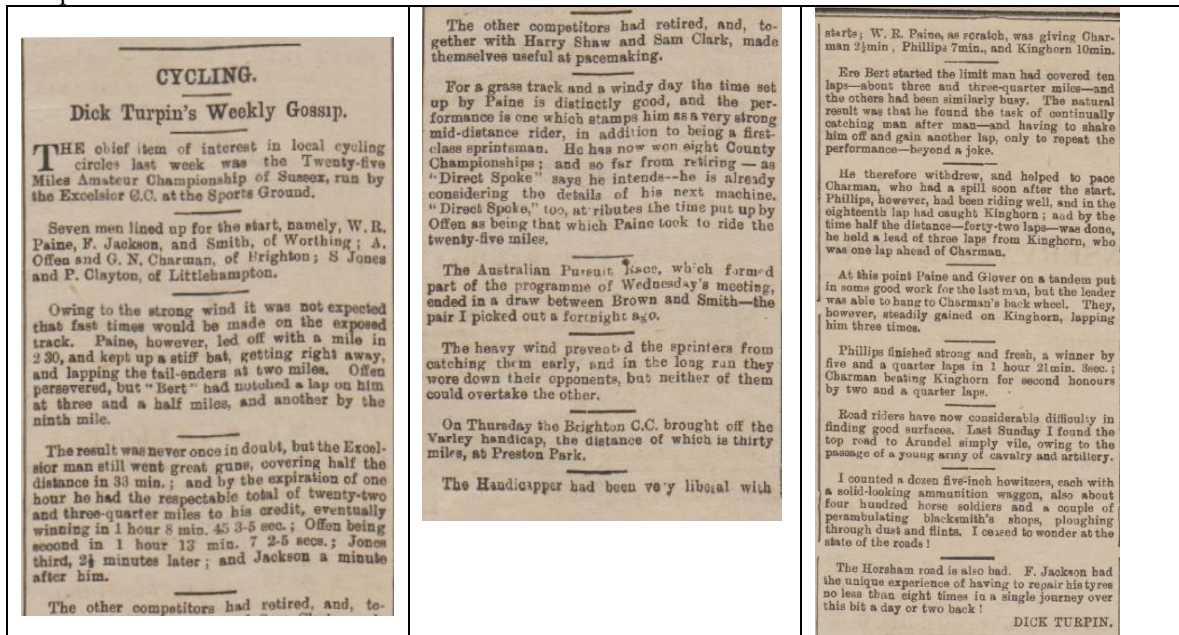


Dick Turpin's Weekly Gossip.
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CYCLING

Dick Turpin's Weekly Gossip.

THE chief item of interest in local cycling circles last week was the Twenty-five Miles Amateur Championship of Sussex, run by the Excelsior C.C. at the Sports Ground.

Seven men lined up for the start, namely, W.R. Paine, F. Jackson, and Smith, of Worthing; A. Offen and G.N. Charman, of Brighton; S. Jones and P. Clayton, of Littlehampton.

Owing to the strong wind it was not expected that fast times would be made on the exposed track. Paine, however, led off with a mile in 2.30, and kept up a stiff bat, getting right away, and lapping the tail-enders at two miles. Offen persevered, but "Bert" had notched a lap on him at three and a half miles, and another by the ninth mile.

The result was never once in doubt, but the Excelsior man still went great guns, covering half the distance in 33 min.; and by the expiration of one hour he had the respectable total of twenty-two and three-quarter miles to his credit, eventually winning in 1 hour 8 min. 45 3-5 sec.; Offen being second in 1 hour 13 min. 7 2-5 secs.; Jones third, 2½ minutes later; and Jackson a minute after him.

The other competitors had retired, and, together with Harry Shaw and Sam Clark, made themselves useful at pacemaking.

For a grass track and a windy day the time set up by Paine is distinctly good, and the performance is one which stamps him as a very strong mid-distance rider, in addition to being a first-class sprinter. He has now won eight County Championships; and so far from retiring - as "Direct Spoke" says he intends--he is already considering the details of his next machine. "Direct Spoke," too, attributes the time put up by Offen as being that which Paine took to ride the twenty-five miles.

The Australian Pursuit Race, which formed part of the programme of Wednesday's meeting, ended in a draw between Brown and Smith - the pair I picked out a fortnight ago.

The heavy wind prevented the sprinters from catching them early, and in the long run they wore down their opponents, but neither of them could overtake the other.

On Thursday the Brighton C.C. brought off the Varley handicap, the distance of which is thirty miles, at Preston Park.

The Handicapper had been very liberal with starts; W.R. Paine, as scratch, was giving Charman 2½ min, Phillips 7min., and Kinghorn 10min.

Ere Bert started the limit man had covered ten Laps - about three and three-quarter miles - and the others had been similarly busy. The natural result was that he found the task of continually catching man after man - and having to shake him off and gain another lap, only to repeat the performance - beyond a joke.

He therefore withdrew, and helped to paceⁱ Charman, who had a spill soon after the start. Phillips, however, had been riding well, and in the eighteenth lap had caught Kinghorn; and by the time half the distance - forty-two laps - was done he held a lead of three laps from Kinghorn, who was one lap ahead of Charman.

At this point Paine and Glover on a tandem put in some good work for the last man, but the leader was able to hang to Charman's back wheel. They, however, steadily gained on Kinghorn, lapping him three times.

Phillips finished strong and fresh, a winner by five and a quarter laps in 1 hour 21min. 3sec.; Charman beating Kinghorn for second honours by two and a quarter laps.

Road riders have now considerable difficulty in finding good surfaces. Last Sunday I found the top road to Arundel simply vile, owing to the passage of a young army of cavalry and artillery.

I counted a dozen five-inch howitzers, each with a solid-looking ammunition waggon, also about four hundred horse soldiers and a couple of perambulating blacksmith's shops, ploughing through dust and flints. I ceased to wonder at the state of the roads!

The Horsham road is also bad, F. Jackson had the unique experience of having to repair his tyres no less than eight times in a single journey over this bit a day or two back!

DICK TURPIN

ⁱ These references seem strange to modern cyclists. Men who had retired from the race then rejoined it as pacemakers, thus affecting the result of an event from which they had withdrawn.