

## Carl Lawton C 750

Surrey W.C. 'Ewhurst 100' 1983 (100 miles); 17.51.51  
Club: Belgrave Harriers



### “Completing a 100 miles”

I had been race walking over 15 years with many successes and failures in that time. I had completed the Hastings, the Brighton and Plymouth to Dawlish on many occasions, Nationals and Internationals but a 100 had eluded me. Prior to taking up walking I had cycled 200 miles in under 13 hours for fun.

To complete a 100 miles walking was another challenge.

I was always susceptible to something going wrong, legs seizing up, back pain, and so it was going to be completed with a bit of luck and good fortune.

My first attempt was 1982 at Leicester. I had spent many a long Sunday morning up early and out pounding the roads and footpaths of north Surrey, but regrettably a week before the race I had picked up a slight cough and I should not have started but “bravely”, or probably “foolishly”, I lined up and joined the throng only to quietly cough my way through the thirty miles until calling it a day. I stayed on route to help John Dunsford complete his first 100. He was just under six minutes in front of a waif like figure competing in her first and maybe as some thought her last 100, who went by the name of Sandra Brown.

The cough remained with me for a few months and into the following winter. Visits to the doctor for some magic remedy eventually worked and the cough disappeared. In early spring I began to get back to some form of fitness. At the same time I had decided to start work on building, virtually by myself, the extension to my house and a vision of having another go at a hundred, this time the Surrey at Ewhurst. So it was back to the 3am Sunday morning starts, 8 hours on the road/footpaths etc., home for 11, breakfast and then the rest of the day on the house, then back to work Monday morning. What are our top athletes of today missing?!!! Some sessions would be 8 hours on my own or 4 hours alone and then meeting with others for the second half.

Training went well, no coughs and so the previous Sunday it was Colchester for the National 35kms. A hot June day, tough undulating lap course, and things went surprisingly my way to give me a win as I picked off the fallers in the heat, the first at 35kms and second National title.

Travelling home feeling the worse for wear, nothing was further from my thoughts than a 100 miles. But 5 days later on a warm summers afternoon I lined up with a field of over 100 to take on the undulating 10mile, 10 lap country circuit that was Ewhurst. I had no plan, no charts, no lap times, no schedule to adhere to, no special feeding arrangements. No watch, Was I really in the right place?

At 6pm we were sent on our way by the Centurion's President. I held myself back to try and get into a comfortable rhythm and see what the first lap time would produce. There were those in front that were out for the world record!!, those that could not control their pace, speeding up, slowing down, and those who were out to get inside 24hours. There were

plenty in front but I was not racing anyone, in fact I was not racing. Long distance events for me had to be taken steadily.

At the end of the lap we dropped down an incline to Ewhurst Village Hall, with a time of ONE HOUR FORTY FIVE MINUTES AND FORTY FOUR SECONDS.

A second lap of ONE HOUR FORTY ONE MINUTES AND TWENTY SIX SECONDS moved me up a few places. I can remember little of the following hours and miles as they rolled away. The evening dusk approached and the windows of the odd farmhouse and wayside dwellings faded into darkness as the incumbents transformed their day into night..

Meanwhile a third lap of ONE, FORTY THREE AND TWENTY FIVE took us into the deep dark night and unlit roads, the only method of navigation was the pulsating of the broken white lines in the middle of the road. At the few road junctions there was the opportunity for a few words with the pointsmen as I passed by and the sight and sounds of the tented village set in the dog leg. From two laps I was on my own, although still some in front and many behind. After 4 laps I was lapping some of the back markers with cheerful good wishes all round. This continued throughout the race.

I was doing my own pace, avoiding walking with anyone else. I had to stick to my pace not be thrown by someone else who might be just that few seconds a mile difference.

Laps 4 ONE, FORTY FOUR AND THIRTY SEVEN

And 5 ONE, FORTY FIVE AND FORTY THREE gave a halfway time of 8hrs 45m 55s. Just over nine hours for the Brighton but having to do it again. Although the overall times were being given out I was completely incapable of working out the lap times.

And then my fastest lap between 50 and 60 miles with ONE, FORTY AND THIRTY TWO. Which I was not aware of until after the event. This lap was between 2.45am and 4.20am. when one is normally in deepest sleep. Somehow I was not and the body kept pumping.

Between 60 and 70 miles, ONE, FORTY THREE AND THIRTY TWO, I moved into first place following the retirement of Ed Shillabeer and then it was morning. It had been an excellent night not cold, and no rain and the sun rose majestically over the Surrey Hills.

The last three laps began to take their toll on me I was beginning to slow but not drastically. ONE, FIFTY AND TWENTY FIVE. For lap 8.

My legs were beginning to ache, my back was coming out in sympathy, but cold Ralgex spray came to the rescue. Going into lap nine the tented village was coming to more life and the smell of fried breakfast wafted across the green. I stuck to the biscuits and drink and progressed onwards.

For the last two laps I had some help from Paul Warburton, who was probably suffering as much as me on a rather rickety uncomfortable bicycle. But he goaded me on, completing the circuits in ONE, FIFTY FIVE AND FIFTY TWO and finally ONE, FIFTY NINE AND THIRTY FIVE, just inside the two hours.

To a welcome finish in SEVENTEEN HOURS FIFTY ONE MINUTES AND FIFTY ONE SECONDS to join the ranks of The Centurions as number 750 and be joined by a further 27 who followed me home. This time put me at number 9 on the all time first timers and have only slipped one place since. I think I had judged it right, I do not believe I could have got much further.

After that I only attempted, and failed, one further 100 mile attempt, at Woodford, again a withdrawal at 30 miles with a failure to get a rhythm going.

Since then I have attended many 100's and enjoyed them all, apart from the rain, trying to put a little back into the sport from which I have gained so much.