



Captain's Christmas Message

This is my first Christmas message as Captain of the Centurions having been elected at the AGM in January. Many may know me but some may wonder about my walking background which covers many aspects of our sport. I have been a member of Blackheath Harriers (now Blackheath and Bromley Harriers AC) and Surrey Walking Club for over 50 years. Blackheath's connection with walking stretches back to at least 1872 with its club championship. I am Centurion 724 having completed the Leicester 100 in 1982. I have also walked cross country 100's with the LDWA and 100's in France, Belgium and the Netherlands.

The main events this year were the 100 miles in Middlesbrough also incorporating a 50 kilometre event, and a trip to Hilversum in the Netherlands to make the presentations to the Dutch Centurions.

At Middlesbrough the race was blessed with reasonable weather and a range of competitors. A worrying feature was the lack of British competitors, both established 100 milers and those attempting it for the first time. My congratulations go to all those who completed the race. I spent the race as a judge and my thanks go to all the officials who made the event happen. We need to promote the event more, particularly to general walkers. In the past many members of the LDWA have taken part to qualify as Centurions with remarkable success. The first LDWA Centurion was probably Alan Blatchford C350 in 1963 some ten years before the LDWA was formed by him with Chris Steer. Many Centurions are also members of the LDWA. I hope this year to increase the knowledge of our event among LDWA members.

On 25th November a small contingent of Centurions travelled to the Netherlands for their annual reunion and presentation of trophies, and were made extremely welcome and a very pleasant day was spent in the company of our fellow walkers. The Dutch walkers have now set up their own Dutch Centurions Club and we wish them well. Distance walking is particularly strong in Holland and Belgium with many events.

We are approaching our 100th hundred and encouraging people to support this event must be one of our aims. This year the 100 will be the 99th and will take place in August. Now is the time to encourage people to start training towards the goal of qualifying as a Centurion. Regularity of walking is far more important than vast distances. Cross country walking at a fast pace also helps considerably to develop stamina. Cross country walking events take place all over the country thus giving an opportunity to walk at a reasonable pace in company.

At this time of the year let us remember all those Centurions and their families who are no longer with us.

Finally may I wish everyone a healthy and peaceful Christmas and New Year, and at 2 pm on Christmas Day to raise a toast to 'The Centurions'. Enjoy your walking in 2024.

Roger Michell C724