

## VALE CLAUDE MARTIN: 1935 - 2025

14. **Claude Martin (15.09.35)**  
08-09 October 1977  
22:42:53.6  
George Knott Athletic Field, Clifton Hill, Victoria

**Claude Martin**, who was born in Switzerland on 15<sup>th</sup> September 1935, emigrated to Australia as a young man and settled in Melbourne.

An enthusiastic sportsman, he eventually found the sport of Athletics, joining the famous Collingwood Harriers club and testing himself out in various events. He soon found his event of choice, namely racewalking. His first major test was in the 1961 Victorian 20km Roadwalk Championship at Albert Park, where he finished 15<sup>th</sup> in a time of 1:58:14. From then on, he was a regular competitor in all the major Vic Champs until he stepped back in 1984, just short of 50 years of age.

His best Victorian Championship results were silver in the 1975 Victorian 50km Championship (5:35:01) and bronze in the 1976 Victorian 50km Championship (5:13:06). It is fair to say that Claude was a stayer rather than a sprinter.



*In the action in the 1978 Victorian 30km Championship at Albert Park  
From left: Bruce Dudon, Jim Bannon, Claude (with headband) and Ken Hall*

Apart from racing with Collingwood Harriers at the State level, Claude was also an enthusiastic member of the Victorian Amateur Walkers' Club (VAWC) and regularly raced in their teams in various Australian Federation of Race Walking Club (AFORWC) championships, especially in the annual Lake Burley Griffin 20 Mile Classic which was held in Canberra each June. There he had 8 appearances between 1974 and 1983, his best being 13<sup>th</sup> in 1980 with a time of 2:58:06.

His first centurion attempt was in October 1976 in Adelaide. His form was good - he had recently completed the City of Mordialloc 50 miles at Mentone in second place behind Tim Thompson, with a time of 9:27:27. However, like the rest of the field in Adelaide, he suffered with the springy synthetic track and was forced to retire in the early hours of the Sunday morning, a few miles short of 50 miles. On that occasion, Tim Erickson was the only centurion qualifier.

Come 1977 and the VAWC opted to stage a 24 hour racewalk at the Collingwood Harriers track, the venue used successfully for the 1975 Centurions qualifying event. The main contender was Claude, who had just completed a successful winter season of walking and was hopeful of success in his second attempt.

He started out confidently but was shadowed by 16 year old Bill Dyer; they were never separated by more than a handful of laps. The 50 mile splits (10:32:24 for Claude and 10:42:04 for Bill) illustrate this fact. The last few hours of the race proved very interesting with a strong Bill gradually closing the gap on his older opponent. Claude was, however, able to rally, holding out the fast finishing youngster to become Australian Centurion 14 with his time of 22:42:53.6. Bill finished just over 8 minutes behind with 22:50:33.5.



*Claude and Bill congratulate each other after their successful centurion walks in 1977*



*Centurions at the 1977 event at Clifton Hill*

*Back: Stuart Cooper (C5), Dudley Pilkington (C7), Bill Dyer C15), Jim Gleeson (C3), Claude Martin (C14) and Tim Thompson (C6)*

*Front: John Harris (C12), Mike Porter (C9) and Clarrie Jack (C4)*

Interestingly, Claude was the first person to complete the double of the 100 mile walk and the 100 mile run. He did his 100 mile run at the Aberfeldie Track at Essendon (Victoria) on Australia Day in 1987 with a time a few minutes slower than he did for his walk in 1977. Within a period of less than 2 years, Jim Turnbull, George Audley and Stan Miskin would join him in the run/walk double.

On his retirement, Claude moved to Queensland, settling in Gordonvale, just outside Cairns. The tropical climate suited him and he remained fit and active into his older years, the bicycle becoming his preferred mode of fitness training.

Although now separated from his old walking mates in Melbourne by some 2,500km, he remained interested in the Centurions and regularly corresponded with me and followed all the news.

In 2022, aged 86, his many years of long distance walking finally caught up with him and he returned to Melbourne for hip replacement operations.

Claude passed from us on Wednesday 27<sup>th</sup> August, just shy of his 90<sup>th</sup> birthday. Although now gone from us, we will cherish our memories of him as a person, as a family man and as a fellow racewalker and centurion.

A service will be held at Werribee LePines at 10am on Saturday 13<sup>th</sup> September to honour his life.

To his children Jo-Anne, Alain and Trevor and to their families, we pass on our deepest condolences.

Tim Erickson  
Saturday 30<sup>th</sup> August 2025.