

## Dick Turpin's Weekly Gossip.

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Turpin 9.4.1902 P2C5 - 01

### CYCLING.

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A PRIL showers and weather of a variegated nature generally have been the rule during the past week, but the roads are in fine order, as I found on Sunday, when out Horsham-wards with a couple of Excelsior men.

The northerly wind was fairly stiff, and we had to pedal to get down Washington Bostel, but we pushed along as far as Southwater, finding the country looking very fresh and nice, and primroses and daffodils in plenty. Most of the few wheelmen we saw were gathering the wild flowers, a good occupation when the wind makes riding hard work.

On the return journey a burst of speed on the part of my friends compelled me to hastily abandon a comfortable smoke and take to scorching—a thing quite opposed to my general habits.

There are more ways than one of scorching awheel, as I discovered when negotiating the hill near Knepp. A number of children were on the road, and as I passed them, trying hard to recover lost ground, there was a great shout of "Master! you're on fire!"—the shout growing louder as the youngsters found their warning unheeded.

At length I slowed down, and found my pipe had burnt a hole in my coat, nearly large enough to crawl through.

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Many a wheelman has proved how easy it is to get alight through a pipe, as his speed at once fans the fire and prevents his detecting the smell; but it is well not to scorch in too many senses at once. The double scorch in my case meant a delay of several minutes, tearing away the smouldering parts, after which there was not much left.

From the top of the Bostel, thanks to the favouring breeze, the free-wheel man did no work at all for two and three-quarters miles at one stretch. With a starting start on the road I fancy his distance will take a bit of beating.

On Saturday afternoon the first of the Excelsior Club's running races on the road was held, the course being from the north of Broadwater Green over Offington Hill, along the Findon road to the old Toll House, returning the same way to Broadwater Schools, the distance being about four miles and a half.

Considerable interest was taken in the race, and a lot of people had assembled at Broadwater to witness it. Fourteen entries had been received, but only half that number faced the starter, who sent them off about 4.20.

Beneath the trees the roads were somewhat sticky, owing to the recent rain, but otherwise all going was very good.

After a well-fought struggle the race was won by A. Arnold (1 min. 35 sec. start), who took the lead from G. Standing (2 min. 50 sec.) at Offington Hill on the return journey, leaving him to finish second, closely pursued by J. Grevatt (scratch), who had accounted for four of his fellow-competitors, but was unable to overhaul the two others. F. Ayres (1 min. 45 sec.) finished fourth, and H. Haynes (25 sec.) got home fifth. The two other starters, J. Gads and E. Miles, retired through lack of condition.

The fastest time was that of J. Grevatt, who ran the course in 27 min. 5 secs.; Arnold being next best in 27 min. 41 secs. The times were not up to expectation, but as yet the men are unfamiliar with the course, and they will improve on the present figures.

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Just before the start I witnessed an incident fully as exciting as the race itself. A cow had escaped from its drover, and was clearing off in a hurry, when Mr. Hampton, of Findon, gave chase on horseback, and finally, with the aid of "the Irrepressible" Durant, brought the animal to bay at the top of the Green. Then ensued a thrilling five minutes, as the frightened bovine dodged about wildly, and made frantic efforts to break away.

The admirable style in which the horseman headed off the beast again and again, together with the nimble way the Excelsior man prevented the animal from getting past him, won the unstinted praise of Peto and myself—who had retired to a safe distance! As we watched the skilful manoeuvres of cavalry and infantry we only wished De Wet were in place of the cow. He could not have escaped!

The opening run of the Tarring C.C. was a distinct success, thirty-four members turning out for the ride to Littlehampton. At the Norfolk Hotel there was a pleasant surprise in store for them.

The generous Club Committee had provided an enticing spread, with a pleasant little musical programme to follow. Miss Chemins, Miss Street, Mrs. Peto, Mr. A. Duffield, and Scribe Peto were the singers—and good singers too!—and altogether it was a very jolly time; the Tarring Club are great on the social side. Late in the evening a gentle potter home, everybody happy.

There is no truth in the rumour of a Club run to Old Town, Clapham, where six hundredweight of treacle was spilled in the roadway. All the treacle is gone!

Three cyclists passing at the time slipped and fell, getting fairly covered with the adhesive sweetstuff. Treacle is good in a porous inner tube, but very bad on an outer cover.

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<sup>i</sup> So first WCC&AC foot race was on 6.4.1902.

<sup>ii</sup> A reference to Christiaan de Wet, Boer general and politician, a leading figure in the South African war..