over half have replied asking that they continue to receive the Christmas letters and other information on the Centurions, and saying how much they appreciate being kept informed. A few responded that due to health issues they do not wish to have their details recorded. However, "once a Centurion, always a Centurion" and their names will be in the Handbook for all to see.

The organisation of 100 miles events requires considerable effort and manpower and the committee is aware of the need to establish a pipeline of future event, especially as the projected 100th 100 miles is due in 2023. Our recent Affiliation to England Athletics now gives the Centurions the opportunity to organise its own events without reliance on clubs to host the event. The EA's third party liability insurance gives us this flexibility. However, working in partnership with clubs is important. This year the 100 is at Castletown, Isle of Man, and in 2020 at Colchester where we shall work closely with Colchester Harriers AC.

The use of social media is to broaden people's knowledge. The Centurions see this as an effective means of communication between Centurions and it is becoming more popular but, as is being reported extensively in the press, it requires careful monitoring and regulation. Our web site is managed by Kathy and is an important source of information, and many complimentary comments have been received. The committee has discussed how it could possibly become more focused on specific issues and this will be explained in more detail in due course. Our Group Facebook page is increasingly used and efforts are being taken to ensure that content falls within acceptable bounds. There have been occasions when unwarranted comments which could be construed as defamatory or personally actionable, or lack accuracy, have been posted. This requires careful checks to ensure they fall within our criteria.

Richard Cole C928 was elected Treasurer at the last AGM. I wish to extend our thanks to him for presenting a set of figures which indicate the positive financial health of the Centurions and how well he has mastered the complexities of the treasurer's role.

The role of the Archivist is an important one, and collecting memorabilia for sorting and eventual deposit in our archive at the Surrey History Centre is central to our heritage. It is essential this continues by asking Centurions and their families to let us know what material they have for possible archiving.

We have maintained a close friendship with our Continental friends and this year a small group travelled to a unique agricultural town north of Amsterdam where the Dutch and Belgian Centurions held their reunion. We enjoyed their hospitality and presented trophies and medals. Frans Leijtens C949 is a most active Secretary of the CVN.

Finally, this is my last report as your Secretary. I stand down after 15 years in the post. It has been a privilege to serve under four exceptional Centurions who have been honoured as President, namely John Eddershaw C299, Carl Lawton C750, Ann Sayer C599 and Eric Horwill C390. To coin a phrase I have been the 'oily rag' putting into effect the wishes of the President and the committee and I am sure my successor will continue the advancement of this unique society. One area which requires attention is to encourage Centurions who have qualified in recent years to become more involved. Unfortunately, I ran out of time to pursue this aim.

Chris Flint C849
Hon. Secretary.