

55th London to Brighton Walk 6th Sep 1980

This year's race was won by our own Peter Selby in the very respectable time of 8.21.35. We started with five competitors and finished with four, with Messrs. Wynn, Peddie and Clements backing up Selby to enable the Club to take second place in the team race, nine points behind Belgrave Harriers.

These are the bare facts, but to elaborate a little let us return to Westminster Bridge, the time 6 a.m. Big Ben did not sound quite so disapproving as last year, as it gazed down on the 50 starters. This was, after all, an increase in the field of 20% compared with 1979 and well in line with the inflationary trend. The early morning weather indicated too that we were in for the by now almost traditional fine Brighton Race day.

The name of Tim Erickson has cropped up frequently in our race reports this summer and he was again the centre of attraction. It was reported that the young Australian was attempting to break Don Thompson's 23 year old record of 7.35.12. His many excellent performances during his brief stay here made this a distinct possibility and with Steve Barton and Bernard Imber to pilot him he could at least be sure his attempt would not fail through losing his way and going off course. Such a misfortune had almost certainly cost him the Hastings record.

As was expected, Erickson quickly disappeared from the view of his rivals, passing through Brixton before the natives had aroused from their slumbers and reaching the first timing point at Streatham Hill (5 miles) in 40.48.

John Eddershaw, the Welshman from Sheffield, made a valiant effort to chase the leader but the pace was undoubtedly much hotter than he would have liked. Peter Selby on the other hand began much more sedately, chatting away as if out on a club stroll, but this ploy was to reap dividends because Eddershaw suffered for his brisk start and Selby cruised by him just beyond Redhill whilst he waited for his second wind.

At 50 Kms Erickson's time of 4.24.30 was inside the record schedule but almost without warning he wilted and soon after Pease Pottage decided to call it a day. One could not help but feel sorry for him, for he has crammed a great many races into a short time and has added interest to our domestic scene, besides being an extremely pleasant and likeable person. There is a lot to be said, though, for knowing the Brighton road; it may not look a particularly arduous route but it can be deceptively difficult for the uninitiated. Peter Selby's feet had trod the way many times before and knew exactly what to expect. Not even they, however, calculated to be leading the field and Peter shook his head in disbelief. He quickly recovered his poise and, maintaining a steady pace, demonstrated the value of his experience. Eddershaw gained slightly on him from Dale Hill but never looked likely to get on terms and Peter still had plenty in reserve as he crossed the line. This was a tremendous performance by Peter and confirmed his stature as one of the few class competitors in long distance walking in this country. The true measure of his achievement was apparent, however, only to those who have known the very harrowing time he has had in recent months with the seriousness of his mother's illness. She was in fact sadly to pass away a few weeks later. His courage and powers of concentration under these circumstances were remarkable.

Steve Wynn was our next man home. He more or less maintained 13th place throughout and walked very steadily, if a little below his true capabilities.

Inevitably the ultra reliable Graham Peddie completed the course. 37th at Streatham Hill, he had gained 21 places by the time he reached Brighton. The distance is no problem to Graham, but he takes so long to get warmed up it might be an idea to start him off an hour earlier, say, from the top of Highgate Hill next year.

Our scoring quartet was completed by Jim Clements. Jim got bogged down a little after a promising start and suffered from bouts of cramp. Nevertheless he soldiered on and kept the Club colours flying in the team race.

One must mention, too, Hans Van Wakeren and Nolan Simmons.

The Dutchman from A.V. Unitas, who joined us last year and walks second claim Surrey, had a fascinating duel with Graham Peddie, with barely a minute between them from Redhill. Under the watchful eye of George Hallifax, Hans thoroughly enjoyed the experience of his first Brighton. Nolan, on the contrary, will not look back on this race with any affection. He started brightly but from being 12th at 5 miles he had slipped

horribly to 42nd place at 50 Kms and he wisely retired.

Our congratulations to Belgrave for this their 23rd success in the team race, without any of their stars too and I mean no disrespect to their winning team. The names of Dunsford, King and Day don't feature very prominently in result sheets in the short and intermediate distance races, but they showed here that what they may lack in basic speed is amply compensated for in guts and character. Dave King established a record with his 8th winning team medal, and how about another Belgravian, John Keown? He started and finished his 22nd consecutive Brighton. Well done Sir!

Finally our thanks to the Northern Rock Building Society for their sponsorship. This was an innovation for the Club and we hope the beginning of a long and fruitful association.

Results:

Position	Initial	Surname	Club	Hour	Min	Sec
1	P.	Selby	Surrey	8	21	35
2	J.	Eddershaw	Sheffield	8	28	22
3	K.	Halstead	Coventry	8	42	05
4	P.	Worth	Enfield	8	54	39
5	E.	Holmquist	Highgate H.	8	55	31
6	M.	Davitt	Cambridge H.	9	07	05
7	R.	Purkiss	Metropolitan	9	08	27
8	J.	Dunsford	Belgrave H.	9	09	40
9	R.	Day	Belgrave H.	9	25	37
10	D.	King	Belgrave H.	9	34	23
11	A.	Eddleston	Cambridge H.	9	37	49
12	C.	Bent	Leicester	9	45	20
13	S.	Wynn	Surrey	9	45	24
14	E.	Dolan	Lancashire	9	47	32
15	D.	Ringshaw	Steypning	9	50	43
16	G.	Peddie	Surrey	9	51	43
17	H.	Van Wakeren	A . V . Unitas/Surrey	9	52	42
18	K.	Roost	Enfield	9	53	19
19	A.	Armstrong	Cumbria L.D.W.A.	9	53	47
20	M.	Turner	Brighton	9	54	42
21	B.	Gale	Trowbridge	9	56	47
22	J.	Morris	Belgrave H.	9	56	58
23	G.	Smith	Enfield	10	00	24
24	J.	Shields	Leicester	10	01	42
25	C.	Weston	Highgate H.	10	02	51
26	M.	Gleed	London Vids.	10	07	22
27	P.	Emery	Enfield	10	08	48
28	J.	Clements	Surrey	10	09	47
29	J.	Keown	Belgrave H.	10	14	12
30	G.	Beecham	Belgrave H.	10	24	24
31	P.	Hastings	Cambridge H.	10	27	01
32	E.	Warner	Leicester	10	47	31
33	R.	Williams	Leicester	10	54	53
34	D.	Rebeck	Highgate H.	10	57	11
35	C.	Hayes	Cambridge H.	10	58	18

36	P.	Briggs	Yorkshire R.W.C.	10	59	43
37	N.	S. Johnson	Leicester	11	10	57
38	S.	Fredericks	Southend A.C.	11	19	43
39	P.	J. Carroll	Yorkshire R.W.C.			

	Team Position	Club	Points
1		Belgrave H.	27
2		Surrey W.C.	36
3		Enfield	41
4		Cambridge H.	51
5		Leicester	63

Trophies

Victory Cup	P. Selby, Surrey
Dithy Cup	P. Selby, Surrey
Elaine Trophy	J. Clements, Surrey
Harry Preston Trophy	J. Eddershaw, Sheffield
Astill Bowl	C. Bent, Leicester
Edward Knott Memorial Shield	Belgrave Harriers