

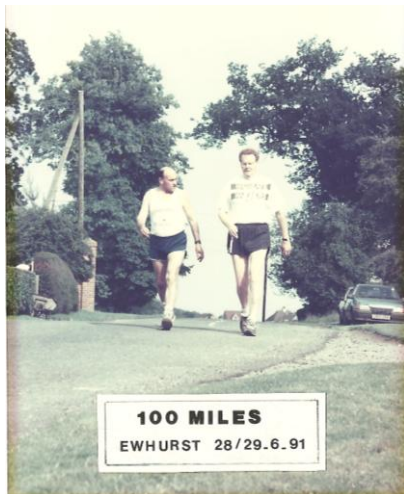
## C890 Bill Sutherland

Surrey W.C. 'Ewhurst 100' 1991 (100 miles); 23.49.36

Club: Highgate Harriers

### What Being a Centurion Meant to Me

It is very difficult to put into words what being a Centurion meant to me as it happened on my third attempt. Having been a G.B. International for 5 years at mainly 20 kms to 20 miles, ultra-distance walking was something that I had watched, officiated at, organised (accolade 8 hours, Arthur Eddlestone 100 miles 1989, Metropolitan Police Walking Club London 200 kms/24hours 1993), but in all honesty did not think I could, or would, ever succeed in doing. I always had the greatest admiration for the many Centurions in the Highgate Harriers, particularly Freddie Baker (C266) and Charlie Weston (C584).



My first recollection of 'Centurions' was in 1965 at the Chigwell '100' when the Dutch could be heard click-clocking in their clogs! So it was that I toed the line late in the afternoon at Ewhurst, Surrey with 10 hilly laps of 10 miles ahead. The start was not good, as during the first 20 miles we had heavy showers of rain and I had blisters on the balls of my feet. However I was in the 'last chance saloon' as Kath, my wife, told me before the race, this was the last time she would be on the roadside. 'Camraderie to the fore', she was quite a popular supporter as she wore a miner's lamp on her forehead and regularly sang 'Maybe it's because I'm a Londoner' to the Dutch contingent.

Another recollection was that the night was like walking down an endless dark tunnel that never seemed to end. I will never forget the cry of the peacocks on each lap of the dogleg. As I reached 70 miles Pat Duncan C897 (Belgrave Harriers) told me I less than 50 kms to go and to get going now! With blistered toes on both feet, one foot went down a hole in the road and blood gushed out of my shoe. Pat commented 'it's only pain!' Fortunately I had sufficient time to complete the last 3 laps at 2½ hours per lap. Now the late John Hedgethorpe (C413) reminded me regularly that I would not make it. I owe so much to George Beecham, my handler (C716), my wife Kath and Pat Duncan. A glorious finish, 23 hours 49 minutes 36 seconds! My problems were not over as I had to drive home. After 40 miles - cramp, glorious cramp! If there is a will there is a way.



*William Sutherland, B.K.M.*