

AUSTRALIAN CENTURION FOUNDERS: FRED REDMAN (C 8)

C8: 22:59:00

28-29 September 1973, 22:59:00

Adelaide Harriers Track, Adelaide, SA

Fred Redman, one of the four founders of the Australian Centurions, was born on 21st April 1911 in England. His parents almost despaired of his ever learning to walk. He took little interest in athletics at school and almost invariably arrived too late to start in the events in which he did enter.

A chance remark just before his firm's 1929 annual sports day set him off. No one could be found to oppose a certain expert who had won the mile walk 8 years in succession. Fred happened to mention an interest in strolling and was persuaded to enter the race. He did not beat the expert but walked the mile in 8 mins 32 secs. This prompted him to take up race walking seriously.

In 1932 he broke the 10 mile Junior road walking record in the RWA Junior National Championship and recorded a time of 1.17.59. Then in 1934 he broke the world record for the same distance in a time of **1.14.30.6**. He held the world record for 8 years and the British record for 22 years (until eventually broken by George Coleman in 1956 with a time of 1:14:06.0).



A sketch of Fred from "The Sport of Race Walking", Published by the Race Walking Assn, Ruislip, Middlesex, 1962 (p134).

The outbreak of war brought one of his major disappointments. He was listed for training for the 1940 Olympic Games. They were never held and he served instead with the Royal Engineers in India and Burma.

In 1951 he walked his first 100 mile in **20.53.44** and became Centurion No 163. He walked it again in 1953 with a time of **18.44.58**.

In 1961 he migrated to Australia with his family and settled in Melbourne where he became quickly involved in the local walking scene. I remember him in the 1960s as a familiar walker at Albert Park. Little did I realise what a great walker he had been. He was unassuming and let his past performances speak for him.

In 1971 he was instrumental in the formation of the Australian Centurions Club and was one of our four founding members.

He showed by his example what it means to be a Centurion. He went back into distance training and completed his last 100 miler in 1973 at the age of 62 years. His time of **22.59.00** was a great achievement for a person of that age.

Fred died on 3rd September 1986, aged 75. We remember him as a fellow club member, as one of our founders and as a great walker.