

7th London to Brighton Walk ? Sep 1925

This year's race will be memorable for the very determined effort made by the Canadian, P. Granville, to beat record. Granville, who will be remembered as a Competitor in the Three Hours Walk at the Bridge last year, was sent over to England by the Hamilton Y.M.C.A. with the sole view of breaking record. Seeing that he had been in England long enough to get thoroughly acclimatised and in first rate condition, his chances seemed bright, especially as the day turned out as perfect a day for a Brighton race as I remember. The road was dry, the weather fine and warm enough without being too hot, and the wind a gentle following one all through. But Granville failed, chiefly, I think, because he was over-confident and rated the opposition too low. He is a fine long distance walker and full of grit, but the head is as important as the feet on the Brighton road, and Granville did not use the former to the best advantage.

It was cool and misty at 7 a.m. when 95 competitors faced the starter, who got them off promptly. Granville at once took the lead, walking as if he were merely engaged in a five-mile jaunt, and our Edgar was not far behind him. At Streatham Hill Station he had established a two-minute lead from Horton, with Grimwade lying third, and some way behind Poynton, Baker, Stone, Todd and Gosling in a bunch. Now, our Edgar is a cunning old bird on the road, and is also a bit of a student of his fellow-men. Was he or was he not out to bustle the Canadian? I wonder.

Well, so they went on to Purley, where Granville had gained a minute on Horton and about three minutes on Poynton and Baker, who were walking strongly but well within themselves. After Coulsdon, however, Granville began to come back to his men. The long rise to Merstham told on him, and Horton was holding him while Poynton and Baker were gaining. Then at Gatton Point Poynton cut loose, passed Horton in Redhill, and went full pelt after the leader, to catch and pass him a little before the Chequers. While this was going on in front, Horton had a bad time and Baker passed him, but Edgar soon recovered and was off again in the fourth place. Entering Crawley Granville caught Poynton again and the two raced through the village and up the hill side by side. Then suddenly, less than a mile past the railway gates Poynton collapsed with cramp and had to retire. Granville pushed on, but Pease Pottage was too much for him after his earlier efforts, and he slowed down to a mere crawl. This was Baker's opportunity, and at Tilgate Forest Row he took the lead and soon opened out a respectable gap, walking in fine style and strongly. But Granville was not done with yet. He pulled himself together and got going again, and at the foot of Dale Hill was only about 300 yards behind, with Horton a long way back. But he could not keep it up, and once the summit of Dale Hill had been passed Baker called up his reserve, and went clean away. He did the last 6 miles in 62m. 21s. and finished fit and strong in 8h. 16m. 16 ²/₅, the third best time that ever was. Granville was second and Edgar, by occupying third place, annexed the Dithy Cup for the umpteenth time. It was a fine race and the winner walked with remarkable judgment.

Of the 95 starters 69 finished, 7 beating 9 hrs., a further 15 beating 9.30, and 18 others beating 10 hours. Grayson Stone put up a fine performance in finishing fourth in 8h. 45m. 31s., and Hubbard won the Veterans' prize with a time only 2 minutes slower than his best 17 years ago. Some Veteran !

We won the team race with 16 points to the Belgrave's 18. May it prove a good omen. The prizes were distributed by the Mayor of Brighton in the Royal York, and then we all went home feeling that it was indeed the end of a perfect day.

Results:

1. W. F. Baker, Queen's P.H 8 16 16-¹/₅
2. P. Granville, Hamilton Y.M.C.A. Ontario 8 28 4
3. E. C. Horton, S.W.C 8 37 7
4. G. Stone, Southgate & W.G. A. A. 8 45 31
5. A. Hubbard, S.W.C 8 53 5
6. J. Rathbone, Belgrave H. 8 57 46
7. H. J. Grimwade, Stock Ex. A.C. 8 58 52
8. S. Todd, Surrey A.C 9 2 29

9. W. J. Stupples, Lyons A.C. .9 3 25
 10. S. A. Manning, Belgrave H. . 9 6 49
- Other members finishing were :—
17. G. W. Gosling (scored in winning team) 9 15 58
 18. R. J. Hargreaves 9 16 54