

9th London to Brighton Walk 10th Sep 1927

Having been commanded by friend Tozer to write some notes upon the ninth annual Open Walk from London to Brighton promoted by the Club, I thought I would take an easy course and gather the necessary material by questioning the participants. I therefore asked several officials the question : " What was your impression of the Race"? They all answered "RAIN." I could not justifiably fill the allotted space by repeating the word, so I turned to the competitors and asked them the same question. They all replied " RAIN, 1RAIN." Failing again in my quest, I dug out of the mud the attendants, and put the question to them. They all replied " RAIN, RAIN, RAIN." So perforce I have to rely upon myself, and I shall be delighted if all those who do not like these notes will write and tell Tozer, so that he can find a better man next time.

In spite of the rain the race was an unqualified success, and the hard-working and thoughtful Wulcko is to be heartily congratulated upon his maiden effort. The officials all heroically carried out their duties without a murmur, but I suppose this was only to be expected from such tried warriors. The Club is deeply indebted to each of the officials for his splendid service. It would be invidious to refer in particular to any one, and space does not permit mentioning all of them—besides they are all too' modest to care about seeing their names in print.

The arrangements for the comfort, convenience and checking of competitors, which have been improved each year, were complete in every detail. In this connection it should be mentioned that in addition to providing 17 competitors the L.C.C. Tramways A. & S. A. furnished part of the transport and willing, competent and enthusiastic workers at some of the food stations. It is hoped that the attendants upon competitors did not suffer any ill effects as the result of their gallant efforts.

The Club and all English sportsmen were delighted to welcome Carlo Giani, the Italian long distance walking champion, who fully justified his high reputation by walking pluckily and magnificently throughout. His style resembled that of Donato Pavesi—who won the race in 1921 in 8h. 37m. 27s.—but he has a lower action and thus expends less energy. His promised visit of next year will be looked forward to with great interest, as given a fine day and equal physical fitness, he might beat 8 hours for the journey. It is hoped that in the meantime, Baker will be able to find time to get himself into trim, and that improving walker Green, who finished second to Giani, will continue on the upward grade, so that we may witness the race of the century. Since Ross made his record of 8h. 11m. 14s. on September 4th, 1909, the road has been slightly shortened and the surface has been improved out of all knowledge; consequently each year that his record stands a further tribute is paid to his great performance.

If I dwell upon the performances of Giani and Green I shall use up all my superlatives, so I append below a comparison between the sectional times of the two best performances (each made by Ross) and the times of the two first men to finish in the last race. The three races were held respectively on the under mentioned dates, and so as to save space are identified by

A Race held 4th September, 1909.

B Race held 3rd April, 1920.

C Race held 10th September, 1927.

Place

Competitor

Race

H

M

S

Streatham Hill 4 miles, 1,740 yards

Ross

A

0

45

40

Ross

B

0

41

42

Giani

C

0

44

50

Swan and Sugar Loaf Hotel,
South Croydon, 10 miles, 844 yards

Ross

A

1

33

45

Ross

B

1

30

14

Giani

C

1

34

16

Green

C

1

41

24

Red Hill Post Office, 20 miles, 448 yards.

Ross

A

3

1

30

Ross

B

2

59

39

Giani

C

3

2

3

Green

C

3
14
39
Chequers, Horley, 24 miles, 909 yards
Ross
A
3
40
12

Ross
B
3
35
33

Giani
C
3
41
27

Green
C
3
54
50
The George Hotel,
Crawley, 29 miles, 1,104 yards.
Ross
A
4
29
25

Ross
B
4
30
29

Giani
C
4
29
59

Green
C
4
45
0
Queen's Head,
Bolney, 38 miles, 398 yards.
Ross
A
5

53
5

Ross
B
5
55
48

Giani
C
5
57
37

Green
C
6
9
46
Pycombe,
46 miles, 27 yards.
Ross
A
7
8
45

Ross
B
7
15
1

Giani
C
7
17
51

Green
C
7
21
20
The Aquarium,
Brighton, 51 miles, 1,607 yards.
Ross
A
8
11
14

Ross
B
8
15

Giani*

C

8

18

35

Green

C

8

26

44

* The fifth fastest time so far recorded. In the race of April 3rd, 1920, Tommy Payne set a very fast pace, reaching the reputed 21st mile point in 2h. 59m. 11s., but although he led the field at Bolney he shortly afterwards retired —the victim of his ambitious schedule. During the same race Edgar Horton was with Ross at Redhill, but thereafter gradually fell back, and finished 17 minutes after him

Edgar Horton was, he told me before the race, in fine condition. His slender form and veteran age could not, however, withstand the inclement conditions. George Booker, after his great win in the Club's Open "50" wisely took an "easy" and in the result was not fit enough to battle against the elements, retiring midway, and our Treasurer, "Summy," who had trained like a Trojan, had to retire through cramp at Merstham. The popular Simpson walked splendidly throughout, and is to be heartily congratulated upon finishing fourth in the race and first for the Club, and thereby gaining the distinction of having his name inscribed on the "Dithy" Cup.

Tilbrook made a welcome re-appearance and, as usual, walked a fine race, and even whilst it was pouring in torrents looked unperturbed. His legs became so black with the dye from his sodden clothes that he must still be spending much time in trying to scrub them clean. The youthful Mayor put up a great performance in finishing 10th, and when he obtains more experience and the stamina which continuous walking can give, will show a vastly improved performance. Swan, who finished 17th, at last gave an exposition of the form which many have expected him to produce. Mayor and Swan should develop into useful "A" team men. Amer is probably disappointed with his performance, but it is hoped that he will not lose heart, as he has many years of the Brighton Road before him. J. R. Booker gave an example of what a purely strolling member can do- when he dons racing attire. He was unfortunate to miss a firstclass standard medal by less than two minutes, but nevertheless put up a very creditable performance. Gosling paid his annual visit and it is a great pity that so fine a natural walker has not the benefit of local competition. The coming walking boom may remedy this defect.

Hargreaves did not walk up to his usual form but, nevertheless, bore throughout his customary happy expression. Wilmot, after several hours of rain, had his body stained like an ancient Briton, and one wonders how he will be received when he goes bathing on his forthcoming visit with Foster to Spain. Discombe, Remnant, Roberts, Penny, Stocker, Prior and Hansell complete the list of finishers in the Club's name, each doing a praiseworthy performance. Penny was the tallest man in the race, and after his multi-coloured garments had enjoyed the rain he looked as if he was masquerading as a rainbow. Prior having attained his majority was allowed to walk, and by completing the journey gained his coveted ambition. Roberts, a somewhat old novice introduced by our still enthusiastic Past-President Tommy Hammond, should materially improve with training.

Results:

1. Giani, Carlo, Italy 8 18 35
2. Green, T. W., Belgrave H 8 26 44
3. Holt, F., Yorks 8 46 29
4. Simpson, J. H., S.W.C. 9 0 27
5. Hillary, L. J.. L.C.C.T. 9 1 42
6. Rathbone, J., Belgrave H. 9 2 6
7. Tilbrook, R., S.W.C. 9 3 14
8. Goff, E. V., Ashcombe A.C. 9 11 20
9. Hornsby Smith, F., Ashcombe A.C. 9 12 3
10. Mayor, F. W. J., S.W.C. 9 12 22
11. Scott, F. R., Rochester 9 13 20
12. Manning. S. A., Belgrave H. 9 15 17
13. King, A. W., Hampstead 9 15 31
14. Winter, A. E. H., Polytechnic 9 15 40
15. Scorer, A., Yorks W.C. 9 17 21
16. Snell, T. A., Surrey A.C. 9 20 30
17. Swan, G. G., S.W.C. 9 27 44
18. Lloyd, H. V., Sussex W.C. 9 28 18
19. Cattell, C. A., L.C.C.T. 9 28 59
20. Amer, W. F., S.W.C. 9 30 9
22. Booker. J. R., S.W.C. 9 31 59
23. Gosling, G. W., S.W.C. 9 32 22
26. Hargreaves, R. J., S.W.C. 9 35 53
31. Wilmot, F., S.W.C. 9 39 39
48. Remnant, F. J., S.W.C. 10 23 40
50. Roberts, J. H., S.W.C. 10 24 22
54. Discombe, L. K., S.W.C. 10 34 10
56. Penny, R. A., S.W.C. 10 47 28
58. Stocker, C. C., S.W.C. 10 59 4
59. Prior, J., S.W.C. 11 2 41
63. Hansell, H. B., S.W.C.11 46 35

BELGRAVE HARRIERS T. W. Green 1, J. Rathbone 4, S. A. Manning 8 13
 SURREY W.C. J. H. Simpson 2, R. Tilbrook 5, F. W. J. Mayor 7 14
 L.C.C. TRAMWAYS L. J. Hillary 3, C. A. Cattell 9, W. J. Harris 11 23