

Corkills ¹⁹⁸⁶ Masterly Walk

Parish Walk by Murray Lambden

COLBY'S Willie Corkill produced a masterly walk last Saturday and Sunday when he finished the 85 mile Mylchreest's Motors Parish Walk some two and a quarter hours ahead of Douglas postman Ray Hughes.

Mick Holgate, a workmate of the winner was third, while Rose Clarke and Allan Callow emerged victorious in the women's and veterans sections respectively (these classes covering the first 32¼ miles of the course as far as Peel).

A record entry of 167 entered the three races. Starting at mid-day (11.30 for the women), the walkers had to contend with sweltering conditions during the afternoon, and a vividly contrasting cold wind overnight. The winner finished opposite the Villa Marina arcade just after 5 a.m. and the last of the 14 finishers of the full course (only one less than last year's record) finished just before 11.30.

It was a repeat win for Willie Corkill, and along with a second placing in 1983, it was his third finish. It was the manner in which he used this experience that impressed most observers. He has had some disappointments in the Parish Walk as well as his successes, and so he knew that in order to finish he had to preserve his energy, particularly in the heat. He refused to be drawn by the fast early pace of John Cannell, who was contesting the veterans class, nor some dozen or so others walkers who were ahead of him at the start.

At Peel he took second position after the three top veterans had retired, but he was still some 15 minutes in arrears of five times winner Derek Harrison. He gradually whittled this down to six minutes at Jurby (45 miles) when sadly Derek Harrison called it a day. From then on the result was never seriously doubted. Chris Keown he retired from his third spot at Kirk Michael, youngsters Steve Taylor and Steve Brennan, held second spot from Jurby, but they were passed by

Tony Kneale only for him to retire soon after Maughold, sadly affected with injury problems after three successive finishes.

So Willie increased his lead to the finish, and although the variable conditions meant that he was half an hour slower than last year, he received a tremendous reception when he received the winners trophy from Colonel Brian Mylchreest at the Howstrake Hotel on Sunday evening. As did the other thirteen finishes, who all deserve a brief mention.

Neither Ray Hughes or Mick Holgate featured among the early leaders, but Ray used his experience of last year to improve by three minutes, despite the conditions, while Mick, thriving in the heat also thrived on good pace judgement to record his first finish. He was the first veteran of finish. An hour later came two more in the popular form of Dave Wilkinson, who walked the latter stages with first time finisher John Wright.

In total contrast the joint eight finishers were the two 20 year old's Steve Taylor and Steve Brennan. They surprised and impressed everyone in their first walk over 20 miles, while Norman Christian recorded his second finish in succession walking in company with David Hall and Fintan Suddards, who deserve congratulations on their first finish. Colin Hodgkinson was another popular finisher after six attempts, and a little progress each year, and David Callister completed the course for the third year in succession, the only person in the walk to do that.

The veterans and womens walks to Peel provided the most excitement. John Cannell and Ann Cain blasted ahead in their respective races, but neither won. Cannell built up a five minute lead over

the opening dozen miles, but just as he began to suffer on the Sloc, Allan Callow was at his strongest. He passed Cannell and started to build up his own lead, only for John to start catching him again and the distance at the end of an exciting race was just one minute in Allan Callow's favour.

Ann Cain also suffered from her fast early pace, and came under pressure from the remarkable veteran Jean Olroyd. Ann was to retire on the Sloc, while Jean, although continuing to walk well was passed by last years winner Rose Clarke. Rose went on to win in a time almost half an hour faster than last year, and her 70 mile a week training obviously paid off, even though she was close to pulling out of the race the week before when she injured herself in training. Jean took second place and that too was reward for some determined training.

As always with a report on the Parish Walk it is not possible to do justice to every heroic walk, but for most people the certificate to show how far they have walked in the most important recognition.

The success of the walk is based on teamwork and the organisers would like to thank Mylchreests Motors for making the event viable; the civil defence for their important radio communications and for the dozens of timekeepers, checkers and marshals who worked often behind the scenes throughout the long afternoon, night and following morning (when a cloud-burst brought new problems). Every team needs its captain however and Boundary Harriers are deeply indebted to Arthur Jones who acted as their most efficient captain and race organiser. 74 year old Arthur is one of the Island's most respected sports administrators, and he was so busy with all his commitments this year that he did not manage to walk himself. He hopes to rectify next year!

1986

Mylchreest Parish Walk

A RECORD 157 starters left the Villa Marina Arcade last Saturday in the Mylchreest Motors Parish Walk and it was 17 hr 3 min 45 sec later and 85 miles that Willie Corkill of Colby crossed the finish line on the Douglas promenade to win for the second year in a row.

After a sensible steady start Willie took the lead at Jurby, where the leader since Peel, Derek Harrison, had retired, and continued untroubled to the finish. He was almost 2¼ hours ahead of 2nd man Ray Hughes. Ray too had walked steadily to come through whilst others retired or slowed. Third place went to Mick Holgate.

Result: 1, Willie Corkill 17.03.45; 2, Ray Hughes 19.17.44; 3, Mick Holgate 19.46.31; 4 (tie) Dave Wilkinson and John Wright 20.42.30; 6, Norman McKibbin 21.18.44; 7, Mick Rodger 21.25.34; 8 (tie) Steve Brennan and Steve Taylor 21.33.49; 10 (tie) Norman Christian, David Hall, Fintan Suddards 21.36.34; 13, Colin Hodgkinson 23.10.25; 14, David Collister 23.27.25.

Steve Brennan and Steve Taylor shared the Murray Lambden Trophy for the best performance by an under 21 year old.

In the Veterans (32½ miles) race to Peel John Cannell and Allan Callow had a close race with never much more than 45 seconds between them. John set the early pace and it wasn't till the bottom of the "Sloc" — 23 miles — that Allan took the lead which he retained to the finish.

Result: 1, Allan Callow (Boundary Harriers) 54.29.50; 2, John Cannell (Boundary Harriers) 5.30.50; 3, Charlie Weston (Highgate Harriers) 5.54.30; 4, Peter Dougherty (Post Office) 7.05.39; 5, Norman Kneen (Boundary Harriers) 7.20.46.

The Ladies race similarly produced exciting racing with Ann Cain setting the early pace only to succumb to the hot conditions after Rushen and see Jean Oldroyde take the lead. However it was reigning champion Rose Clarke who paced herself the best and she came through to pass Jean and take the ladies title in an excellent time. Jean was rewarded with the new lady veterans trophy whilst her team made Sylvia Harrison come through to take 3rd place.

Result: 1, Rose Clarke 6.33.6; 2, Jean Oldroyde 6.37.45; 3, Sylvia Harrison 6.50.25; 4, Rita Norrey 7.02.19; 5 (tie) Linda Shimm and Ann Oates 7.03.07.

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