AUSTRALIAN CENTURION DETAILS

17.   ***Ian Jack (27.04.45)***
17:59:30
03-04 November 1979
George Knott Athletic Field, Clifton Hill, Victoria

Ian Jack started racewalking in 1961 while still a schoolboy - St Bedes were setting up an athletics club and wanted a walker. Soon after that, he also joined the Victorian Amateur Walking Club. After a year with St Bedes Old Boys Athletics Club, he joined St Kevins Old Boys and walked with them until 1965. At that stage, he felt that, to continue to improve, he needed to walk A Grade so he moved with his brother Clarrie to Glenhuntly Athletics Club where he stayed throughout his subsequent career

After a couple of years racing A Grade with Glenhuntly, Ian decided to give it all away and retired in 1967. It was not until 1972 that he returned to the sport. In the intervening period, Clarrie had been steadily improving and was now ranked amongst the top Victorian distance walkers.

Ian now had to start again, but this time in Clarrie's shadow. While Clarrie was winning medals in Victorian championships, Ian was quietly working his way along a couple of places behind him. In 1973, he had his first success, 3rd place in the Victorian 50 km championship. His time was 5:04:27.

As he got fitter, he became a regular in Victorian teams to the AFRWC 20 mile championship and to the Australian 50 km championships (held every second year). By 1978, he had just about caught up to Clarrie and bridged the gap created by his earlier spell from walking. Now only a minute or two separated them and he started to split the honours with Clarrie and swap places in various races.


Clarrie (left) and Ian (right) in 1975 - twins and very evenly matched walkers

His greatest athletic achievements came in 1979. Firstly he was selected in the annual Australia vs New Zealand racewalking match and came 2nd in the 50 km event, only 1 minute behind the winner Clarrie. Then a couple of months later, he completed the Australian Centurions 100 mile event at the Collingwood Harriers Track in Clifton Hill in an astonishing 17:59:30. This cut some 34 minutes off the current Australian record and was amongst the world best times for the 100 mile walk.

In that event, Ian negative split the two halves, walking around 9:15 for the first 50 miles and then storming home over the second 50 miles in 8:45. That event showed where his real potential lay – in the ultra walks. What he lacked in speed over the shorter distances, he more than made up for in his awesome strength and ability to absorb pain.

It is unfortunate that Ian retired from serious competition in the early 1980s but he leaves a 100 mile mark that has withstood all challenges over the last 32 years – and promises to withstand them for quite some time yet.

1973	AV 50 km	Melbourne	3rd	5:04:27	
1979	**AFRWC Aust vs NZ**	**Auckland**	**2nd**	**4:38:24**	
	Centurions 100 Mile	**Melbourne**	**1st**	**17:59:30**	**AUSTRALIAN RECORD**
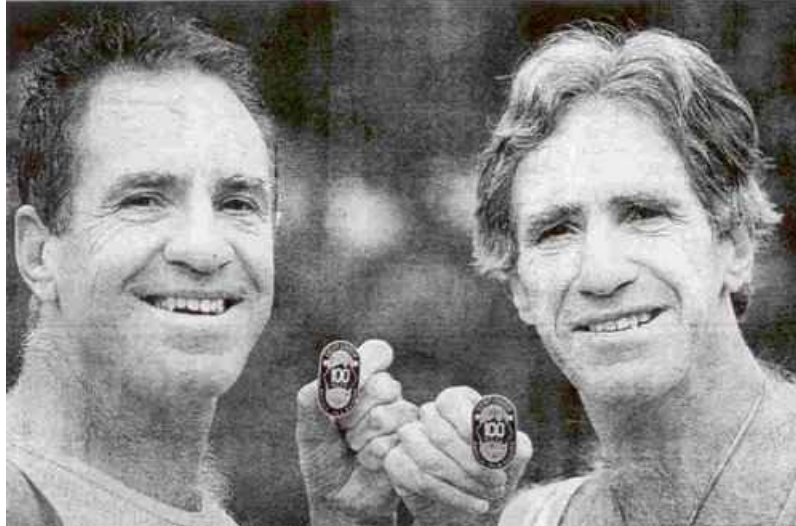
Ian and Clarrie with their Centurion badges - Ian holds the 100 mile record and Clarrie holds the 50 mile record