

CENTURION FOOTNOTES

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DATES...DATES...DATES

Nov 6, 2006	Victorian 6 Hour Track Championship	Moe, Victoria
Nov 19-25, 2006	Australian 6 Day Championship	Colac, Victoria
Nov 25-26, 2006	3rd Penang International 12 hour walk	Penang, Malaysia
Jan 6-7, 2007	Coastal Classic 12 Hour event	Gosford, NSW
April 21-22, 2007	Australian Centurions 24 Hour Qualifying Event	Coburg, Victoria
May 19-20, 2007	Continental Centurions 24 Hour Qualifying Event	Weert, Holland

Big news on the local front is that the Australian 6 Day Championship at Colac has will not be held in 2007. It was due to start on November 19th but a number of key resignations from the local Colac organising committee has left the event

NEWS ON OUR MEMBERS

Peter Bennett (C 24) tells me that he is just back racing again on the Queensland front after a recent injury. He confided that he probably would have recovered earlier if he hadn't kept trying to race every Sunday and getting himself injured all over again. I can sympathise with you Peter...I am back into a bit of walking after my successful hip operation and managed to pull a hamstring today when doing a 2000m walk in our Melbourne Track and Field Competition. Ah, the joys of getting older. It's back to the stretching mat again!

Tim Thompson (C 6) and his wife Bev reported in from Queensland as they neared the end of their trip around Australia Tim has this to say

We are now back at our block in Queensland. We came in earlier that expected as my health has not been the best. We'll spend about 10 weeks here and then head back to Adelaide for some Specialist appointments. (We had originally intended to keep travelling down the East Coast, but I think I'm a bit "Travelled-out" at the moment.) While I was at Cape York, I met several people involved in amazing feats:-

* Running from Tasmania to Cape York!!!

* Driving 22 Chamberlain Tractors from the most S/W corner of Australia diagonally (in the most direct route) across Australia. (5 of the tractors drove The Telegraph Track, the rest did the Diversion road)

* A 1928 Chev that drove up from Victoria (He did Diversion Road) to Cape York.

Have a good rest and then enjoy the final trip home to Adelaide, Tim and Bev.

Stan Miskin (C 23) had an awful shock a week or so ago. He was out with wife Ellwyn and with **Fred Brooks (C 42)** and his wife Lill when Ellwyn collapsed with what was later diagnosed as a stroke. She was walking behind the others and it was some 20 minutes before Stan found her, just as she regained consciousness. She was rushed to hospital and, after several days in intensive care, she had open heart surgery (a quadruple bypass). It came as a shock to all of us as Ellwyn is a regular at all of Stan's long walks and normally walks the first 6 hours herself before settling down to look after Stan. It just goes to show that we never know what is around the corner. We all wish Ellwyn a speedy recovery and hope that she will soon be back to her fit self.

SRI CHINMOY AUSTRALIAN 24 HOUR CHAMPIONSHIP, ADELAIDE, SEPT 30 – OCT 1, 2007

The 23rd Sri Chinmoy 24 Hour Festival of Running was held at the Santos Stadium in Adelaide on the last weekend in September. This annual event, hosted by the Australian Sri Chinmoy Marathon Team, is also the designated Australian 24 Hour Running Championship so always attracts a very competitive field of runners. Over the last few years, it has also attracted a number of walkers and that was the case again this year.

We had 4 Centurions in action and one budding Centurion giving it a very good go. **Carol Baird (C 39)** and **David Billett (C 50)** entered as runners while **Deryck Skinner (C 51)** and **Pat Fisher (C 53)** entered as walkers alongside

Canberra based walker **Sharon Chomyn**. Sharon won the 12 Hour walk at Coburg this year with 82.814 km in a very impressive first up performance. She has continued her training with Pat Fisher and came to Adelaide for her first hundred attempt.

Unfortunately, as we all know, it always depends on the weather and this particular weekend was HOT and sunny, with daytime temperatures nudging the 30°C.

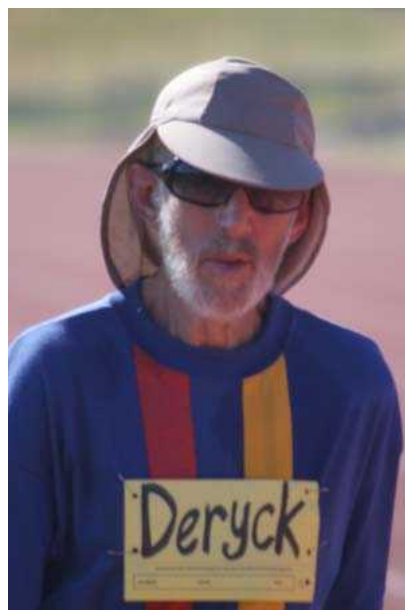
Carol Baird had missed a lot of training recently due to a nagging ankle injury but it did not stop her setting a whole swag of running records including a new Australian W55 100 km age category record and new WORLD W55 age category records for 12 Hour and 100 miles. She held down second place throughout the race and only one runner could beat her overall. What a fantastic run – 192 km in the heat.

David Billett kept it very easy for most of the race but came home like a train to complete yet another hundred as a runner. David, like Carol, is another really consistent competitor.

If Carol was the outstanding runner, Deryck Skinner was the outstanding walker. At 73 years of age, he finished his fourth centurion qualifier within a 12 month period. What an absolutely amazing performance. Deryck's one line comment - "The heat was cruel and it was the most rugged 24 hour I have contested so far."

Pat Fisher had hoped to complete his second hundred, following on from his successful walk at Coburg earlier this year, but he suffered from an aggravated ankle injury and was forced to give it away just past the 100 km mark. Sharon Chomyn was also amongst the retirees with a very badly blistered heel. Her 100 km time of a little over 15 hours is certainly a very good inaugural 100 km split and we hope to see her back soon to complete some unfinished business!

Special thanks to **Geoff Peters (C 20)** and **Ruth Webber** who stayed trackside for the weekend to help out and to verify any performances from a centurion viewpoint.



Deryck Skinner on his way to his fourth hundred (Photo from Sri Shinmoy Ultra website)

24 HOUR NATIONAL CHAMPIONSHIP

	Name	Age	State	Marathon	50km	50mile	100km	150km	100miles	Final Dist.
1.	Mick Francis	48	WA	3:46:30	4:32:14	7:57:24	9:56:04	15:09:37	16:29:05	227.928km
2.	Carol Baird	58	ACT	4:12:13	5:01:25	8:32:44	10:33:52	17:17:00	18:36:45	192.436km
3.	Tony Collins	59	NSW	4:38:15	5:40:55	9:56:40	12:35:10	19:27:51	20:55:01	181.135km
4.	Robert Boyce	44	VIC	4:43:24	5:46:08	9:53:37	12:40:20	20:29:30	22:08:24	171.888km
5.	Collin Brooks	53	SA	5:25:35	6:30:27	10:45:03	13:38:54	21:32:55	23:17:07	166.017km
6.	Brett Worley	30	SA	3:58:25	4:40:40	8:22:15	11:01:49	19:53:38	22:24:08	165.463km
7.	David Billett (W)	36	SA	5:36:59	6:28:54	11:20:13	13:48:07	22:21:55	23:29:25	164.417km
8.	Deryck Skinner (W)	73	SA	5:25:25	6:32:01	11:05:23	14:02:23	21:51:06	23:30:12	163.806km
9.	Sarah Barnett	30	SA	4:44:13	5:57:10	10:16:57	13:24:05	23:05:48		154.494km
10.	Graeme Watts	53	QLD	5:10:41	6:13:39	10:30:11	13:31:28	23:26:26		150.400km
11.	Brendan Mason	44	NSW	4:45:09	5:48:00	10:45:36	14:23:57			143.088km
12.	Gary Wise	60	NT	4:10:23	5:36:00	10:46:10	15:40:25			132.688km
13.	Richard McCormick	39	VIC	5:17:57	6:41:28	13:35:05	18:45:52			116.452km
14.	John Timms	64	VIC	5:54:40	7:14:45	14:18:30	19:24:20			115.200km
15.	Peter Gray	41	VIC	8:12:10	9:41:10	18:50:27	23:48:00			101.056km
16.	Patrick Fisher (W)	58	ACT	5:52:42	7:05:48	12:09:51	16:08:50			101.055km

17. Sharon Chomyn (W)	47	ACT	5:59:05	7:05:15	11:52:18	15:21:37	100.655km
18. Dick Crotty	77	Tas	8:41:04	10:46:54	20:21:30		97.584km
19. Kaven Dedman	59	SA	7:35:26	9:06:12	20:19:54		85.778km
20. Anyce Melham	48	NSW	4:24:34	5:19:54	9:44:42		82.400km

AUSTRALIANS AND THE HUNDRED MILE WALK

When I published the list of those Australians who have achieved the centurion mark on more than one occasion, I left out one of Carol Baird's performance, namely her second Auckland walk on 08-09 July 2002. With that one correctly in place, I can now correct the record and let everyone know that Carol has 9 successful hundreds to her credit as a walker.

Carol Baird (C 39)	22:16:43	18-19 Sept 1999	Coburg, Victoria
	21:47:47	08-09 April 2000	Coburg, Victoria
	21:26:10	02-03 Sept 2000	Coburg, Victoria
	20:55:46	07-08 July 2001	Auckland, NZ
	169.2 52 km in 24H	25-26 Aug 2001	Genting Highlands, Malaysia
	20:31:34	13-14 April 2002	Coburg, Victoria
	20:48:53	08-09 July 2002	Auckland, NZ
	21:13:27	19-20 Oct 2002	Adelaide, SA
	21:55:35	12-13 April 2003	Coburg, Victoria

And it's also worthwhile listing Deryck's four walks, all done within a 12 month period and at ages 72 and 73. Wow!

Deryck Skinner (C 51)	22:39:55	15-16 Oct 2005	Santos Stadium, Adelaide, SA
	23:23:43	22-23 April 2006	Coburg Harriers Track, Coburg, Victoria
	23:23:30	11-12 Aug 2006	Aust 48H C'ship, Gold Coast, QLD
	23:30:12	30 Sept – 1 Oct 2006	Santos Stadium, Adelaide, SA

A NEW ULTRA WEBSITE

Peter Bennett passed details of a great new ultra website, put together by French Ultra Walk Organizer Thierry Martineau. Point your browser to <http://www.marchons.com>. In fact it was the only website where I could find the results of the recent European ultra walks that are featured later in the newsletter.

ULTRA RECORDS UPDATED

We have recently ratified some new Australian Age Group ultra distance walking records for Val Chesterton of Canberra. Val has walked in a number of our Centurion events and is a regular racewalker in Canberra. We congratulate Val on the following new standards set in the W65 division during the year.

W65 50 km Road Walk	7:07:52	Canberra, 9 September 2006.
W65 50 km Track Walk	8:26:17	Gosford NSW, 7-8 January 2006 .
W65 12 Hour Track Walk	69.503 Km	Gosford NSW, 7-8 January 2006

THE EUROPEAN ULTRA SEASON HOTS UP

The European ultra walking season is now well and truly back in business again after the usual break after the Paris-Colmar classic. Most of the following events are qualifying opportunities for the 2007 Paris Colmar so are strongly contested.

200 KM DE GRAIDE, BELGIUM, 2-3 SEPTEMBER 2006

The 4th edition of this event saw men trying to achieve a distance of 200 km and women after the 170 km mark in a timeframe of 24 hours. The race circuit was 3.333m, through the streets of Graide. Polish legend Grzegorz Urbanowski was the star, completing his 200 km in 23:20:02. In fact, he was the only one to reach the qualifying mark.

Pl.	Name	Club	Nat.	Distance	Time	km/hr
1	Urbanowski Grzegorz Adam	WKS Slask Wroclaw	POL	200.000	23:20:02	8.571

2	Ossipov Dimitri	Individuel St Petersburg	RUS	193.333	23:45:20	8.138
3	Phister William	ASM Bar le Duc	FRA	186.666	23:58:08	7.788
4	Jacob Bernard	Bertrix Basse Semois	BEL	186.666	24:11:47	7.715
5	Varain Cedric	AC Chateau Thierry	FRA	163.333	23:50:14	6.852
6	Chatillon Nicolas	NL Fublaines	FRA	160.000	23:46:32	6.730
7	Robinet Michel	AC Chateau Thierry	FRA	160.000	24:03:22	6.651
8	Gerard Philippe	Bertrix Basse Semois	BEL	156.666	24:00:22	6.526
9	Spieser Jean Paul	CSL Neuf Brisach	FRA	140.000	24:06:37	5.807
10	Tabouret Guy	US Toul	FRA	120.000	24:11:05	4.962
11	Clarival Joseph	Bertrix Basse Semois	BEL	113.333	24:00:27	4.721
12	Betz Thomas	SV Saar 05	GER	110.000	23:57:60	4.593
13	Biebuyck Pascal	UA Flobecq Athletisme	BEL	110.000		
14	Heinrich Thierry	GASM Ligny en Barrois	FRA	103.333		
15	Langlois Patrick	AM St Thibault des Vignes	FRA	86.666		
16	Thevenin Pascal	AM St Thibault des Vignes	FRA	80.000		
17	Andre Hugues	Bertrix Basse Semois	BEL	76.666		
18	Rassaind Andre	AL Voiron	FRA	70.000		
19	Rivinius Hartmut	Biestalrunners		40.000		
1	Berthault-Korzhyk Annie	Neuilly sur Marne Athletisme	FRA	100.000		
2	Goleret Isabelle	OCT Thierville		90.000		

ROUBAIX 28 HOUR WALK, ROUBAIX, FRANCE, 16-17 SEPT 2006

The next event on the calendar was the Roubaix 28 Hour walk. This is both an individual and a teams event with walkers representing a number of European countries including England. 45 men and 6 women were on the line for the 1PM start but alas, many of the expected Russian walkers were absent after experiencing visa problems. Klapa was trying for his 11th victory in Roubaix after Urbanowski had won the last 3 years. But Ossipov, only 2 weeks after taking second place in Graide, walked with great confidence to win this one, covering 232 km in the 28 hours. In fact, he was one of 6 walkers who backed up after Graide for this second elite ultra.

The women's event was a very close affair with Marina Tarashevich just edging out Sylviane Varin, both covering the excellent distance of 207 km.

Pl.	Name	Club	Nat.	Distance	Time	km/hr
1	Ossipov Dimitri	Individuel St Petersburg	RUS	232.420	28:00:23	8.299
2	Letessier Gilles	PLM Conflans Ste Honorine	FRA	229.170	28:05:10	8.160
3	Ricks Haan	AV Attila Hart	HOL	226.590	28:05:40	8.065
4	Jacob Bernard	Bertrix Basse Semois	BEL	221.145	28:04:07	7.879
5	Lukashevich Nicolai	IND Brest	BLR	214.745	28:04:31	7.649
6	Klapa Henri	Individuel Leknica	POL	214.075	28:04:02	7.624
7	Dufrien Pascal	Senart Combs Brie	FRA	212.450	28:01:41	7.580
8	Frolov Nicola	ndividuel Mordovie	RUS	207.960	28:02:29	7.416
9	Costils Alain	SPM Vernon atletique	FRA	207.960	28:05:30	7.403
10	Grassi Alain	MJ Trouville	FRA	206.050	28:02:39	7.347
11	Jones David	Redcar Race WC	GBR	198.980	28:04:35	7.087
12	Czukur Zoltan	Komboi Banyasz	HUN	195.445	28:03:54	6.964
13	Bunel Pascal	Neuilly sur Marne Athletisme	FRA	194.490	28:00:55	6.942
14	Venslanovich Ivan	STEP Minsk	BLR	194.490	28:04:27	6.928
15	Naumowicz Dominique	Gohelle Athletisme	FRA	190.285	28:04:08	6.779
16	Leijtens Frans	Rotterdamse WV	HOL	189.045	28:00:36	6.749
17	Yvert Louis	MJ Trouville	FRA	189.045	28:02:12	:6.743
18	Courcy Jean Claude	SPM Vernon atletique	FRA	182.260	28:04:17	6.493
19	Watts Ken	London Vidarians WC	GBR	181.305	28:05:51	6.453
20	Leermakers Ad	AV Attila Hart	HOL	179.395	28:01:09	6.403
21	Grados Daniel	CM Roubaisien	FRA	175.190	28:00:46	6.254
22	Biebuyck Pascal	UA Flobecq Athletisme	BEL	172.610	28:00:42	6.162
23	Spieser Jean Paul	CSL Neuf Brisach	FRA	168.120	28:04:27	5.988
24	Constandinou John	York Postal Walking	FRA	165.925	28:03:57	5.912
1	Tarashevich Marina	Brest	BLR	207.960	28:04:06	7.409
2	Varin Sylviane	Coulommiers Brie	FRA	207.005	28:00:37	7.390
3	Berthault-Korzhyk Annie	Neuilly sur Marne Athletisme	FRA	178.725	28:05:25	6.363
4	Fauqueur Duda Corinne	CM Roubaisien	FRA	176.815	28:00:44	6.312
5	Anxionnat Claudine	RESDA des Vosges	FRA	142.420	28:04:22	5.073
6	Crilley Kathy	Surrey Walking Club	GBR	44.495		

200 KM DE VALLORBE, SWITZERLAND, 23-24 SEPT 2006

Pl.	Name	Club	Nat.	Distance	Time	km/hr
1	Girod Urbain	CM Montey	SUI	191.997	23:48:58	8.062
2	Paille Stephane	A M Merignac	FRA	175.917	23:48:59	7.386
3	Peter Vincent	A Verdunois	FRA	170.557	23:45:32	7.179
4	Guerinier Christian	SPN Vernon	FRA	162.517	23:55:53	6.791
5	Genin Sebastien	C M Monthey	SUI	151.797	23:48:58	6.374
6	Spieser Jean Paul	CSL Neuf Brisach	FRA	149.117	23:53:16	6.242
7	Bert Dominique	AS Credit Foncier	FRA	146.437	23:49:47	6.145
8	Glaser Jean Bernard	Neully sur Marne Athletisme	FRA	135.717	24:07:02	5.627
9	Tabouret Guy	US Toul	FRA	122.317	24:07:43	5.069
10	Zeccha Paolo	Non Licencie	SUI	119.637	23:54:41	5.003
11	Duwald Patrick			111.597	23:45:08	4.698
12	Aubertin Alain	NL Mirecourt	FRA	57.997		
13	Vernier Jean Pierre	AS St Junien	FRA	49.957		
1	Brunet Paola	C M Fribourg	SUI	159.837	23:57:49	6.670
2	Ribezzo Penelope	Non licenciee	SUI	119.637	24:07:49	4.958

200 KM DE DIJON, FRANCE, 7-8 OCTOBER 2006

This is always a very popular event as it boasts the annual French National 100 km Championship which David Regy makes a habit of winning most years. It was once again a very high quality event with Russian star Rodionov reaching the 200 km mark ahead of a whole sway of top French ultra walkers. In the women's event, Dominique Alvernhe also reached her required mark of 170 km ahead of Claudine Anxionnat.

Pl.	Name	Club	Nat.	Distance	Time	km/hr
1	Rodionov Alexse	Neully sur Marne Athletisme	RUS	200,000	23:33:00	8,493
2	Morel Philippe	AC Chateau Thierry	FRA	196,329	24:02:48	8,164
3	Frechengues Bernard	Senart Combs Brie	FRA	192,658	23:50:10	8,083
4	Parrot Jean Marie	SCBA	FRA	185,316	23:54:32	7,751
5	Gilg Paul	Pays de Colmar Athletisme	FRA	185,316	24:08:51	7,674
6	Barbuczinsky Josef	EA Bourg-en-Bresse	FRA	177,974	24:00:32	7,413
7	Thanron Bernard	Dynamic Aulnay Club	FRA	174,303	24:09:38	7,214
8	Jose Mora Bernardo	Standing Palma	ESP	170,632	23:53:03	7,144
9	Bunel Pascal	Neully sur Marne Athletisme	FRA	170,632	24:06:44	7,077
10	Spieser Jean Paul	CSL Neuf Brisach	FRA	166,961	24:11:17	6,903
11	Guerinier Christian	SPN Vernon	FRA	163,290	23:46:25	6,869
12	Staub Philippe	COS Villers Nancy A	FRA	126,580	23:47:37	5,320
13	Simon Jean Luc	COS Villers Nancy A	FRA	115,567	23:47:39	4,857
14	Harasse Daniel	Non Licencie	FRA	111,896	24:01:58	4,656
15	Segui Santiago	GEIEG	ESP	108,225	23:48:41	4,545
16	Camara Jose	Standing Palma	ESP	104,554	23:48:40	4,391
17	Langlois Patrick	AM St Thibault des Vignes	FRA	122,909		
18	Albrecht Jacky	ASM Bar le Duc	FRA	111,896		
19	Bastien William	ASM Bar le Duc	FRA	111,896		
20	Erard Christophe	ASM Bar le Duc	FRA	108,225		
21	Donze Eric	Non Licencie	FRA	108,225		
22	Poirot Pierre PLMC	Conflans	FRA	100,883		
23	Marejus Eric	CM Dijonnais	FRA	100,883		
24	Regy David	EACPA	FRA	100,000		
1	Alvernhe Dominique	Montpellier Athletisme	FRA	170,632	22:50:03	7,473 km/h
2	Anxionnat Claudine	RESDA des Vosges	FRA	166,961	24:12:32	6,897
3	Brunet Paola	C M Fribourg	SUI	163,290	24:10:05	6,756
4	Dols Corinne	AFA Feyzin	FRA	152,277	23:54:02	6,371
5	Navet Monique	C.o.s. Villers Athletisme	FRA	144,935	23:47:38	6,091
6	Gautier Janine	Senart Combs Brie Athletisme	FRA	137,793	23:49:08	5,785
7	Quinqueton Bernadette	AM St Thibault des Vignes	FRA	137,593	23:52:01	5,765
8	Rodier Nicole	Efs Reims A.	FRA	100,883		
9	Harbulot Renata	CM Dijonnais	FRA	100,883		
10	Landru Noelle	ASCE	FRA	100,000		
11	Camus Corinne	EFSRA	FRA	89,870		
12	Berthault-Korzhyk Annie	Neully sur Marne Athletisme	FRA	86,199		
13	Clerc Aline	CM Dijonnais	FRA	86,199		
14	Clerc Florence	CM Dijonnais	FRA	56,831		

French 100 km Championship

David Regy won his umpteenth French championship but not until after a battle with Gilles Belloir. With the first 4 walkers under 11 hours, it was indeed a great event.

1	Regy David	EACPA	FRA	100,000	10:27:27	9,563 km/h
2	Belloir Gilles	ULA Quimper Cornouaille	FRA	100,000	10:37:27	9,413
3	Erard Christophe	ASM Bar le Duc	FRA	100,000	10:46:49	9,276
4	Kieffer Pascal	AS Libourne	FRA	100,000	10:51:17	9,213
5	Heinrich Thierry	GASM Ligny en Barrois	FRA	100,000	11:15:16	8,885
6	Dien Daniel	ASCA -CL	FRA	100,000	11:15:22	8,884
7	Langlois Patrick	AM St Thibault des Vignes	FRA	100,000	11:37:52	8,598
8	Morel Philippe	AC Chateau Thierry	FRA	100,000	11:52:20	8,423
9	Gilg Paul	Pays de Colmar Athletisme	FRA	100,000	11:58:54	8,346
10	Fauqueur Raymond	CM Roubaisien	FRA	100,000	12:12:20	8,193
11	Barbuczinsky Josef	EA Bourg-en-Bresse	FRA	100,000	12:16:44	8,144
12	Frechengues Bernard	Senart Combs Brie	FRA	100,000	12:16:56	8,142
13	Parrot Jean Marie	SCBA	FRA	100,000	12:17:05	8,140
14	Cys Jeremy	AC Chateau Thierry	FRA	100,000	12:50:33	7,787
15	Thanron Bernard	Dynamic Aulnay Club	FRA	100,000	13:00:47	7,685
16	Bunel Pascal	Neuilly sur Marne Athletisme	FRA	100,000	13:04:16	7,650
17	Poirot Pierre	PLMC Conflans	FRA	100,000	13:05:08	7,642
18	Spieser Jean Paul	CSL Neuf Brisach	FRA	100,000	13:43:10	7,289
19	Albrecht Jacky	ASM Bar le Duc	FRA	100,000	14:03:13	7,116
20	Pichon Jean	AM St Thibault des Vignes	FRA	100,000	14:05:03	7,100
21	Guerinier Christian	SPN Vernon	FRA	100,000	14:80:00	7,075
22	Tabouret Guy	US Toul	FRA	100,000	18:27:58	5,415
23	Bastien William	ASM Bar le Duc	FRA	100,000	19:00:30	5,261
24	Varain Cedric	AC Chateau Thierry	FRA	75,186		

That finishes the major qualifying opportunity but it all starts over next year with the following key dates

03 - 04 Mar 2007	200 km de BOURGES (France)
24 - 25 Mar 2007	200 km de CHÂTEAU-THIERRY (France)
14 - 15 Apr 2007	200 km de BAR LE DUC (France)
28 - 29 Apr 2007	200 km de DIJON (France)
06 - 09 June 2007	PARIS-COLMAR Classic

VALE DON THOMPSON (C 631) 1933 - 2006

It was reported last week that Don Thompson MBE, at the age of 73, had died in Frimley Park Hospital in Surrey after suffering an aneurysm. Don, who was one of the elder statesman of English walking, will be forever remembered for winning the Gold Medal at the 1960 Rome Olympic Games - and of course for his unique training methods prior to this race!

Don, born on Friday 20th January 1933 in Hillingdon in London, was not your typical Olympic champion. Standing 5 feet 5½ inches (1.68m) and weighing only 120 lbs, he must have looked a scrawny specimen when he first took up racewalking in 1951 at 18 years of age. He joined Metropolitan Walking Club, the same club where Harold Whitlock was a member and, although he had no formal coach, he was happy to receive advice from Whitlock throughout his career.

It did not take long before people started to notice the young walker. In 1954, he suffered through his first London to Brighton walk (52 miles) and had truly found his calling. By 1955 he was amongst the leading walkers over the 50 km distance and in the longer ultra walking distances. During that breakthrough year, he was 2nd in the R.W.A. 50 km championship in **4:34:39**, won the London to Brighton in **8:06:24** and won the Milan 100 km championship in his first international event. People quickly realised that an indomitable spirit made up for his small stature and unsophisticated technique.

The next year, he improved one place to win the R.W.A 50 km championship in **4:24:39** and then won the London to Brighton classic with **7:45:24**, breaking Harold Whitlock's 1935 race record of **7:53:50**. These performances catapulted him into world class and he was rewarded with selection in the 1956 Olympic 50 km event. Alas, things did not go according to plan in Melbourne and, in hot conditions and on a tough course, Don collapsed when placed 5th with just 5 km to cover. It was a salutary lesson which he did not forget.

From then on, he was unbeatable over the longer distances in England. In 1957, he defended his R.W.A. 50 km title with **4:41:48**, won the Hastings to Brighton classic (38 miles) in **5:45:22** to break Tommy Richardson's 1936 course record by 7 secs, and then won his third London to Brighton in an unbelievable time of **7:35:12**. In fact an alteration to the

Brighton road had increased the distance by 1195 yards to 53 miles 129 yards but Don still broke his record by nearly 20 minutes! This record still stands today, nearly 50 years later.

In 1958, he improved his 50 km time to **4:21:50** in winning his third R.W.A. Title at Wimbledon and came a great 5th in the European 50 km championships in Stockholm in **4:25:09**. Of course, it goes without saying that he also defended his London to Brighton title.

1959 saw a special performance when he set a huge PB of **4:12:19** in winning his fourth R.W.A. 50 km title at Baddersley. This event also saw the first 3 places going to Metropolitan walkers (W Misson was 2nd and N. Thompson was 3rd). He also came within a whisker of his own London to Brighton record after fading in hot conditions to win in **7:35:28**.

He was now ready for his second Olympic attempt and, remembering how he faltered in 1956, he decided to prepare as well as he could for the conditions he would probably encounter in Italy: searing heat and high humidity. His solution - he sealed his bathroom, heated it, filled it with steam and started vigorously exercising during the weeks leading up to the Games. "*There was an electric heater attached to the wall and I thought, 'well, that won't provide enough heat,'*" Thompson said last year. "*I had to boost the humidity, too, so I got a Valor stove and put that in the bath. Half an hour was more than enough; I was feeling dizzy by then. It wasn't until several years later that I realised I wasn't feeling dizzy because of the heat; it was carbon monoxide from the stove.*"¹ Thus did he prepare, in addition of course to his regular road walking.

Frank McGuire² quotes the following extracts from *The Don Thompson Story*, Modern Athletics, England, December 1960

Heat Treatment. I was a bit scared of the heat prospect and had great fear of failing as I did in Melbourne, because of the heat. So came the much publicised bathroom treatment. During the three months prior to the Games, there were nearly 20 sessions of ½ to ¾ hours duration in an atmosphere of 100 degrees F, with a humidity around 55. I am sure it was a great help.

Relaxed Training. In mid-August, some three weeks before the race, I spent a very vigorous week in the Lake District on my own. The lovely fells provided a training ground with which I doubt even the much publicised Australian Portsea can compete, for a walker anyway. Some 150 miles of fast walking were indulged in. Then, being on my own for long hours each day provided the opportunity for plenty of uninterrupted thought about Rome prospects, and the walkers who might upset my hopes. There was a lot of very pleasant day dreaming, inducing a form of self hypnosis, which in turn was used to strengthen the will and boost the spirit to a high degree of exhilaration. So i went to Rome very relaxed.

In Rome. I normally consider myself as fairly active, but the four days spent in Rome prior to the race were unusually quiet and restful. The only training was three very short sprints on the roads round the village. Most of the time was spent resting on my bed or in deck chairs in the shade of the buildings, just summoning up enough strength for a journey to the restaurant to eat light meals.

No energy was wasted shopping or sightseeing. In fact, I only left the village twice, once to motor over the course, and the second time to inspect the exit from the stadium and the first mile of the course.

Sure enough, the race began in 87° Fahrenheit (31° Centigrade) weather and Don was ready. Wearing sunglasses and a French legionnaire's hat, he embarked on the long awaited race. At the halfway point, he found himself in first place, following the disqualification of two of the leaders and the early over-exertions of several others. Surprisingly, his only challenger was 1948 gold medallist John Ljunggren, who was two days shy of his 41st birthday. With 5 km to go, the two men were only one second apart. But then Thompson managed to pull away by 18 seconds over the next two kilometres, a lead that he was able to maintain the rest of the way. His winning time of **4:25:30** was a new Olympic record.

1.	Don THOMPSON	GBR	4:25:30.0	OR
2.	John LJUNGGREN	SWE	4:25:47.0	
3.	Abdon PAMICH	ITA	4:27:55.4	
4.	Aleksandr STCHERBINA	SOV	4:31:44.0	
5.	Thomas MISSON	GBR	4:33:03.0	

¹ *Olympic 50km walking champion Thompson dies*, Duncan Mackay, Friday October 6, 2006, The Guardian

² *Training for Race Walking*, by Frank McGuire, Track & Field News, 1962



Don's Olympic triumph in Rome - wearing sunglasses and a French legionnaire's hat, Thompson was nicknamed "Il Topolino" - "Little Mouse" - by Italian fans.

He returned to a hero's welcome as befitted Britain's only 1960 athletics gold medallist and promptly got back to 'basics' by winning yet another London to Brighton race within days of his triumph. He finished off the year with a second win in the prestigious Milan 100 km event.

The next couple of years saw him continue on his merry way, fresh with the confidence of knowing he was an Olympic champion. He won the 1961 and 1962 R.W.A. 50 km championships, the Hastings to Brightons and the London to Brightons. He also participated in the inaugural Lugano Cup in 1961, taking silver in the 50 km event in **4:30:35** and took bronze in the 1962 European 50 km championship in **4:29:02**.

In 1962, Frank McGuire, in his book *Training for Race Walking*, quoted a typical week of training for Don as follows

Pre-Training Warmup	Only Before track training
Pre Race Warmup	Gentle walking, sprints, stretching repeated from about 1 hour before race until about 5 minutes from start.
Comments	Trains all the year. Races all distances on 50 km schedule.
Sunday	25 – 30 miles (in shirt and trousers) pace 6 m.p.h. or better
Monday	5 to 7 miles (stripped training)
Tuesday	Fast and slow laps – 1:50 and 2:40 x 440 yards x 12 to 15 laps
Wednesday	8 to 12 miles at 6½ m.p.h. or better
Thursday	(if no race on Sat.) 6 to 8 miles on road or 5x1 miles with 880 yards recovery laps
Friday	Rest
Saturday	10 to 14 miles or race 20 to 50 miles

Don's training regime was a simple one – big mileages on the weekends when he had the time and shorter sharper training during the week when he had to fit his training in with his full time job as an insurance clerk.

Sadly, his time at the top could not last forever and in the early sixties a new breed of speed walkers, headed by Paul Nihill, Ray Middleton and Ken Matthews, were revolutionising the sport. Middleton won the 1963 R.W.A. 50 km championship in 4:16:44 and Nihill won it in 1964 with 4:17:10. All of a sudden, Don was relegated to third spot over the 50 km distance. But third spot was still good enough to gain him his third Olympic berth and he raced competitively in Tokyo to finish 10th in **4:22:39**. Younger walkers were pushing the limits and improving the standard over all distances. Don's one failing was his lack of raw speed and it was now starting to tell.

Still, he was not one to give up without a fight and the 1965 Lugano Cup saw him finish 4th in a PB time of **4:09:14**. He was only 3 minutes behind 1964 Olympic 50 km winner Pamich and his performance certainly surprised those who thought him a spent force.

One of the highlights in this latter stage of his career was his 4th place in the 1966 Commonwealth Games 20 Mile event in Kingston in **2:46:43** in trying conditions (he was only 2 minutes behind winner Ron Wallwork). Final European 50

km championship (1967, 9th in **4:27:11**) and Lugano Cup 50 km championship (1967, 6th, **4:25:31**) appearances rounded off what had been a stellar international career.

In 1978, he came out of retirement to achieve his final walking goal, qualifying as Centurion 631 in the Leicester to Skegness 100 Mile where he came 10th with a time of **20:46:48**. He then came out of retirement a second time in 1990 at the age of 57 to earn his second centurion qualifier, finishing 3rd in the Leicester event in an even better **19:58:29**. In 1992 and 1993 he finished further hundreds, recording times of **20:49:41** and **20:51:15**. The 1993 event was a 24 hour even and he continued on to record a final distance of **184 km**.

He came out of retirement once again in 2000 to start in yet another hundred, but this time simply to make up the field and to be part of the event. For the next few years, he was a semi regular in the annual centurion event, walking significant distances befitting someone of his age.

But when reviewing his wonderful career, it is one event in particular with which we associate Don – the London to Brighton classic. He was quite simply “Mr Brighton”, his record of having been placed in each of his 13 outings being unrivalled. Nine times he won and only he himself came within two and a half minutes of his quite superb course best of 7:35:12 – that’s 7 miles per hour all the way for 53 miles!



“Mr Brighton” - Don in typical London to Brighton pose

When interviewed in 1980 at the AAA Centenary Celebration, he commented: ¹ “No, its funny. I can't really remember anything about that walk. I could tell you a lot about my Brighton debut (1954) because I suffered in that one – or the 1959 race when the sun got to me and I came apart in the last couple of miles and just missed breaking my record by seventeen seconds. But in one's best races, everything goes so well that nothing stands out. Tactically, I would go through 5 miles in about 40 minutes, 10 in about 82.; 20 in about 2:45 and the 50 km point in about 4:25. From then on, I'd just be hanging on as best I could. Yes, I always looked forward to the Brighton. I'd build up throughout the summer and then give it all I had. I was extremely proud to break Harold Whitlock's record and from then on was keen to improve my own.”

The following list of Don's major National and International results says it all

1955	2 nd	R.W.A. 50 km championship, Coventry	4:34:39
1955	1 st	London to Brighton	8:06:24
1955,	1 st	Milan 100 km	
1956	1 st	R.W.A. 50 km championship, Enfield	4:24:39
1956	1 st	London to Brighton	7:45:32 (Rec)
1956	DNF	Olympic 50 km, Melbourne	
1957	1 st	R.W.A. 50 km championship, Leyland	4:41:48
1957	1 st	Hastings to Brighton	5:45:22 (Rec)
1957	1 st	London to Brighton	7:35:12 (Rec)

¹ Wordsworth, *Haridressers A.C., John Denver AND the London to Brighton*, John Lees, Athletics Monthly, Sept 1980

1958	1 st	R.W.A. 50 km championship, Wimbledon	4:21:50
1958	5 th	European 50 km, Stockholm	4:25:09
1958	1 st	London to Brighton	7:49:22
1959	2 nd	R.W.A. 20 Mile championship, Surrey	
1959	1 st ,	R.W.A. 50 km championship, Baddersley	4:12:19
1959	1 st	London to Brighton	7:35:28
1960	2 nd	R.W.A. 20 Mile championship, Gomersal	
1960	1 st	R.W.A. 50 km championship, Chigwell	4:32:55
1960	1 st	Hastings to Brighton	5:25:53 (Rec)
1960	1 st	Olympic 50 km, Rome	4:25:30 (GR)
1960	1 st	London to Brighton	7:37:42
1960	1 st	Milan 100 km	
1961	1 st	R.W.A. 20 Miles Championship, Chiswick	2:44:49
1961	1 st	R.W.A. 50 km championship, Sheffield	4:22:51
1961	2 nd	Lugano Cup 50 km, Lugano	4:30:35
1961	1 st	Hastings to Brighton	5:31:51
1961	1 st	London to Brighton	7:39:57
1962	2 nd	R.W.A 20 Miles Championship, Birmingham	
1962	1 st	R.W.A. 50 km championship, Luton	4:27:26
1962	1 st	Hastings to Brighton	5:32:07
1962	3 rd	European 50 km, Belgrade	4:29:00.2
1962	1 st	London to Brighton	7:49:58
1964	10 th	Olympic 50 km, Tokyo	4:22:39
1965	4 th	Lugano Cup 50 km, Pescara	4:09:14
1966	4 th	Commonwealth Games 20 Miles, Kingston	2:46:43
1966	1 st	R.W.A. 50 km championship	
1966	9 th	European 50 km, Budapest	4:27:11
1967	1 st	London to Brighton	
1967	6 th	Lugano Cup 50 km, Bad Saarow	4:25:31

Don's list of achievements makes for awesome reading

- 8 R.W.A. 50 km championship wins (1955-1962, 1966)
- 9 London to Brighton wins (1955-1962, 1967) and a course record that still stands today
- 4 Hastings to Brighton wins (1957, 1960-62) and a course record that still stands today
- 2 wins in the Milan 100 km (1955, 1960)
- 3 Olympic 50 km appearances (1956, 1960 and 1964) with a Gold medal in 1960
- 3 European 50 km championship appearances (1958, 1962 and 1966)
- 3 Lugano Cup 50 km appearances (1961, 1965, 1967)
- 1 Commonwealth Games 20 Miles appearance (1966)

He won the prestigious Edgar Horton Cup (R.W.A award for best individual performance during the Association year) on 4 occasions (1956-1958, 1961) and in the early 1960s, he was the British record holder for 20, 25 and 30 miles, 3, 4 and 5 hours, 25, 30, 40 and 50 km.

Yet Don was an unassuming person, lacking in the airs and graces one might have expected. He was willing to talk to anyone and was indeed a credit to the sport of racewalking and to the great English tradition. We will sadly miss him but will always remember his wonderful feats and achievements.

Additional references:

The Oxford Companion to Sports & Games, edited by John Arlott, Oxford Uni Press, 1975

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The Sport of Race Walking, Published by The Race Walking Association, Middlesex, UK, 1962

The Centurions – A History, Published by the Centurions, England, 1997

sporting-heroes.net <http://62.232.35.140/athletics-heroes/displayhero.asp?HeroID=1860>

100 Years of Racewalking, Sandra Damilano, Milan, 2002

FINANCIAL NEWS

It's been a quiet time from a financial perspective. With our major costs for the year completed, our aim is to continue on quietly to the end of 2006 and then start building up finances in preparation of our 2007 year.

Expenditure	Postage and Photocopying	12.90
	Final Account Balance as at 10/09/2006	198.08

UNTIL OUR NEXT NEWSLETTER

Another issues hits the presses, so to speak. For my own part, it is great to be out again and doing some walking in our warm Melbourne spring weather. Walking remains one of the most relaxing and beneficial activities in which we can participate and the we as Centurions continue to show by our achievements what is possible when ordinary people set their minds to achieve extraordinary goals.

Yours in Centurion walking

Tim Erickson (C 13)
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