

C881 L.A. David Watson

Surrey W.C. 'Ewhurst 100' 1991 (100 miles); 21.17.26

Club: Surrey Walking Club

When I became Rector of St John's with St. Frances, Selsdon, South Croydon, in 1986, I was aware that one of my new colleagues, Shaun Lightman, a Reader within the parish, had been one of Great Britain's race walkers in the 1968 Olympic Games. In 1988, the Church of England launched the Church Urban Fund, inviting financially better of parishes to raise money to support the Church in the Inner City. I decided to undertake to walk from Brighton to London, a distance of 50 miles within a day, an undertaking I knew would be a challenge. I invited parishioners and personal friends to sponsor me. Shaun undertook to accompany me and we succeeded in completing the distance in under 15 hours.



It was during that walk that Shaun told me about the Centurions. The idea of walking 100 miles in a race within 24 hours I found utterly enthralling. When Shaun mentioned that such a race was going to take place at Ewhurst in June 1991, I began to train in earnest, usually doing 10 miles early in the morning, a couple of times a week. Shaun's advice was invaluable, as was that of Richard and Sandra Brown. I did a night hike of 55 miles and, a week before the Ewhurst race, familiarised myself with the ten mile road circuit.

Richard won the race in the amazing time of 17.52.47, more than one hour ahead of the second man home. I finished 10th in 21.17.26, and Roger le Moine, also of Surrey Walking Club 15th in 21.49.17, ensuring that Surrey Walking Club won the team event, narrowly beating RWV Holland into 2nd place. Being nearly 54 when I took part in my first 100, I never managed to compete in short races, but I did complete four more '100s' in the 1990s, and several 50s, the Manchester to Blackpool and the London to Brighton on a number of occasions. I have made a number of very good friends through memberships of the Surrey Walking Club and the Brotherhood of Centurions.