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Dear Fellow Sportsmen,

Why you should be saddled with an unknown 'Erb as the Editor of your NewsLetter may well be quite a mystery to most of you, and especially as he is also a 'non-runner' too. However, I can claim to have done some running in the past, although without the success of many of our members, and can only now claim to be a walker, of sorts, who nevertheless, still takes an interest in all sports generally. To have a walker editing your News Letter may not be quite so unusual as it seems, for at least one of our members is also a regular competitor in our walking races, and competes with a good amount of success. I refer, of course to Leslie Griffiths; take a bow Les!

However, I should like to point out that this is your News Letter and the material which goes into it will be of your choice, so please always keep in mind that you have a medium through which you may air views and spread your news to your fellow members. Whether you will be satisfied with the efforts of your scribe I don't know, but it will be up to you all to let me know whether you think it successful or not, and also let me have any ideas you may have for improving it, but I rely on you not to make the ideas too outlandish.

Although it is now some time since the London to Brighton run took place, it is never too late to pass on our congratulations, and so we extend them most heartily and sincerely to Derek Reynolds on his fine record breaking achievement, and we shall wish him the best of luck in his attempt on the records at Motspur Park on the 13th of December.

One man can never make a race, and I know that Derek would be the first to agree with me on this point, so to all the other competitors who took part in the Brighton race and who helped make it such a successful promotion, we send our sincere congratulations and thanks for their fine efforts.

Nothing succeeds like success, and so it is that the Brighton run was a triumph for all concerned, and our Hon. Secretary, without whose drive and persistence it would not have come off, is to be profusely thanked for the enormous effort which he put forth to ensure its success.

At this stage I do not think it would be out of place to send our congratulations and felicitations to our President, Rex Cross, and express to him our aim to do everything in our power to make his tenure of office a very happy and successful one.

As a reminder for next year may I wish all who are taking part in the Motspur Park record attempts the very best of luck and all the success necessary to turn in new record figures, and to all our members, plenty of good running on the road for 1953 season.

May I again remind you that I shall welcome ideas and material for future issues.

Yours sincerely,
Jack Stirling-Wakeley.

A few observations on the London to Brighton Run by Arthur Newton.

Don't you feel pleased when you find you've been right for years although many of the so called "experts" tell you you're completely mistaken? That's my position today after seeing the 1952 London to Brighton race. The first year it was bound to be a toss-up; being entirely novel to the country it needed time for the idea to be assimilated: but once the thing had been properly put over there was never a doubt as to its ultimate success. But don't forget that the organiser had to work just as hard as the runners, and just as long, in order to achieve this outstanding and complete success.

Mistakes? Of course there were bound to be some; but these can be overcome as we learn more. The chief one, and it occurs in every long distance race I've seen (I've been horribly guilty myself) is that some of the less experienced men make the pace at the start and try to keep it up. Yet you've probably noticed that the winner in distance events is very rarely, if ever, at the front in the early stages. Ruminates over that for your next attempt. I was agreeably surprised, however, to note

that the very great majority kept their heads (and their efforts) under control and refused to be rattled in this way, a sure sign that they had realised the value of intelligence.

Then again, though this is not so imperative, each runner ought to have a friend either on a cycle or in a car to keep in touch with him, particularly over the last half of the race. It's wonderful what a difference it makes to know there's a reliable man handy and you can get a drink just when you need it most instead of having to travel perhaps three or four miles further when you're already mighty near the end of your tether. Those two points seem to me to be the chief ones at this stage; perhaps the Editor will let me suggest further tips from time to time while you are busy preparing for the 1953 race - and you should already be well stuck into this.

(The Editor will welcome any further writings from so true and tried a sportsman as Arthur.)

Now for a word or two about the recent event. D. E. Reynolds' record was well earned by real hard work backed up by the soundest of good judgement: the two combined to ensure success. And just wasn't I pleased at the performances of some of the "novices", men who were having their first "go" at such a distance! Take Tom Bell 7th, not to mention many who followed on. Their times were quite remarkably good, which means of course that they had put plenty of work into their preparation. Balk at the preparation and the result of the race will convince you of the error of your ways: you can't fool nature, so don't fool yourself by imagining you can. As I said above, the time for hard work is NOW: after a few months you'll get used to it and it won't be by any means so hard, even though your mileage, along with your prospects and enthusiasm, will have moved up considerably.

You may have men from Canada and South Africa next year: lay a good foundation and show them what men from the Old Country can do!

Arthur Newton

A few remarks by Derek Reynolds

Before the race Piper and I had discussed that 6 min. 40 secs. miles would get us inside the record (5hrs-53mins-42secs.) and would give us a time of 3hrs-20mins, at Crawley, which would prevent too much wastage over the later stages, as we felt that both Ballington and Arthur Newton had travelled too fast over the early stages. Actually I arrived at Crawley about 2 minutes inside the schedule feeling full of running and knew that if I could keep up this pace more or less, I should be somewhere near. I therefore had to do the remaining 22 miles 694 yds in 2hrs-35mins-52secs, to beat the record. The actual time taken was 2hrs-34mins-32secs, (1min-20secs inside). This proved to me that as far as I'm concerned, and I think it is the only way for anybody to achieve the best, that an even effort is required practically throughout the race, and will allow one to make an all-out effort in the last mile if necessary. I myself, was able to do this quite comfortably when I heard that the Railway Viaduct Preston was only a little over a mile and a quarter and that I had 10 minutes to do it in.

Greatest thrill for me, one which I shall always remember, was Arthur Newton's answer in the affirmative to me at the top of Dale Hill, to my enquiry as to whether I could do it.

If I may be so presumptuous as to offer advice I can do no better than repeat the old adage, "run your own race regardless of anyone else" and run at least once a day, twice if possible, in training -- it's the miles in the legs that count.

Derek Reynolds

A MESSAGE FROM YOUR PRESIDENT.

It has often been said through the ages that "FORTUNE FAVOURS THE BRAVE" and that "SUCCESS BEGETS SUCCESS"; no truer words have ever been spoken in any age and these words are certainly applicable to the Road Runners Club of today for it has indeed required a man of courage and great foresight to launch a new Club into the world of sport.

The Road Runners Club has come to stay and all its members are deeply conscious of the vast amount of work that went into its formation, a task that was carried out almost entirely by its chief architect - Ernest Neville. We are indeed fortunate in having the services of one so well equipped and so willing to devote his time and energies towards making a success of this young and virile organisation, its members are drawn from sixty clubs spread over the British Isles, all are great enthusiasts, all are willing to build upon the foundations so well and truly laid last September; all are second-claim members but all realise fully that the Road Runners Club has an important part to play in the future of our sport and that all can be of service to each other, for it is in the spirit of service to each other that we shall attain success in our ventures.

Of the past, little should be said except that our first venture, the London to Brighton Race, was a very great success not only from the runners point of view but also from the organisation side; we were greatly appreciative of the honour accorded us by the Mayor of Brighton, Alderman Miss Dorothy Stringer, J.P., who very kindly consented to present the prizes and entertain the runners, their friends and the officials to tea in the Royal Pavilion. This was a particularly happy event, which has done much to bring together men of vast experience in the art of long distance road running.

Of the future much can and should be said but space prevents a lengthy treatise on the future prospects of Road and Track Distance Running. It is well to content ourselves with the grand turn-out that we had at Motspur Park on Saturday, 13th December, where the enthusiasm shown by both competitors and helpers alike was so well justified that no fewer than six of our members broke the old records for the forty and fifty miles. Each and every one of them deserves our hearty congratulations on their excellent performances as too can those others who strode manfully round the track for many miles but who were not quite so successful. In such races as these, the accolade touches everyone throughout the field, and though it is given to but one man to be acclaimed the winner yet all who enter share in the ultimate victory.

Rex F. Cross.

The Editor at this stage tenders his sincere apologies for having been unable to get this issue out, as was hoped, before the record attempts were made, but pressure of work made this task impossible. However, there is an old maxim that says "better late than never" so it is with this in mind that I ask you to excuse the delay. ED.

A WELCOME TO OUR PRESIDENT

by

F. W. PARKER.

It was a wise choice to elect Mr Rex Cross as the first President of the Road Runners Club and he will discharge the duties of the office with quiet efficiency.

Born in 1902 he joined Blackheath Harriers in 1927, was Cross Country Captain for some seasons and elected President in 1937. From 1935 to 1938 he was Hon. Auditor Kent County A.A.A. and was elected a Vice President of that body in 1947. He represented Blackheath Harriers for ten years in National C.C.C., Southern Counties C.C.C. and Kent County C.C.C., and competed in the A.A.A. and S.C.A.A.A. Championships attaining standards.

He is not unacquainted with distance running having competed in A.A.A. and Polytechnic Marathons.

During the War years he served with the Royal Engineers, 8th Army etc.

With a background such as this we need have no fears concerning the affairs of the Road Runners Club and it is the unanimous wish of all the members that he will have a successful and happy term of office.

W.F.Parker

The 40 and 50 Mile Record Attempt

by

The Editor

This race was billed as the Greatest Long Distance Amateur Track Running Race ever held, and it certainly lived up to its billing.

The weather appeared to have been willing to co-operate as the 22 starters lined up for the off promptly on time. Looking round the recording tent I must confess that for a moment I thought that I was at the wrong venue for the recording pencils all seemed to be held by members of the Walking Fraternity. This surely is a tribute to the esteem in which the newly formed Road Runners Club is held by fellow sportsmen. However, to the race.

The initial running was made by J. Nash of Port Talbot Y.M.C.A. and he made a good pace for about thirteen miles, until, overcome with cramp he was forced to retire. In the meantime it was noted that W. Wortley of Belgrave was running second and looked quite comfortable, with Tommy Richards in third position. The main hope for breaking the record, Derek Reynolds, was running his own race and looking the most comfortable runner in the field. With the retirement of Nash, Wortley took up the running in first place, and although looking very comfortable, he gave me the impression that he was holding himself in hand. If I may be allowed an observation here, I thought that the effort of holding himself back seemed to rob him of the easy smooth action as shown by Reynolds, and the energy so expended might well have had something to do with the cramp which later attacked him and caused his retirement. However his effort was an excellent one.

With his retirement, Tommy Richards was left well in the lead and he made the running until the 38 plus mile mark, when he too became a victim of cramp. In the meantime, Derek had moved up to second place and it was noted that the 40 mile record would surely go to him. Not once had he varied that lovely easy style of his; there were no sudden fast laps, to be followed by a crawl, it was a most even performance throughout. Thus it came about that Derek turned in the new record time of 4h 19m 20.4s for 40 miles and went on to set new figures of 5:30:22.4. for the 50 miles. The next five men also broke these records, and are to be congratulated on their fine running. Veteran Les Griffiths too, is to be praised upon his tenacity in running so well. All concerned the runners and officials are to be congratulated on a really fine co-operative effort, which turned out so successfully. The only adverse criticism I have to offer concerns the finishing. EVERY COMPETITOR who takes the trouble to travel and start in these events, MUST be given the opportunity of finishing, however inconvenient it might appear to the officials. That is the acme of true sportsmanship.

WISHING YOU ALL A VERY HAPPY CHRISTMAS AND A VERY SUCCESSFUL 1953. A.J.S-W.