

George Foot C 885

Surrey Walking Club "Ewhurst 100" 1991 (100 miles); 22.50.27

Club: Long Distance Walkers Association (LDWA)

Becoming a Centurion was one of the highlights of my walking career. Not that I ever did much race walking. My first experience was in about 1959 when I walked for Cambridge in the annual match against Oxford. Since it was at Cambridge that year anyone could just turn up and participate. Apart from a couple of practice walks on my own the event itself was my first go at race walking. Although I was somewhat behind at the start because others were faster than me I gradually caught up, and by the end of the 10 miles I was in the first 5 counting places for Cambridge and we won the match. I didn't get a blue or anything, it wasn't a significant sport then. I didn't race walk again until a couple of years before my Centurion.

Having done quite a number of LDWA 100s at a reasonable speed and also having done the Bob Graham, becoming a Centurion made a new goal. My first worry was whether I could walk correctly. I didn't want to have a go at a Centurion and get disqualified somewhere along the route. So I entered a 50k event around Burrator Lake. Actually there was also a 10k and 30k event starting at the same time. When I first tried to enter they told me to switch to the 10k since I had no real race walking experience. However when I told them there was no point because I didn't have much speed but did have stamina, and that I didn't mind if the officials left before I finished because I was too slow, they let me in. I was indeed well behind the others, I couldn't keep up, but I was not disqualified.

For some reason I then couldn't do the Centurion that year, 1991, so I again entered the Burrator event the following year. I found myself alongside some of the same walkers as the previous year who I discovered were also having a go at the Centurion. I was a bit faster than the previous year as I'd done a bit of training though I could only keep up for about a third of the way. However since stamina is at least as important as speed I did manage to get my Centurion, I think about 22 hours 50 minutes, while as those I'd walked with at Burrator I think all retired. I do particularly remember Sandra Brown (C 735) walking along with me for quite a way from one of the checkpoints she was looking after that year which I much appreciated as it's a long way to walk entirely on one's own, and though Annie gave me excellent support at various points along the 10 mile circuit she couldn't then walk fast enough to keep up.

I am still managing the LDWA 100 though very slow, this year 43 plus hours but I was 75 so I suppose not too bad. Annie walked it as well, but some way ahead. I have entered the 2013 100 in our neck of the woods but if I finish it will be no. 25 and I think time to call it a day.

27/12/2012