

# Lambden eases to debut triumph

## Weather fails to spoil day

The Leicester Mercury 20 miles road walk passed its 50th milestone in robust style despite the damp, cold conditions.

Most pleasing was the appearance of Mercury Walk hero T. Lloyd Johnson, now in his 83rd year.

Lloyd had written to say that he would most likely be in hospital on the day, but, happily for him and those who wanted to shake his hand, that was not so.

Lloyd, nine times a winner of the race, including the inaugural 1927 event, regretted it was such a foul day and all against fast walking.

When the big field sped off on the track at 12.30 conditions were not too bad but they got progressively worse.

Everybody wanted to congratulate each other and in particular the women in their event who had battled on, suffering with cold and cramp and for the first-timers, wondering why they were doing it.

Not one would have missed the experience, but there was a strong feeling that 10 miles would be a more suitable distance for them.

An anonymous person had donated special awards for those who had rendered the event sterling service. Among the recipients were Peter Markham, competing for the 30th consecutive year, and previous winners Carl Lawton and Brian Adams.

Scores of people worked tirelessly. The St. John Ambulance Brigade were kept busy. Feeding station organisers, Doug Collins and Elwyn Elliott kept up the supply of drinks and officials on and off the road helped to put a memorable competition together. —JIM SHARLOTT

The 50th Leicester Mercury 20 mile road walk was won in the gloomiest of conditions by Isle of Man star Murray Lambden in 2-39-41, at Saffron Lane Sports Centre, on Saturday.

Making his debut, Murray, who had not found it possible to fit the Mercury race into his schedule before, said he was delighted that he had made it this year.

He wanted a fast race as a final preparation for the national title next month.

Although Sheffield's Peter Ryan stretched him for threequarters of the race, the absence of two entrants reduced the calibre of the challenge.

Lambden and Ryan began to surge ahead in the first mile on Saffron Lane which they covered well inside eight minutes.

In Bassett Street, Wigston, the five mile marker, their positions were still the same.

### Defending

Both clocked 38-55, pursued by former winner of the race, Carl Lawton, of Belgrave, London and Leicester's Chris Smith, the Midlands champion.

With Smith in fourth, Brian Adams (40-12) in seventh, Geoff Toone (10th) followed by Alan

## REPORT by JIM SHARLOTT

Worth, defending team champions, Leicester Walking Club, were making their presence felt.

Passing the 10 mile marker, the leading order was unchanged.

Just before 15 miles, Ryan forced a break. "I thought I had got him", he said afterwards. But Lambden came back and from 17 miles there was little doubt that he would win.

His time was 34 seconds slower than the course record set by Leicester's Alan King in the first of two victories in 1981.

King who missed the race because of the forthcoming World Cup, acted as a marshal. In the closing stage of the event in Wigston, King was reasonably confident his record would stand.

Alan's absence from the city club's squad meant that Leicester had to fight considerably harder to lift the challenge cup for the 23rd time.

They scraped in by one point, relieved to have done so, for winning in the 50th year meant a lot to them.

### Pressure

Leicester's scorers were Adams, Worth, Toone and Smith. All walked well and had to do so for the top three clubs were all so close.

Leicester's 40 edged out the 41 of Belgrave and Sheffield with 45, were also pressurising the top two teams.

Leicester Walking Club's Wendy Toach, sole female competitor in the Open section, for got all the fatigue after her record making debut.

Wendy, normally a shorter distance girl with good form up to six miles, clocked 3-46-25, improving very much on the 3-48-40 set by Angela Bent last year.

A Charles Keene College student, she bemoaned the fact that she had started off too slowly and was confident that she can walk a lot faster.



**WINNING SMILE** . . . Wendy Toach, the women's open winner, salutes her success.



**HOME AND DRY** . . . Claire Sharples wins the women's novices event.

1. M. Lambden (Boundary, Isle of Man) 2-39-41; 2. P. Ryan (Sheffield) 2-40-34; 3. G. Lawton (Belgrave) 2-44-12; 4. R. Gardiner (Bromsgrove) 2-45-20; 5. H. Adams (Leicester) 2-48-00; 6. D. Engleart (Sheffield) 2-50-06; 7. J. Eddershaw (SH) 2-50-36; 8. S. Lewis (Coventry) 2-51-36; 9. S. Marshall (Belgrave) 2-52-13; 10. A. Worth (L) 2-52-42; 11. P. Warburton (B) 2-53-12; 12. G. Toone (L) 2-53-23; 13. C. Smith (L) 2-53-59; 14. C. Berwick (L) 2-54-06; 15. P. Markham (L) 2-54-17; 16. K. Smith (Coventry) 2-54-39; 17. D. Ratcliffe (Coventry) 2-54-39; 18. M. Scammell (B) 2-58-38; 19. C. Thomas (R. Sutton Coldfield/Birmingham) 2-59-27; 20. A. Collins (Hollway) 3-00-04; 21. S. Whitmore (L) 3-01-19; 22. E. Holmquist (Highgate) 3-02-26; 23. D. Moss (York Postal) 3-03-17; 24. J. Sturges (L) 3-03-33; 25. N. Simmons (Surrey) 3-04-50; 26. S. Tibb (S) 3-04-50; 27. S. Trigg (L) 3-05-36; 28. J. Errington (Y.P.) 3-06-37; 29. M. Angove (Coventry) 3-06-49; 30. H. Moseley (SH) 3-07-01; 31. J. Dowling (SH) 3-07-31; 32. P. Stapleford (L) 3-07-49; 33. R. Rawlings (Harborne) 3-09-10; 34. D. Jones (L) 3-10-15; 35. J. Dunsford (B) 3-11-53; 36. G. Jones (C) 3-12-19; 37. D. May (RSCB) 3-12-36; 38. R. Simmons (SH) 3-13-21; 39. R. Powell (Eathel) 3-13-30; 40. W. Tweedhope (Y.P.) 3-13-31; 41. M. Byrne (SH) 3-15-01; 42. B. Hart (L) 3-15-49; 43. A. Puge (L) 3-15-47; 44. D. Trigg (L) 3-16-56; 45. A. A. Wicken (SH) 3-17-03; 46. K. Emsley

