

Record speed registered by Armstrong in Wallace Caldwell memorial road race.

Ballymena Road Club – Northstone – cyclists held their annual Wallace Caldwell memorial road race at Galgorm, as part of the Slane Ulster classic road racing league, last Saturday morning.

Perfect racing conditions were enjoyed by the seventy six entrants and they were to put in a record breaking performance as the winner, Adam Armstrong (Eurocycles), came below the three hours mark for the first time on this course. His time of 2 hours 58 minutes 01 seconds represented an average speed of 25.615 mph for the 76 miles marathon.

This was an amazing speed considering some of the hilly terrain which the course included. The present route, which by-passes Coleraine by going through Aghadowey, was first used in 2003 when Gary Cranston won in 3 hours 3 seconds and that was the previous best time for the event.

Adam Armstrong has a good record in the Caldwell as he also won in 2008 when his time was 3 hours 11 minutes 43 seconds.

This year's race was generously sponsored by Ben Morrow of Woodside's Chemists Church Street and J&R Keys, floor and wall tile shop, Castle Street Ballymena. Their financial backing helped the club to put together a £500 plus prize list and this made the racing fast and animated from the outset and by the Waterwall, after Clady, with 9.5 miles covered three riders, Jonathan Dempsey, Peter Lilley and Simon Williams (who won the Caldwell in 2009) had gone clear and led by 20 seconds.

By Maghera the lead group was now fifteen riders strong and their lead was out to 43 seconds. BRC associate member Conor McAllister (Slane cycles) and Ahoghill's Philip Bremner were included in this fifteen along with Jonathan Dempsey, Simon Williams, Gary Cranston, Peter Williams, Dane Dunlop, Glen Kinning, John Neill, Ian Inglis, Adam Armstrong, Drew McKinley, Desi Foley and James McMaster.

The first hour's racing took the riders a distance of 25.3 miles to the outskirts of Garvagh.

The left turn at Garvagh saw the fifteen leaders with an advantage of 72 seconds over the chasers; this increased again to 1 minute 25 seconds at the Boleran chapel near Ringsend, with 30 miles covered.

The tough climb to the Cam forest (which is to be tackled three times during this Sunday's stage of the tour of the north) saw the lead increase to two minutes.

The right turn near Limavady on to the Springwell climb at 38.4 miles marked the half way point of the race and the lead was 2 minutes 05 seconds.

Four riders then went ahead on the climb to the Springwell; they were Simon Williams, Des Foley James McMaster and eventual winner Adam Armstrong.

McMaster dropped back leaving three to stay clear on the descent towards Coleraine.

The roundabout at the junction of the Garvagh road saw a collision which involved BRC's Mark McCullough who suffered a suspected arm fracture. His race was over after performing well up to that point.

The others, of course, kept going and the gaps continued to open out as the race progressed through Aghadowey and past the Brown Trout.

Conor McAllister then joined Simon Williams and Adam Armstrong as the front group re-shuffled and they held a slender 16 seconds advantage at the Brown trout.

Then, at 59 miles on the outskirts of Kilrea, a chasing group of eleven re-caught the three leaders with the first of the chasers nearly 5 minutes adrift. This left fourteen riders at the head of the race as they returned through Portglenone and the final test of the race – the ascent of Tully.

Conor McAllister attacked at the bottom of the hill and Adam Armstrong followed and then countered but McAllister still had enough in reserve to go with him. These two then put in an amazing ride up Tully and built a lead of 50 seconds by the top of the climb.

That sorted out the first two and then Jonathan Dempsey (East Antrim) attacked going into Ahoghill and he too held on to the finish for third place 58 seconds behind.

Peter Williams (Orchard) took fourth at 66 seconds. (5) Simon Williams (Basso) at 67 seconds (6) Drew McKinley (Newry) (7) John Neill (Phoenix) (8) Philip Bremner (unattached) winner of the A2 prize. (9) Gary Cranston (East Antrim) (10) Des Foley (Basso) all at 67 seconds (11) Ian Inglis (cycling Ulster junior team) all at 1 minute 10 seconds (12) Glen Kinning (East Antrim) at 4 minutes 15 seconds. (13) Dane Dunlop (Lakeland) at 4 minutes 20 seconds (14) Peter Lilley (Slane cycles) at 5 minutes 48 seconds. A3 prize (18) Bryan McKinney (Ballymoney)

Matthew Brennan came in with this forty rider group in 31<sup>st</sup> position next for BRC was associate member Leo McAllister (Slane) who was 39<sup>th</sup> both 5.48 behind. First lady (42) Heather Wilson (Maryland) at 5.48.

Other BRC (51) Simon Taggart at 8.47 (59) Colin Scullion at 12.46 (60) Uel Cunningham (Michelin) at 12.46.

Well done to Hugh McCullough in his first season as BRC race secretary. Hugh assembled an enthusiastic team of experienced helpers who, with the expert assistance of the PSNI motor cycle outriders, ensured a reasonably safe environment for the race. Hugh thanks all those who helped make the race a success – the riders, marshals race officials, PSNI, first-aiders, the sponsors, the local Railway street businesses who let the race use their car parks and of course to the tea ladies for the post race refreshments.