

Captain's letter April 2014

Dear Fellow Centurions

I hope that April finds you fit and well, and that you have been able to take advantage of the Spring weather to enjoy some good walks.

Centurions AGM, January 2014

Our well-attended and convivial AGM was held in January at the West Midlands Police Sports Club at Tally Ho! in Birmingham. Warm thanks go to Eric Horwill C390 and other Midlands Centurions who organised this excellent venue, and to Parminder Bhatti C909 for providing the very tasty and much-enjoyed refreshments. At the time of the AGM, the venue for the 2014 Centurions' qualifying event was still uncertain. Since then, we have been delighted to announce that the 100 will take place in Southend on 2-3 August [more on this below.] It remains our ambition to work with potential organisers and clubs to ensure a pipeline of future 100 miles events so as to reduce uncertainty. It is therefore wonderful to hear that Redcar might be able to mount a 100 in 2016 after the Surrey 100 in 2015. Please keep those offers coming!

Centurion and RWA 100 Miles Event – Southend, 2-3 August 2014

Chris circulated details of this year's Centurion qualifying event, to be held at the Garon Leisure and Tennis Centre in Southend on 2-3 August. Our warm thanks go to the organising team at Southend AC for their initiative and hard work to put on this event: we are immensely grateful. Thanks also to Chris, Kathy, Pam and the Centurion team who are working with Southend AC to make the event a success.

Please come and walk, and encourage others to do so. Whether walkers are already Centurions returning to the event, or aspiring Centurions seeking to qualify, this will be an unusual opportunity to walk 100 in a good track environment, and to enjoy the attractions of sunny Southend. Kathy Crilley looks forward to hearing from you, so please get on to the website and send those entries in early!

As always, a lot of help will be needed during the event. A team of lap recorders, sufficient to work in relays, will be especially vital to the smooth-



running of a track event. If you are able to help, please contact Chris Flint or Kathy Crilley.

For more information and to enter, see our website www.centurions1911.org.uk

Social Walk in Essex, 22 March 2014

A merry group of Centurions and friends met together on 22 March for a social walk in Essex, brilliantly devised and led by Steve Kemp, C1075. Descending on Benfleet station from Essex, Kent, Buckinghamshire, Dorset – and even Holland [Frans Leijtens C949 driving over that morning], Centurions were raring to discover our Roman heritage and other local attractions, our appetites whetted by Steve's excellent route description.

Crossing the creek to Canvey Island by the modern road bridge, we were reminded that the crossing was made by ferry boat or stepping stones until just 83 years ago. We followed Canvey's sea-wall embankment, created by the Dutch in the early C17th, past the freshwater marshes and nature reserve, important for migratory birds. The old Port of London jetty was followed by the new super container port at Coryton, en route to the ancient Lobster Smack Inn. Charles Dickens, in the 1860s, knew this attractive pub as the loneliest inn on the Thames marshes, and, in great Expectations, sent Pip and the fugitive Magwitch to hide here. Nearby stands a row of old coast guard cottages. As we followed the reinforced sea wall, we were reminded of the night of 31 January 1953 when a NE gale and high tide breached the sea defences and brought devastating floods, in which 58 people died.

Reaching the sandy beach, fashionable in the Victorian era, we stopped for a picnic, and admired the splendid 1930s architecture of the Canvey Labworth café. Across the Thames estuary, the Kent coastline was clearly visible, and in the distance Southend's famous pier – evidently the longest in the world. The eastern edge of Canvey was favoured by the Romans for their salt industry. Before leaving the

island, we had the enormous pleasure of meeting up with George Beecham, C716 who joined us to walk the section near his home.

Back at Benfleet station, we walked east towards the ruins of Hadleigh Castle – through the 2012 Olympic mountain bike course, where we had the thrill of seeing GB international young cyclists hurtling up and down muddy tracks and over boulders. I think I'll stick to walking 100 miles! Hadleigh Castle, an impressive Norman fortification from the C13 and C14, occupies a vantage point above the estuary. After exploring the site [and managing not to lose anyone in the tower], we dropped down to Old Leigh, to stroll beside the old cockle sheds and reach the harbour-side cafes, completing our walk of 20 miles.

Warm thanks go to Steve Kemp for a fantastic day out, full of interest and fun, and to all those who joined the party. Even the weather exceeded expectations and was good all day. See the website for photos.

Future Social Walks

Centurion social walks have become an established and popular feature of our programme. They are a great way of meeting fellow Centurions and friends for an interesting walk and a good day out. We welcome suggestions for future social walks.

Jill Green, C898 has kindly offered to devise and lead a social walk through “green” north London, visiting the home and burial place in Highgate of James Edwin Fowler Dixon, C1. Watch the website and newsletters for further information. Also, Norman Smith C976 is again holding a Remembrance Day 26 miles walk at 7.20 am from Bicester Aerodrome and he invites Centurions to participate.

Centurions in National 10 miles and 20 km

The national 10 miles in London's Victoria Park gave fellow walkers, and the many spectators enjoying a sunny afternoon, the chance to admire the talent and tenacity of our members. Centurions filled the top three places in the men's race, the honours going to Dom and Dan King, C1098 and C1100 and Ian Richards, C1064. Roger Michell, C724 led home Surrey Walking Club's winning team. Many other Centurions were flying the flag for walking, your Captain taking the third lady slot. In the national 20 km at Sheffield last

weekend Sandra Brown did a W65 GB best performance in 119.15, whilst last year's winner of the 100 miles Richard Gerrard C1106 took third position in the Senior Men's race with fellow Centurions Chris Berwick C902, Paul King C972 and Chris Flint C849 amongst the finishers.

Schiedam 7-8 June 2014

There is something for everyone during the excellent “Wandelweekend” organised by Rotterdam Walking Club. On offer are events at 50kms, 50 miles, 100kms, 100 miles [Continental Centurion qualification] and 24h, all in an attractive nature-park, and well-supported. See our website for details, and come and join us!

It's great that Centurions have opportunities to meet, race, and walk socially, making our “club” not just something you qualify for, but a society you feel involved in and connected with. Do join us if you can for the Southend 100, and keep in touch. My very best wishes to you all.

Sandra Brown C735 Captain
randsbrown@btinternet.com Below:
sunshine and smiles on Canvey Island social walk

