

4th London to Brighton Walk 23rd Sep 1922

The fourth Open Race over this classic course for the Victory Cup was held on the 23rd Sept. under very favourable conditions. The weather was a little cool, perhaps, but preferable to the heat wave which coincided with our race of 1921. The entry of 109 was a record, as also was the number of starters, 96, no less than 67 of whom finished, four men beating 9 hours, 31 10 hours, 59 11 hours, and the whole list of finishers beating 11.75 hours—a remarkable improvement in times recorded on all previous races.

It is needless to give a fully detailed description in this Report, as the Press gave considerable space to the race, and all intermediate times of the competitors appeared in the papers of the 25th September; but we most certainly will record our appreciation and congratulations to our Captain, E. C. Horton, who put up a magnificent performance, showing his best figures over this course. He very wisely did not attempt to hold the leaders, D. Pavesi and del Sole, two Italians of the Molinari A.C., over the first ten or 15 miles, but he was never more than about half a mile behind them and used his head wonderfully well.

Horton took the lead shortly before Crawley, and was timed there 4.33.47. The third Italian, Giusto Umek, who had held back during the earlier stages, now began to make a great impression, and on the hilly road from Handcross to Bolney walked right away, arriving at Bolney almost half a mile ahead of the field. Del Sole "had retired on the stretch to Handcross, and Pavesi dropped right back, maintaining, however third position. At the top of Dale Hill, Umek led Horton by 6 minutes, 11 seconds, but was very distressed and those of us who saw Horton at this point realised that he still had a good chance—we know E.G. when he gets his second wind ! At The Pump, Patcham, 3.5 miles to go, 3 minutes 40 seconds separated the pair, but Umek was not making five in the hour, whilst Horton must have been doing close on 7, and we felt confident. He passed the Italian in great style amid great enthusiasm a mile and a half from the Aquarium, and left him literally standing still—indeed, he beat him by eight minutes. Umek must have had a very bad time over the last mile or so, but walked a plucky race, and we hope to see him and his compatriots again next year.

Our second man was A. Hubbard, last year's winner of the " Dithy," who beat his performance of last year by 12 minutes and finished 6th. He walked with his usual judgment and although he had a bad time in the last few miles, showed us what a sterling walker he is, and also the value of a good attendant. Incidentally, he took the Veterans' prize for competitors over 45.

E. Parslow was our third man and did well to finish ninth. Had he had an attendant, he might have been placed still higher.

These three men scored for the Club in the team race, in which our Club gained premier honours (12 points), although the Belgrave ran us very close (15 points), and would have undoubtedly beaten us if Ricketts, their third man, had not had such a bad time over the last few miles. The Southgate and Wood Green A.C. were third (19 points), followed by the N.L.H. (34 points), and the H.H.H. (38 points). Next to finish for the Club was F. Wilmot who did a remarkably fine performance on his first attempt, but he is a great stroller, and we knew he would do well. R. J. Martin, of the N.L.H. and S.W.C., did well, and Holley is to be congratulated on beating his previous time by no less than 39 minutes, and did not appear at all distressed. Next, H. F. Weston he will do better next time, if he gets up to Westminster a little earlier and avoids a last minute rush before starting. A. R. Davis next. He might have done a 9.30 performance if he had not gone so fast to Streatham. He should have a try next year and take more time over the first 10 miles, and he will do better. H. C. Ashenden and H. Sorrell both beat their previous figures handsomely, and M. I. Lane did well on his first journey down. F. J. and A. A. Mann, and Compton retired at Crawley—we wish them better luck next time.

Mention must be made of the two veterans, T. Hall, of Bradford W.C. and C. W. Lyde, Unattached, who finished the course in 11.34.42 and 11.44.19 respectively. The former gentleman will be 72 next month, and walked from Sheffield to compete, and on the next day was seen near Bolney walking back to London. The Club presented him with a medal to commemorate what must always be considered a wonderful feat of pluck and endurance. He hopes to compete next year and do even better.

After the race the prizes were presented by Mrs. Schofield at the Royal York Hotel (by kind permission of Mr. and Mrs. Preston), and after the prize-giving, an exodus to our various homes to dream of one of the most thrilling races held on the Brighton Road.

Results: