New York City, Dec. 1—In the 61st Annual Coney Island 10 Mile Handicap, newly elected National Chairman took full advantage of a generous 32-minute handicap to finish nearly 4 minutes ahead of the field. The 42-year-old Bittano turned in a good 1:34:43 to foil the handicappers and finish 3:17 ahead of Shore AC's Arsene Eglin, who at 44, had an excellent 1:31:30. Ron Laird, just back in the country after his European sojourn of more than a year, walked away from fellow scratch man John Knifton to finish 11th overall and capture fast time. Highs: 1:13:29.2 in the cold weather beat Knifton by nearly a minute and a half. Here are the results, with actual times shown.


The race was somewhat late starting, although the starting time had been rather flexible. The delay came about when your editor's car broke down in a desolate spot about two miles on the way filled with life, kids, and good things to eat. A 2-mile jog back home in street shoes and overcoat didn't help the walking later but was necessary to fetch the other car. After little attempts to start the realcitrant Simca by pushing and jump-starting it off to call a tow truck. With a boost from his starter pack the old wagon roared to life (11:39 turned out to be alternator troubles) and afterwards it was off again via the F30. As a result of all this, the 15-minute drive took a full 1:45 and it was after 8 when we started, more hungry than eager. Doc and Dale got a 7-minute start while I changed in to my kit (a British tan, for my downshaded English readers). Dale walked quite well considering this was his first and he could of course, since the Labor Day Dash, and his training for the year consisted of about three workouts prior that one and another three or so back in January. He hopes to get a first mile active in the New Year, and so we had the schedule. I figure we could do this year's Eve Race next year is usher in as well as usher out.


Looking Back—5 Years Ago (From Dec. 1976 GWR)—A largely randling issue covering the AUW Convention and year-end decade-end wrapups. The latter was a well written, highly entertaining summary of the previous decade in Unitd States. I do say so myself....The GW also announced Semi of the Decade and Race Writer of the Decade awards. The for some to Charlie Silock for his many contributions and continuing devotion to the sport. The latter went to Ron Laird who was dominant throughout the 10 years with Ron Zinn, Rudy Hale, and Larry Young ranked behind him....The Annual Blackburn Award for the Outstanding Performance during 1976 went to Bob Kriken for his big 15 miles in 3.08. Steve Hayden captured the Scottish relay race in 1:20:29 with John Kiff at the front in 1:19:46. Ron Daniel and Ron Kulik were also under 1:20....Ron Dooley did a 1:29:32 for 20 miles and 2 weeks later, Bill Hanney, who had dropped out at 15 miles in Dooley’s effort, did even better with 1:28:51....Dave Rosansky turned in a 1:5:35 for 10 km in New Jersey and Larry Walker had a 54:09 for 7 in California. Walker also had a 6:16:46.7 mile.

From Feet To Toe

Well, I did my usual sloppy, haphazard job of compiling the World Lists of top performers in the last month’s issue. Without details of performance, the following additions to these lists are in order (I am still not buying that 1:23:30 by Frenkel in Czechoslovakia or other performances in that race, simplistic, that I am): 20 km—1:27:12 Constantin Stan, Romania; 1:27:12 Ton Carlini, Italy; 1:28:45 Jan Jncoch, Poland; 1:29:32 Viktor Vavilov, USSR; 1:29:35 Fazal Selkour, Czech; 1:28:46 Hartwig Gauder, G.B.R. 1:28:48 Vittorio Visini, Italy; 20 km—4:00:01.0. Czchoslovakia; 4:05:51.0 Petrov, USSR; 4:07:03.0 Aleksandr Gerasimov, USSR; 4:07:13 Vittorio Visini, Italy; 4:07:15 Oswaldsalka, USSR; 4:07:16 Oleks Pradlotten, USSR; 4:07:51 Oleksy Totski, USSR; 4:11:18, Leo Frey, W.G....The British have lined up an excellent international walk for their walkers for 1977. Included are a 20 km in Bulgaria April 13; a 20 (2 men) and 10 (1 man) in East Germany May 12 and 20 km vs West Germany with four on a side each on May 25; a 20 km in Romania the same date; a 20 vs the same 20 km in East Germany the same date; a 20 km vs West Germany the same date; a 20 km vs East Germany with two on a side on June 21; a 20 km vs France with two on a side on July 12; a 20 km vs USSR with three on a side on July 21; a 10 km vs Sweden for two men on Sep. 13; the Lugano Cup Qualifier on Sep. 20-21 and the Lugano Cup on Oct. 11-12 both with four men at 20 and 50. Wouldn’t it be nice if we could do as well. To all of those who send notes full of appreciation and encouragement with their renewals let it assure you that I enjoy hearing the efforts are so well received. More good publicity for the sport. Don Jacobs sends along a very interesting and well-done article from the Fortla nd Oregonian on 25-year-old Cindy Aronblad, who was third in the 1974 Women’s 10 km. We should see a lot more of Cindy since she intends to peak at age 75. Regarding the proliferation of National Championships, which seems to be a point of contention these days, as witness this column for the past year; Dave Kriken’s letter (and he may forget that he suggested since this letter has been laying here some time) that perhaps we could retain the same number of championships but have them split between just two sites at two times. As he suggests, one walker doesn’t need to win everything. There may be some merit in this idea although Dave may have gone a bit too far in overburdening one site with races at one time. However, we can look to Sweden in which they take 4 or 5 days at one place and have Sr, Jr, 20, and 50 km, Jr 5 and 10, Women’s 3, 5, and 10, and Girl’s 3 and 5. That.
LAIJD, MONACCO SCORE TWIN VICTORIES

Pittsburgh, Pa., Jan. 4–5—Ron Laird and Carol Mohancco both scored back-to-back victories in walking races at the Pittsburgh Classic Indoor Track Meet. On Saturday night, Ron toured the 220-yard track 7 times to win a 1500-meter race from the Shore AC's John Fredericks in 6:16.7. Fredericks, who led by about 15 yards at the quarter in 1:36, & corded his best ever at 1500-meter with 6:16.8. Bob Kitchen easily beat Bill Walker for third in 6:31 to 6:56, so on. In the women's 1500, Carol Mohancco edged local favorite Amy's pair 7:42.4 to 7:43.7 with Amy's pair but was still close as they went. 

At about 11:30 the next morning most of the same protagonists returned for a men's 2 Mile and women's 1 Mile. Also on the starting line was one Jack Lorand and missing was Walker who opted for a fine 4:57 for fourth in the Sub-Buster's Mile Run. Laird again received a good race from the very competitive Walker. They were together for splits of 1:14, 3:29, 5:15, and 7:02. John was still close as they went. He was 14:50 off his laps times. Fredericks finished in 13:27.8 and was given 14:24.8. Kitchen walked a lonely third and finished in 14:33, was then given 15:03, which I figure should be 15:00. Lorand moved from seventh to fourth in 14:31, or 15:52, judging from my last lap. Next came young Geoff Rhodes in a good 15:14 (16:16) and Hank Klein in 15:41 (16:45). Carol was really an easy winner this time. 8:14.9 and Amy's 9:15. How they messed the lap up, I don't know.
Take a Tip from the Working Man.

Again, the food with which the British artisan maintains his energies is quite good enough for the athlete. A breakfast of ten and bread and butter, with a bloater or a "pair of kippers" or a "half haddock," or two fried eggs or a rashers of bacon. Dinner, consisting of a cut from the joint, with potatoes and cabbage or some other green vegetable, followed by jam roll or "boiled plum," with a glass or two of "ale." Tea, a repetition of breakfast. Supper of cold meat or fried fish or bread and cheese. This may not be an ideal diet, but it is quite good enough for the average athlete. It is a great deal better than meals made up of patent foods. The mechanic, at all events, thrives on it.

The Vexed Questions of Beer and Tea.

Beer is a vexed question. So is tea. The latter should not be drunk too strong. If tea tastes bitter, refuse it. And it should not be drunk after midnight, nor with a meal of fresh meat. Curiously enough, with salted and compressed dishes, the bad effect is not so noticeable. Fresh meat and strong tea taken together mean trouble. With beer it is a question both of quality and of quantity. The old training books—which, as I have hinted above, were absolutely wearisome on the question of diet—usually recommend "sound old ale." They do not however, indicate the address from which this desirable article is to be procured.

The ordinary London "Burton" will not do at all. It is bad for the joints and for the digestive system.

"Ale—"four ale"—is a refreshing and fairly innocent drink, if you are careful as to quantity. It is not like the beer of Bradford or the South Coast, of which you can drink as you will. I remember once making inquiries as to the daily capacity of a Dover boatman. "Sometimes," said he, "I have a quart, and sometimes I have a bucketful." You cannot do that with four ale. The "mixture"—I must name it so—has marked medicinal effects, if swallowed in bulk. Our London "bitter" is bad enough in the same respect. "Mild and bitter" gives us a modification of flavour, not of effect. Bottled beers are worst of all.

Many athletes swear by the better brands of stout. No sincere athlete has a good word to say for spirits.

Be a TT, if You Can.

Frankly, I believe teetotalism is the best of all—provided it does not worry you. That is a point to be considered. "If you fancy a glass of beer,"—I am quoting the words of a wit to whose authority we all bow—"do not ruin your health by denying yourself." On the other hand, if you do not fret at the self-denial, why dose yourself with malt and hops and chemicals? The eagle in the air, the elephant on land, the whale in the sea contrive to do without these stimulants. Why shouldn't we?

With regard to sleep, it is absolutely essential that the athlete should have long and deep sleep. There is an old adage, not much quoted nowadays, that the proper allowance is six hours for a man, seven for a woman, eight for a fool. I should say that the gentleman who composed that formula required his eight hours regularly. Six is too little. Seven may be all very well for a sedentary man of law; and that limit is suggested in Lord Coke's quatrain—

"Six hours to Law,
To pleasing Slumber seven;
Ten to the World,
And all the day to Heaven."

Spite of the admirable last line, I doubt whether this allowance will do for the athlete. Seven hours' sleep may be enough to ensure a daily output of mental activity. It would not enable a man to break walking records. I know of one sterling athlete, however, who can do with much less: most men in training want much more. If you must do with eight hours, be sure that they are hours of deep and undisturbed slumber. Go to bed early, except on Saturday. Make a special rule of early retirement on Sunday.

There is one more word to be said before we proceed to the programme of work. There can be no compromise between athletics and an unclean life. It is not sufficient to forbid sins of deed only. Put a muzzle—"ostium circumstantiae"—upon your mouth and (in Heaven's name) upon your thoughts. Avoid pornographic literature as you would poison. Evil meditations are a poor sort of pleasure. What is more, they carry their own penalty with them: they break your back.

So much for the first member of Aristotle's definition. Now for the "Great labours."

Training, by rights, should be a change from mere good health to that state of specialised vigour which is needed for athletic effort. Unfortunately, it must often be something much more than this. The candidate for racing honours may enter upon his course of training feeble or positively ill or "fat and scant of breath." Properly speaking, that is no business of the trainer's. It is a matter for self discipline or the doctor. Above all there must be no haste in getting into harness. The man who, in search of glory, is determined to change all at once from a crook into a crack is much more likely to "go to glory" elsewhere.

Until you have done sufficient gentle walking exercise to enable you to tramp for hours together without becoming footsore or fatigued, it is no use bothering about cinder-path or stop-watch. It is mere superstition to suppose that one must "go away" in order to rectify one's health. London streets are good enough for this preliminary canter, and the vicinity of London provides lanes and highways second to none in the wide world. "When a man is tired of London," says Dr. Johnson, "he is tired of life, for there is in London all that life can afford." The learned man is almost right. London is a repository of all good things—except pure beer.

Athletic Inequality of Men and Women.

I make it clear, I hope, that I am writing for novices, and not for the hardened sinners of the cinder-path; but I find it difficult to forget that I am not writing for Londoners alone. At all events, I address them primarily. And again, the athletes I address are men chiefly and not women. Man's characteristic virtue should be bravery and woman's
Systematically Getting Fit.

When you are well enough to begin in dead earnest, you may set yourself systematically to the task of becoming "fit" in the athletic sense. You have three things to acquire—speed, stamina, and skill. You must learn to walk fair and to use your energies economically. You must learn to go fast enough. You can't win unless you can go fast enough. As Mr. G. Lacy Hillier used to impress upon novice cyclists, there we have a truly instructive truism. Finally, you must learn to stand the friction of protracted effort; that is, to stay. The consideration of that point will come up again when we talk of schedules and bad times.

A good style can best be learnt by training under an experienced coach or copying an acknowledged expert. An elaborate explanation of the devices of race-walking, treated from the point of view of scientific mechanics, is one thing. That is what my chapter on "Devices" purports to be. The elementary instruction of a novice is quite another matter. The rules should be short and to the point. The greater requirements should be secured first. To begin with, the following are quite sufficient.

Style of Walking.

Hold yourself up. Stride out as far as you can to the front without leaning forward. Brace your knee and push it well back into the socket as you urge yourself on. Bend your arms at the elbow and swing them somewhat as a runner does. Let your hips go loose.

March a Mile in Ten Minutes.

Any able-bodied man ought to be able to march a mile quite steadily within ten minutes at his second or third attempt. A week's practice will bring this time down close to 9 minutes. Still there must be no attempt at sprinting. Once you are below the 9-minute limit, walking with perfect fairness and machine-like regularity, you can begin to extend the distance, if you are training for distance; or to press the pace if your ambition is to become a sprint-walker. Ease your work at the slightest symptom of shin-ache. If you don't know now what that is you will soon find out. It is an absolutely unnecessary nuisance. Much better avoid it altogether than bring it on and then walk it off.
Social Training Spins.

One of the evenings of the week will, I presume, be spent with your pals in a social training spin. There you will find experts to imitate, and probably "old uns" ready to advise. Some clubs have a training spin on Saturday afternoons. Gentle running is a very good thing for a walker at the beginning of training, and you can take an easy trot across country if you fail to make arrangements with a walking pack. Then there are combined "strolls" on Saturdays and Sundays. The Surrey Walking Club, for instance, promotes regular Sunday strolls at a pace which is supposed to be "moderate" over country routes of twenty to forty miles. The same club, and others, organise "strolls" down to Brighton, and—bless the boys!—up from Portsmouth. For my part I could never appreciate such exercise in packs, I can show you a more excellent way.

Two's company, three's none. Get a friend to go with you, one who is content to take his fair share, and not more than his fair share, of talk. Better be alone than have with you a companion who trips you up in conversation. If you can't get one to suit your fancy, try a dog. If you can't take a dog, go by yourself. Like Tobias in our illustration, you will have your guardian angel with you—and your thoughts and your eyes and your ears. Some strollers make a great point of choosing country paths: give me the highway, out and born. Let us try a specimen day. Suppose it is a Saturday in the summer. Let us be reckless and suppose you have a Saturday clear—no work in the morning. You have got over the early inconveniences of training and are ready for a long tramp. Breakfast over, you start—say, from Victoria Station—and push northwards across the park. You note the time, of course, and, though moving leisurely, keep an eye on the mileage. Passing through the park, there are the flower-beds to inspect. You ought to feel proud of your property. This garden is yours to enjoy, as much as anyone else's. You weather the Marble Arch and steer up Edgeware Road. Dust bricks and mortar? Not a bit of it! Every busy street in a big town has a charm of its own. "Sir," said Dr. Johnson to his assiduous biographer, "if you have seen one green field, you have seen all green fields. Let us take a walk down Cheapside." With all deference to the learned doctor, green fields have their claim too, and we shall yield to it later on. It is amazing how some people can take an interest in museums and find none in the activities of city life. Collections of butterflies and birds, mummed monkeys and stuffed elephants, are very delightful in their way; but so are men and women and children and horses and trams and houses. You bear to the left at Paddington and make for the Harrow Road, and begin to note the milestones. Some are mere memorials, tablets let into the walls to denote the old position; some stand foursquare and substantial at the edge of the pavement. On this route they measure the distance from the Marble Arch. You have a mile and a half to add for your walk from Victoria. You should consult your watch at intervals and see that you are keeping true to time.

You leave Harlesden behind and pass "Jolly Jumbos," and there first strike the open country. Wembley close on the right; fields and the railway, and, far off, the canal and Acton on your left. The hedges, perhaps, are beginning to foam over with the May blossom, or perhaps every little wood shows a shimmer of bluebells between the tree-trunks. You note that the mile between stones "5" and "6" is a short one. At Sudbury, if it were winter, and you had started late enough, you might possibly meet some hares setting out for a spin. But it is summer, and such sports are suspended.
can remain in bed; better, you can go "strolling" with your clubmates; best, you can go to church. You cannot possibly spend the time more happily anywhere else, and, after all, it is the only decent thing to do. I assume that I am speaking to Christians. The Jew must sanctify his Sabbath, and the Mahometan keep Friday sacred. They can easily modify our programme to suit their needs. It is astonishing to find people who know nothing of the ecstasy of adoration and the privilege of prayer. If you have ever entertained doubt about the supernatural, go and hear "Lohengrin," and you will come away with a firm belief in Providence. If you have ever scoffed at the rites of religion, go to "Faust," and you will learn how deeply the devil dreads holy water. The atheist—the "fool" of the Psalms—is provoking enough; but the man who should try one's patience most is the one who regards a sermon as the chief event of Sunday's service. London caters for every variety of religious worship. If you want a service of free-and-easy type, in modern English, with plenty of social singing, you can find it in every district, often at the street corner. You can even get speeches in the local dialect, such as that sermon I once heard in Bethnal Green on "ow to get to 'eaven, or 'alf-way hup". The Established Church opens her doors to those who prefer respectability and Elizabethan English. The liturgy of the Greek Orthodoxy Church is celebrated in Moscow Road and at the Russian Embassy. Finally, there is the Catholic Church. She has bred most of the historic heroes of religion. She deserves the hearty respect of all men of good will. I, for one, owe her sincere gratitude and reverence.

How you spend the rest of Sunday depends on how fresh you are after Saturday's heavy work. There are the parks and the country in which you live. You have the museums in winter and the galleries in the summer, the libraries in the evening, and the streets all day and all the year round. Go calling or go courting. A stroll up river, or a trip to the sea-side, or a leisurely bike ride, make capital variations.

The Track Trials.

And so you start the next week's work. The track trials ought to show a better result, and the Saturday tramp the same. When you can do two miles in 17 minutes you are ready for a venture in the handicaps. It will be some time, however, before you get your proper mark—600 yards or so. Perhaps you will improve, and come back to the "half-limit," where the handicapper may have put you experimentally. As soon as you can do two miles in 16 minutes you may hope to get near seven in the hour. It is from this point on that every little detail of style tells. There are two ways of getting faster, one unfair, the other fair. The first is to sprint by lifting; the second to quicken up, or keep it up, without lifting—and it is mastery of style that will enable you to do that. Remember, when you can walk two miles quite fairly in 15 minutes, you are doing what was once deemed impossible by pedestrian critics.

Your Conduct in the Race Itself.

I come next to tactics—your conduct in the race itself. Every race should be walked according to a pre-arranged plan. In a short race this is just a "plan," in a long race it is a "schedule." At one time all athletic mentors advised the competitor to go off at top speed, and keep it up for 300 yards, no matter what distance the race might be. That is absolute rubbish—unless you want to get the better of the judge, and think he is more likely to overlook transgressions during the first minute and a half than later on. Get off quite steadily, with your best and longest stride. You can shorten and quicken as soon as the strain becomes too great. Even so, in a mile-walk, you will find that the first quarter is walked quicker than the second, and the fourth—if there is any incitement to finish strongly—will be quicker than the third. If you receive a caution, take it in good part, and attend to it. That is more common sense. You can have no reason to suppose it is meant otherwise than well, and you would think little of a judge who allowed you to disregard his words of warning. Assume that the officials are good sportsmen, and be a good sportsman yourself. Above all, if you are disqualified, come off the track quietly. Make no fuss at the time, and none afterwards. Inquire if you like, and protest if you wish later, with courtesy, and in such a way as to cause no suspicion that you wish to give annoyance. In particular, I would affectionately urge on all walking men who have friction with the judges not to use the word "prejudice," unless they mean what the word really means. Look it up in a good dictionary, and you will avoid making a scandalous misuse of it.

Steady at the Start.

The greatest difficulty a "gaffer" experiences is to keep his man steady at the start. Athletes always want to go off at top speed. Among record-breakers, two celebrated sprinters at the start have been Shrub and Jack Butler. When a long journey is to be covered it is important to believe that there is any advantage in a rush at the start, but when a man has taken a fancy to starting so, he will often become seriously annoyed if you try to keep him back, and irritation is sometimes quite as distressing as physical exhaustion. In such cases it is better to let your man go unchecked. But if you know that he cannot safely undertake a fast start, and that he is willing to follow your advice, you must make special provision for his failings in the schedule. Give him a fairly fast start, just fast enough to satisfy him and make a good show. Then grade the times rapidly down to the proper level. There may be a difference of as much as half a minute between the first mile and the second, but after that there is no need for any variation greater than 15 secs. between any two consecutive miles.

The schedule should be written out in a fair-sized note-book, the distance and times on one side and notes on the other. Insert a special warning wherever a change of speed is indicated. On a road journey the schedule should be carried by a separate attendant—I mean in case of important attacks on record.

The Recording of Records.

Where record is attempted it is very embarrassing to know how one is to deal with intermediate records. Say that a man is going for a 100-mile walk, and wants to beat the figures for 51 miles or route. It may well be that the pace required is too hot for the best results at the longer distance. It is said that 100 miles has been walked in 17½ hours. Supposing I send a man to beat this reputed time, it will be quite sufficient for him to cover the first 50 miles in 8 hours 20 mins. But there is a 12-hour record of 74½ miles, also "reputed." If any man is determined to beat that, too, he must be down to 8 hours 10 mins., or at least 8 hours 15 mins., for 50 miles, and that is bad for his chances later on.

If you enjoyed this, we might row more at lazy or 16x times in the future.